

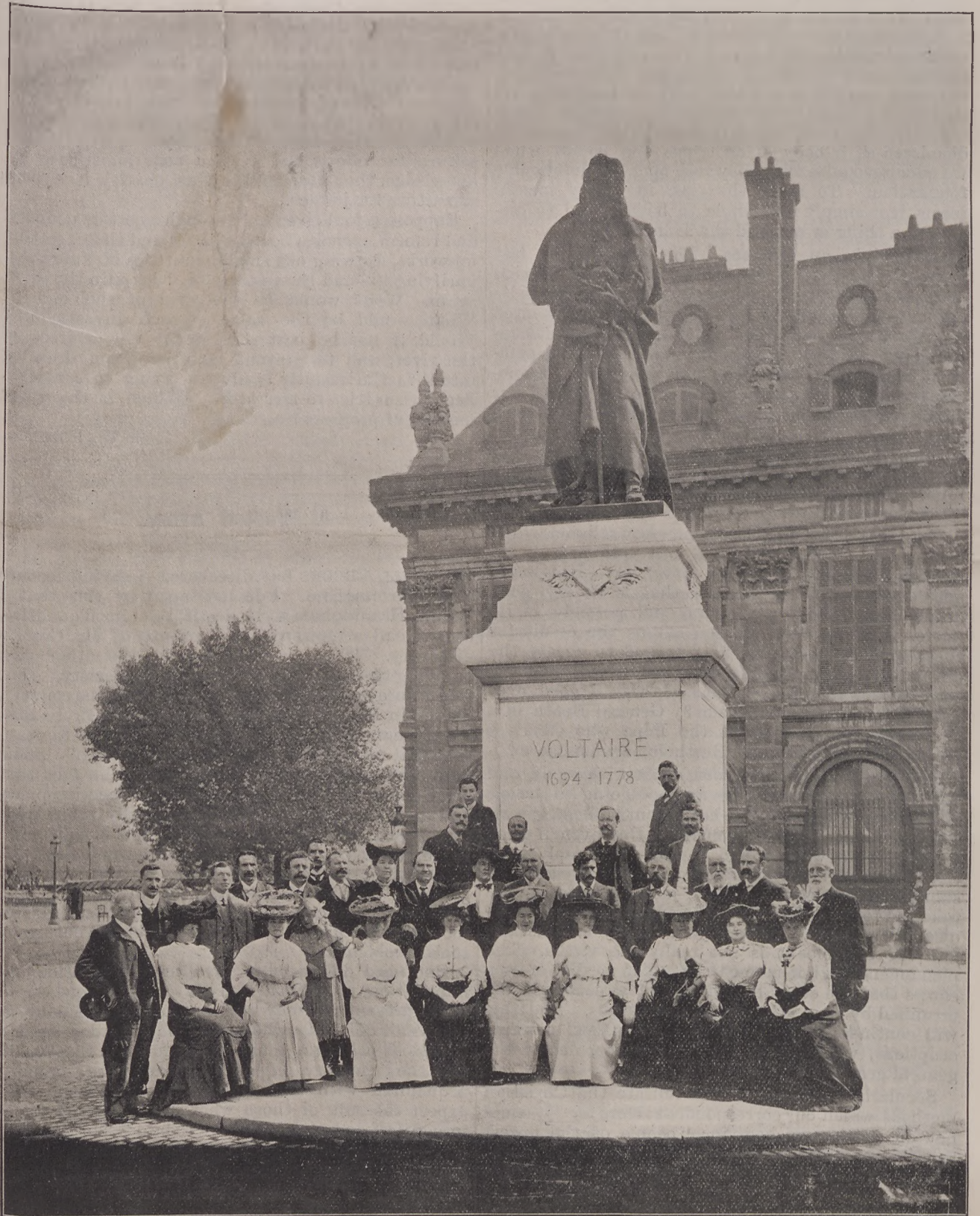
THE Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

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Methods of Progress.

UNDER the heading of "Lingering Doubts" we publish a letter this week from a young and recent convert to Freethought, who apparently still feels that there is a good deal to be said for the old religion. He does not put it exactly in this way, but this is what it comes to; and we gather that his disquietude springs entirely from the ethical side of the argument.

Now in answer to this correspondent's appeal to us for a little intellectual assistance we would say, first of all, that the primary and important question about Christianity or any other religion is this—*Is it true?* If it be not true, if it be positively false, if it be scientifically, historically, and philosophically unsound, nothing in the long run can save it, and nothing ought to save it. Beautiful falsehoods fail to charm when they are seen to be falsehoods. So that if Christianity were absolutely beautiful, which it is very far from being, it would still have to be dismissed as a body of doctrines and beliefs when we once recognise that they rest upon an impossible foundation. To state the case in purely mental terms, it is simply impossible to believe and to disbelieve a thing at one and the same time.

Let us take an instance. The story of the last hours, the death, the resurrection, and the ascension of Jesus Christ may be as beautiful and moving in its pathos and sublimity as his eulogists have represented it. We are not concerned for the moment to discuss the point. We will assume it. Yet this is not sufficient to give it a hold upon our allegiance. Something else is necessary before it can control our minds and shape our lives. We must believe it to be true. If we come to see that it is not really historical, but imaginative, legendary, and mythological, we may continue to admire it ever so much as a religious romance, but it will necessarily cease to command our devotion and excite our hopes and fears.

Here is another consideration. Any religion which has lasted a long time, and had millions of adherents in many countries, must have had many good deeds associated with it; that is to say, good deeds done by its professors, and possibly in its name. But if such a religion claims the credit for these good deeds, it must be prepared to accept the discredit of all the bad deeds. And how would the account look then? Dr. Barnardo was a good man—but how about Torquemada? General Booth is a good man—but how about the Pope who struck a medal in honor of the St. Bartholomew massacre?

The Welsh revival has been dealt with again and again in our columns. We are not going to accept all the loose statements we hear about its beneficence. They need a good deal of sifting. But even if they were all true, what would it prove? Simply this, that a powerful excitement may temporarily act as a substitute for positive virtue, just as hysteria may take the form, and produce the symptoms, of various diseases. But the hysteria is not really the disease, and the excitement is not really the virtue. The phenomenon is but momentary. The verdict of time shows that the ethical condition of a people is determined by slow and permanent causes. And this will continue to be so until earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, whirlwinds, and tidal waves, decide the general geography of our planet.

Secularism does not seek to imitate the Christian methods which our correspondent refers to. It could not do so if it wished, for "people of the lowest type" are precisely those who would most resent having any association with "infidels." There was a burglar once (and this is a fact, not a story) who bitterly denounced the admission of the late Charles Bradlaugh to the House of Commons, on the ground that if men like that went to parliament nobody's property would be safe. Criminals of this class must be left to Christian reform agencies—which, after all, if we may judge by statistics, do not seem to make much impression upon them.

General Booth, judging in the same way, has made no impression on the poverty and vice of this country. The "submerged tenth" are as much in evidence as ever. The publicans do not fear his teetotalism. The tobaccoists do not fear his non-smoking. He is now asking for a million pounds to export honest working men to the Colonies. Charles Bradlaugh tried to get them settled upon the soil of England. It is the land laws that drive myriads, and perhaps millions, of Englishmen out of the most natural and healthy occupation in the world. And the remedy does not lie in cheap philanthropy, but in wise legislation. Give labor land and security and it can do without "charity." Saviors of society like General Booth only find opportunities in the midst of the squalor and misery of our boasted "Christian civilisation." There would be no room for them in a healthy community. And it is the healthy community that Secularists want to realise. They do not spend their time in palliating evil effects—that is an incessant business, as bad as the rolling of Sisyphus's stone. They deal with causes. And just as they believe that prayer is a poor substitute for effort, and faith a poor substitute for knowledge, they also believe that charity is a poor substitute for justice.

Suppose a foul river ran through a certain country, and reform agencies operated here and there, setting up works, drawing out small quantities of water, and purifying it—and then pouring it back into the river again. What would be the good of such labor? What would be the value of such investments? Would it not be better to purify the sources of the river, and to prevent pollution from draining into it? Christianity is always trying to *cure* evil. Secularism tries to *prevent* it. Which is the wiser method of progress?

G. W. FOOTE.

A Wasted Army.

MR. WILL CROOKS has discovered a saving feature about Birmingham. I do not mean by this that I believe Birmingham to be destitute of good qualities, only to call attention to the nature of Mr. Crook's discovery. That gentleman said the other day, speaking at a Christian "Men's own Society," that there were many signs of improvement in the country, "Even in Birmingham they were not entirely lost, for there were 70,000 adult scholars going to Sunday-school at nine o'clock every Sunday morning." Some allowance must, perhaps, be made for the fact that Mr. Crooks was speaking in a Christian meeting place, and to the kind of audience not usually remarkable for the acuteness of its criticism, but it is a disquieting utterance from a labor leader nevertheless. It is certainly a good illustration of the fact that generous sentiments, energy of disposition, and honesty of character are, after all, but poor substitutes for adequate grasp of the fundamental nature of social problems.

One need do no more than merely mention one implication of such a remark. For reasons to be noted presently it may be safely assumed that by no means all of those who would be regarded by Mr. Crooks as *politically* sound are included in this 70,000. On the contrary, if Mr. Crooks were properly acquainted with Birmingham life, he would find, expect the bulk of those who were really advanced in political and social matters to be outside this army of Sunday-school attendants. And if those who are outside this army were as narrow in their mental outlook as the average religionist, they might resent in a politically unpleasant manner, the attendance at one of the dreariest and most unprogressive of religious functions as a test of social and political righteousness. Fortunately their being outside Mr. Crooks' saved class is a presumption in favor of their taking a saner view of life than such resentment would indicate.

Seventy thousand *adults* is a very large figure, and it is possible that Mr. Crooks is exaggerating. If he is depending upon figures given him by religious leaders it is certain that he is doing so. Accuracy is not their strong point, and an exaggeration of, say from 50 to 75 per cent., would be held to be quite excusable if it made for the "greater glory of God." The population of Birmingham is, in round figures, half a million. Suppose we allow, at a liberal estimate, half that number to be adults. Deduct half of that for females, who have no parliamentary vote, and we are left with 125,000 males. Making a still further allowance for those who are without votes, Mr. Crooks' 70,000 will represent quite half the voting strength of Birmingham. Now, looking at the matter from Mr. Crooks' own political point of view, does he regard the political output of Birmingham as satisfactory? There is no doubt that he would, on the contrary, take it as eminently unsatisfactory, not to say retrogressive. But if this is the case, what is to be said of the influence of the 70,000. For allowing for those with whom Mr. Crooks would agree, and who are outside the Sunday-school—no inconsiderable proportion—it follows that the bulk of those with whom he would disagree, and whose conduct he would regard as politically disastrous, are actually included in his own seventy thousand which constitute, he thinks, Birmingham's saving feature. Here, then, is a pretty condition of things. The people whose political action occasion the conservation of the less worthy features of English public life are chiefly drawn, according to his own statement, from the gallant 70,000 that form the best feature of life in Birmingham. Which shows that not even the position of a popular labor leader ought to absolve a man from thinking over what he says, and being sure of his facts, and their implications before he makes them public. Energy *with* reason is altogether an admirable thing; but energy *without*, is like unto the getting up a full head of steam with defective machinery.

