

THE Freethinker

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PRICE TWOPENCE

I dispraise not the defence of just immunities, yet love my peace better, if that were all. Give me the liberty to know, to utter, and to argue freely according to conscience, above all liberties.—MILTON.

Bigotry and Freethought.

ONE of the encouraging symptoms of Freethought progress is the fashion latterly in favor amongst "broad-minded" religionists of charging Freethinkers with being "dogmatic" and "bigoted" and "aggressive," and generally seeking to make it appear that the modern Atheist is as much an intellectual sinner as the old Christian—the said "broad-minded" religionist being the real exponent of that "tolerance" which holds that both sides of a contradiction are about equally true and that everything is much of a muchness. In a recent number of the *Labour Leader* there is an article entitled "The New Bigotry," signed "J. B. G." (which stands, presumably, for Mr. J. Bruce Glasier) in which he thus rebukes Freethought "bigotry":—

"Beliefs change," he says, "but bigotry does not die. Only yesterday the allegation that any opinion or proposal was irreligious was enough to condemn it. To-day there are already those who would condemn any principle or scheme if only it bore the slightest association with religion. Formerly it was the religious bigot who was on the prowl, now his 'vera brither,' the anti-religious bigot, has taken up the charred brand of the inquisitor."

In so far as this paragraph makes it appear that there is an equality in arrogance or bigotry between the Christian religion and the Freethought movement, it is plainly false. To take one point out of dozens; there is not a Freethought journal published which will not allow a hearing to the other side or will keep out Christian arguments because they are Christian; there is not one religious journal in ten which will allow the mildest Freethought remonstrance even on a question of fact. And this one point alone—the willingness to hear, and to allow others to hear, the arguments of the other side—is a crucial one in the ethics of the intellectual life.

The trouble appears to arise, as is evident in Mr. Glasier's article, over the question: What is bigotry? To hold that your opinions are true and that your opponent's are wrong is involved in the very nature of things and is assumed in all controversy. If that is held to imply "arrogance" then the charge applies to everyone, without distinction, who has any serious philosophy at all. Mr. Bruce Glasier, for instance, as a Socialist, holds that all non-Socialist politicians are wrong, and therefore holds implicitly that his is a "superior" outlook on politics to theirs. And he may be reminded that the charge which he brings against Freethinkers is frequently preferred against Socialists by the capitalist press. The religious bigot, I take it, is one who by force, by social and political ostracism, by the capture of the public schools and the control of the public revenues, seeks to impose his creed on other people—in short one who uses methods other than argument and moral appeal in furtherance of his beliefs and endeavors to browbeat where he cannot convince.

Now, Freethinkers cannot possibly be guilty of any such conduct as this at the present time, for they have not the power; and inasmuch as Freethought, properly understood, is a discipline no true Freethinker can ever be guilty of it at all. In Catholic newspapers in these countries it is sometimes farcically alleged that the object of the French Republican policy is to endow Atheism out of the public revenues. The charge, of course, is absurd; though if M. Combes had proposed so unjust a scheme it would hardly lie with Catholics in the light of their own conduct to condemn him. On what grounds other than those of the most crass partisanship can it be argued that what the Christian may do it would be a high crime for the Atheist to do? Of course, such crass partisanship is almost inseparable from all kinds of Christianity. The Nonconformist in England, for instance, howls about putting Popery "on the rates," but he is perfectly ready to put his own "undenominational" Nonconformity on the rates.

And when we turn to Mr. Bruce Glasier it seems that he too, for all his fair denunciation of bigotry, only wants in the end to silence the pertinacious Freethinker; but the pertinacious Socialist is to be encouraged in his good work. "Let but any reference to religion appear in our columns," says J. B. G., "and immediately there is a buzz as of a hornet's nest in our postbag. Not even the words 'God' or 'Christ' or 'soul' may pass without an excited zealot in some corner of the country or another thrusting forth his sting." The animus of such a remark is apparent. Mr. Bruce Glasier is irritated that Freethinkers are so lively, as doubtless many orthodox politicians have often felt irritated at the liveliness of Socialists; and so, like the orthodox politician, the Socialist editor abuses and indiscriminately calls names. For Mr. Bruce Glasier apparently makes no distinction between the Freethought criticism he would allow and that which he would condemn. He condemns it all. Some correspondent asked him "if he could name any Christian who has upheld loftier ideals of human progress or who has done more for the workers than did Charles Bradlaugh." Surely a very pertinent and proper question. Yet this is cited by Mr. Glasier as an example of Freethought "bigotry!" From a thousand Christian pulpits and in a hundred Christian journals we are told, day by day, that Christianity is the one touch-stone of moral character and the one guarantee of social progress. Yet when a Freethinker asks a Socialist editor the awkward question as to what better character can be found than that which was moulded by Secularism, the Socialist editor loses his temper. He goes on to speak of "the narrow and often arrogant attacks upon Socialism" made by Herbert Spencer, Huxley, Tyndall, and Bradlaugh. I will not here argue the specific point; as a matter of fact I personally hold that the Socialists, speaking generally, have got the right end of the political stick. But Mr. Bruce Glasier's idea seems to be that he is to have the right to call all and sundry "arrogant" and "narrow-minded," whilst if anyone questions the justice of the epithets, he is a bigot. Well, that is the historic pose of the dogmatist everywhere. But Socialism, if it means progress, will have to abandon it.

Of course, on the main question it must be allowed that there are such things as good taste and dignified silence. You are not called upon to raise a hub-bub in every private drawing-room you enter over such questions as Immortality and the Virgin Birth. Most of us get thick-skinned after a time, and when we find ourselves described every day by fifth-rate scribblers and clerics as wicked and corrupt men, full of dulness and despair, we do not grow pale with indignation. Freethinkers are prepared for a good deal of abuse, and, as a body, are the very last people who need to have the virtues of patience pressed on their attention. But when young and enthusiastic Freethinkers resent the slanders on their name and plunge into discussion in the public press they are absolutely within every rule of justice and taste. And if Socialist editors care for discussion they ought to have the courage of it. If they choose to describe men as "arrogant" or "narrow-minded" or selfishly hostile to working-class interests, they must not get into a rage when criticised. They may be right, or they may be wrong in any given case; Socialists are no more infallible than any other people. But the truth can only be reached by free discussion, and free discussion is prescribed by the ethics of Socialism, as I understand the matter, no less than by the principles of Freethought.

FREDERICK RYAN.

Ingersoll Triumphant.—II.

WE will now look into Dixon's statements. Numbers 1 and 2 are perfectly correct, though they are nothing to the purpose. Ingersoll *did* sign a petition against the Comstock laws, and we shall see presently what that petition was; and the petition *was* successfully opposed by Comstock. But statement number 3 is an absolute falsehood. Ingersoll *did not* claim that the United States Congress had no right to make laws prohibiting the dissemination of obscene literature. His speeches at the Cincinnati Convention are printed. They are included in the "Dresden Edition" of his works. And they prove the exact opposite of Dixon's allegation. Readers of my pamphlet, *Dr. Torrey and the Infidels*, know that Ingersoll defended the right of the State to make laws against obscene literature. He spoke only in favor of amending the existing law, so that it might not be used to stifle free discussion on religious and social questions. He spoke plainly and strongly against the total repeal of the law. The majority thought that the only way to put a stop to the misuse of the law was to abolish it altogether, and let obscene publications be dealt with by the ordinary law of the land. Ingersoll thought otherwise. He said that the law was a good one if enforced against really obscene books and pictures, which every honest man would recognise as such at a glance. He declared that if "total repeal" were carried he would have to leave the Liberal League. Total repeal *was* carried, and he *did* leave the League. He left it on the spot. Nothing could be more decisive. And nothing could more clearly show the falsehood of Dixon's assertion.

It is probable that Dixon had taken other people's statements about a hated "infidel" on trust—just as Dr. Torrey may have done. After a lapse of fourteen years (between 1879 and 1893) religious people were not likely to be very particular. The lie got started; it was passed on from mouth to mouth, from city to city, from State to State; and it got bolder (so to speak) as it went along, until it was publicly challenged, and then it was seen to be the infamous thing it was.

Practically the whole of Dixon's defence rests upon this absolutely false statement. Proving that to be a lie, proves his defence to be an utter absurdity. And we can well understand that Ingersoll may have been perfectly satisfied with having brought Dixon's principal "fact" to the light of publicity. He made Dixon show his hand, and there was nothing in it but a demonstrable falsehood.

Statement number four is true. Ingersoll *did* express sympathy with D. M. Bennett and his family. Ingersoll *did* try to get D. M. Bennett released from prison. And D. M. Bennett *was* imprisoned, technically, for "the dissemination of obscene literature." But he was struck at because he was a Freethinker, and the editor of an obnoxious Freethought journal called the *Truthseeker*; and the publication he was indicted and punished for was not obscene at all. Bennett's case was parallel to that of Charles Bradlaugh and Annie Besant, who were *technically* guilty, as he was, of publishing an obscene pamphlet, because a jury brought in a verdict of Guilty against them, and Lord Chief Justice Cockburn sentenced them to imprisonment. True, they did not go to prison, but that was because they upset the indictment on technical grounds. It was drawn up faultily, and thus the whole trial fell to the ground. But they were guilty of publishing obscenity as far as the jury's verdict could brand them with the crime. Everyone knows, however, that in such cases the verdict of another jury is of greater importance. The jury of public opinion has reversed many a verdict delivered in the formal and reactionary courts of law; and Christians, of all men should remember this, for their Founder was executed as a malefactor. At this time of day no one pretends that Charles Bradlaugh and Annie Besant were really guilty of "obscenity." Neither was D. M. Bennett. He was simply a victim to bigotry. The very pamphlet (it was on a profoundly important social question) for which he was imprisoned was afterwards declared *not* to be "obscene." Another man was indicted for publishing it, and another jury brought in a verdict of Not Guilty.

Nothing could be meaner, nothing could be more contemptible, than prosecuting the publishers of unpopular opinions for "obscenity." It is a cowardly appeal to popular prejudice and passion. A book is only "obscene" when its object is to excite lust; and such things are always as dear as they are worthless. A book which discusses marriage, or sexual problems, or the population question, is *not* obscene; and getting twelve ill-educated, thoughtless men in a jury-box to say that it is does not make it so. There cannot be an obscene *opinion*. The very idea is absurd. The obscenity must be in the *language* or the *treatment*. And this leads us back to our original definition. A writer is only obscene when his object is obviously to excite lust and promote depravity. But, here again, the words "lust" and "depravity" must be understood in their common signification. Words must not be turned and twisted by the hand of malice, under the eyes of bigotry, so as to manufacture what is called "constructive" crime. This is persecution masquerading as justice, and is one of the vilest crimes to which a court of law can lend its sanction.

