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All that is highest in wisdom entwines around all that is purest in love.—MÆTERLINCK.

Haeckel's Farewell.

Last Words on Evolution: a Popular Restrospect and Summary.
By Ernst Haeckel, Professor at Jena University. Translated
from the second edition by Joseph McCabe. With portrait and
three plates. London: A. Owen & Co.

HAECKEL'S three Berlin lectures on Evolution, here called his last words on the subject, are naturally of great importance; not as containing anything very new, but as expressing his ripe and final judgment on the greatest questions in religion and philosophy, considered from a scientific point of view. Mr. Joseph McCabe, who translated the *Riddle of the Universe* so admirably, has brought his scholarly powers to bear upon the task of introducing this valuable book to English readers; and Messrs. Owen & Co. have produced it in a handsome form at what, we suppose, is in the circumstances the reasonable price of six shillings. We should add that the portrait of Haeckel, which serves as frontispiece, is a remarkably fine one, and is in itself worth a good part of the cost of the volume.

These will be Haeckel's last deliverances to the world. He is old, his health is enfeebled, and he assures his English translator that he "is now condemned to remain a passive spectator of the tense drama in which he has played so prominent a part for half a century." But he has done his work, and given the age his thoughts, and he will not be removed from his place in the intellectual history of mankind, either by the cunning manoeuvres of the Jesuits or by the sneers and insults of the whipper-snappers of Protestant apologetics.

When these Berlin lectures were delivered the news was flashed from the capital of Germany to the whole civilised world that Haeckel himself had capitulated to the special-creationists and theologians. This might have been a telegraphic blunder, but Haeckel thinks otherwise. At first he believed that a reporter had blundered, but he was "afterwards informed from Berlin that the false message was probably due to a deliberate corruption by some religious person who thought to render a service to his faith by this untruth." Such lying for the glory of God and the honor of the Church has been too common to excite surprise in the present instance. Haeckel understands this well enough, and he warns Freethinkers against placing any trust in the champions of Faith. More than once he calls the Pope "the charlatan of the Vatican." He points out that all Churches strive to keep the schools under their power, because "they can control and exploit the adults at will, if independent thought and judgment have been stifled in the earlier years." Never has he joined, nor will he join, the "amiable group of 'men of compromise,'" for he has contracted an invincible habit of "giving candid and straightforward expression" to his convictions. The trimmers in Germany are of the same breed as the trimmers in England. They have cast their petty gibes at the Achilles of German Freethought—as though their feeble cries could drown his mighty shout in the trenches. "If," he says to those who listen to such men—"If I seem

to be a tactless and inconsiderate 'fighter,' I pray you to remember that 'conflict is the father of all things,' and that the victory of pure reason over current superstition will not be achieved without a tremendous struggle." Brave and wise words! And as much needed in England as ever they are in Germany.

Haeckel sees reaction gaining ground in the land of Goethe and Schiller and Heine and Strauss. He refers to its increase "in higher circles," to the "growing audacity of intolerant orthodoxy," to the "preponderance of Ultramontanism," to the danger to "freedom of thought in the university and the school," to the subtle falseness with which the Church seeks "to enter into peaceful compromise with its deadly enemy, Monistic science," to the way in which "the Reichstag and the Government vie with each other in smoothing the path for the Jesuits," to the Emperor's hobnobbing with "the fanatical Bishop Benzler, who declared that a Christian cemetery was desecrated by the interment of a Protestant," and to his flouting the Schiller centenary at Strassburg and holding a military parade in the vicinity. It is possible, of course, that Haeckel may consider the prospect worse than it is; on the other hand, he may be uttering a true prophet's warning; but this at least is certain, that those who trust to an abstract evolution, without human effort, to achieve a victory for truth and freedom, and reason and justice, are basking in a most contemptible fool's paradise.