What effect has this gallant army of 70,000 nine o'clock in the morning Sunday-school scholars had on public life in Birmingham? Politically, according to Mr. Crooks, they assisted in returning the wrong men to Parliament. When Mr. Lloyd George visited Birmingham, during the South African War, they assisted in the attempt to lynch that eminent Nonconformist, and in breaking the windows of their own Town Hall. Recently the Freethinkers of Birmingham have been subjected to a further outrage in the exercise of their common rights as citizens, and the seventy thousand cannot be absolved from their share in that bigoted act. Mr. Crooks is a labor man, deeply interested in all that affects labor. Has he ever tried to discover what influence his 70,000 has on labor questions? It must have an influence of some kind. Seventy thousand adults in a gross population of half-a-million cannot be treated as a negligible quantity. I do not believe there is the same proportion of adult Sunday-school scholars anywhere else in the kingdom. Is the general outlook for labor any better in Birmingham than elsewhere? Would Mr. Crooks, if he contested a Birmingham Constituency obtain the same majority as in Woolwich? Would he even get a majority at all? Cannot Mr. Crooks see that if the influence of Sunday-schools was good or wholesome, over a fourth of the adult population, working in the right direction would have a surprising influence on the life of the people. Really Mr. Crooks' figures are anything but flattering to his own reflective powers—still less so to the Christian religion.

If they were trained in the right manner! But are they? Can anyone imagine anything in the nature of really advanced ideas or revolutionary doctrines being taught in the Sunday-schools? A prominent Nonconformist, the Rev. J. E. Rattenbury, described Nonconformist churches as being largely "middle class institutions, run in the interests of the middle classes by the middle classes"; and one may safely say that the Sunday-school is a reflex of the church—only more so. They are notoriously the parade grounds of mediocrity, the refuge of ideas

that educated people would be ashamed to utter elsewhere. A still more prominent preacher than Mr. Rattenbury, the Rev. Dr. Aked, said:—

"I have no hesitation in saying that the Sunday-schools of the land are too often the strongholds of obsolete ideas, of obscurantism, of reaction against progress and light, of cast-iron systems which have been repudiated by educated people outside the Sunday-schools for fifty-years.....Theories and doctrines and methods which are discredited by every educated preacher in the land, and teaching which you have not heard from any educated pulpit for a score of years or more are common in our Sunday-schools."

Now, let me put it to Mr. Crooks quite plainly and simply, Is it likely, is it even conceivable, that adults who by natural inclination gravitate to such institutions—is it likely that they will count as a progressive force in public life? Is it not likely, on the contrary, that obscurantism in one direction will be accompanied by obscurantism in others? I know it may be pointed out that this does not always obtain; that men are found holding advanced ideas in politics and backward ones in religion, or *vice versa*. This may be quite true of the more superficial things of life, but with the deeper and more permanent things the connection is more organic, and the mind's workings in one direction will be a faithful reflection of its workings in all. And this adult Sunday-school attendance stands on a slightly different level to attendance at church, or to youngsters visiting Sunday-schools. These latter go, very largely, because their parents send them. Adults attend church for many reasons, the least powerful and the most honorable being belief in religion. But adults go to School, more so than to church, because their tastes lead them there; and what can be expected in politics of adults who, from pure inclination, from ignorance, from lack of development, or from mental inertia, willingly seek every Sunday the narcotising influence of a Sunday-school?

What are these thousands of adults likely to learn in Sunday-schools that will be of value to them? Will they learn anything that constitutes the real glory and greatness of life—the wonders of science, the beauties of art or literature, or the duties of citizenship? Will they learn anything concerning the resources of the country, its wasted agriculture, or the means of redressing political and social injustice? Direct teaching in these directions would break up any Sunday-school in the kingdom. They will be taught to read more correctly—or incorrectly—the Bible and the New Testament; they will be told to tell the truth, to act honestly, to be good men and women, and to love one another. Most valuable lessons! And the next morning their value will be emphasised by the students telling the same old lies, practising the same old swindles, and circulating the same old slanders. The man who is already honest in his dealings and loyal in his friendships doesn't need the mawkish moralising of a Sunday-school teacher, and the man who is neither will be seldom better for the instruction.

There is one other point I would seriously commend to Mr. Crooks. It is one that Christian speakers have a habit—perhaps a convenient one—of ignoring. This is the obvious reflection that we are, in the main, of a Christian ancestry. In one way or another, by church or school, Christianity has had the people in hand for over forty generations. And the indisputable fact is that this Christian belief and training has not prevented the growth of all manner of social evils and injustices, and it has not succeeded in producing a race of people adequately alive to their social responsibilities and duties. It did not prevent the political abuses of the eighteenth century, nor did it prevent the development of the English factory system—one of the vilest things that ever disgraced human nature—during the time Christian Evangelical fervor was in all the flush of youthful energy. Why, then, should Mr. Crooks look to Christianity for better results in the future than in the past? Why should he think, even, that religious belief is necessary? The Japanese have shown the

world that a people brought up without anything of what a Christian regards as religion can be as high in all important respects—I put the case very mildly—as those brought up under Christian influences. If Labor leaders are so slow to learn the lessons of history and daily experience, why should they be surprised if the people they appeal to are equally obtuse? To look facts squarely in the face is the condition of all permanent reform, and it is a task that requires both honesty and ability. No one, I think, questions that Mr. Crooks possesses the former; it would be well if the evidence for the existence of the latter were equally strong.

C. COHEN.

Refuges of Lies.

SOME modern methods of defending Christianity when attacked by unbelievers are extremely unworthy and cowardly. When an Atheist denounces a certain theological tenet as irrational and absurd, the usual retort is this: "Sir, you are flogging a dead dog; the doctrine you hold up to ridicule is no longer taught except by a few old fogies here and there, the thinking Church of to-day having completely outgrown it." Such an answer is, of course, a sign of conscious weakness; but it is also calculated to deceive and mislead opponents. No one wants to waste his time and energy in fighting shadows. When a Secularist maintains that the Bible cannot be the inspired and infallible Word of God, the apologist replies by asserting that the doctrine of verbal inspiration has been entirely abandoned. The intelligent Secularist, however, knows that the assertion is false. There are many thousands of Christian teachers in this country alone whose supreme object is to "promote the reverential study of the Holy Scriptures, and to resist the varied attacks made upon their inspiration and infallibility as the Word of God."

The other day an inquirer asked, through the *Christian Commonwealth*, what answer could be given to "a man, avowing himself an Atheist, who said he was unable to accept the Christian religion because its ministers taught that 'all people in the world, all the millions on millions who do not believe in Christ as God and the only Savior, will be condemned to everlasting perdition.'" It was a sensible, pertinent question, and deserved a straight answer. But the answer given was nothing but a hollow evasion:—

"An Atheist, or any other person, who ventures on an assertion like the above most recklessly misrepresents the overwhelming majority of the ministers of the Christian religion. We do not know of a single representative evangelical Protestant minister, for instance, whose teaching comes under so terrible a category. We should think that the Atheist is confounding the teaching of Protestants with that of certain Roman Catholic catechisms, which have had wide circulation, and which embody terrible presentations concerning indiscriminate retribution. As for the millions on millions who do not believe in Christ as God and the only Savior of the world, the customary preaching refers to the apostolical statement in Acts x. 35, where Peter says, in the house of Cornelius at Cæsaria: 'Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that feareth him and worketh righteousness is acceptable to him.'"

The "Bury correspondent" must be easily hoodwinked if the above reply will satisfy him, for a more inaccurate and misleading paragraph was never penned. It is true that preachers of the school represented by the Rev. R. J. Campbell do not teach the view referred to by the avowed Atheist. Most of them do not believe in everlasting punishment at all. They are adherents and proclaimers of the Gospel of the Larger Hope. But there is a school of Protestant preachers who resolutely maintain that all who die without faith in Christ are eternally lost. What the writer of the paragraph means by "representative evangelical Protestant ministers" I

do not know, but it is an undeniable fact that even to-day Christians generally regard the heathen world as lying under the wrath of God and doomed to everlasting punishment. One often hears that conviction expressed at missionary meetings, and missionary collectors make effective use of it. Times without number has the writer been appealed to for a subscription to some great Missionary Society on the ground that the Christian Gospel is the only means of salvation for the whole world. Indeed, it was out of this conviction that all the Missionary Societies arose, and it is the same conviction that has always secured financial support for them. There are some who doubtless remember the fierce controversy that raged in the United States, some twenty or thirty years ago, over the eternal destiny of people who die without having heard of Christ. There was a small party of progressive men who alleged that the offer of salvation would be made in eternity to all who had not had it made to them during their lives on earth. If my memory does not deceive me, the late Joseph Cook was an advocate of that theory. But the American Missionary Board stoutly upheld the orthodox doctrine, and would not accept any candidate for the foreign field if he showed any leaning towards the probation-after-death heresy.

The editor of the *Hibbert Journal* is one of the most liberal and fair-minded theologians, and he maintains that "the hold of Christianity upon the peoples of the Western world is rooted in the conviction that *this is the religion which produces the best men.*" He fears that the conviction is not well founded, but is, in fact, itself the result of Christian ignorance and prejudice. But the impression that prevails in the churches, and which all revivalists dwell upon *ad nauseam*, is, not that Christianity is the religion which produces the best men, but that it is the only religion that can deliver men from the wrath to come, and furnish them with a sure title to endless bliss in heaven. If you listen to Dr. Torrey, Mr. John M'Neill, or Mr. Gipsy Smith, you will find that the *utter lostness of all mankind apart from Christ* constitutes the core of their message. The same tenet underlies all evangelical preaching throughout Christendom. Christ is proclaimed as the only Savior of the world. Not many months ago I heard an eminent doctor of divinity declare that all non-Christian religions are false.