What we have now to do is to go back to that petition for an amendment of the Comstock laws. Readers of my first pamphlet in defence of Paine and Ingersoll against Dr. Torrey's infamous libels will recollect that Ingersoll signed the petition for the *amendment* and not for the *repeal* of those laws. Fortunately the written pleadings by Ingersoll's attorney, Mr. R. H. Griffin, give extracts from the petition, in order to show the real object of the petitioners, and the astonishing folly of Dixon's argument. The petition set forth:—

"That the statutes aforesaid are capable of and are in fact being used for the purpose of moral and religious persecution; whereby the dearest and most precious rights of the people are being grievously violated under the forms of legal inquisition, fines, forfeitures and imprisonment."

The petitioners also say that:—

"They are convinced that all attempts of civil government, whether State or National, to enforce or to favor particular religions, social, moral or medical opinion, or schools of thought or practice, are not only unconstitutional, but ill-advised, contrary to the spirit and progress of our age, and almost certain in the end to defeat any beneficial objects intended. That mental, moral, and physical health and safety are better

secured and preserved by virtue resting upon liberty and knowledge than upon ignorance enforced by Governmental supervision."

Is this the language of disseminators of obscene literature—in the common and only honest sense of the words? Is it not the language of reformers, who may be right or wrong in the particular instance, but are indisputably seeking to promote the public good?

But let us see what was the special object of the petitioners—the practical purpose which their words and efforts led up to. Here it is in their own words:—

"Wherefore, your petitioners pray that the statutes aforesaid may be repealed or materially modified so that they cannot be used to abridge the freedom of the press or of conscience, or to destroy the liberty and equality of the people before the law and departments of the Government, on account of any religious, moral, political, medical or commercial grounds or pretexts whatsoever."

Such was their object, and it was a legitimate object, a worthy object. It was the object of Milton in writing his glorious *Areopagitica*. "Give me," he exclaimed, "the liberty to know, to utter, and to argue freely according to conscience, above all liberties." Yet the men who claim him as a great Christian poet trample upon his most cherished principles, and revile and persecute those who defend them.

With regard to Dixon, it was pointed out by Mr. Griffin, in the pleadings, that his premises had no connection with his conclusion. Put in its "concrete and logical form" Dixon's argument, he said, was as follows:—

"The plaintiff signed a petition to modify or repeal certain laws so that they could not be used to abridge the freedom of the press or conscience.

"Therefore, the plaintiff represented publishers of impure literature, and was paid to pollute the minds of the young of this generation."

"Is it possible," Mr. Griffin asked, "to conceive of a more perfect *non sequiter* than this?"

It should be remembered that Ingersoll was not *paid* in this matter. He was in no man's service. He was acting as a private citizen, like all the other seventy thousand petitioners. He was solicitous for the public welfare. Bearing this in mind, the reader will see the appositeness of the following illustration in Mr. Griffin's pleadings:—

"Suppose the plaintiff had made a speech against capital punishment. Suppose he had petitioned the legislature for the abolition of capital punishment. Does it necessarily follow that he was in the employ of murderers; that he was paid by murderers, or that he believed in murder?"

"Could such an inference be drawn when in the very speech or in the petition it was charged that capital punishment tended to increase crime?"

How, it may be asked, could Dixon hope to win an action in which he pleaded so illogically, and indeed so foolishly? The answer is simple. He relied upon the bigotry of the jury. This was disclosed in his written defence. He alleged that Ingersoll had for many years been making (for pay or otherwise) speeches and writing books and pamphlets attacking Christianity, blaspheming God, denying the inspiration of the Bible, and seeking to weaken the sanction and authority of the moral law. Here is the common orthodox assumption that the moral law rests upon Christianity, and that those who attack Christianity are immoral persons; and from "immoral" to "obscene" is only a step on the road of Christian Evidence. It is true that Ingersoll's opposition to Christianity was no sort of evidence that he was "*paid* to pollute the minds of the young of this generation." But bigotry, like jealousy, does not need evidence; it carries all it wants in that line, and never fails to lead an accusation up to a "Guilty."

Dixon had even the barefaced impudence to plead that Ingersoll had, in 1880, written a Preface to a book by Van Buren Denslow, LL.D., entitled *Thinkers*, and that "the natural and necessary effect" of this book was "to pollute the minds of the young of this generation." Not a single extract from the book was given in justification of this extraordinary

criticism. But extracts *were* given by Ingersoll's attorney, and they were before Judge Andrews, who pronounced upon them as follows:—

"Whatever else may be said of them, they are not obscene within any known definition of that word, and in my opinion would not be admitted in evidence upon the trial as tending to prove that the plaintiff has been the defender of the propagators of obscene literature."

Judge Andrews also ruled that Ingersoll's opposition to Christianity had nothing whatever to do with the libel before the court. He might have attacked Christianity, blasphemed God, and denied the inspiration of the Bible, and thereby "in the opinion of the defendant" (a most important qualification) sought to "weaken the sanctions and authority of the moral law"; but "I am at a loss (the judge said) to see how any or all of these facts prove or tend to prove that he has been a defender of the propagators of obscene literature."

Dixon then gave notice that he would offer in evidence all the matter set out in his second, third, and fourth defences by way of mitigation of damages. This in law means that the defendant admits the falsity of the libel, but had reason to believe it true through other facts that came to his knowledge, and upon which he had based his false opinion. He alleged that he had known young men whose characters had been injured by Ingersoll's teachings. He also alleged that Ingersoll had a bad character for vulgarity, indecency, profanity, immorality, obscenity, and general pollution. But all this appears to have been and but changes rung upon the old tune of Ingersoll's "infidelity." Judge Andrews said it would not be admissible in evidence upon the trial even in mitigation of damages. Nevertheless the defence could not be overruled at *that* stage "because matter pleaded in mitigation is not a subject of demurrer."

Our readers are now in possession of the facts. They will be able to judge for themselves between Ingersoll and Dixon. They will see that Dixon accused Ingersoll of being "*paid* to pollute the minds of the young of this generation." They will see that he was unable to adduce a scrap of evidence in support of this hideous charge. They will see that he could advance nothing but inferences, and that these inferences were grounded upon flagrant falsehoods, which were the very opposite of the truth. They will see that when he was brought to book he practically admitted that what he had said was libellous. They will see that he then sought to shirk his responsibility by a base appeal to popular bigotry—by arguing that if Ingersoll were not guilty of this particular offence, he was nevertheless a wicked blasphemer, of whom a minister of religion might be excused for believing anything, and who ought to find no friends among a Christian jury.

Ingersoll comes triumphantly out of this investigation. It is Dixon who is covered with shame and confusion.

And now a final word for Dr. Torrey. This man said that he had written to America for particulars of this case, and that he would not publish them although they were so "damaging" to Ingersoll. If he has a spark of honor left in him he should answer the following questions. To whom did he write for those details? Who supplied him with them? Were they supplied in a letter or in a printed record? And what were they? These questions should be answered. Dr. Torrey owes it to himself, to truth, and to common decency, that this matter should be cleared up. For look at the alternative before him. Either he received those "damaging" details from some lying bigot in America, and was misled by them—in which case he is bound to make an ample apology; or he did not receive them, but invented them, and is thus a liar of the deepest dye, who deserves to be banished from human society until he honestly comes to the point of repentance and atonement. One or the other of these alternatives is inevitable. Which does the American revivalist accept? Will he choose to be considered a dupe or a villain? He has the choice to-day. It will be too late to-morrow.

G. W. FOOTE.

What Christianity Owes to Civilisation.

(Continued from p. 404.)

Closely associated with the change of opinion brought about by the development of astronomy, were the changes induced by the world's growing geographical knowledge. For generations the countries outside Europe and certain portions of Africa and Asia were practically unknown. Such stories as existed concerning them—one could scarcely call it knowledge—exhibited the people in such a strange and non-human light that they seemed as a race apart. Maxim Gorky makes one of his Russian peasants doubt the existence of Slavs because such a race is not mentioned in the Bible. The mental state connoted by such a doubt is not a bad type of the state of mind current before the voyages of Magellan and his successors. The sixteenth century saw the displacement of the fantastical romances that passed for books of travel by more serious and trustworthy works, and nations that had seemed of different clay were brought, so to speak, to our doors. These people were seem to differ in no material respect from ourselves. They had their own customs, their own culture, and, above all, their own religion, and had not heard, nor desired to hear, of Christianity. The opponents of Christianity were not long in using the new weapon placed within their hands. Right through the eighteenth century, or even earlier, the Christians are met with the taunt that the existence of these millions, hitherto unknown to Christendom, with religions that were believed in as firmly as was Christianity, and supported by arguments identical in strength and character, could not be squared with Christian teaching or tradition. The world was, in fact, growing too large and too complex for the Christian theory to fit, and once again the same "corruption" of Christian teaching ensued. In spite of itself Christianity was compelled to become broader, more tolerant, more cosmopolitan. These new religions could not be ignored, nor could they be explained out of existence. Some place had to be found for them in the general scheme of things, and this could only be done by a science of comparative religions which, while promising a temporary relief, was destined to place *all* religions upon exactly the same level of ignorance, credulity, speculation, and duplicity.

The modifications of Christian belief effected by astronomical and geographical discoveries were, however, only part of a general development of scientific thought, the consequences of which were as general and as comprehensive as the causes of which they were the expression. Definite results of the Copernician astronomy, the physical and astronomical researches of Galileo, and the carrying forward by Newton of the principle of terrestrial gravitation until it included the motions of all matter, are not difficult to find. But the far-reaching results of these researches on religious beliefs are not always adequately realised. Yet these results were striking; the more so, perhaps, because the process was very largely an unconscious one. The vast majority of those who gave up their beliefs, or whose belief underwent various modifications, would have found it difficult, if not impossible, to indicate the causes of their change of attitude. It may, indeed, be safely asserted that the decay of such widespread beliefs as miracles, special providence, witchcraft, and the like, has been brought about, not so much by argument, as by the creation of an intellectual atmosphere to which such beliefs are radically unsuited. And though arguments may be carefully and elaborately stated against religious beliefs, these, again, depend for their success upon the same thing. Even if essays such as those of Hume could have been written in the tenth century they would have met with little or no success. This could only be achieved when conditions had been sufficiently modified, and an atmosphere created of such a nature

as to render them more or less acceptable to numbers of people. In fact, the success of any argument depends upon its putting into exact language what is being *felt* in society at large. In this way scientific development, by spreading abroad the conception of natural law, and by eliminating the supernatural from explanations of natural phenomena, weakened the power of religious beliefs, and so brought about a state of mind with which the surrender of religious belief was a mere matter of time.