These lectures on Evolution were delivered by special request, and in order to assist in stemming the tide of reaction. For this reason they were made as popular as possible by their delivery in the Academy of Music, where Humboldt, seventy-seven years earlier, had delivered the remarkable lectures that afterwards made up his *Cosmos*.

The special value of these lectures to Freethinkers, and their chief importance to the world generally, lies in their reiteration of Haeckel's views with regard to the bearing of evolution on "the three great questions of personal immortality, the freedom of the will, and the personality of God." This is done in the third lecture; the first being mainly historical, and the second devoted to a clear and masterly summary of the biological evidences of man's real place in the universe.

Haeckel urges that the old idea of "dead matter" is scientifically done for, and that all living plasm has a psychic life, even in the vegetable world. In this he agrees with the late Professor Clifford, who held that "matter stuff" and "mind stuff" always go together, however they may be separated in human thought. A fully formed nervous system is not found in many of the lower animals, or in any of the plants; yet, Haeckel observes, we "find psychic activities, especially sensation, irritability, and reflex action everywhere." But this only shows more convincingly than ever that man's life is but a part of the general life of the world. And if man's life, including his psychic life, belongs to the same category as all others, it shares the common destiny. On this point Haeckel does not mince matters. "When the brain dies," he says, "the soul comes to an end."

The belief in personal immortality lingers for two reasons; first, the great power of conservative

tradition—second, the perversion of the youthful mind through education. "It is for that very reason," Haeckel says, "that the Churches strive to keep the schools under their power at any cost." And he declares, with a Voltairean lift of the eyebrows, that the leaders of Conservative governments, who strive to keep the people under the dominion of "revelations," have no belief in these inspired systems themselves, but look upon them as the natural policy of the old alliance between altar and throne.

The doctrine of free-will is also inconsistent with the truth of evolution. The will is determined by the organisation of the brain, and "this in turn is determined in its individual character by the laws of heredity and the influence of the environment." The truth of determinism was established long ago. That it is not yet generally accepted is due to the old religion and sociology, which deceive the people to prolong their empire.

With these two false doctrines is associated the belief in a personal God, which is "an open or covert anthropomorphism." God is, after all, only an idealised man. God is said to have made man, but the truth is that man made God. "The childish conceptions of this extramundane God, who is set over against the world as an independent being, the personal creator, maintainer, and ruler of all things, are quite incompatible," Haeckel says, "with the advanced science of the nineteenth century, especially with its two greatest triumphs, the law of substance and the law of Monistic evolution." Nor is this belief in a personal God necessary as its champions pretend, except to those who are incapable of science and art. To them it may still be useful, as it is all that they can understand.

No doubt the tricksters of faith will make the most of Haeckel's concluding sentence that: "The will of God is at work in every falling drop of rain and every growing crystal, in the scent of the rose and the spirit of man." They will forget to tell their dupes that this poetical statement must be read in the light of the practical exposition which precedes it. Haeckel has rejected the idea of a personal God. He has identified God with "natural law itself." He has treated "God" as synonymous with "the all-embracing essence of the world," as "identical with the eternal, all-inspiring energy," and as "one in eternal and infinite substance with space-filling matter." So that Haeckel is a Monist still, and as hostile as ever to the supernaturalism of the theologians.

G. W. FOOTE.

Dr. Horton on Miracles.

ONCE every month the Rev. R. F. Horton, ex-president of the Free Church Council, delivers a Sunday evening lecture in place of the customary sermon. The distinction is probably to warn the people that they must be prepared for something extra-thoughtful and illuminating; and one may also take it that, from an intellectual point of view, Dr. Horton is here seen at his best. The last lecture delivered by Dr. Horton bore the title "Miracles Do Happen," and he has a quite characteristic way of stating his case. A man of an extremely limited outlook and narrow views, his statements are usually marked by exaggeration. When, for instance, he is dealing with unbelievers, he declares that all of them should be ostracised from human society. When contrasting China and England, he lays down the startling and amusing law that the whole difference between the two peoples is the difference of their religion. When he is dealing with Roman Catholicism, that is the one great enemy to England's prosperity; and when he discusses why it is that people have so little faith in Christianity, his answer is, Because they drink intoxicating liquors—all of which is very amusing from one point of view, but depressing from another, because so many people seem to take this gentleman seriously.