And, after all said and done, nothing can be more obvious than that this Christian exclusivism is in perfect accord with the teaching of the New Testament. The "Bury correspondent" is referred to Acts x, 35. That passage is the strong tower of the progressives into which they always run for refuge when assailed. If the passage could be taken out of its context it might legitimately be claimed as a bulwark of modern liberalism; but unfortunately it cannot be so taken. It occurs in a context the meaning of which is that Cornelius, though a Gentile, was eligible for Christian baptism *on account of his exceptionally good character*, and was entitled to receive the remission of sins because he too now believed on Christ. This was a new discovery to Peter, indeed it had come to him as a special revelation from heaven, and even now he could scarcely believe it was true. He had never dreamed before that the Gospel could be preached to the Gentiles. He had looked upon it as a gracious message to Jews only. Now, however, he learned that God would accept devout and righteousness-loving Gentiles as candidates for salvation through Christ's name. Such is undoubtedly the correct interpretation of the passage under consideration when viewed in the light of its context, and certainly no other interpretation can be in harmony with the general tone of the New Testament teaching. Even in Peter's sermon to Cornelius, we find these significant words: "To him (Jesus) bear all the prophets witness, that through his name every one that believeth on him shall receive remission of sins" (Acts x, 43). Jesus himself is reported to have said: "He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved, but he that disbelieveth shall be damned" (Mark xvi, 16). In John iii, 36 we read: "He that believeth on

the Son hath eternal life, and that obeyeth not the Son shall not see me, but the wrath of God abideth on him." The keynote of the New Testament is this: "In none other is there salvation" (Acts iv, 12). The apostle Paul tells us that prior to his becoming a Christian he had always been a good man. His neighbors pronounced him "blameless." But after he accepted Christ his former righteousness appeared to him as utterly worthless. He had been a lost sinner until Christ saved him through his blood. As a missionary of the Cross the message he delivered everywhere was, not that devout and good people in every nation were saved from the wrath of God through their goodness, but that all, Jews and Gentiles alike, could be saved if they confessed with their mouths, Jesus as Lord, and believed in their hearts that God had raised him from the dead. That was his Gospel, and he knew of no other. There was no salvation except through the death and resurrection of Christ. Faith in Christ was impossible apart from preaching, and effective preaching could only be done by those whom God specially sent.

Is it not perfectly clear then, that according to the New Testament and the orthodox Church, "all people in the world, all the millions on millions, who do not believe in Christ as God and the only Savior, will be condemned to everlasting perdition?" The common sense of liberal-minded divines revolts at such an irrational doctrine and they unhesitatingly declare that it is fundamentally false. We are in full agreement with them, but it is sheer intellectual nonsense to tell Atheists, either that it is not contained in the Bible, or that present-day ministers no longer preach it. It is in the Bible, and thousands of present-day ministers do preach it.

But is it wise, when argument fails, to fly to subterfuge? If Christ was a Divine Being his teaching must have been faultless, and the religion He founded perfect. The editor of the *Hibbert Journal* admits that for many centuries Christianity went through the process of adopting and assimilating various elements from other religions with which it came into contact; and he is also strongly of opinion that it needs to go through a similar process again. But is it not *un-Christian* to suggest the slightest improvement upon or modification of the teaching of the Divine Master? Paul said: "Neither did I receive it (Gospel) from man, nor was I taught it, but it came to me through revelation of Jesus Christ" (Gal. i. 12). Surely, he must be a bold man who even hints at improving or altering the revelation of Jesus Christ! And he must be a bolder man still who takes a solitary verse of the New Testament out of its context and then ignores the rest of the volume! Were Paul among us at this hour he would say: "Though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach unto you any gospel other than that which we preached unto you, let him be anathema" (Gal. i. 8). Was Paul laboring under a delusion when he declared that his gospel had descended to him out of heaven and was infallible? Was he mistaken when he taught that salvation was through faith in Christ alone? Was Jesus himself self-deceived when He said that He was the Bread of Life, and that only those who ate His flesh and drank His blood could have life in themselves? If we believe the teaching of the evolutionary theologians of to-day, both Jesus and Paul were but deluded dreamers, whose alleged intimacy with the supernatural world and its inhabitants had no reality except in their own imagination. But if Jesus and Paul were mistaken even on one fundamental point, who can say that they were right on any point whatever?

When an Atheist affirms his inability to accept the Christian religion because of the palpable absurdity of a specific doctrine, it is no reply to his objection to say that the said doctrine is no longer taught. The only conclusion he can draw from such a statement is that there are Christians who no longer accept the whole of their own religion, and that to knock out one stone from a building vitiates the whole structure. What he maintains is that an

evolving religion is of a purely human origin. He has no knowledge whatever of the "Universal Christ" spoken of by Mr. Jack, nor is he aware that God objectively exists. All he knows is that the noblest and most beautiful type of character may be and is developed without faith in Christ, without faith in any supernatural agency whatever, and knowing this he is quite content with his Atheism.

J. T. LLOYD.

Byron.

"I am now of all humors, that have show'd themselves humors, since the days of goodman Adam to the pupil age of this present twelve o'clock at midnight."—SHAKESPEARE, *Henry IV.*

BYRON is one of the most fascinating figures in literature. He flashed through his brief life with a disastrous glory. He was a noble, a man of ancient and illustrious descent; and he flung poems broadcast in a golden largesse. He was the Napoleon of passion and of poetry. Europe was aghast at him. He died heroically at Missolonghi, and "Byronism" became a contagion. From Moscow to Madrid whole armies of young men lengthened their hair, shortened their collars, and were in love with Romanticism and their neighbors' wives. Both supremacy in genius and personality were ascribed to Byron. Astounding, perhaps; but what a poet, what a man!

Byron was accepted abroad. He enfranchised English literature; he moved the aged Goethe and the youthful Victor Hugo. Why? Surely for a simple reason. Byron is easy to understand. He deals rhetorically with elemental emotions, and he enjoyed the fame of being at war with society, an aristocrat in exile, a champion of the people. Now, rhetoric and oratory and eloquence make a wide appeal. They address themselves with poignant vigor to the simple feelings of men. "Give me liberty, or give me death!"—that is the kind of thing; a sonorous and impassioned phrase flung out upon the air to thrill the hearts of thousands. Byron's verse has this quality. He possessed the imagination of the orator. Stanza upon stanza of "Childe Harold" reads like the finest things in oratory, grandiose and sweeping.

"Roll on, thou deep and dark-blue ocean, roll!"

You can almost see the outstretched arm, hear the resonant voice. The effect is prodigious. "The Isles of Greece" and "Ode to Napoleon" and "Lines on Completing My Thirty-sixth Year" have the true oratorical note and ring—emphatic, strenuous, impressive.

"The sword, the banner, and the field,
Glory and Greece, around me see!
The Spartan, borne upon his shield,
Was not more free."

There is a trumpet call in that. But, after all, Byron's chief glory is his gift of wit and satire, his superb recklessness of mocking phrase and rhyme. There all that was potent and sincere in him became triumphant, and the writer of "Don Juan" is a deathless delight.

Byron was so much more than a mere author. Here, at least, was a man. He was like one of the Greek heroes—youthful, resplendent; a warrior as well as a poet. Compared with so many of his rivals, his voice was as the roar of a hurricane above the whisper of the ocean foam.

His burning words, like those of Voltaire, roused men like a tempest blast. This man sang of liberty, took up arms in her cause, and died in her defence. Even the prosaic English race was captivated, whilst his magnificent music thrilled to the very heart of Europe, compelling a whole continent, as at a god's command, to turn once more to the altars of liberty.

There can be no doubt about Byron being a Free-thinker. He had a strong sense that all forms of faith were of equal uselessness.

"Foul superstition, howsoever disguised—
 Idol, saint, virgin, prophet, crescent, cross,
 For whatsoever symbol thou art prized—
 Thou sacerdotal gain, but general loss,
 What from true worship's gold can separate thy dross?"

"The Vision of Judgment," in which Byron's genius for scathing satire has full force, is startling in its blasphemy. From its opening, with the foolish angels all singing out of tune, to its close, with his Most Gracious Majesty George the Third, sometime King of England, practising the "Old Hundredth," it is full of cold-blooded contempt for all the hallowed paraphernalia of the religion of Christ Jesus. Every epithet hits, every line that does not convulse with laughter stings or lashes. In the preface to that very profane drama, "Cain," Byron sarcastically remarks that it is difficult to make the Devil "talk like a clergyman," and that he had endeavored to restrain him within the bounds of "spiritual politeness." The restraint is not very manifest in the drama, for the Luciferian logic put into the mouths of the various characters is strong enough to frighten a bishop fortified with a big salary. Cain pours his scorn on the God who takes "his high pleasure in the fumes of scorching flesh; and, even when offering him some fruits, says:—

"If a shrine without a victim
 And altar without gore may win thy favor,
 Look on it! And for him who dresseth it,
 He is—such as thou mad'st him; and seeks nothing
 Which must be won by kneeling."

Indeed, the whole drama is a forcible protest against the fundamental doctrines of Christianity.

In "Childe Harold," his noblest if not his ablest utterance, we find something of the nature-worship of Rousseau. In this light the petty religions of man all dwindle into insignificance:—

"Even gods must yield; religions take their turn;
 'Twas Jove's, 'tis Mahomet's, and other creeds
 Will rise with other years, till man shall learn
 Vainly his incense soars, his victim bleeds—
 Poor child of doubt and death, whose hope is built on reeds."

Byron may at times have hoped for immortality; he certainly did not believe in it. How finely he apostrophises this longing in "Childe Harold":—

"Bound to the earth, he lifts his eyes to heaven;
 Is't not enough, unhappy thing! to know
 Thou art? Is this a boon so kindly given
 That being, thou would'st be again, and go,
 Thou know'st not, seek'st not, to what region, so
 On earth no more, but mingled with the skies
 Still wilt thou dream on future joy and woe?
 Regard and weigh you dust before it flies,
 That little word saith more than thousand homilies."

Most critics assign the first place among Byron's works to "Don Juan," whom Leigh Hunt said he designed, with an acute knowledge of religious human nature, at last to turn into a Methodist. Certainly the work could have been written by no Christian.

Byron's views were, like most poets', fluid and fluctuating; he was, more or less, the slave of his emotions. Yet he doubtless uttered a predominant mood when he wrote:—

"Some kinder casuists are pleased to say,
 In nameless prints, that I have no devotion;
 But set these persons down with me to pray,
 And you shall see who has the properest notion
 Of getting into heaven the shortest way,
 My altars are the mountains and the ocean,
 Earth, sea, stars—all that springs from the great whole
 Who hath produced, and will receive my soul."

This is very like Rousseau, the same Jean Jacques whose books were solemnly condemned by the Archbishop of Paris. In another passage this pantheism peeps out again:—

"Are not the mountains, waves, and skies a part
 Of me, and of my soul, as I of them?
 Is not the love of these deep in my heart?"

Leigh Hunt his friend, says Byron was "an infidel by reading." Thomas Moore, minor-poet and flunkey, was compelled to admit that Byron was "to the last a Sceptic."

Byron's heterodoxy is apparent in his poetry; but his letters, particularly those to his friend Hobhouse, show much more clearly that he was no Christian.

In his correspondence with the Rev. Francis Hodgson he writes even more strongly. Byron's scepticism deepened as he grew older, but far too early came "the blind Fury with the abhorred shears" cutting the thread of his existence. On the rude coffin, at Missolonghi, were placed sword, helmet and laurel crown. It was happily done. A more brilliant soldier never fought in the great army who march under the banner of Liberty.

MIMNERMUS.

Acid Drops.

Rev. Dr. Horton wishes to see a great man arise and form a league of Christian nations. He includes France in his list. Arc we to believe that he does not know that France is not a Christian nation? France has deliberately severed the connection between Religion and the State. She has decided that there shall be no public recognition of religion in any form whatever. She is neither a Christian nation nor an un-Christian nation. She has absolutely no relation to Christianity. Dr. Horton may reply that there are millions of Christians in France. Yes, and there are millions of Freethinkers.