Voltaire's criticism of the story of the saint who walked one hundred steps with his head under his arm was that he could believe ninety-nine of the steps; it was the first one that offered all the difficulty. And in the giving up of religious belief it is the first step that is the most difficult. All the others follow as a matter of course. One can note that in each case where the pressure of advancing knowledge has been brought to bear upon specific Christian doctrines the defence has covered a successively shortening period. This is clearly seen if we compare the length of the struggle against the Copernician theory with that against the doctrine of uniformity in geology, and development in biology. So far as the last is concerned, a single generation saw the commencement (for it was practically a commencement, although mooted before Darwin) and the conclusion of the contest. Copernicus died bequeathing to the world a work that he had not dared to publish during his lifetime. Charles Darwin was able to publish his work, and to see its conclusion accepted and applied to the human species within a very few years. Slow as the Christian Churches are to learn, the centuries of conflict had taught them something, and they recognised that the struggle against evolution was hopeless. At most they could only stave off defeat for a few years, and when the triumph of science came it was the more impressive because of the struggle and the delay.

The position was simple but comprehensive. All along the line the conception of natural law had triumphed. Slowly but surely science had built up a conception of the universe that left no room for miracles; no room for a special providence; nothing for a deity to do, even though one assumed his existence—no place, in brief, for the supernatural. It was this position Christianity had to face; and it replied with the usual policy of evasion and reinterpretation. God, it was said, worked, not by special interposition, but through natural law. Evolution was the method of the divine operation; and, as usual, the Bible upheld evolution—read in the proper light. The facts could no longer be made to square with Christianity, and so Christianity had to be squared with the facts. Once again the forces of civilisation were triumphant, and Christianity was compelled, despite its resistance, to recognise, and even to teach, principles that were subversive of the whole religious structure.

The Churches, however, overlooked, or ignored, one very awkward fact. This is that while apologies from platform or press may *sound* well enough to lull anxiety, there is a certain logic of facts that will work itself out. A God who works *through* natural law is good enough for the study; but what of the market-place? Here the average person is apt to think that if God never works apart from natural law, if natural law is the same to all alike, and if, finally, individuals and nations depend for their well being upon a knowledge and control of natural forces, then a belief in God is, at best, an intellectual luxury, and at worst a sad and serious waste of human energy. It is not as a pure speculation that men began to believe in deity, but because they fancy they saw him, or them, in vital relationship with facts, and without whom the facts would have a totally different complexion. It is because they believe a God did immediately control natural forces, that he regulated them to reward or punish human beings, and that their prayers were something more than a mere act of self-communion, or a species of self-induced hypnotism, that they believed in religious formulas. And when this basis is destroyed religious

beliefs inevitably weaken. Necessarily the process of disintegration takes time, primarily because their elaboration has also been a matter of time. But the process is certain, none the less.

The influence of progressive forces on Christianity does not cease with the intellectual aspect of religious beliefs. It extends to their social and ethical aspects, where the modifications are quite as drastic and as important. In the later stages of belief, more important, for the reason that when religion can no longer claim support on intellectual grounds, it does so on account of presumed ethical and social utility. And here again, examination will show that just so far as Christianity presents features that are attractive to the modern mind, it is because civilisation has compelled it to drop its earlier teachings, and inculcate others that are in greater conformity with contemporary thought and feeling.

(To be concluded.) C. COHEN.

Christianity In the First Three Centuries.

It is the contention of most apologists that Christianity is a *revealed* religion and, as such, absolutely perfect. It is to be found, in its integrity, in the New Testament, and consequently it cannot be subject to any development. In the Church there has been development, it is true, but it has been purely the development of the science of *interpretation*. The Church's one business is to discover, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, what Bible Christianity is. All its doctrines are in the Book, and by now the Church has, after long and patient digging, found most of them. In the early centuries the great doctrines of the Person of Christ, the Incarnation, and the Trinity were discovered. But the most important of all the doctrines, that of Justification by Faith, though so clearly taught by Paul, did not dawn upon the Church until Martin Luther arose and *saw* it lying full-sized in the Bible.

When this absolutely perfect religion was super-naturally revealed, the world was intellectually and morally at its lowest ebb. The mission of Christianity was to redeem such a dilapidated, decadent, and corrupt world. All other religions were false, and had no right to exist. Christianity came to abolish them.

Such has always been the position maintained by the orthodox Church. Freethought, however, has always maintained an entirely different and antagonistic position. It has always held and still holds that Christianity was not revealed from heaven, and is anything but a perfect religion. Freethinkers believe and teach that the Bible is a purely human and fallible book, and that Christianity is a purely human and fallible religion. What infinite abuse has been heaped upon their poor heads for daring to challenge the great doctors of the Church! How they have been jeered at as ignorant and impertinent and wicked, and how their arguments have been dismissed as utterly unworthy of a moment's serious notice! At Councils, and Congresses, and Assemblies without number they have been held up to scornful ridicule, and denounced as deadly enemies to God and man.

Now, the mission of Freethought is to enthrone reason and bring all other mental faculties into subjection to it. What Secularists seek for is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth about every subject. Truth is their supreme interest. Their only reason for attacking supernatural religion is their firm conviction, based upon the result of most careful inquiries, that it is not true, that its claims are irrational, and that its effect upon character is injurious. Because of this conviction, they feel it to be their solemn duty to do their utmost to destroy men's belief in supernatural beings and forces, and to advocate the paramount claims of the natural. They frankly admit that Christianity has appropriated several ethical truths of great value,

and these they ardently cherish; but they are convinced that these do not constitute the essence of the Faith. The essence of Christianity is to be found in this declaration: "God so loved the world that He gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life." This declaration is the grand centre round which all the fundamental Christian doctrines are made to turn.

My present, object, however, is not so much to define the position taken up by Freethought as to call attention to the most significant fact that the cause of Freethought now finds some of its most valiant champions within the Christian Church itself. There is a growing tendency among theologians to eliminate, as far as possible, the supernatural element from the Christian Religion. In the Church of England there are high-placed clergymen not a few who have practically renounced the miraculous, even the Virgin Birth and Resurrection of Christ; and in all the Churches, even the most orthodox, there are a few thinkers who treat Christianity quite as critically as they do Buddhism or Mithraism. One of the chief among these is Dr. Adolf Harnack, Professor of Church History in the University of Berlin, and Member of the Royal Prussian Academy. His great work is a *History of Dogma*, and he has just published in two large volumes, "a monograph devoted to the mission and spread of the Christian Religion during the first three centuries of our era." This work will be invaluable to Freethought writers and lecturers. It is the production of a thorough scholar. I can only indicate a few of its main points.

Dr. Harnack has much to say in praise of Paganism. Many apologists cannot find words strong enough to denounce it. But Dr. Harnack holds that Paganism, when it became Greek and Roman, accomplished much genuine good. The following would startle orthodox people: "As Uhlhorn remarks very truly," he says:—

"In the Roman Empire there had already appeared a universalism foreign to the ancient world. Nationalism had been effaced. The idea of universal humanity had disengaged itself from that of nationality. The Stoics had passed the word that all men were equal, and had spoken of brotherhood as well as of the duties of man towards man. Hitherto despised, the lower classes had asserted their position. The treatment of slaves became milder. If Cato had compared them to cattle, Pliny sees in them his 'serving friends.' The position of the artisan improved, and freedmen worked their way up, for the guilds provided them not simply with a centre of social life, but also with the means of bettering their social condition. Women, hitherto without any legal rights, received such in increasing numbers. Children were looked after. The distribution of grain, originally a political institution and nothing more, became a sort of poor-relief system, and we meet with a growing number of generous deeds, gifts, and endowments, which already exhibit a more humane spirit."

Those fine remarks by Uhlhorn come to us with Harnack's unqualified endorsement. Under the Empire, in its best days, slaves, women, and children profited enormously. It is therefore false to assert that these owe their freedom, rights, and protection alone to the benign influence of Christianity. Uhlhorn is bold enough to fling this statement in the teeth of the orthodox, and Harnack quotes it with approval: "Had the stream of new life issuing from Christ encountered ancient life when the latter was still unbroken, it would have recoiled impotent from the shock." That is not a high compliment to pay to a supernatural religion endowed with omnipotent might.

Christian Evidence lecturers become terribly angry when Freethinkers assert that Christianity has ever been distinguished for its borrowing and adapting qualities. But according to Harnack all religions have always been notorious borrowers. He tells us that so far as we are in a position to trace back the history of the nations lying between Egypt and the Euphrates, the Tigris, or Persia, "their religions

were, like themselves, exposed to constant interchange, whilst their religious theories were a matter of give and take." Then he assures us that "as soon as Christianity itself began to be reflective, it took an interest in this 'syncretism' (blending, amalgamating), borrowing ideas from it, and using them, in fact, to promote its own development. Christianity was not originally syncretistic itself, for Jesus Christ did not belong to this circle of ideas, and it was his disciples who were responsible for the primitive shaping of Christianity. But whenever Christianity came to form late ideas of God, Jesus, sin, redemption, and life, it drew upon the materials acquired in the general process of religious evolution, availing itself of all the forms which these had taken." Again: "Unconsciously it learned and borrowed from many quarters: indeed it would be impossible to imagine it existing amid all the wealth and vigor of these religions (of the Roman Empire) had it not drawn pith and flavor even from them. These religions fertilised the ground for it, and the new grain and seed which fell upon that soil sent down its roots and grew to be a mighty tree."

Another fact that stands out prominently in Harnack's *Expansion of Christianity* is that the primitive Christians were intensely self-conscious and conceited. They regarded themselves as unspeakably superior to all others. "We Christians are the third race," was one of their blunt expressions in describing themselves. They stood alone as God's chosen people, as a new nation, as a holy priesthood. "We only seem to be the younger People," they said; "from the beginning we have been latent, ever in existence, previous to any other people; we are the original people of God." Their convictions were as follows:—

"1, Our people is older than the world; 2, the world was created for our sakes; 3, the world is carried on for our sakes; we retard the judgment of the world; 4, everything in the world is subject to us and must serve us; 5, everything in the world, the beginning and course and end of all history, is revealed to us and lies transparent to our eyes; 6, we shall take part in the judgment of the world and ourselves enjoy eternal bliss."

Such nauseating pretensions "find expression in sermons, apocalypses, epistles, and apologies" from before the middle of the second century, and we are not surprised to learn that "nowhere else did Celsus vent his fierce disdain of Christians and their shameless, absurd pretensions, with such keenness as upon this point."

Such downright egotism is simply intolerable. It betokens littleness of mind and narrowness of outlook, and it cannot possibly co-exist with a strong, rich, and well-rounded character.

Harnack is himself a Christian, but he is by no means blind to the weaknesses and follies and delusions from which primitive Christians suffered so much. He shows them all up with heroic impartiality. We learn from Origen that early in the third century the Christian churches, together with their bishops and clergy were not morally what they ought to have been. Now, when did the Gospel win Europe? Was it in the second century, when Christians were morally at their highest but few in number, or was it in the third century, when their morals were on the down grade and their numbers increasing?