His defence of miracles is, therefore, typical of the man. Most people are content to argue that miracles may possibly occur somewhere, and to an individual here and there. Dr. Horton will have none of this. He says miracles happen everywhere, to everybody; and the "dogma" that miracles do not happen was "in direct contradiction to the experience of almost every person who accepted it." The statement that miracles do not happen might have done for the "unthinking times thirty years ago"; but things are altered now. Again a characteristic piece of extravagance. Thirty years ago these "unthinking times" were dominated by poor weaklings like Darwin, Spencer, Huxley, Tyndall, and their fellow-workers. It is true that Dr. Horton was not then a leading preacher, but it is unphilosophical to blame such unthinking individuals as those named because they did not live at a later date when they might have hied them to 'Appy 'Ampstead to master more accurate methods of thinking at the feet of its brilliant preacher.

From these "unthinking times" Dr. Horton turns to the task of showing how very common miracles are. His first statement is that the things described in Scripture as miracles are not isolated occurrences, but occur at other times and elsewhere. "They can all be paralleled." Of course, in one sense, this is true. It would be easy, for instance, to show that all the miracles in the Christian mythology are related in other mythologies, and are believed on exactly the same evidence. But Dr. Horton does not mean this. What he means is that the events described in the Bible as miraculous can be met with elsewhere, occurring in the normal life of the people. It would have been really interesting to hear of the people who treated as normal occurrences flights to heaven in fiery chariots, or the feeding of some thousands of people with food enough for about a dozen, and having more left at the finish than at the start; but Dr. Horton is seized with unusual modesty, and gives us only two or three illustrations.

We are first of all referred to the third chapter of Joshua, where the waters of Jordan ceased to flow, so as to enable the Jewish priests to walk across the river dryshod. Now, says Dr. Horton, I have a quotation from an Arabian historian describing the stoppage of the Jordan at exactly the same place; and he is as certain of the truth of the story as he was of the tale about an Episcopalian clergyman which he had to apologise for only the other day. The Arabs were building a bridge in 1268, and one of its pillars became insecure. The force of the current threatened the safety of the whole structure, when suddenly the water ceased to flow. And the historian gives the cause. The water had undermined a big bank overhanging the river, the mass of earth had fallen, and the course of the stream was diverted. And this, says Dr. Horton, is the parallel to the story of Joshua! Now putting aside all else, if Dr. Horton reads again the story in Joshua, he will find the waters "stood and rose up upon a heap," while the Arab account says the waters flowed along elsewhere. There is truly nothing wonderful in a river's course being choked for a time; but water that piles itself up in a heap is a phenomenon that will not obtain credence on any slighter grounds than Dr. Horton's assurance that it is so. Besides, if the story in Joshua is merely a distortion of a similar event to that which is said to have happened in the year 1216, it becomes either an imposture worked by those who knew or a piece of ignorance perpetuated by those who didn't.

The other illustration is connected with Elijah's bringing rain in a time of drought. Last September the Punjab, India, was suffering from a drought. But on the 10th of September an enormous crowd of Mohammedans offered "soulful, heaven-moving prayers" for two "passionate" hours for rain. And on the Sunday night it commenced to fall in heavy, monsoon-like showers. And this is, according to Dr. Horton, an exact parallel to the story recorded of Elijah, although his was only one of a series of tricks designed to show the superiority of Elijah

to the prophets of Baal. The utter childishness of such stories—although characteristic of a man who believes that God specially directed him to find a lady's shoe in Norway—is so complete as to almost baffle criticism. And when he caps this with a further "proof" in the shape of rain falling after a missionary had been praying for it in China, one is left gasping and wondering what it is that the congregation of Lydhurst Road Church have their heads stuffed with in place of what is usually found in one's cranium.