Great Britain belongs only to one "league" to-day. She has contracted a ten years' alliance with heathen Japan. Is this the secret of Dr. Horton's anxiety? Is he afraid that the paganism of Japan will spread in England, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales?

This fear of the example of heathen Japan seems to be growing, at least in the Free Churches. Speaking at a Free Church demonstration at Hampstead, on the eve of the parliamentary election there, the Rev. Silvester Horne (according to the *Daily News*) "warned the large audience against the attempts made to copy methods of the Japanese which might be un-Christian." Probably the Free Church leaders—we mean the professional ones—would rather see this country allied with holy Russia. Russia is very bad, of course, but she is not un-Christian.

"General" Booth has got to the top at last. They have made him a freeman of the City of London. There is probably more rascality in that square mile of our metropolis than in any other part of the world of the same size. We congratulate the "General."

William Booth, whatever else he is, or is not, is always the Grand Old Showman. He played a humble part in requesting to have the freedom of the City presented to him in a wooden casket instead of a metal one, but he compensated himself by "proceshing" to the Guildhall with a crowd of his followers and his own brass band. The "General" always gets the last atom of publicity out of everything that comes his way.

In his speech to the City Fathers the "General" had something to say about his dead wife. He is fond of working this rhetorical theme for all it is worth. When she died he organised a splendid advertisement over her coffin, and he has ever since reckoned her memory as one of his best assets. Nor did the "General" forget the rest of his family at the Guildhall. He sang the praises of his son Bramwell, and did it in a manner which suggests that Bramwell will succeed William as the boss of the Salvation Army.

Now that William Booth has received his apotheosis at the hands of what Jesus Christ might have called "a den of thieves," the newspapers are lauding him more lustily than ever. Nothing succeeds like success! Booth has found the truth of that proverb. Since the King invited him to Buckingham Palace his career has been an uninterrupted triumph. But what we want to know is this. Giving him credit for good intentions, what good has he really done? He has kicked up a great deal of fuss in the world, but what is the net result of it all? The working-classes, by natural instinct, have a profound mistrust of his "schemes"—and he is always launching a new one. It is the middle and upper classes that shout "Hallelujah!" as he passes by. And they also follow their natural instinct. They feel that William Booth is a fine friend of "law and order," and that he helps to sustain "the powers that be." What he does is simply this. He diverts attention from the root political and social causes of poverty and misery. For this reason the "classes" bless and praise his holy name. They will

subscribe more an "work" from motives of sheer self-interest. Of course they will affect to be actuated by motives of humanity; but, just as pride apes humility, so does selfishness love to disguise itself as benevolence; for it not only tends to deceive others, but gives the performer a pleasant glow of self-approval.

General Booth cannot understand why the Government does not give him the million he wants for his new "scheme." He will soon be wondering why he is not asked to take the King's place at Buckingham Palace.

The new Berlin statue of Moltke bears an inscription, which is thus translated into English: "For a right people the right man, at the right time, in the right fight. God's dice fall, however, and whenever they fall they fall on the right side." There is a good deal of the "chosen people" idea in this inscription. But it is really hard to see why "God's dice" are brought into it. Only a century has elapsed since Napoleon smashed the German armies on famous battlefields. Did "God's dice" fall on the right side then?

Emperor William is above all a Christian, and the Empress has a positive mania for building churches—although she can't get people to fill them. When the Kaiser made a send-off speech to the German contingent of the punitive expedition that went to Peking after the Boxer rising and the siege of the Legations, he bade them deal with the wicked Chinese as the Lord's chosen people of old dealt with the Amalekites—and we believe they did. Naturally the Kaiser attended the unveiling of the Moltke statue, and naturally he spoke, for it is impossible for him to be silent in front of an audience. After toasting the memory of Field-Marshal Count von Moltke, the Kaiser gave another toast. "You have seen, gentlemen," he said, "how we stand in the world. Then, powder dry, sword keen, eyes on the goal, muscles taut, and away with pessimists. I empty my glass to our people in arms. The German Army and the General Staff. Hurrah!" Bobadil stuff like this comes of Emperors being full of Christianity.

That other pious Kaiser (Czar is really the same word at bottom), the Lord of All the Russias, is in a very tight corner and may come to grief at any moment. Butter would hardly melt in this gentleman's mouth, if you judge him by what he says; yet he and his "pals" brought about the bloodiest war of modern times—only a few years after he called the first International Peace Congress!

We congratulate the Archbishop of York on recovering from his recent seizure. It is hard to have to leave £10,000 a year. The Archbishop is seventy-nine years old, but hopes to keep out of heaven a good bit longer.

Jesus Christ said that God looked after the birds, and not one fell to the ground without his knowledge. But in this, as in some other things, the Founder of Christianity was mistaken. Birds perish by the myriad during their migration southward to avoid the northern winter. It is reckoned that at least ten thousand were lost through snowstorms in the Riesengebirge range of mountains which separates Prussia from Bohemia. Crowds of these poor creatures have perished in Switzerland—caught by the cold between the snow-clad Alps. It is no use talking to ornithologists nowadays about "the special providence in the fall of a sparrow." Well-informed people know better.

Evan Roberts had a big day recently at Mountain Ash. It was the musical festival of the Welsh Calvinistic Methodists, and the floor of a great pavilion was filled with a choir of 10,000 men and women drawn from over 200 churches, while the galleries and stage were crowded with 4,000 spectators. Evan Roberts attended, with two of his lady helps, Miss Annie Davies and Miss Maggie Davies. He was pressed to speak both in the afternoon and in the evening, but declined to do so. But just at the close of the evening meeting, after Annie had sung a Welsh hymn, and "a great revival wave" had passed over the congregation, Evan rose amidst a solemn hush, and announced that he had a message to deliver. And he delivered it. "Watch," he said, "and pray; watch lest the evening steal from you the blessings of the day." That was all, and it was nothing in itself, but it was well-timed. The psychological moment had arrived. That simple empty sentence acted like magic. Scores of people fell on their knees, and prayers were offered up from all parts of the building at once. The fourteen thousand people had a fine time at the finish. Yes, if Evan Roberts is not a great man, and he does not look it,

he is certainly an adept at revival business. You might guess that by his Sunday smile.

Rev. G. P. H. Frost, of Otley, speaking at the Ripon Diocesan Conference, held at Bradford, denounced Sunday recreations of all kinds. He appeared to think that everything was bad which kept people from church—which is a very natural view on his part, although he must be very foolish to expect people outside his profession to see the matter in the same light. The reverend gentleman deplored the "self-indulgence and licence" which prevailed nowadays. Even the children, he said, insisted on sucking sweets in Sunday-school. Perhaps it would do him good to join them occasionally. Better suck sweets than talk nonsense.

An Italian ice-cream vendor has been fined at Birmingham for "loitering" near the Lyng Wesleyan Sunday-school. This dark-eyed villain tried to induce the children to spend their half-pence at his barrow. Naturally the Sunday-school conductors wanted the half-pence for collections. They therefore called upon the police to deal with him. He knows now who is entitled to the lawbees.

It is reported that some African natives in German territory, bent on getting their own back, after killing one brother of the Benedictine mission, and seriously wounding another, were frightened off by the sign of the Cross. Sagacious natives! They smelled mischief. The Cross was too much for them. They knew its record.

Anthony Comstock, secretary to the American Vice Society, a prurient-minded bigot, who has libelled Colonel Ingersoll and many other "infidels," is now turning his attention to Mr. George Bernard Shaw. Comstock has written to Mr. Arnold Daly, who is going to produce *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, protesting against Mr. Shaw's "filthy products." Mr. Daly replies that "the adjective filthy is decorative, but not descriptive," and invites Comstock to the rehearsals. We fancy that even the Americans are getting sick of old Comstock at last.

Canon Henson, in a letter to the *Times*, once more warns the Churches of what is bound to come if they do not make up their differences over the Education question. He tries to remove the objection to "undenominationalism" by calling it "fundamental Christianity"—just as if either the Anglican or the Nonconformist party will be satisfied with a catchword instead of a substantial advantage. Canon Henson then proceeds:—

"Unless we can agree upon some simple scheme of fundamental Christian teaching, we shall sooner or later, and rather sooner than later, inflict on the English nation the miserable necessity of accepting, against its own wish, but in sheer disgust and despair of securing a concord of Christian ministers (the concord among the masses of the parents exists already), a secular system pure and simple, with or without some 'facilities' for the factious minorities."

The "Secular system" of education may be a "miserable necessity" to those who think like Canon Henson. But that is their affair. We shall be satisfied if it arrives, as it seems likely to. We are glad to see Canon Henson so apprehensive.

The *Morning Leader* prints brief utterances by public speakers under the heading of "Wisdom While You Wait"—though you don't wait, and it isn't always wisdom. A recent issue of our brisk contemporary contained the following two extracts:—

(1.) "Formerly the natural instinct of the people was to get into touch with religion; the natural instinct of the people to-day is to leave it severely alone."

(2.) "It is one of the saddest things of the present day that Christians are always quarreling about unimportant and trivial things."

The author of the first extract is the Rev. M. A. Knapp, of Norwich; the author of the second is the Rev. J. G. Adderley, of London. We should be sorry to contradict either of them.

The Bishop of London condemns "the miserable gospel of comfort." This is rich on the part of a gentleman who lives in a palace and gets £10,000 a year—and publishes a balance-sheet to show how he loses on the job.

What remarkably good sense the Chinese display, even in matters of religion, where sense is usually at a premium. Five hundred and thirty-seven years ago the first Emperor of the Ming dynasty prohibited all his subjects from praying to God. He undertook to do all that was necessary in that line himself. "What a confusion," he said, "there will be

above, what intolerable annoyance, if you people all call upon him." With a little humor thrown in, the picture might be set beside Lucian's, in which Jupiter listens to the most distracting prayers for opposite things from his earthly worshippers.

On the ground that he was mad, the pity bestowed on the youth Arthur George Jewell, who cut Ethel Mary Peeling's throat from ear to ear, and afterwards performed the same operation on himself, is doubtless all right; but it appears to us very odd, to say the least of it, to say so much about "the poor fellow" on any other ground. The young fellow's motive was one of the utmost vulgarity. He murders a girl because she will not fly in her parents' faces and marry him. To call this "love" is a prostitution of the noblest of words. Evidently there is room for much ethical improvement "under the shadow of the cross"—that is to say in Christian countries.

It is said that when the Lord Mayor of London entertains the Church party the wine is an unusually heavy item in the bill. Can this be true? We pause for a reply.

Mr. Arthur Symons, in his new volume entitled *Spiritual Adventures*, says that he was brought up by deeply religious parents, and was impressed with the reality of Heaven and Hell, the shortness of life, and the necessity for conversion. "Once or twice," he says, "it came to me with such vividness that I rolled on the ground in a paroxysm of agony, trying to pray God that I might not be sent to hell, but unable to fix my mind on the words of the prayer. I felt the eternal flames taking hold on me, and some foretaste of their endlessness seemed to enter into my being. I never once had the least sensation of heaven, or any desire for it. Never at any time did it seem to me probable that I should get there." What a faith is this "best religion in the world" to torture a child in such a fashion!