Organised Christianity prospered in the Roman Empire, not because it was of God, but because it had such a genius for adaptation. It was a ship well manned which could set its sails to all the winds that blew. Think of Gregory Thaumaturgus, Bishop of Neo-Caesarea in Pontus, and his marvellous gift for accommodating himself to the Pagan tendencies of his converts. It was his diocese that contained only seventeen Christians when he entered it, and that at the close of his episcopate of thirty years, according to Gregory of Nyssa, who wrote his *Life and Panegyric*, held only as many non-Christians. It was his reputed miracles and skilful management that accounted for his amazing success. Converts

multiplied because they were bewitched, not by Christ, but by the preachers of his alleged gospel, not by the power of the Holy Spirit, but by the magnetic eloquence, intoxicating rhetoric, or priestly pretensions of mere men. This is obvious from the fact that the Gospel triumphed least when it was most pure, and prospered most when it had riches, and earthly power, and a splendid organisation at its back.

J. T. LLOYD.

Help for a Veteran.

THERE are four vice-presidents of the National Secular Society living at Birmingham. The oldest of these is Mr. J. H. Ridgway, who is a good deal past the Psalmist's three score years and ten. Mr. Ridgway has been a hard worker all his life, and if this were a civilised country he would be enjoying an Old Age Pension to soften the last stage of his pathway to the great resting-place. As it is he is practically helpless. He has labored at his trade until he can do so no longer; and he who has always been kind and loyal to others is now dependent on their recognition and good-will. But this is not all. Mr. Ridgway has not only been a hard worker, he has been a hard fighter. All the leisure of his life, and more of the means than he could really afford, have been devoted to the cause of liberty and progress; and if he gave most of his leisure and means to Freethought, it was because he had the chivalrous nature that prompts a man to fight for what is most necessary and most unfriended. When I visited Birmingham I was always glad to see Mr. Ridgway walk up and shake hands. He stood upright and he looked upright. His tall figure was surmounted by a head and face somewhat suggestive of Bradlaugh's. You could see he was a born fighter of the best type; strong, bold, and brave, with a great tenderness nestling in his heart of hearts. Certainly there are men in the Freethought party ahead of him in what is (sometimes facetiously) called "education," but there is no more sterling and stalwart Freethinker. He had been in nature's college all his days, and could give lessons to some who fancied themselves his superiors. For my part, I have been proud to call him friend; and I say deliberately that the thought of a few men like Mr. Ridgway scattered over England, and the knowledge that they were with me, has been a powerful stimulus to me in some hours that might else have been fraught with the heaviest discouragement.

My readers will understand why I print, with mingled pain and pleasure, the following letter that I have received from Birmingham:—

HELP FOR A VETERAN.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—The members of the Birmingham Branch of the N. S. S. beg to ask you to kindly allow an appeal to be made through the columns of the *Freethinker* on behalf of our old and esteemed member, Mr. J. H. Ridgway.

In his great age, 79, he is little able to do anything and is much in need of support.

He has rendered valuable services in the past among the advanced movements of his time, which should entitle him to generous consideration.

He not only worked hard, but gave the best of his means, first among the Chartists and later in the Freethought ranks, especially during the late Mr. C. Bradlaugh's parliamentary struggle and with the Birmingham Branch in its vicissitude; notably its contests with the late School Boards when the Branch was fighting for the use of the schools.

An opportunity will be afforded by this appeal to show him that his work has not gone unrecognised by those who know him personally and also those who admire a courageous and dauntless spirit.

Trusting this application will gain your favorable consideration.

JAS. PARTRIDGE

(Hon. Sec. Birmingham Branch N. S. S.).

I sincerely hope that this appeal will be generously responded to. I am a poor man myself, but I shall

count it both a duty and an honor to contribute my own subscription. Those who are moved to "do ditto" can send their contributions to me, if they choose; but it would be better to send them direct to Mr. Partridge, at 183 Vauxhall-road, Birmingham. Every subscription, by whomsoever received, will be acknowledged in the *Freethinker*. And now let us all make an effort to cheer the last days of a grand old veteran.

G. W. FOOTE.

Acid Drops.

Yes, the Japs will certainly have to send missionaries over here. They have such a lot to teach us. Take the following, for instance. The management of the Alhambra Theatre, in London, offered a special benefit performance for the Japanese Soldiers' and Sailors' Widows and Families Fund; but the Japanese found themselves unable to accept the offer unless it could be extended to the Russian sufferers also. Such is the high-mindedness of the "yellow monkeys," as the Russians called them until it was *too* ridiculous.

The North Wales Calvinistic Methodists (what a mouthful!) have been expressing their abhorrence of Mr. Balfour's "Sunday golf." They are "greatly pained" by the news that the Prime Minister of a Christian country like this should presume to indulge in such a wicked pastime on Sunday afternoon, and still more by learning that King Edward has "given countenance thereto." They declare that the religious sentiments of the best subjects of the realm have been deeply wounded by this action. By "best subjects" they mean their own noble selves and those who think with them. Sad, is it not? But what is to be done? Mr. Balfour won't listen to the Welsh Calvinists, and King Edward will probably consult his own wishes instead of theirs. The only way seems to be this. Let the Welsh Calvinists appoint the Prime Minister, and make Evan Roberts king of Great Britain and Ireland. Then it will be *all* right. And there will be no more Sunday golf.

A Birmingham firm advertises "Individual Communion Cups," which are stated to combine purity and conformity to early Church usage. There are lists to be had "suitable for large or small churches." Is this a mistake for large or small drinks?

Rev. R. J. Campbell's place at the City Temple during August will be taken by Dr. Gunsaulus of Chicago. What has Dr. Torrey done? He comes from Chicago too. Couldn't they have given him a look in? Perhaps they were afraid that he would bring trouble upon them with his "converted infidels." These people are so numerous that if they all came to hear him they would crowd out the regular seatholders.

How they love one another! Mr. H. R. Mansfield, M.P., belongs to the Chapel party. And what does he say of the Church party? "The Church," he says, "has one suggestion—give the children drink and dogma." What a blessed thing is Christian charity!

Talking of "dogma"—what does Mr. Mansfield call the doctrines of the Church—whatever it is—that he belongs to? As a matter of fact, *all* religious doctrines are *dogmas*. The doctrines of Nonconformity no more rest on reason than do the doctrines of Anglicanism. All of them rest on *faith*—that is, on *authority*. And, after all, if you have one dogma you have no right to ridicule or denounce a man who has twenty. As the French say, it is only the first step that costs. It is like the unit in front of a lot of noughts. The Protestant is really as irrational as the Catholic, and the Free Churchman as the member of the Church of England. Straining at gnats is absurd after swallowing camels. The believer who has swallowed the Trinity is very fastidious to scruple at anything else.

Dr. Clifford has been addressing Free Churchmen at Lowestoft. He had a "rousing reception" and seems to have delivered a rousing speech; at any rate, it was wildly applauded. He flattered his hearers by telling them, as if he had just heard it from heaven, that "the Free Churches of this country had got to save the Christianity of their day." This may be true. We don't think it is—but it *may* be. What we should like to know is this. Is the Christianity of the day *worth* saving? As the gentleman in the play says, we pause for a reply.

Dr. Clifford went on to say that Free Churchmen (bless them!) meant to have Christ supreme. This very good on their part, and we hope Christ is duly grateful. But when Dr. Clifford proceeded to say that "the soul must be free from the tyranny of the priest," he simply invited the retort that he is a priest himself. What is the essential difference between a Nonconformist minister, a Church parson, and a Catholic priest? We wish Dr. Clifford would tell us—if he can. It seems to us that they are all in the Kingdom-Come business, and that how they are appointed or elected is a mere accident.

Being in the same business as Church parsons and Catholic priests, Dr. Clifford is willing to pursue the same methods as far as they are feasible and profitable. For instance, he is quite willing to turn Church of Englandism out of the state schools and put Nonconformism in its place. He is just as ready as his religious rivals to take advantage of the helplessness of little children and stuff them with his own religious ideas—for the sake of his own religious prosperity. Is not this priestcraft? We think it is. Dr. Clifford flourishing his Bible on the school-room floor, is as much a priest as the Bishop of London flourishing his Catechism.

We tender our respectful sympathy to Dr. Alfred Salter, a member of the Bermondsey Borough Council, who has gone to prison for the fourth time as a Passive Resister. It was only a two days' imprisonment he had to suffer, and if he were "taken" one evening we believe he would be liberated the next morning. But it must be remembered that every hour has sixty minutes and every minute sixty seconds. By thinking of it in this way we shall be able to form a faint idea of Dr. Salter's martyrdom.

The Bishop of Norwich is "perfectly persuaded that the Athanasian Creed is, in its present position, a stumbling-block to many a devout worshiper." He believes it himself (of course!) and admires it immensely, but he doesn't want it to stand in the way of the Church. He proposes, therefore, that "its use be limited to diocesan conferences and Church Congresses." In other words, he is against killing it in public, but suggests a private asphyxiation. Well, for our part, we should say, "Stand not upon the order of going; but go."

According to *Lloyd's* the new "Ruler of Pilots," Mr. Thomas Rhodes, of Gravesend, is "a thoroughly practical man. In his early days he was twice shipwrecked." This seems an odd testimonial. But we suppose it is all right in a Christian country, where men who have been morally "shipwrecked" in their "early days" are considered the most fitted to "save" their fellow-men afterwards.

The Liverpool *Weekly Mercury* prints some editorial nonsense about the Secularists having the use of great public buildings like the Picton Hall, where a splendid Freethought demonstration took place on Whit-Sunday, in connection with the National Secular Society's Annual Conference. Our contemporary admits that Secularists are ratepayers, just as Christians are; but it reminds them that Christians are in the majority, and argues that the majority have the right to exclude the minority from any of the privileges of citizenship. But this is simply to make right and might synonymous—which would justify any infamy. If power—that is, number—is to decide such questions, it follows that Christians have a right to exclude Atheists from the public thoroughfares. If our contemporary does not see this, it may not be exactly blind, but it is certainly one-eyed.

Atheists, the *Mercury* says, no doubt consider that they are right, and their opponents wrong; but most people (which, by the way, is really open to question) regard Atheism as the negation of all the cherished hopes of themselves and their children, which alone make life worth living, and therefore the Atheists "must recognise the existence of the preponderating opposition, and bow to circumstances." Now this argument, if we ought to call it so, assumes that the Christians are compelled to attend Secular meetings. They are *not* compelled. They can stay away if they like, and keep their children away too; and thus keep those "cherished hopes" intact. Why should they interfere with others who choose to go to such meetings? In other words, why should they claim the right to keep their neighbors' "cherished hopes" in lavender as well as their own?

We venture to offer the *Mercury* another word of criticism. It must not imagine that Secularists are fond of "bowing to circumstances"—especially when this is a convenient

phrase for orthodox bigotry. Secularists are stronger as a body than they used to be, and it must not be expected that they will take Christian insults and persecution lying down. They mean to assert themselves, to fight for their rights, and to resort to all legitimate means to obtain them. We commend this to the *Mercury's* attention. It is just as well to be wise in time.