For to point out that people often pray for rain and it does not come, would avail nothing. Dr. Horton would say it did then. To ask why crops were permitted to go to ruin and lives lost before the rain was sent, would be to get the reply that one cannot always unravel the ways of Providence. And to say that if these Mohammedans in India with "soulful" prayers can really bring rain when it is needed they must be a mighty careless lot not to see that the rainfall in India is better, would be to call down on one the charge of irreverence. Yet the criticism would be both sober and justifiable. If these miracles can be worked, they should be worked. And if they are not, then the responsibility rests with those who have the power but refuse to exercise it.

Dr. Horton says it is quite scientific to believe in miracles, but it is unscientific to say with Professor Huxley, "Let us have a day of prayer to see whether God can answer prayer in healing the sick in hospitals." He says, "You do not make experiments of that kind." True, but why not? If prayers can dam rivers, bring rain, and, in Dr. Horton's own case, find a lady's missing shoe, why cannot it heal the sick in hospital? More, Dr. Horton would advise people to pray for the recovery of a sick friend or relative, and if they recovered would proclaim their recovery as a direct answer to prayer. But if it can be tried in the case of one individual, why not in the case of a number? And if it is good in the case of people at home, why not also of those in hospital? The only objection to it is that it is an experiment, and Dr. Horton, like others of his kind, has a strong objection to anything that would offer a clear proof one way or the other. What he prefers is to let people keep on praying, and if it rains after they pray, or if someone recovers from a sickness after they are prayed for, proclaim these as definite disproofs of unbelief. Even the unthinking times of thirty years ago could realise that by counting the hits and ignoring the misses one could prove anything. And this much ought to be clear to such an acute and penetrating intellect as that of Dr. Horton.

Finally, to thoroughly discountenance Huxley's "ridiculous assertion" that miracles do not happen, Dr. Horton falls back upon the old and stupid case of George Müller of Bristol. Müller, he says, raised hundreds of thousands of pounds by prayer alone. He never asked anybody for a farthing, and never advertised for it. The stupidity of the assertion is staggering. Suppose George Müller had shut himself up in a room, said nothing to anyone, given no one his address, how much would he have raised? Why he might have prayed in this fashion for a life-time without raising a farthing. Müller didn't ask anyone for money, but he let everyone know that he was not going to ask anyone, and kept the fact advertised that he would not advertise for charity. Why even a local preacher might be expected to see through so flimsy a pretence as this.

In the middle of his address Dr. Horton gives a definition of a miracle that suggests far more than he imagines. A miracle, he says, is an effect produced upon our minds by the action of the Divine Spirit so that it becomes an evidence to us of the character or will of God. Delete the action of the "Divine Spirit," and there is some truth in the statement. In miracles man has always seen the direct action of God in answer to his prayers or as the result of his actions. And so long as he is honest about the matter he always will see this. But honesty of belief in miracles is only consonant with ignorance. The more man knows of nature the less possible

miracles become. Possibility is merged in necessity. What can happen does happen, and the deeper man's search extends, the clearer becomes the chain of inevitable causation. The truth of this is seen in the simple fact that people outgrow the belief in miracles, not so much from the result of reasoning as from the result of insensible mental evolution. Natural happenings are only evidences of Divine action so long as we are ignorant of the conditions of their occurrence. When our ignorance goes our belief goes also. What we then have to deal with is shufflings, evasions, false professions, in a word, apologetic sermons that convince none who do not already believe, disgust even some of these, and bring a smile of contempt to the lips of all other intelligent men and women.

C. COHEN.

"The Differentia of Christianity."