Rev. Mr. Morley sued the deacons of George-street Baptist Church, Hadleigh, Suffolk, for the sum of £34, being arrears of his salary, at the rate of 25s. a week. It appears that there are "ructions" in the house of God, half the congregation siding with the plaintiff, and half with the defendants, the result being that "plaintiff gets nothing, and the pulpit is filled with sardine tins." Sad, is it not? Especially in view of the pious utterances in the letter of engagement, which closes with the prayer that "God will abundantly bless us as a pastor and a people, and add to the church daily souls that are eternally saved."

President Roosevelt was forty-seven on Friday, October 27. The years are slipping by. Will he find time to unsay his false and foolish description of Thomas Paine as a "dirty little Atheist"? We advise him to hurry up.

The Bishop of Manchester proposes to extend the Black-pool sands experiment. His idea is to have a thirty days' mission along the Lancashire coast—during the summer, of course. We should be sorry to interfere with him. But if a Freethought speaker starts up anywhere on the same game, we hope the Bishop will restrain his hooligan followers, and prevent them from repeating their ill behavior on Black-pool sands last summer when Mr. Ford, of Derby, tried to get a hearing.

At the Roose (Haverfordwest) Petty Sessions, the Rev. Benjamin Powell Morris was ordered to pay five shillings a week for fourteen years as the father, according to the majority of the court, of the illegitimate child of Ellen Davies, a widow with seven children. A lot of religion was mixed up in the case, and we will not stir it up too freely. From the evidence it appears that the reverend gentleman officiated at Mr. Davies's funeral and took advantage of the widow a month afterwards. It is only fair to say that he denies this, and has given notice of appeal. Meanwhile, we suppose, the five shillings a week is payable.

Dr. Torrey has not been soul-saving in the region of Harwich, but an incident which recently occurred there ought to be of some interest to him, considering his theory that suicides are mostly due to Atheism. Percy Ashford Vince, son of a town councillor, cut his throat on a piece of waste land, and left a letter on his body stating that he was "eaten with sin," and praying "and now may God receive my soul." We fail to detect the Atheism in this unfortunate young man's actions; perhaps Dr. Torrey can. He was able to see what did not exist in the actions of Thomas Paine and Colonel Ingersoll, and he may be able to do the same in this case.

Rev. C. R. Parsons, in the *Christian*, relates how he converted a wicked "infidel" at Britol. He made short work of the man. After a few questions, with the Rev. C. R. Parson's glittering eye fixed upon him, he shook and blabbered, and shortly afterwards "found Christ." Many details are given, but not the name and address of this interesting convert. It is wonderful how shy these "converted infidels" are of being recognised.

Christian Science has been to the front at Hull, in connection with an inquest on the body of Robert Stephen Pirie, who died from tuberculosis while under the special care of a Christian Scientist. This gentleman was censured by the jury and severely heckled by the coroner, but it appears that he does not believe in doctors and does believe in God—which is in accordance with the Bible from Genesis to Revelation.

Mr. T. D. Benson, Labor and Socialist candidate for Harpurhey, has written his opponent, Mr. William Holden, a letter denying the latter's statement that "present-day Socialism is anti-Christian." Mr. Benson announces that he is a Christian himself, and adds that "those of us who are Socialists believe that God's kingdom on earth, the establishment of which is prayed for daily by Christians, can only be realised under Socialism." It is not within our province to discuss the last statement. What we are concerned to rebuke Mr. Benson for is the suggestion that Socialism is generally intended to be a Christian movement. He might remember the names of some Socialists who are far more important than himself—such as Blatchford, Shaw, and Hyndman, who are all Freethinkers.

The Sweet Influence.

"AND the hospital system of that country," continued the traveller, "is laudable indeed, being upheld by a small municipal tax. The hospitals themselves are situated in the most healthful districts, and the doctors, being represented on the legislature and in the schools, have methods of preventing, in a marked degree, every kind of disease. Yet they are for ever occupied in treating broken limbs and other results of accidents upon their horrible roads.

I inquired of an inhabitant why they were not kept in order with the same perfect method as the hospitals. He then told me that they were connected with the religious observances of the land.

It seems that 2,000 years since, a man was miraculously born called Susej, who claimed, among other powers, that of removing mountains by credulity, casting them into the sea.

He is reported to have cast some handfuls of earth into the quagmire of their chief causeway, as by a miracle, and thereby gained great advertisement.

And now his priests encourage men to collect heaps of refuse called yenom which, at their death, are cast into the mire of some thoroughfare. Then they place a notice board upon these mounds with the legend:

'Erected to the Memory of

MR. GREATMAN.

Contributions are Earnestly and Pathetically Beseechd
in order to Maintain and Keep this Heap from
Becoming Worse than It Is.'

Some bold heretics, the native told me, had proposed that the roads might be considered as a necessity, and with advantage be managed on their hospital system; whereupon the priests raised an uproar condemning the speakers as enemies to Charity and the Religion of Susej, so that they were cast into prison."

And when the traveller had thus spoken he subsided into his chair and set about to fill his pipe, remarking with all the self-composure in the world, that the heretics might have saved themselves by standing on their heads while talking to the people.

G. E. W.

I know many wise men that fear to die; for the change is bitter, and flesh would refuse to prove it; besides, the expectation brings terror, and that exceeds the evil. But I do not believe that any man fears to be dead, but only the stroke of death.—*Bacon*.

How is one to learn to know one's self? Never through introspection, but through active work. Endeavor to do your duty, and you will readily enough get to know what is in you.—*Goethe*.

Do thine own work and know thyself.—*Plato*.

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, November 5, Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, All Saints', Manchester; at 3, "Oscar Wilde and Jesus Christ"; at 6.30, "Why the 'Yellow Monkeys' Won: an Object Lesson to Christians."

November 12, Liverpool; 19 and 26, Stanley Hall.
December 3, South Shields; 31, Leicester.

To Correspondents.

C. COHEN'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—Address, 241 High-road, Leyton, Essex.—November 5, Birmingham; 12, Stanley Hall, North London; 19, Coventry; 26, Manchester. December 3, Birmingham; 17, Forest Gate.

J. T. LLOYD'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—November 5, Glasgow; 19, Glasgow; 26, Neath, South Wales; December 3, Forest Gate; 10, Coventry.

R. MOORSLEY.—Pleased to hear you say that, although twelve months ago you looked upon Freethought literature as a wicked thing, you now regard it as the only sensible literature you know, and "look forward every Friday morning eagerly for the *Freethinker*." Glad to know, too, that you have found both amusement and edification in *Bible Romances*.

L. N.—We cannot reply to such letters by post. (1) It does not follow that there are not other good causes in the world because the *Freethinker* does not advocate them. We stick to our own special work in this journal. (2) We are not called upon to express any opinion on Socialism in the *Freethinker*. (3) The Christian era was not established by Jesus Christ. It was not even thought of until the best part of a thousand years after the alleged date of his birth. (4) If you wish to join the N. S. S. the secretary is the person to apply to, not the editor of this or any other journal.—As you say, it is odd that the Clerkenwell Free Library should boycott our *Bible Handbook*, which consists almost entirely of extracts from "Holy Writ."

J. D. A. (Penang).—Shall be sent as requested.

H. THOMAS.—Cuttings are always welcome.

J. HARRINGTON.—If you refer to the Bible, we should advise you to get *Bible Romances* (6d.) and the *Bible Handbook* (1s. 6d.), both from our publishing office. Postage would be 3d. extra on the two.

UNCONVERTED.—See "Acid Drops."

G. F. REA.—We noticed it in "Acid Drops" last week.

NORMAN MURRAY.—You will have seen that the correspondence you refer to was closed. How did you discover that Atheism is "a dogma"? Pray tell us. You say that there is a difference between Atheism and Agnosticism, but you do not state what it is. What is it? We hope the Freethought cause is progressing in Canada, though we do not observe any very optimistic reports in Mr. Ellis's paper, which reaches us occasionally from Toronto.

C. W. STYRING.—Thanks for cuttings.

C. J. ATKINSON.—Sorry we cannot find room for announcements of Sunday Society lectures. The *Freethinker* is a special paper with a special object.

W. P. BALL.—Thanks for your welcome cuttings.

W. BINDON.—The Rev. D. J. Hiley may be the most popular Baptist in Bristol, but his reference to George Eliot was that of a clerical hooligan. It is curious that the apostles of the religion which claims (falsely enough) to have invented "charity" are so prone to "all uncharitableness" when they descend from theory to practice.

H. TUCKER.—Thanks for copy of your fourth letter to Dr. C. A. Hingston, Dr. Torrey's host during the mission at Plymouth. Your letter ought to elicit a reply, but of course it will not. The fact is that only a few Christians are moral enough to object to lying and slander in the interest of their own faith. Dr. Torrey has nothing to fear from "leading" Christians, but our pamphlets and Mr. Stead's articles have done him a great deal of harm with the general public, besides making some Christians feel very sick. We thank you for all your trouble in the matter.

J. PARTRIDGE.—See "Sugar Plums." We hope Mr. Parsons' policy of protest will be infectious.

SECLARIST.—Thanks for your letter and cutting. See paragraph. No doubt the Manchester Secular Hall will be as full to-day (Nov. 5) as you hope to see it.

S. HUNT.—We agree with you that a Labor movement dominated by sentimentalists like Mr. T. D. Benson would never come to much good.

E. NEVILLE.—Sent as requested. Hope you will be able to get your friends to run over to Manchester with you to hear our lectures. We have not carefully examined the Harmsworth publications you refer to, but we have no doubt that they are well worth their price. *La Raison* is published at 30 Rue Montmartre, Paris.

H. L. HARRISON.—Your *jeu d'esprit* is amusing.

J. W. E. BENNETT.—Send us cuttings whenever the spirit moves you to do so. Thanks.

G. H. C.—"C. Agnostic's" letter in the *Hull Daily Mail* ought to do good. It is built on lines familiar to our own readers. If the Passive Resisters would, in their turn, distract upon and imprison Freethinkers for refusing to pay the Education rate under a law that suited the Nonconformists, they are arrant hypocrites.

F. A. DAVIES has removed from Himley-road, Tooting, to 58 Waleran-buildings, Old Kent-road, S.E. Branch secretaries, and others concerned, will please note.

W. W. GUNN.—Glad to hear you will offer a weekly copy of the *Freethinker* to the West Hartlepool Free Library. The letter you propose to send would be all the better for being entirely your own. We prefer to make no suggestion, and trust you will appreciate our motive.

H. R. CLIFTON.—Freethinkers do a much-needed and valuable service to the cause by writing careful letters from a Freethought point of view to their local newspapers.

ANTI-TORREY MISSION FUND.—H. R. C. 1s., A. Campbell 2s. 6d., A. S. 2s. 6d.