Evan Roberts made several converts at a recent meeting, and one of them was an old lady of eighty-nine. She is saved now. But it was a very narrow squeak. How lucky it was that she came across Evan Roberts!

From a purely human and secular point of view there is something almost disgusting in young fellows "saving" ladies old enough to be their great grandmothers.

At another Evan Roberts meeting the news was circulated that a very recent convert had been killed on the railway. Immediately the Welsh people groaned and wept and cried to God for mercy. And this is religion! And it is religion that elevates mankind!

This is the twentieth century. And this is a country that boasts of its civilisation. Yet a daily paper comes out with headlines like these: "Weird Revival Scenes.—Thousands of People Wailing and Shrieking for Mercy." And press and pulpit alike speak of the Welsh Revival as one of the most encouraging features of the age.

It was at one of Evan Roberts's open-air mission meetings at Holyhead. Between 10,000 and 12,000 people were present. For three hours there was no particular manifestation of feeling; in fact it was a fizzle. Evidently something had to be done to rouse the meeting, and Evan Roberts was equal to the occasion. Suddenly he jumped up, and uttered some half-coherent words, and then broke out into loud weeping and wailing. "O Lord," he cried, "bend these people." The result was as follows:—

"The effect upon the gathering was electrical. A wave of emotion swept over the throng, thousands wailing and shrieking aloud for mercy. At least three or four thousand people were loudly praying at the same time. Tears were pouring down the cheeks of many.

"Suddenly Evan Roberts underwent terrible convulsions, and fell full length on the rostrum, weeping bitterly, and crying out in agonised tones, 'Bend them, bend them, Lord.'

"Those who have followed these services for months say that nothing like such a scene has been witnessed before. Men rolled on the ground and women fainted."

Presently the Welsh revivalist jumped up, laughing and shouting, and crying that the victory was won. The people leapt to their feet, frantically waving their arms, and shouting "Glory hallelujah; the victory is won." Then the crowd sang, shouted, and cheered, while Evan Roberts laughed and laughed, and cried "The devil is conquered. See him fleeing." After which, the report says, large numbers of converts came forward.

Such a scene is worthy of Bedlam. Evan Roberts seems a lunatic, with a good deal of method in his madness. His advantage is that he practises on a lot of other lunatics, with no method in their madness at all.

One of the Welsh revival "converts" is a shoemaker by trade, and since he found Christ under the pleadings of Evan Roberts he has been selling the revival edition of the *Evening Express*. He is now under treatment at Bridgend Asylum. Wearing only his trousers and shoes, he stood in the streets shouting, "I am Jesus Christ with a crown of thorns." Nobody believed him. Perhaps he had too much clothes on. Perhaps he had too little.

The *Liverpool Echo* of June 19 contained a curious advertisement amongst those "too late for classification." It was a pious talk about trying "poor lovely Jesus" as "the finest, the surest, and the most efficacious and lasting cure for all illnesses, ailments, and diseases of the human system." We wonder if he is good for bald heads. His *pater* seems to be, if we may believe Pastor Richard Howton, of Bathrapha Home of Rest, Glossop. This gentleman gives a remarkable case of "Faith Healing." He anointed and prayed over a Salford man whose skull-thatching was worn away. A few days afterwards it began to grow again, but, alas, the color was white as snow. Further prayers to God, however, turned it to a beautiful brown. Evidently the Lord is the best hair-restorer. Mr. G. R. Sims and "Tatcho" take a back seat.

We understand now what the little Jew boys meant when they told bald-headed Elisha to "go up." It was to get proper treatment for his distressing nudity. They simply anticipated Pastor Howton.

Sir Oliver Lodge has been telling a Men's Class meeting at Aston the secret of the power and success of Christianity. "He believed," according to the *Daily Mail*, "the most essential element in Christianity was its conception of a human God." Probably this is truer than he realises. Martin Luther said that "without Christ there is no God," and that he knew no God except the one that "sat on Mary's knees and sucked at her breast." Sir Oliver Lodge would not talk in that way, but we believe he means the same thing at bottom. The multitude have been caught by the fairy-tale of Jesus Christ, and particularly by the pathos of his arrest, trial, and execution. The human, suffering God has appealed to suffering humanity—and kept it in its suffering. That is the other side of the picture.

It is easy enough for Sir Oliver Lodge to talk of "a God who loves, and can understand, can sympathise, and can suffer, and can feel the extremity of human anguish." But is there the slightest evidence of the existence of such a God? If there be a God who is aware of human anguish, and feels for the sufferers, why does he not come forward to alleviate and assist? The fact that he *does* nothing scatters Sir Oliver Lodge's dream to the four winds.

Rev. C. F. Askew, of St. Mary's Church, Laisterdyke, has received a number of reasons from his parishioners "why they don't go to church." One man says "We want more fat pigs and less fat parsons." This answerer knows what he is talking about. No wonder the man of God feels waxy.

The parish of Southwick, Sunderland, is agitated over the Rector's ritualistic practices, and the Vestry, by 14 votes to 11, has protested against the angels, the candlesticks, the flower-vases, and the cross. According to one vestryman, the Rev. T. Shortt was driving people into infidelity. We are glad to hear it. More power to him!

The wretched creature Auguste Gaillard, who murdered Miss Henrietta Carey, at Neuilly, by strangling her in a field, for the sake of her small belongings, had religion enough to exclaim "God forgive me." Whatever else he is, he is not an Atheist. For which we are thankful.

Italian Catholics have long been prohibited from taking part in political elections. But a change has come over the scene. The Pope has ordered his sheep to get ready for the next elections. This is described by one English paper as epoch-marking. But the only epoch-marking thing about the Papacy will be its end. And that is coming.

The miraculous origin of life has been championed by the clergy for ever so many years. They said that it gave the death-blow to Atheism and Materialism. But now Mr. J. B. Burke, who thinks he has discovered "spontaneous generation," says that it will only confirm the truth of Biblical teaching. Thus the Christians have you any way. It is heads they win, and tails you lose.

The Bishop of Bristol considers that clerical stipends are ridiculously small. What about those that are disgracefully large? A preacher of "Blessed be ye poor" with four, five, ten, or even fifteen thousand a year, is, from a moral point of view, the ghastliest spectacle on this planet.

Thirty thousand people witnessed the launch of the new battleship *Hibernia* at Devonport Dockyard. Devotional preliminaries were conducted by the Rev. J. C. Stebbing, the Dockyard chaplain, and hymns were sung by the Dockyard choir. We suppose this was meant to draw the Almighty's attention to what was going on. Then the battleship was christened by Lady Ormonde with a bottle of Irish whisky. Who can doubt after this that England is a Christian country?

The inventor of pins did a thousand times more good than all the popes and cardinals, the bishops and priests—than all the clergymen and parsons, exhorters and theologians that ever lived.

The inventor of matches did more for the comfort and convenience of mankind than all the founders of religion and the makers of all creeds—than all malicious monks and selfish saints.—*Ingersoll*.

Mr. Foote's Lecturing Engagements.

(Suspended during the Summer.)

To Correspondents.

C. COHEN'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—Address, 241 High-road, Leyton, Essex.—July 2, Dalston; 9, a. and e., Victoria Park; 16, m., Camberwell, a., Brockwell Park; 23, a. and e., Victoria Park.

OUR ANTI-TORREY MISSION FUND.—Previously acknowledged:—£138 3s. 3d. Received this week:—R. L. Coleman 3s. 6d., W. Vile 2s., Mrs. Whatcott 2s., J. A. Rudham 2s. 6d., Elizabeth Williams 2s. 6d., Scottie 1s., R. Downie 5s., Mount Ash Branch (collection) 7s. 6d.

W. TAVERNER.—The best single volume Shelley (we refer only to the poems) is the new "Oxford" edition, but it is rather expensive, being published at 8s. The cheapest collection of Shelley's prose is the two volume edition, edited by Shepherd, price 7s. There is a cheap selection in the Scott Library at 1s. 6d. The best pocket selection of Shelley's poems is the volume published by Dent & Co. in the "Temple Classics." The old pocket selection published by Moxon has long been out of print. It was admirable both as to contents and form. We have a copy which has been with us on many a journey and is many a ramble. The Leopardi volume you inquire about is to be published by Routledge and edited by Bertram Dobell. We understand that it will be ready soon, but we cannot say exactly when, nor what will be the price. According to our early announcement it was to be included in the shilling "Universal Library."

T. L. (Bootle).—We cannot make out your name. But thanks for the cutting, and see paragraph.

F. DEANE.—Will you kindly send me your present address, as we wish to communicate with you?

W. WAYMARK.—That is the idea some people have. They fancy that drawing people away from one Freethought meeting to another, or from one Freethought society to another, is progress. But there is no need to worry. All things find their level in time.

Lux.—Pleased to hear from you. We remember most of the old Bristol "saints" you refer to.

A. H. FEAR.—Glad to know you have such a high opinion of the *Freethinker*, though we should blush to print your compliments in detail. You would find Green's *History of England* useful. A history of Europe would be too large a subject. You would have to read it up in sections. George Henry Lewes's is the best *History of Philosophy* from a Secular standpoint, but it is expensive. Write again if you wish further information.

Mrs. WILLIAMS, 143 Cardiff-road, Aberaman, supplies the *Freethinker* and other Secular literature. Local "saints" please note.

F. CALVERT.—We are obliged, but we prefer to deal with Dr. Torrey from our own special standpoint.

R. AXELLEY.—Shall be forwarded. Thanks.

J. PARTRIDGE, the Birmingham Branch secretary, has removed from 65 Cato-street to 183 Vauxhall-road. Those concerned will please note. We are very glad to hear that Mr. Partridge is quite well again.

W. VILE.—We note your feeling that subscribing to the Anti-Torrey Fund is like spending money on good rat poison. The biological question you ask is treated in Darwin's *Descent of Man*. The sexual characteristics of one sex are (through heredity) reproduced in a modified form in the other. Read the book for yourself.

J. BRIDGER.—Thanks for your letter and good wishes. We hope to fight for Freethought many a day yet. Glad you are resting now at Brighton.

W. P. BALL.—Your cuttings are always very welcome.

G. GARRETT.—See paragraph. Thanks.

H. J. CATTELL.—We find it amusing. The reverend gentleman is a wonderful authority on "heart." We have never exchanged a word with him off the platform, and that was many years ago; so you see how profound and intimate is his acquaintance with us. Glad to hear from you as a recent reader.

J. KNOWLES.—All you have to do is to write to the headmaster or headmistress of the school saying that you desire your child withdrawn from religious instruction. The law gives you this right. If you find any difficulty let us know.

ELIZABETH WILLIAMS.—Glad to hear that you "read and enjoy the *Freethinker* every week." We wish we had more lady readers.