HERE is another plea for orthodoxy. It is Number 22 of *Essays for the Times*, and its author, the Rev. John Robson, D.D., of Edinburgh, is a well-known champion of sound doctrine. Dr. Robson has published several other works, chief among which, perhaps, is *The Holy Spirit the Paraclete*. This divine differs from most others of the same school in his attitude to Pagan religions. He declares that the recent publication in the West of the Sacred Books of the East has rendered it impossible to cherish the conviction, once so fondly and confidently held, that Christianity is the only true and divinely inspired religion. Time was, Dr. Robson tells us, when "if great truths were met with in other religions they were looked upon as evidences of their indebtedness to the Biblical revelation," or when "the very stories of Greek and Roman mythology were treated as reminiscences of the Old Testament narratives." Our author frankly acknowledges that "such apologetics are impossible now." This proves that even the narrowest and most literal orthodoxy is bound to move a little with the times. Dr. Robson continues: "The mists that used to hang over the religions of the world have lifted: we have seen that they include not only barren wastes and pestilent swamps, but that in them there are airy uplands and lofty mountains which rise well towards heaven. Their principal Sacred Books have been translated—books whose inspiration is believed in by those who accept them as firmly as that of the Bible is believed in by Christians, and which contain many great religious and moral truths that were once considered the exclusive teaching of Christianity." Had Dr. Robson lived a few hundred years earlier he would probably have suffered martyrdom as a dangerous heretic.

But having made such a candid admission our author proceeds at once to qualify it. He has no sympathy with those who "are ready to say with the late Mr. Jowett that Christianity is coming to be one of many religions," nor can he endorse the view of those who "would give it superiority only in degree, as teaching the same essential truths as other religions, but with a far greater fulness and purity." Dr. Robson's own doctrine is that "a knowledge of the religions of the world" will make it quite manifest that "Christianity is the only religion suited for all the world." "It will be seen," he contends, "that it alone is possessed of truths and principles which are needful to make it the religion suited for all mankind." When we come to examine it carefully we discover that this doctrine involves God in a policy of rank injustice and cruel partiality. Hinduism, Buddhism, Mithraism, Zoroastrianism—all the great religions of the world contain "many great religious and moral truths," but they also lack other "truths and principles which are needful to make a religion suited for all mankind." Now, whose fault is it that the religions of the world lack essential truths and principles? If God gave such religions, why did He not make them complete and all-sufficient? On what ground of justice and fair

play could He inspire into being only one absolutely perfect and universal religion? Dr. Robson regards Christ as God, and this is what he says of him in this connection:—

“He saw that the nations were seeking after God in ways of their own—often terribly dark and fatal ways—but that very fact was an evidence that there was among them a craving which needed to be satisfied. And, conscious that He alone could satisfy it, He did not denounce the methods by which it had expressed itself, but left it to find out the truth of the response which He supplied.”

The above picture of Christ is anything but fascinating. It represents him in a cold, callous attitude towards humanity's supreme need. Christianity, the only complete and soul-satisfying religion, has been in the world for nearly two thousand years; and yet, at the present moment, a vast majority of mankind have never heard of it, a state of things for which God alone is ultimately responsible.

We must admit, however, that Dr. Robson is heroically loyal to the Bible. The New Testament emphatically backs him up. He ascribes the non-success of Christianity, not to any neglect or partiality on God's part, but to the lukewarmness and unfaithfulness of professing Christians. Dr. Robson is by no means a disputatious divine. Of “those who deny any historical value to the narratives of the Resurrection” he simply says: “I do not discuss the question with them, but concede to them the right to class Christianity as one of many religions.” That is a fine stroke of generosity. “But if they do” (so class Christianity), “they are without any warrant from Christ for seeking the extension of his faith throughout the world. It is only in the words of our Lord after his Resurrection that we find the warrant for so doing in the command to make disciples of all nations; and it is in them, too, that those who feel the obligation to obey that command, must look for what specially distinguishes his religion from the religion of the nations which it was meant to supplant.” Accepting implicitly the dogma of the Resurrection, Dr. Robson believes all the words attributed to Christ after that stupendous event; and that belief is his only argument for the truth of orthodoxy. He takes the New Testament as it stands and swallows the whole of it.