F. SHAW.—Thanks for the Bacon reference, although we were acquainted with it.

FRANK LEE.—Will read the enclosure and see whether it calls for any criticism from our pen.

MIDLANDER.—Mr. Robert Blatchford was given an opportunity of aiding the Secularists in their protest against the "index expurgatorius" of the Birmingham City Council—his own book, *God and My Neighbor*, being on the list of "offensive" publications. We regret his silence, while conscious that he may have his own reasons for it.

Several matters have to stand over till our next issue, in consequence of Mr. Foote's lack of time to deal with them. His visit to Newcastle consumed three days, which is a very large slice out of a 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.

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.

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.

Sugar Plums.

South Lancashire friends will note that Mr. Foote lectures at Manchester to-day (Nov. 5). His subjects are fresh and will doubtless prove attractive.

The Newcastle-on-Tyne Branch has been unable to secure a good hall for Sunday lectures during the past ten years. Occasional lectures have been delivered during that period at Gateshead, but these were never much more than a makeshift. Recently, however, an opportunity occurred of obtaining the use of the Lovaine Hall, and the Branch booked it for three successive Sundays, relying to some extent upon financial assistance from the Secular Society, Limited. Mr. Lloyd lectured on the first of these Sundays (Oct. 15), and gave great satisfaction to all who heard him, but unfortunately the wretched weather played havoc with his evening meeting. Mr. Cohen followed, and suffered from an unusually strong competition in the shape of some special Sunday evening attractions in the evening. This rather threw a damp upon the Branch, as Mr. Cohen is popular on the Tyneside. Happily there was a very decided rally when Mr. Foote lectured last Sunday. The committee looked cheerful when an excellent audience assembled in the afternoon, and quite delighted when the rain did not prevent a much larger audience from assembling in the evening. Only a few people went into the free seats; the great majority preferred to pay in the old-fashioned manner. Mr. Martin Weatherburn, a fine old veteran Freethinker, who occupied the chair in the evening, congratulated all concerned on the gratifying and encouraging attendance. A large party came over in a brake from Oxhill, bringing with them a baby girl, Edna Lyall White Johnston, whom Mr. Foote "named," amidst loud applause, before the second lecture. Two Freethinkers came all the way from West Hartlepool to hear the afternoon lecture and shake hands with Mr. Foote, and went back by the 5.30 train, the only one that would take them home again. A small party cycled in some twelve miles, and had to cycle back at night in the rain. Two others walked in eight miles, and had to walk the same distance back; indeed, it made Mr. Foote quite uncomfortable to think about them. Probably there were others in almost as bad a plight. Mr. and Mrs. Peacock and Mr. Chapman came from South Shields, and many "saints" from several other places whose names we failed to remember. It was what the Scotch would call "a gathering of the clans." Fortunately Mr. Foote was in first-rate trim, and his audiences were extremely enthusiastic. The Branch committee are now resolved to have more special lectures, and to carry on an active propaganda throughout the winter.

North London Freethinkers should note that Stanley Hall, Junction-road, close to the "Boston," has been engaged for three more Sunday evening lectures under the auspices of the Secular Society, Limited. Mr. Cohen leads off next Sunday (Nov. 12), and Mr. Foote takes the other evenings.

"Saints" who can assist by circulating printed announcements of these lectures are requested to communicate with the secretary, Miss E. M. Vance, at 2 Newcastle-street, E.C.

An excellent letter by "C. E. C." appeared in the *Birmingham Gazette* of October 24 censuring the action of the City Council, through the Estates Committee, in preventing the local Branch of the National Secular Society from selling or distributing its literature at its annual meeting in the Town Hall. This correspondent calls it plainly "a case of persecution" and denies that the Council is "entitled to single out any particular society" in this fashion. Right under "C. E. C.'s" letter is one by G. B. Cross, a rabid Christian, who was disgusted at finding it used by Free-thinkers. "We have stopped them in the Board schools," he says, "and why should they be allowed in the Town Hall?" On the whole we thank this gentleman for his letter too. He shows the cloven hoof which the Estates Committee tried to cover up. It is always well to realise what public acts mean, and what they must lead to.

Mr. Horace W. Parsons has sent the Birmingham Branch a cheque for £10 as a practical protest against the persecution to which the Branch has been and is still subjected. We hope other Freethinkers will copy so good an example.

An effort was made to obtain a hall for two nights during the last week of Dr. Torrey's mission at Plymouth, in order that Mr. Foote might visit the town and deliver two lectures, with a view to restarting Freethought propaganda there. Unfortunately the effort proved unsuccessful. The visit would, however, have put a heavy tax of work and travelling on Mr. Foote; so there is a certain consolatory aspect of the failure. Perhaps a visit to Plymouth on a Sunday may be possible in the near future.

The *Christian Commonwealth*, while praising Dr. Torrey's mission at Plymouth, admits that it has aroused "a great deal of criticism." "The sceptic," our contemporary says, "is also in evidence. The 'lying tracts,' as Dr. Torrey calls them, headed in bold letters *Guilty or Not Guilty*, are being distributed, and here and there may be seen gathered little groups of men who denounce the movement as a 'money-making business,' and only worthy of their contempt." Another supply of the "lying tracts" has been sent to Plymouth, and a thousand copies of the *Freethinker* for distribution at the final meetings.

A letter by Mr. H. R. Clifton on "Common-place Christianity" in the *Croydon Chronicle* drew forth an editorial article "cordially agreeing" with what he wrote. The article points out that men are ceasing to attend church, and that Christianity will have to change or die. We believe it will do both.

Mr. George Meredith, who is happily recovering from his late accident, contributed a fine Nelson poem to the *Outlook*, the first verse of which runs as follows:—

"Three hundred years have passed, and he
Whose name appeased a nation's fears,
As with a hand laid over sea;
To thunder through the foeman's ears
Defeat before his blast of fire
Lives in the immortality

That poets dream and noblest souls desire."

The last two lines show plainly, to all who have the sense to understand, what is Mr. Meredith's attitude towards the doctrine of a future life. We live in others after death—not in ourselves.

Mr. Victor Roger, seeing the statement in a monthly paper that an International Freethought Congress would be held in London in a year or two, wrote to M. Furnémont, secretary of the International Freethought Federation, asking whether there was any truth in this announcement. M. Furnémont has replied as follows: "Dear Sir and Comrade,—The Congress of International Freethought will be held in 1906, at Buenos Ayres; in 1907 at Budapest. It is the Congress at Budapest that will have the fixing of the next Congress. There is therefore, at the present moment, no question of a Congress in England. If the proposition is made it will have to be discussed at Budapest. Very fraternally yours, Leon Furnémont."

The Camberwell Branch, having closed a record season in the open air, resumes its "Freethought Parliament" to-day (Sunday) at 3 p.m.; when Mr. Gallagher opens with the subject "Is there a God?" to be followed by the usual open discussion. All those interested will be cordially welcomed, irrespective of belief. They may bring their pipes, and can be sure of an enjoyable afternoon under the most comfortable circumstances.

Why Christianity is Non-Essential to Civilisation.

HAVING clearly and deliberately decided in our first article that Christianity is in no sense whatever essential to Civilisation, judging alone, and at least, from the unique experience which for the year past has been placed so vividly and so powerfully before our very eyes by the magnificently moral example of Japan, in striking and significant contrast to the pitifully immoral part that has been taken by Russia, it will be both interesting and instructive to investigate the actual and comprehensible reason of this non-essentiality. Instructive, not only because of this novel and surprising experience, which, with swift and startling suddenness, has fallen like a bolt from the blue of the unexpected into the blind stolidity and conservatism of accepted Theological doctrines; nor again because of the fact that hitherto, and indeed even now, except among the small minority of the sane and rational intellectualities of the human race, morality has been, as it still is, looked on and considered to be the essential outcome of the Christian religion, without which in fact, Morality was deemed an utter impossibility. But because this very singular experience has given the lie and a flat contradiction to the prevailing fallacy, and in this practical and forcible way, has opened the eyes of those who are truthful and not mentally short-sighted, to the still more significant fact that while Religion is most indubitably an essential ethical factor, it is in no sense a mere human creed, a dogma, such for instance as Christianity with its sects innumerable; but an instinct that is born into man with the same protoplasmic germ, from which all his other instincts and tendencies have evolved and developed. And it is as we intend to show, because the Japanese have been true to themselves, that is, to nature in general, and to humanity in particular, while the Russians have been false to the very core, that the former have from the beginning up to now, emerged victorious and triumphant over the latter. For it is in the sincerity and substantiality of natural ways and means that we are enabled to perceive the ethical soundness and nobility of their actions, as compared to the rottenness, as well as to the subtler methods of their Christian adversaries. However humiliating the reading of truisms such as this may be to those other nations of Christendom—England and Germany for example—who consciously pride themselves on the superior altruism of their motives, it is all the more so, because of this very bitter truth. Indeed it is in this fact that the sting lies, more so almost than in the stinging reality itself. For the more we look into this important matter, the more we contrast and compare the qualities of the two races—and it is not even necessary to delve beneath the external surface into the internal psychology of motives—the more palpable does it become that in every sense, and from every standpoint, the Japanese have shown themselves a more moral, and a more highly civilised race. That Russia is a typically Christian country no one can deny, for as regards her people, Christianity is no novelty, but a creed that has held sway among them for close on ten centuries. Equally so, Shintoism, or the cult of the Ancestor, has administered and ruled over the Japanese from time immemorial. With what results, the events of the last decade, but especially of the past eighteen months, have demonstrated with a significance, as well as with a truly natural vengeance, not merely startling, but absolutely beyond the reach and expression of even the most intellectual eloquence.

Now it does not require any Psychological expert, or learned professor in the duplex art of Philosophy, to tell us that while in the case of Russia, the ethics of Christianity have been mainly, if not entirely, responsible for the development of the Civilisation, that has been thereto attained, a corresponding, but certainly not similar ethical force, has evidently done its work among the Japanese. Corresponding because

although until comparatively recently they were reckoned by western nations to be if not mere barbarians, a semi-civilised race at the very most, they have shown the world at large that no matter how or when they arrived at it, they are now in a condition of civilisation, which is not only equal to that of the presumably older civilisation, but which as we have seen has surpassed it at every point.

The methods, the dogmas, and the much vaunted ethics of Christianity, especially as they are practised by the divinely descended ruler, and the orthodox church of Russia, are too well known to us to need repetition. For in spite of its subtleties and the necessary concealment of its spiritual mysticisms, the true motives of its extremely materialistic operations have unconsciously unfolded themselves, as all human motives are bound to do when forced to the judgment bar of action and exposition. Because in spite of theological metaphysics, the mental or so called spiritual is but an abstract property or condition of matter—the conscious energy which can no more be without matter than matter can do without it. Waiving however to one side the question of superiority, let us see what force it is that has been productive of a civilisation, so systematically and conscientiously ethical, and so patiently and consistently dignified, as that which has been reached by Japan. By in fact a nation belonging to that hopeless East, which, according to so presumably prominent an authority as Mr. Rudyard Kipling, can never get into touch with the Christianised and therefore pre-eminently exclusive west.