H. GAGE.—Torrey pamphlets sent as desired.

C. W. STYRING.—Always glad to receive useful cuttings.

E. HILL.—See "Acid Drops." Thanks.

H. R. CLIFTON.—Pleased you think our *Guilty or Not Guilty?* pamphlet so effective. We must postpone dealing with the rest of your letter till next week.

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.

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

THE 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.

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

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

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

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.

Mr. Foote does not propose to do any more platform work, except in an emergency, until September. He cannot very well take a complete holiday, but he will take it as far as possible as he goes along. It is not easy to drop his *Freethinker* work even for a single week; and other matters have to be attended to which make little or no public show.

Mr. Cohen's lectures on Tyneside were, from all points of view, a complete success. On the Newcastle Town Moor on Sunday last, the weather was ideal, and the audience large and sympathetic. Every point told, and after listening for nearly an hour and a half, the meeting seemed as though it still wanted more. Another pleasing feature was the report that appeared in the *Newcastle Daily Chronicle*, showing that, in some quarters, at least, the press boycott is breaking down. On the Saturday evening Mr. Cohen lectured to a good audience at Hutton-le-Hole, and it is hoped that a new Branch may be formed here in the near future.

Miss Jeannie Wren Hutty, of Newcastle-on-Tyne, formerly of Whitby, has gained the degree of Bachelor of Science. Miss Hutty is a Freethinker and the daughter of Freethinkers.

Local Freethinkers should rally round the Bethnal Green Branch platform in Victoria Park this afternoon, when Mr. Baker lectures there for the first time, after doing good service in other parts of London. We have not had the pleasure of hearing him lecture, but we understand that he is a very capable speaker.

Mr. George Scott, of Glasgow, whose able pen is known to our readers, is a convert from Roman Catholicism—though the Christians never mention the matter. Mr. Scott represented the Glasgow Branch, in which he is an active worker, at the N. S. S. Annual Conference at Liverpool. "I was very pleased," he writes us, "with my first experience of the N. S. S. Conference and feel that it should work a great deal of good for Freethought in the Liverpool district."

"The Singer who is Silent" was the heading of a recent article in the *Daily News* by Mr. W. B. Hodgson; the sub-heading was "Mr. Gerald Massey and his Poems." It appears that Mr. Massey has written no poetry for thirty years. He believes he is doing better work. He has published four big volumes on the Egyptian origin of Christianity, and "now is preparing one big book that has taken twelve years to write, in which he hopes finally to explain his views." A brave work for an old man of seventy-seven! The final part of this interview with Mr. Massey will be of special interest to some of our readers:

"When the Egyptians had refined and filtered their wisdom, and stored it in myths in the constellations, there came along those miserable literalists, the Jews, to convert it into mere stories.

'Here are the hieroglyphics,' said the old Poet. 'I have learned to read them in thirty years!'

And he produced the Book of the Dead, beautifully printed in colours. And there was the Serpent and the Tree of Life, Eve plucking the Apple for Adam, Moses coming out of the bulrushes—all the old Bible stories, painted on stone ages before Moses was born.

To restore religion to its place as a myth, or allegory, is Mr. Massey's consuming passion. He has even, through a friend, approached the Pope, begging his Holiness to promulgate the doctrine that Christianity is a Myth!

'I have the ambition,' said Mr. Massey, 'that in death my grave may be found cut right across that pathway of error and delusion first trodden by the misinterpreters of Mythology

who falsely founded the Christian creeds. I mean to pile the barrier of my grave-mound as high as ever I can with my books, sold or unsold, and shall be glad of every stone flung at it by the enemy, after I am gone, to pile it still higher.'

And that is why Mr. Massey has not written any poetry for thirty years! He has gone over to the Egyptologists."

"Christianity a Myth." That is Mr. Massey's message to the world. And it is a true message. The so-called Higher Critics, after all, only touch the fringe of a great problem.

We beg our readers to persist in carrying on what we call "The Underground Movement." Every Freethinker can, if he chooses, become a propagandist "on his own." He may help to circulate Freethought literature. This can be done in various ways. One of the best is to introduce the *Freethinker* to fresh readers. It is astonishing what a large number of people would gladly buy the *Freethinker* every week if they had only made its acquaintance. Great good is done, therefore, by lending this journal to friends or persons met in the business and pleasures of life. Another method is to send us the names and addresses of persons who would be likely to read it if a copy were sent them for six weeks consecutively; by the end of which time a number of them would be sure to wish to continue reading it. To this end we are prepared to send the *Freethinker* post-free to such addresses for the six weeks. In this way we have gained many subscribers. Here, for instance, is a letter from a new subscriber at Fulham:—

"I write to thank you for the six weeks' sample copies of the *Freethinker* you sent me at my brother's recommendation. I should have written before, only unfortunately I have been ill. I now have the *Freethinker* regularly from my newsagent, and I find it exceedingly interesting, original, intellectual, and refreshing. It is one of my best mental stimulants. I will take this opportunity of congratulating you on your method of obtaining new readers. If the *Freethinker* is not worth buying after six weeks' trial, I don't know what is."

There you are, reader. That ought to encourage you to send us more addresses. It should also satisfy you that circulating the *Freethinker*, east, west, north, and south, is like sowing seed. Some of it is sure to spring up and bear fruit.

The *Methodist Magazine*, of Toronto, publishes an article by the Rev. C. S. Eby, for many years a missionary in Japan, in which he bewails the spread of "anti-Christian and materialistic" ideas in both Japan and China. The Japanese policy of Secular Education in the national schools destroys the prospects of Christianity, and indeed of every form of religion. In one school of 200 students, whose average age was 18½ years, there were found 2 Christians, 9 Buddhists, 1 Shintoist, 140 Agnostics, 27 Atheists, and 21 non-committal. In another school of 130 students, averaging 21½ years, there were no Christians, 3 Buddhists, no Shintoists, 1 Confucian, 95 Agnostics, 26 Atheists, and 5 non-committal. "Thus it will be seen," missionary Eby says, "that the old religions are passing, and that the Gospel to-day accepted in Japan is that of Herbert Spencer and Professor Haeckel." This is the real Yellow Peril. A nation of Atheists and Agnostics is astonishing the world: heroes in war and humanitarians in peace.

The London *Star* lets in a little bit of Freethought now and then. Probably the exigencies of commercialism do not permit any more. Mr. James Douglas, for instance, in a recent "Books and Bookmen" reference to the late Lord Acton's theology, let out in the following manner:—"For the modern mind theology is a dead phase of human eccentricity. It no longer counts. It has its interest just as the diplodocus has its interest. Like the diplodocus, it once had a large body with a small brain. The evolution of man has deprived it of sustenance. Its place is in the museum of antiquities." This has been said in the *Freethinker*, of course, for twenty-four years. It is more novel in the *Star*, and will do good there, if it catches the eyes of a few readers who do not spend all their time on the sport and racing news.

Thomas Paine was not only a great sceptic, he was a great political thinker. There is more political wisdom in his writings than in those of any modern we know. And he was the first man who had heart and head to propose a scheme of Old Age Pensions for the masses of the people. This scheme may be found in his immortal *Rights of Man*, which the Pioneer Press (see advertisement) is now offering at the wonderful price of sixpence. There ought to be a run upon it.

The Picton Hall meeting, in connection with the N. S. S. Annual Conference, appears to be bearing fruit. The Liverpool *Evening Express* is printing correspondence on "The Failure of the P. S. A.," and one writer signing

himself "J. M." contrasts the Christian with the Secularist speakers. This is what he says:—

"While the P. S. A. orator is holding forth in one street the lecturer of the Secular Society may be lecturing in the next. Now, the former may be an excellent man, but can he be compared as a rule in mental calibre, in persuasiveness, and incisiveness of speech and in argumentative force with him who speaks for atheism and freethinking? I venture to assert that he can not.

"If P. S. A.'s are to be of any service to the Christian religion they must bestir themselves and fight the rationalists, who are at present conducting their campaign—also on the Sunday afternoons—with extraordinary ability and, I believe, success."

Liverpool Secularists will note this tribute. It shows that they are making themselves felt.

Shelley said, and many Freethinkers have said since, that the world would be in a much better state now if civilisation had been carried on from the point reached by the Greeks and Romans, without the long dark Christian interregnum. We have repeatedly called attention ourselves to the fact that Christendom has never produced great rulers to equal those who swayed the destinies of Greece and Rome. A parallel statement has just been made by Dr. Percy Gardner in his *Grammar of Greek Art*. "In turning over the portraits of Greek statesmen, poets, and philosophers," he says, "one is fairly amazed at the high level of beauty which they show; here a beauty not merely of outline and physical condition, but of mind and character. These great men seem to belong to a race which has perished." 'Tis true, 'tis pity, and pity 'tis 'tis true.

We have often said that Plutarch is worth a million Old Testaments in giving young people object lessons in civic virtue and heroism. Dr. Percy Gardner says much the same thing, though in different language. Referring to the race which has perished, he says: "It is a race of kings reminding one of nothing so much as the heroic figures in the 'Lives' of Plutarch—a book which has perhaps done more to foster manliness than any book ever written." (By the way, Dr. Gardner should have said "any other book)."

Now and then there is a tolerable pension under the Civil List Act. The last published list, containing the names of a number of nobodies, also contains the name of James George Frazer, D.C.L., LL.D. Dr. Frazer is down for £200 a year "In recognition of his literary merits and of his anthropological studies." Dr. Frazer is the author of that remarkable and extremely important book, *The Golden Bough*.

It is the duty of each and every one to maintain his individuality. "This above all, to thine own self be true, and it must follow as the night the day, thou canst not then be false to any man." It is a magnificent thing to be the sole proprietor of yourself. It is a terrible thing to wake up at night and say, "There is nobody in this bed." It is humiliating to know that your ideas are all borrowed; that you are indebted to your memory for your principles; that your religion is simply one of your habits, and that you would have convictions if they were only contagious. It is mortifying to feel that you belong to a mental mob and cry "crucify him," because the others do; that you reap what the great and brave have sown, and that you can benefit the world only by leaving it.

Surely every human being ought to attain to the dignity of the *unit*. Surely it is worth something to be *one*, and to feel that the census of the universe would be incomplete without counting you. Surely there is grandeur in knowing that in the realm of thought, at least, you are without a chain; that you have the right to explore all heights and all depths; that there are no walls nor fences, nor prohibited places, nor sacred corners in all the vast expanse of thought; that your intellect owes no allegiance to any being, human or divine; that you hold all in fee and upon no condition and by no tenure whatever; that in the world of mind you are relieved from all personal dictation, and from the ignorant tyranny of majorities. Surely it is worth something to feel that there are no priests, no popes, no parties, no governments, no kings, no gods, to whom your intellect can be compelled to pay a reluctant homage. Surely it is a joy to know that all the cruel ingenuity of bigotry can devise no prison, no dungeon, no cell in which for one instant to confine a thought; that ideas cannot be dislocated by racks, nor crushed in iron boots, nor burned with fire. Surely it is sublime to think that the brain is a castle, and that within its curious bastions and winding halls the soul, in spite of all worlds and all beings, is the supreme sovereign of itself. —Ingersoll.

Sibree's Folly.

JAMES SIBREE, JUN., may be living or dead, for all I know. If he has departed, and if there is such a place as Dante figures in his "Purgatorio," I trust the angelic officers of justice have given him due allowance of birch or tawse as penalty for the folly which he committed in the island of Madagascar.

Sibree reached the climax of his stupidity on the 22nd of January, 1867. On that day, crowds of Malagasy, clad in white, attended the opening of the Ambatonakanga Memorial Church, of which Sibree was architect. There is a picture of the scene in his work entitled *Madagascar and its People*. You see an edifice resembling an English village church, spired and many windowed, the arches having the semi-circular curve of the Norman style. A churchyard environs it, and a stone wall furnishes a conventional limit to the yard. If you were cycling through a rural district of England, you would glance a moment at the building, and take no more heed.

But this building is in Madagascar. Of wider area than France, Madagascar is the fourth largest island in the world. Its central mountains, which descend to the low plains by the sea, are cut by torrents, and encircled by an immense belt of forest. Productions are rich—iron, sulphur, cattle, gum-copal, indiarubber, ebony, coffee, sugar, vanilla. Lovely are the forests, where the pandanus droops its long blade-like leaves; the traveller's tree spreads, fan-wise, the great leaves which secrete cool water; the tree-ferns cast a charming shade, and the wild pineapple blushes with scarlet blossoms. The pretty lemurs whisk their long tails as they sport in the foliage. Many a beautiful lake and cascade glitters amid the rocks and woods. The people have a tasteful dress, the chief garment being a striped mantle, or lamba, one end of which is flung gracefully over the shoulder. Industrious in agriculture, the Malagasy are also skilled in weaving, in the fashioning of filigree, in wrought-iron work, and the like. As to their character our friend Sibree remarks:—

"The Malagasy are a most hospitable people, always courteous and polite, and remarkable for the good faith they have always kept in agreements and treaties with Europeans. This is the universal testimony of travellers from the earliest time the island was visited."

Another authority whom I have consulted quaintly observes that the Malagasy are "cruel in war," as if he knew of nations who were not cruel in war! That the islanders have faults is likely enough. Their weaknesses probably come to about the same sum total as the frailties of the natives of Great Britain. And if Europeans had journeyed to Madagascar in order to give the people a knowledge of western science, a taste for Greek art, a love of Italian and German music, or the full meaning of the word "Humanity," I should have regarded the enterprise as legitimate and manly. But the Europeans were not so wise. They went out to exploit the folk commercially, or to impose upon their poor souls the heavy burden of Catholic and Protestant Christianity. Sibree joined in this absurdity, and his Norman church is a monument of missionary thick-headedness. What does the Ambatonakanga church stand for? It represents the Fall of Man, Flood, Babel, Plagues of Egypt, Balaam, Joshua, Elijah, Virgin-birth, Resurrection, Ascension, and all the mythical ideas connected with these names and doctrines. These things are foreign to the Malagasy mind, and never can be made natural to it. The people of Madagascar might indeed cultivate an interest in the Bible, as Englishmen can learn to appreciate Homer or Dante. But that is a very different thing from adopting the religious beliefs of Jews and Christians, and making them motives of Malagasy conduct in the family and in politics. The attempt to Christianise Madagascar is a moral and artistic outrage, and the effect is as ridiculous as if you set a chimney-pot hat on the Apollo Belvidere.

In the seventeenth century, the French Catholic missionaries insulted the fetishes of a Malagasy chief, and suffered death in consequence. The French made severe war upon the natives of the district. Thus ferocity followed on indiscretion. In the nineteenth century, the British Churchmen and Nonconformists descended in full spiritual force upon the island, with a medley of Bibles, catechisms, and baptismal and other ceremonies. The result was a clash between familiar Malagasy customs and the brand-new creeds from Nurope. A mental and moral disturbance affected the native soul, and a persecution broke out which is supposed to illustrate the wickedness of heathenism, but which really testifies to the irrationalism of flinging raw Christianity into an environment unfitted for its reception. In 1837-8 a "Christian" young woman named Rasadama was speared to death; other "Christians" were imprisoned, tortured, or fined. In 1849, fifteen "Christians" were flung from a precipice, and four were burned alive. About 2,000 were enslaved, flogged, or disgraced. Similar events marked the year 1857. Mr. Sibree has no sense of humor, else he would not write:—

"The heathen saw that there was a power in the religion professed by the Christians, which overcame all earthly opposition; many felt and said, "This is the finger of God—there must be something divine in this belief." Numbers were impelled to inquire into the secret of this wonderful courage, and were eventually led to join their community, notwithstanding the peril to which it exposed them."

If there is any point in such a narrative, we should be led to expect the like sequel to persecutions of Jews by Christians, or of Christian sects by other Christian sects. The Jews have very heroically borne a vast deal of ill-treatment from Christians; and would Mr. Sibree have us all become Jews on the strength of the fact? Would he turn Jew himself? Catholics and Protestants have bravely endured some fearful hardships at each other's hands, and, according to our friend Sibree's logic, the many cases of courage on each side ought to have led up to conversions from one rival department of the Christian faith to the other.

Had I time and opportunity, I should dearly love to visit Madagascar, and, as an old teacher, examine samples of the young folk in the missionary schools. I should want to know just how much of the Bible the candidates had read, and how much of its contents they had understood simply in a literary sense. Have they been taught the literal truth of the Old and New Testament Christian miracles? If yes, they have been taught what large numbers of so-called Christians in this country disbelieve. If no, is the fact included in the reports sent to headquarters and published in London? I have never seen such reports. Are the scholars acquainted with Biblical criticism as understood by Colenso, Stanley, Farrar, Cheyne, and Driver (all members of the Church of England)? Have they any conception of the theory of evolution and its influence on the Christian theology? Do the missionaries give these young people fair and accurate outlines of the teachings of Emerson, Comte, Spencer, Tolstoy, and other such liberal thinkers? Have the Malagasy "Christians" heard of Thomas Paine and Ingersoll? Or are the names and works of such men carefully concealed from the innocent wearers of the lamba? Are the Malagasy disciples ever encouraged to listen to discussions between Christians and Freethinkers? Have they any intelligent acquaintance with the differences in the Catholic and Protestant systems of belief? I find, by Whitaker's Almanack, that Madagascar contains about 450,000 Protestants and 50,000 Catholics. Are the Malagasy instructed in the history of the Papal Church of Europe, the Protestant Revolution, and the multiplication of Nonconformist sects?

Sibree wrote his book, with its many foolish observations on the progress of Christianity, in 1870. How the soul of Madagascar is now affected by the missionary I know not. Perhaps the annexation of

the island by France in 1896 has helped to check the invasion of the Christian Philistines. In any case, I feel sure that no permanent good can be done by foisting upon this southern people of Malayan and Melanesian race a mass of indigestible theology from northern latitudes. British conceit in endeavoring to thrust evangelic notions upon such a people as the Malagasy is, intellectually speaking, a piece of villany. We have no right to palm off upon these unwitting natives a species of religion which Europe itself is discarding. Theology began to decay in our quarter of the world in the fourteenth century, and the disintegrating process has continued ever since. The *Encyclopædia Biblica* proves the failure of Christianity on the dogmatic side. The recent letter of the Archbishop of Canterbury, confessing that he had not had time to study the problem of the Unemployed, proves its failure on the practical side. If our friend Sibree (as I courteously hope) still lives, and can witness such singular developments, I would like to know what he would say to his precious Malagasy "Christians" on these subjects.

F. J. GOULD.

The Modern Opposition of Religion and Science.

"In this nineteenth century, as at the dawn of modern physical science, the cosmogony of the semi-barbarous Hebrew is the incubus of the philosopher and the opprobrium of the orthodox. Who shall number the patient and earnest seekers after truth, from the days of Galileo until now, whose lives have been embittered and their good name blasted by the mistaken zeal of Bibliolaters?"

Who shall count the host of weaker men whose sense of truth has been destroyed in the effort to harmonise impossibilities—whose life has been wasted in the attempt to force the generous new wine of Science into the old bottles of Judaism, compelled by the outcry of the same strong party.—HUXLEY, *Lay Sermons*, p. 277.

WHEN Galileo demonstrated that the system of Copernicus was correct, it has been said that he "withdrew the seat from under the body of the ancient Hebrew and Christian Deity."

Undoubtedly he accomplished the greatest revolution in human thought the world has ever known. But these discoveries lay in the inorganic world, the organic world remained untouched, Adam and Eve naming the animals in the Garden of Eden, still represented the beginning of animal and human life. It was not until three hundred years later that Charles Darwin with his *Origin of Species* and *Descent of Man* did for the organic world what Galileo had done for the inorganic world. Fortunately, by that time the teeth of Mother Church had been drawn, her nails had been pared. She had been persecuted to such an extent that she could no longer use the dungeon, the rack, and the Auto da Fe to obtain assent to the truth of the Bible. She had to remain content with uttering impotent curses upon the new truth, and forbidding the books in which it was taught, to be read by her followers.

It has been said by those who wish to detract from Darwin's fame, that Darwin was not the first to propound the doctrine of the evolution of the Species. It is true that Lamarck, Oken, and others published theories upon the subject before Darwin, just as Nicolas of Cusa and Widmanstadt theorised upon the movement of the earth before the time of Copernicus. But these were no more than theories, intellectual curiosities carrying no conviction to the scientific intellects of the time. The Church remained serene.

But Darwin not only propounded theories, he produced the facts to support them, proving his case as clearly as Galileo with his telescope proved the truth of the Copernican system.

Nor was Darwin an unknown, irresponsible visionary; he had—like Galileo—already achieved distinction. As a young man of twenty-two he had been appointed naturalist to the scientific expedition sent out by the Government in H. M. S. *Beagle* in

1831. In 1839 he published the *Journal* of his five years voyage, which remains one of the finest works of its kind, and at once made the reputation of its author. In 1842 he published his researches on the *The Structure and Distribution of Coral Reefs*; a treatise, says Sir Archibald Geikie, the Director General of the Geological Survey, which "has become one of the recognised classics of geological literature."*

In 1851 he published his *Monograph on the Cirræpædia*. Of this work, Professor Romanes declared, that "if it had stood alone it would have placed its author in the very first rank as a morphological investigator."† Besides these works, he had published the *Zoology of the Voyage of the Beagle* in 1840. And *Geological Observations on South America*, in 1846.

It was not until 1859 that he gave to the world his epoch-making work *On the Origin of Species*. He had then been working on the book for twenty years, and would not have published it then had he not found that Wallace was treading on his heels in a similar investigation, and had anticipated some of his discoveries.