To answer a question so seriously impressive as this in its entirety, or even with any degree of thoroughness, is of course impossible within the scope and limitations of an article such as this. But we will try to do so in as few and pithy words as possible. First of all however, it is essential for us to give the reader a clear and concise, yet luminous and comprehensive definition of natural religion, so that he may realise the basis of the position such as we conceive it to be from a perfectly natural aspect of it. Probed and analysed down to its very roots then natural religion is most undoubtedly a tendency which traceable as it is to those moral and social instincts that are inherent in the animal, is common to every man irrespective of any superficial differentiations of race, locality, degree, or color. So that to infer that because certain people do not profess creed or dogma of any kind, they are irreligious or without religion, is to give utterance to a palpable and absolute absurdity. For as man is himself a product of nature, so religion, as one of the mental abstractions of his organism—which can, however, be practically and substantially utilised for the good of himself and species—is also a part of him; an instinct, in fact, that is as much one with those primal instincts of self-preservation and reproduction as they in turn are one with the baffling and inscrutable mystery of all life. So that, in spite of any avowal of Agnosticism or Atheism—questions which are quite outside the mark—there can be, there is in fact, no such state as irreligion. For religion is natural and inevitable. While non-religion is unnatural and impossible. And it is from this natural religion that all our moral as well as all our immoral faculties—in other words, all that is good or of even balance, and all that is bad or uneven in us—have been derived; because it must be evident even to the blind that it is a destructive as well as a constructive force.

It is here then, in this fundamental and instinctive truth that we arrive at the foundation of Japan's success. For while the spiritual subtleties and mysticisms of Christian dogma have led Russia astray and inclined her people towards the lower and more destructive side of religion, Japan has, as we have previously remarked, been true to the unerring, or at least to the natural instincts of nature, and conserved all the best energies of her people in constructing, and consolidating the best interests of their country—*i.e.*, all which is nearest and most personal, therefore most valuable to them. It is only when we get

to the root of the matter that we are enabled to arrive at the truth, and the root of this specific issue, as of all living issues, whether human or animal, lies in the existence of the two radical principles of individual or national preservation and reproduction. It is therefore non-essential from the standpoint which we have taken up, namely, that of the humanitarian, whose principles are based on the highest, deepest, and broadest of motives to inquire into the social or religious antecedents of the Japanese race. It is, too, absolutely unnecessary to refer either to the eloquent work on "The Japanese Spirit," by Professor Okakura Yoshisaburo, or to the view taken by Mr. Sateri Kato, the editor of the *Anglo-Japanese Gazette*, in an article published in the *Daily Mail* of June 1, both of whom, as natives of Japan, have not only presented us with a graphic picture of the true ancestral spirit which animates their countrymen; but have shown us that the unprecedented rapidity of their progressive development, has been due entirely to certain fundamental causes. These in the order of their importance are, firstly, that as a nation they have been true to all that is best in nature, *i.e.*, to that side of her religion which is constructive; secondly, that not only in religion, but in everything appertaining to progress, they have studied practice and not profession; thirdly, because they have rejected the fallacies of Christianity but selected the truth—*i.e.*, all that is true in the science of the west. And in doing so, they have demonstrated to the world the sound common sense and wisdom of their choice, as we of the west who are broadminded and open-eyed humanitarians must readily admit. Because, too, as we know the knowledge—for we cannot call such puerile ignorance science—of theology, is some 1905 years old; in other words, completely antiquated and out of date. No wonder then that holy and Christian Russia has been so completely crushed by natural and ancestral Japan. For truth and justice as natural causes are bound to prevail, and ultimately reign supreme over fallacy and unrighteousness, as artificial forces which are on the wrong side of the balance.

The actions of the people speak for themselves, not alone the splendid virtue, nobility, and dignity that has been displayed by all classes, but above all the good form and feeling they have shown towards the enemy, who would have, if they could, taken their country from them—surely the supremest evidence of true humanity, as it is the greatest test of the highest civilisation! To speak therefore of "the Yellow Peril" in face of a humanity and a civilisation, so thoroughly natural and sublime, is sheer and unmitigated nonsense, and but compatible with the sanctimonious cant and hypocrisy of all Christianity—that Christianity which while it professes the fatherhood of God, and the brotherhood of man, has looked down from its own self assumed pinnacle of moral supremacy upon the east as inferior to, and altogether outside, the pale of the west, not merely because of the supposed inferiority of its religious dogmas, but because of its presumed inferiority of color and civilisation.

But in the case of Japan at all events this crude and unjust conception has at last been shattered by the victories of the yellow race over the white—of Pagans so-called, over Christians—and we who have the courage of our convictions, and are able to see and to speak the truth, have seen that the peril which has been in existence was a peril, not of the east, but of the God-loving Christian west.

It seems almost incredible that, in face of evidence so overwhelming and of an experience so absolutely incontrovertible as this, professing Christians can still possibly believe in the existence of a Being—surely Supreme no longer—who, with loud professions that he is a God of love, has demonstrated to the world that he is, after all, not simply a God of war, but an inhuman monster, who revels in the blood of inoffensive and innocent human beings—a God, moreover, who has proved himself, in the case of Russia, a broken reed of human pretensions and falsehood, who has fallen from the vaunted high

estate and pedestal of Divine supremacy beneath the vigorous blows of true and honest men.

It is fortunate, however, for civilisation that this aggressive and inhuman monster has been effectually crushed. For now that peace has been made, humanity will find that it is in the progressive and constructive element of the Japanese character lies the surest guarantee and the most potential factor for the expansion and development of civilisation which has as yet been known or felt in the history of human progress—a factor which, as the far-sighted have already discovered, most fortunately for humanity, possesses none of the unnatural and fallacious elements of Christianity. It is evident, then, why Christianity is a non-essential factor to the progress of civilisation. Because, in a word, it is but the individual expression or dogma of a mere and irrational human fraction that is based on an abstract conception of perverted principles which are opposed to the basic instincts of ancestral adoration and veneration that is the true and natural outcome of all true religion.

ARTHUR G. LEONARD.

Ernst Haeckel at Home.

By W. W. WHITELOCK.

(From the "New York Times.")

MORE unreserved than Darwin himself in his acceptance of Darwinism, more logical than Wallace in its application and development, Prof. Ernst Haeckel of the University of Jena stands to-day, and has stood for many years, as the chief figure in Germany about which has raged the storm raised by the theory of evolution. The excitement, it is true, which greeted the promulgation of the new doctrine has in great part subsided, yet enough of the old bitterness still remains to render him at times the object of the most violent attacks, not only of a scientific, but also of a personal nature. Each of his many books on the subject of man's ascent from a lower plane has been greeted with a chorus of derision and anger so strong as to bear conclusive evidence to the importance of the work. Especially has this been the case with *The Riddle of the Universe*, which appeared in Germany five years ago, and in a cheap English translation three years later. Of this book in England alone more than 100,000 copies have been sold, from which an idea may be formed of the influence which it has exerted upon contemporary thought. Briefly it may be described as an attempt to popularise and render comprehensible to the masses the results of scientific investigation along various lines during the past century, especially as bearing on religion and man's relation to the other animate inhabitants of the globe. In view of the nature of the controversy, it was to be expected that the author's opponents would greet the book with the cry of "unscientific." Nor is the charge unjustified if under the term scientific is to be understood, necessarily, specialised. Professor Haeckel has written so many "scientific" books that he may well smile at this attempt of his enemies to render him ridiculous. Unlike most scientists, he believes in popularising the results of his investigations.

Externally, at least, the life of the discoverer of the moneres has been, professorily, an ideal one. In the year 1861, just previous to the appearance of his first important contribution to science, *A Monograph of the Radiolari*, he settled in Jena as private docent, or tutor, in zoology, and to-day, forty-three years later, he is to be found on the same spot still actively engaged in disseminating knowledge of his chosen branch. These forty-three years of uninterrupted toil represent a total of achievement such as few men, even in Germany, can boast of at the close of their career. Even to transcribe a list of the books and monographs which in this time have issued from his pen, would be a labor of some moment.

"I shall be glad to see you any morning in the Zoological Institute in Jena," Professor Haeckel had written, in answer to my request to be allowed to call, "between the hours of eight and one."

Accordingly, one beautiful morning in September I entered the train at Weimar, the Athens of Germany and the depository of the dearest intellectual memories of the nation, and proceeded by the little branch line through the charming valley which stretches between the two ancient cities. Memories of Goethe and Schiller and Napoleon were in the air. Along yonder white road I seemed to see the stalwart figure of "the Sage of Weimar" trudging sturdily onward

toward the fifteen-miles-distant Jena to attend a lecture on anatomy at an hour when men years younger were still idly slumbering. About the base of yonder hill, beyond the modern town, had struggled the armies of France and Germany, to the undoing of the latter, while immovable on his white charger had sat the victor of Marengo and Wagram directing the movements of his indomitable troops. Even at the time when this contest was taking place, Schiller had already descended into an untimely grave, and, like Keats, had left ungleamed the treasures of his "teeming brain." A vision of the peaceful garden hidden in the labyrinth of houses rose before me, in which above the little table hangs suspended the tablet inscribed with the simple words from Goethe's pen: "Here lived Schiller. By this table we have often sat and exchanged many a pregnant word." Fit spot, surely, for other intellectual triumphs, though of a different nature.

Professor Haeckel accords with one's conception of the man formed from a perusal of his book—save in one particular. Inevitably a work of the nature of *The Riddle of the Universe* manifests a certain didactic tendency, whereas of the man himself the reverse must be predicated. Unusual modesty characterises him, and only from other sources did I learn of his facility with brush and pencil, as shown in the illustrations of many of his own books, and of the fact that the 400 pages of the *Report on the Siphonophora Collected by H.M.S. "Challenger,"* which appeared in 1888, was written by the author directly in English. Physically he does not betray his seventy years, and as I watched him spring up the stairs, two at a time, it was difficult to realise that I was dealing with the celebrated professor and author. For German professors, as a rule, less perhaps even than their confreres of other countries, are not given to undignified haste in gaining either their physical or intellectual goal. The day of my visit was a busy time for Professor Haeckel, although the doors of the university were closed and his colleagues were in the mountains or by the sea recuperating from their past labors. But not so the Professor of Zoology. The proof sheets of his forthcoming book had arrived, and he and his faithful academic attendant, who glories in the ancient title of *Famulus*, like the Wagner of "Faust," were in the throes of preparing the index to the new work.

"I hope I don't disturb you, Herr Professor," I said, by way of preliminary. "I might just as well have come some other time."

"My dear Sir," was the laughing reply, "you would disturb me at no matter what time you might come. But come up on the roof, and I will show you the town and mountains."

Accordingly we proceeded to climb the ladder to the roof, and from this vantage point my cicerone pointed out the various objects of interest, while quoting here a verse from Schiller, here from Goethe, bearing on what lay before us.