It will thus be seen that if Darwin had never written the *Origin of Species* he would still have held a reputation as a scientific investigator of the first rank. This should be borne in mind when reading the attacks of his clerical opponents, who show no more respect for him than a lawyer does for a hostile witness at the Old Bailey. Huxley's description of the attack by Bishop Wilberforce on the *Origin of Species* as "the insolence of a shallow pretender to a Master of Science"‡ will apply to most of the other attacks by the clergy, which may be described as a mixture of piety, buffoonery, and malignity, in equal proportions.

On the other hand, the work was received with enthusiasm in the scientific world. The greatest and best minds of the age gave in their allegiance to the great thinker. Huxley, Hooker, Bates, Lyell, Lubbock, Tylor, Galton, Tyndall, Lewes, and Bagehot, in England; Marsh, Cope, Leidy, Youmans, Fiske, and Asa Gray, in America; Haeckel, Helmholtz, Vogt, and Lange, in Germany—all declared their adherence to the new truth, and did much to establish and elucidate it.

Louis Agassiz, in America, tried to stem the triumphant progress of Darwinism, from a religious motive. For, says Dr. Andrew White, "in his heart and mind still prevailed the atmosphere of the little Swiss parsonage in which he was born."§ Agassiz knew he was fighting a losing battle. Meeting him at a friend's house in Brooklyn, Professor Tyndall relates how, rising from luncheon, they halted in front of a window. "Earnestly, almost sadly, Agassiz turned, and said to the gentlemen standing round: 'I confess that I was not prepared to see this theory received as it has been by the best intellects of our time. Its success is greater than I could have thought possible.'"|| He had good reason to know, for the very students and disciples he had trained at Harvard and Cornell, and his own son among them, went over to the ranks of Darwinism.

The Church took alarm at the progress of the new thought. In England Cardinal Wiseman planned "The Academia" to combat the advance of science. In a circular letter he sounds the alarm. "Now it is for the Church, which alone possesses divine certainty and divine discernment, to place itself at once in the front of a movement which threatens even the fragmentary remains of Christian belief in England."

In an address before the "Academia," Cardinal Manning declared his abhorrence of the new view

* Charles Darwin, *Memorial Notices*, p. 17, 1882.

† *Ibid*, p. 50.

‡ *Life and Letters of Charles Darwin*, vol. ii., p. 193; 1887.

§ *The Warfare of Science*, vol. i., p. 68. Dr. Aveling says "As to Agassiz, a sentence from the Rev. Dr. Peabody's funeral sermon on this great zoologist settles the whole question, in his case 'His repugnance to Darwinism grew in great part from his apprehension of its atheistical tendency.'"—*Darwin Made Easy*, p. 38.

|| *Beljast Addresses*. The italics are ours.

of nature, and described it as "a brutal philosophy—to wit, there is no God, and the ape is our Adam."* This address was afterwards published, in 1865, in a volume of *Essays on Religion and Literature*, edited by Cardinal Manning. It also contains an essay by the Rev. Dr. Laing, who declares his belief that the Darwinian theory proceeds "from mere imbecility of mind," and sums up the Darwinians as a "shallow multitude, strangers to mental discipline," and in an indignant outburst as "buzzards."

The *Catholic World* compares Darwin to the Devil—"Like Satan, he was cast from heaven in a moment, when desirous of elevating his throne to a level with God's Word, making reason the supreme and sole criterion of truth and certitude"; and "Like the Devil, he sometimes assumes the garments of light, and puts on an appearance of virtue." Anon the *Catholic World* declares for the antagonism of the Bible to Darwin: "He sets aside all revealed truth. He knows nothing about the simple and sublime narrative in the first chapter of Genesis," and comforts its readers by a prophecy. "We think there is little fear that its frivolous arguments will excite anything but laughter and ridicule among men of solid erudition."† The *Dublin University Magazine* charged Darwin with being "resolved to hunt God out of the world."

"But most notable, from the side of the older Church, was the elaborate answer to Darwin's book by the eminent French Catholic physician, Dr. Constantine James. In his work, *On Darwinism; or, The Man-Ape*, published at Paris in 1877, Dr. James not only refuted Darwin scientifically, but poured contempt on his book, calling it 'a fairy tale,' and insisted that a work 'so fantastic and so burlesque' was doubtless only a huge joke, like Erasmus's *Praise of Folly* or Montesquieu's *Persian Letters*. The princes of the Church were delighted. The Cardinal Archbishop of Paris assured the author that the book had become his 'spiritual reading,' and begged him to send a copy to the Pope himself. His Holiness Pope Pius IX. acknowledged the gift in a remarkable letter. He thanked his dear son, the writer, for the book in which he 'refutes so well the aberrations of Darwinism.' 'A system,' His Holiness adds, 'which is repugnant at once to history, to the traditions of all peoples, to exact science, to observed facts, and even to Reason herself, would seem to need no refutation did not alienation from God and the leaning toward materialism, due to depravity, eagerly seek a support in all this tissue of fables.....But the corruption of this age, the machinations of the perverse, the danger of the simple, demand that such fancies, altogether absurd though they are, should—since they borrow the mask of science—be refuted by true science.'‡

Wherefore the Pope thanked Dr. James for his book, "so opportune and so perfectly appropriate to the exigencies of our time," and bestowed on the gratified physician the apostolic benediction, and created him an officer of the Papal Order of St. Sylvester. "Let us never forget," says Dr. Aveling, "that this is the same Church a prelate of which, the Bishop of Salford, told his hearers in the year 1882, that Charles Darwin, then dead but a few days, was burning in hell."§

It should also be borne in mind that Darwin did not attack the Bible or religion in any way—although he came to discard both himself. Neither in the *Origin of Species* or the *Descent of Man* does he point out the effect of his teaching on the account given in the Bible of the origin of animals and man.

In our next article we shall show that the Protestant Churches have been just as violent against science as the older Church, although they have never been able to persecute to the same extent, as they have never had the power.

W. MANN.

Obituary.

I HAVE to report the death of the oldest member of our (Bethnal Green) Branch, Mr. Alfred Eagle, who has taken a prominent part in all Freethought work in East London, including the Toynbee Hall Settlement, for the past fifty years. He was seventy-nine years of age and his death resulted from senile decay. He was "a consistent Atheist" to the last. The funeral has been fixed at Manor Park Cemetery on Thursday (June 29) afternoon at 3.45, when many friends have expressed their intention to be present. The funeral arrangements are in my hands.—JAMES NEATE.

On Friday last the remains of Blanche, youngest daughter of Mr. John Howe, formerly of the Wood Green Branch, were laid to rest in Edmonton Cemetery. The deceased child who was six years of age only, had suffered intensely from consumption for many months. A large number of sympathisers and residents were present who were much interested in the Secular Burial Service read by EDITH M. VANCE.

Our opponents think they refute us if they reiterate their own opinions and pay no heed to ours.—Goethe.

THEOLOGY AND MORALITY.

There is also a third general aspect under which this antiquated clinging to theology has necessarily become baneful to morality; namely, by opposing a solid reconstruction of it on a purely human basis. If this opposition consisted only in the blind outcry too often raised by the various theological or metaphysical schools of our time against the pretended danger of such a substitution, positive philosophers might be content to repel odious insinuations by the convincing spectacle of their own daily conduct in personal, domestic, and social life. Unfortunately it is a much more radical antagonism; for it arises from the necessary and evident incompatibility between these two ways of systematising morality. Since, in the eyes of a real believer, theological motives must always have a far greater intensity than any others whatsoever, they can never sink into the position of mere auxiliaries to purely human motives. The moment they cease to predominate they cease to be efficacious at all. Morality therefore must either be at last founded on the positive knowledge of Humanity, or it must be left to rest on supernatural injunction. Between these alternatives no durable basis can be found.—Auguste Comte.

MEDDLING AND MISSIONIZING.

Professor Frederick Starr, the celebrated anthropologist of the Chicago University, talked to his students a few days ago on foreign religious work, which he said is a huge mistake. Even cannibals, he asserted, would be better off without it. He told the students that the religious rites of the heathen were more tolerant than the Christian religion, which he termed too "intolerant," thereby working injury to the normal state of primitive peoples. Fancy drinks, rum, shoes, stiff shirts, and alarm clocks he named as the only benefits Anglo-Saxon interference had given to heathen nations, and those he declared "the ridiculous monuments of our meddling."

"There is not a barbarous race in the world that we have not tried to enlighten and convert," said the professor. "There is hardly to be found a population so small that we have not carried the torch of learning to it—never failing to bring back the cash.

"We wish to convert these barbarous peoples. Therefore, our religion, which is an intolerant religion, holding that there is nothing but everlasting damnation for those who do not happen to have heard of it, sends its missionaries to foreign shores.

"It is all a mistake. An African living in an African hut after an African fashion is likely to be a better man than he would be after the Anglo-Saxon introduced his religion, his surface civilization, and his rum.

"We think we are the chosen of God.....We are the most meddlesome race that ever existed. We meddle at home, we meddle abroad, and we meddle everywhere, and it is the almighty dollar that is the reason for our meddling. That is the watchword of the Anglo-Saxons. Our missionary work is simply meddling."—*Truthseeker* (New York).

Let us never forget that an act of goodness is of itself always an act of happiness. It is the flower of a long inner life of joy and contentment; it tells of peaceful hours and days on the sunniest heights of our soul. No reward coming after the event can compare with the sweet reward that went with it.—*Maeterlinck*.

* White, *Warfare of Science*, vol. i., p. 71.

† Cited by Dr. Aveling in *Darwin Made Easy*, p. 43; 1887. A valuable little work, containing much information on the subject.

‡ White, *Warfare of Science*, vol. i., p. 75.

§ Aveling, *Darwin Made Easy*, pp. 45-46.

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, a Lecture.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Fountain): 3.15 and 6.15, Mr. Baker will Lecture.

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S.: Station-road, 11.30, E. Edwin, "The Noachian Deluge"; Brockwell Park, 3.15, E. B. Rose; 6.30, E. B. Rose.

CLAPHAM COMMON: 3, A. D. Howell-Smith, B.A., "Conflicts of the Gospel Narratives."

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

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (The Grove, Stratford): 7, F. A. Davies, a Lecture.

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N. S. S.: Annual Picnic at Kinver, per electric trams from Lionel-street, 10.30; tea Edge View Hotel, 3.30; July 6 (Coffee House Bull Ring), 8, H. Thompson will give a Paper.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N. S. S. (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 7, H. Percy Ward, "God's Policemen; or, the Pest of Priestcraft." Outdoor Lectures: 3, Islington-square (if wet, inside Hall); Wednesday, 8, Edgehill Church; Thursday, 8, Birkenhead Haymarket. Cycling Club meets (to-day) 10 a.m., Islington-square, for a run to Ince Blundell.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation Schools, Market Place): 7.30, Annual Meeting, Delegates report and Election of Officers.

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