"My greetings to thee, blue encircled mount.' You remember that is the beginning of Schiller's poem, 'The Walk,' in which he addresses yonder mountain. Think of the thousands of years required for the building of such a mountain. It is entirely of coral formation, and in a year the growth would scarcely be perceptible. Scientists are by no means agreed as to the length of the world's existence, but a conservative estimate places it at twelve million years. A great deal can take place in that time, you know.

The chief characteristic of those scientific minds which rise above the plane of mere chronicling is imagination; we might perhaps venture also to include a sense of humanity, a feeling of akinness with the rest of their fellows. Both of these qualities belong to the author of the *Monograph of the Radiolari* and *General Morphology*, as discordant as they may seem with such works. The result is an immediate sense of ease and possible comradeship, which renders light the task of the interviewer.

Ernst Heinrich Haeckel was born in Potsdam, near Berlin on Jan. 16, 1834, but his early youth was spent in Merseburg, near Cassel, whither his father's juristical duties led him. The lad's education was that common to the youth of his class in Germany, and from the gymnasium he proceeded to the university to hear lectures on medicine, in deference to his father's wish, yet, by no means to the neglect of his then favorite subject, botany. Finally, in 1857, after a peripatetic apprenticeship at various universities, in the manner of German students, he received the degree of Doctor of Medicine and settled in Berlin for the practice of his profession. To judge of the seriousness of his intentions it is only necessary to mention the fact that the hour from five to six in the morning was selected as his consultation hour. The result was, as the whilom physician quaintly remarked, that none of his patients died. As a matter of fact, their number was limited to three. The outcome of this half-hearted experiment was as easy to foresee as that of Thackeray as a follower of law, and shortly afterward we find Haeckel in Italy engaged in the zoological investigations which were quickly to render him favorably known in scientific circles. The result of these labors was

the migration to Jena and the definite adoption of zoology as the line of his professional activity. A conception of the affluence thereby achieved may be formed from the fact that even after the creation of the Professorship of Zoology, the salary of the new intendant was 500 thalers, or about \$375 yearly. In fact, proofs are not lacking to indicate a regrettable lack of worldly wisdom on the part of the world-famous teacher of zoology—from the sales of the entire edition of the *Riddle of the Universe* not a single cent has found its way into the pocket of the author. Further, the immense labor of preparing the various "reports" included in the volumes treating of the *Challenger* expedition was without other reward than that which is said to attend virtue.

The most interesting fact connected with the university career of Professor Haeckel was his relation to the renowned pathologist Virchow, who forty-five years ago was astounding the world with his lectures on cellular pathology. Virchow's reputation had drawn Haeckel to Wurzburg, and the relation between pupil and teacher rapidly developed into one of intimacy, Haeckel eventually coming to fill the position of assistant to him. The relationship thus established, however, was without permanence, as the views of Virchow on the bearing of religion and science gradually underwent a radical change, leading him far from the standpoint of his youth and into opposition to Darwinism. To quote the words of Professor Haeckel on the subject of Virchow's "apostasy," "According to Virchow's former conviction, life is only a higher form of mechanism, and man merely a higher vertebrate organism."

Better than this it is impossible concisely to define the so-called monistic doctrine as but slight thought is needed to show the conclusions to which this theory inevitably leads. The most extreme consequences thereof have held no terror for Professor Haeckel from the moment when, in 1863, he arose as one of Darwin's first defenders in Germany, down to the present day, when he stands as the uncompromising champion of man's descent from the higher apes and the opponent of the so-called "dualistic" philosophy, which holds possible the separation of flesh and spirit, and, by inference, the existence of pure spirit. These teachings have drawn upon him the sobriquet of the "ape professor."

"Personally," I said to Professor Haeckel in the course of our conversation, "I have never grasped the meaning of the 'missing link.' I fail to see the significance of the term."

"There is none," was the reply, "it is an expression coined by the opponents of evolution to throw obloquy on the doctrine. One only needs to compare the human skeleton with that of the higher apes to see the similarity: the same bones are there in each case, only arranged in slightly different relationship. But if they demand a missing link they need only go to the skeleton of the man-ape discovered by Dubois in Java in 1892. This creature must have stood directly half way on the plane between the lower human races and the higher species of monkey."

It is the open advocacy of such theories which has cost Professor Haeckel many a battle in the past and at times even threatened his tenure of office in the university. True, however, to the teachings of his house, which had been the protector of Goethe, Schiller, and Herder, the former Grand Duke Carl Alexander consistently refused to give ear to those who sought to displace this thorn in their flesh.

"You do less harm here than anywhere else," said the curator of the university on one occasion to Haeckel when the latter had offered to resign; "so just remain quietly where you are."

A colored clergyman asked Samuel Johnson, one of his congregation, "Whar is de Lord?" and Sam said he didn't know. So he told Sam the Lord was everywhere. Shortly afterwards he met Sam on the street, and asked him, "Whar is de Lord?" Sam replied, "My! Am he lost again?"

Here's freedom to him that wad read,
Here's freedom to him that wad write;
There's nane ever feared that the truth should be heard
But them wham the truth wad indite.

—Burns.

The philosopher Antisthenes, as the priest was initiating him in the mysteries of Orpheus, telling him that those who profest themselves of that religion were certain to receive perfect and eternal felicities after death; "if thou believest that," answered he, "Why dost not thou die thyself?"

—Montaigne.

The one enemy we have in the Universe is Stupidity,
Darkness of Mind.—Carlyle.

Correspondence.

LINGERING DOUBTS.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—It has taken me a long time to make up my mind to trouble you with a few of the difficulties which, as a young Freethinker, I encounter in sticking up for my views; but at last I do so, fully believing in your willingness to enlighten me, if you have the time and space to do so, though the difficulties under which I labor may seem childish to you, and be only the result of my ignorance. I am twenty-five years of age, and for the last eight or nine years—indeed, ever since I became old enough to think seriously of anything—I have thought much of religious matters, and spent much time in seeking for the truth; and, after much thinking, doubting, and anxious inquiry, I feel now that the mist is gradually rolling away, and serious doubt troubles me no longer. I am no longer a believer in the doctrines and teaching of orthodox Christianity, but find happiness and satisfaction in belonging to the ever-increasing band of Agnostics; but when arguing with some of my orthodox friends—I feel that there is a great deal of truth in the boast which they make that Christianity is a strong agent in raising the ethical standard of the community, and in alleviating distress and poverty; and I can't help feeling that Rational, Freethought, and Ethical Societies do not do so much to uplift their fellows who have sunk low in immorality and wickedness. For instance, living in Wales, the "Revival" is continually pointed out to me as an example of Christianity raising the people. Of course, I feel ashamed as a Welshman that my fellow-countrymen spend their evenings in chapels and halls, shrieking and praying for mercy like a lot of lunatics; but I know that, as a result of the Revival, many thoroughly degraded people have changed in character and are living clean lives, drunkards have become sober men, and debts incurred years ago and not attended to have been paid by people who have been elevated in morals. In face of these facts one is bound to admit that, although mischief has been wrought, much solid advance from the ethical standpoint must also be recorded. Again, I believe that slum work, for example, in the East End of London, where libraries, recreation rooms, etc., are provided, is almost entirely carried on by Christian communities. Take, again, "General" Booth and his Salvation Army, with their theatrical devices and objectionable methods of attracting people. Can it be denied that through their instrumentality people of the lowest type have been converted into useful citizens, and by its shelters and homes the Salvation Army has, and is still, doing a noble work in administering to the physical wants of the poor? Salvation Lasses are also sometimes to be seen in conversation with some of their fallen sisters in the West End, trying to wean them away from a life of shame and degradation. The same sort of thing is being done in our police-courts by the missionary who is in attendance there. Now, is there much of this kind of work carried on by Agnostics? Have Agnostic Societies any places in the slums, where men and women labor on behalf of their unfortunate fellows? Do they send workers to haunts of vice, to try to save someone from shame and misery? Have they shelters to administer to the temporal needs of the poverty-stricken public? I write this letter in a true spirit of inquiry, and, though it is clumsily worded, I hope my difficulties are apparent. If what I say is wrong, I should like to be corrected; but if what I say is substantially correct, it would be a great help to me to hear some explanation given for these facts by a responsible member of the Freethought community. I must apologise for writing such a long letter, and not being able to express myself in a more concise manner. In conclusion, I should like to express my gratitude as a constant reader of the *Freethinker* for the instructive reading it provides and for the help which it has been to me personally in freeing myself from superstition and enabling me to enjoy freedom of thought in religious as well as in all other matters.

D. T. L.

[This correspondent gives his full name and address. As he appears to be a medical student, we have eliminated both, and only left his initials at the end of his communication. The headline is our own. We have dealt with his letter in another column.—EDITOR.]

Man, at this day, tends to fall into the stomach; man must be replaced in the heart, man must be replaced in the brain. The brain—this is the bold sovereign that must be restored. The social question requires to-day, more than ever, to be examined on the side of human dignity.—Victor Hugo.

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.

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S. (North Camberwell Hall, New Church-road): Freethought Parliament, 3, Louis B. Gallagher, "Is There a God?" Discussion invited.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Liberal Hall, Broadway, Forest Gate, E.): 7.30, F. A. Davies, "The Nonconformist Fetish."

OUTDOOR.

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

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S.: Station-road, 11.30, Louis B. Gallagher, "Ingram and Infidelity: a Criticism."

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Prince of Wales Assembly Rooms, Broad-street): C. Cohen, 3, "Breaking the Idols"; 7, "The New Religion of the Future." Thursday, Nov. 9, Coffee House, Bull Ring, at 8, A. Barber, "Shelley."

FAIRSWORTH SECULAR SUNDAY SCHOOL (Pole-lane): 6.30, Quarterly Meeting.

GLASGOW BRANCH N. S. S. (110 Brunswick-street): Joseph McCabe, 12 noon, "Social Progress in Religious Decay"; 6.30, "The Evolution of Man" (II.). With Limelight Illustrations.

GLASGOW RATIONALIST AND ETHICAL ASSOCIATION (319 Sauchiehall-street): Monday, November 6, Miss Pettigrew, "Women and Progress."

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, William Archer, "The Canterbury Pilgrims." With Lantern Illustrations.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N. S. S. (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): H. Percy Ward, 3, "Martyrs for Freethought"; 7, "The Wickedness of God." A General Meeting of members will be held after the evening lecture.

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Rusholme-road, Oxford-road, All Saints): G. W. Foote, 3, "Oscar Wilde and Jesus Christ"; 6.30, "Why the 'Yellow Monkeys' Won: an Object Lesson to Christians." Tea at 5.

MOUNTAIN ASH BRANCH N. S. S. (Workmans' Institute, Lesser Hall): Thursday, Nov. 9, at 7.30, Important Business Meeting.

NEWCASTLE RATIONALIST LITERARY AND DEBATING SOCIETY (Lockhart's Cathedral Cafe): Thursday, Nov. 9, at 8, A. L. Coates, "Leo Nicolaievich Tolstoi."

PORTH BRANCH N. S. S. (Room, Town Hall, Porth): 6.30, F. Bennett, "From Christian to Secular Platform."

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