Now, once the New Testament has been swallowed whole, the duty of those who have done so is perfectly clear. They are under a solemn obligation to preach the Christian Gospel to the whole world. In the interval between the resurrection and the ascension, Jesus repeatedly commanded his apostles to go forth and “make disciples of all the nations, baptising them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, and teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you.” To encourage them in the fulfilment of this great mission, He declared that all authority or power had been given unto him in heaven and on earth, and that He would be with them always, “even unto the end of the world,” and He assured them that they should receive “power from on high.” To further encourage them He said: “And these things shall follow them that believe: in my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall in no wise hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.” All that sounds like a fairy tale; and, judged in the light of subsequent history, it is nothing more. Does even Dr. Robson dare to aver that the words attributed to the risen Lord have had their truth historically verified? The commission is still unexecuted because the promises which accompany it have never been fulfilled. Why are not all the nations Christ's disciples? Why are there still in the world 200,000,000 Hindus, 155,000,000 Mohammedans, and 500,000,000 Buddhists, while, according to the most optimistic Christian advocates, the followers of the Nazarene, all told, do not number more than 500,000,000? When we bear in mind that the entire population of the world is estimated at

1,500,000,000, nothing can be more evident than that Christianity has utterly failed to prove itself “a religion suited for all mankind.” After two thousand years of Christian evangelisation the world still contains 1,000,000,000 non-Christians. Has Dr. Robson ever really faced the music of this appalling fact?

That it is a most appalling and disturbing fact for Christians cannot be denied; but there is a more appalling fact still which Dr. Robson cannot explain away. It is the fact that even Christendom has never been conquered by Christ. The Dictionary defines Christendom as “that portion of the world in which Christianity prevails, or which is governed under Christian institutions, in distinction from Heathen or Mohammedan lands.” What a sad travesty of the truth that definition is! Can Dr. Robson name a single country in Christendom whose government is based upon the Sermon on the Mount, and in whose public institutions are “observed all things whatsoever Christ commanded?” How many Christian employers of labor does he know who treat their “hands” as “brethren in the Lord,” putting them in a position of perfect equality with themselves in all respects and on all occasions? Can he call Edinburgh, with all its natural and artificial beauty, with its numerous churches, devoted clergy, and zealous Christian workers, a Christian city? For their poverty and misery and viciousness, its slums used to be second to none in Great Britain. No, Christendom is not and never has been Christian. Neither morally nor socially, neither politically nor civically, are its affairs conducted on the principles laid down by Jesus.

Practically ignoring these significant facts, Dr. Robson waxes exceedingly eloquent in praise of the new truths and principles which, he alleges, are taught by Christianity. Of these truths and principles, however, he only cites one, leaving his readers to imagine the others. Christianity, according to him, “presents a conception of God quite different from that of any other religion, one that responds with complete fulness to the aspirations of man's heart after God.” What, then, is this unique conception of God? This is the answer:—

“Christianity teaches not only the *Fatherhood* of God, but also the *Brotherhood* of God and the *Companionhood* of God; the threefold relation of God to man, which fully responds to man's religious needs, the absence of any one of which leaves a blank that craves to be satisfied.”

But surely Christ never presented the world with such a conception of God. And the strange thing is that Dr. Robson does not claim that Christ *explicitly* taught it. All he maintains is that it is *implied* in the baptismal formula—“baptising them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost”—which Christ left for the use of the Church. Surely, it is not fair to differentiate Christianity from all other religions by a doctrine which only the ingenuity of modern divines discovers in it. This doctrine of the Fatherhood, Brotherhood, and Companionhood of God is not found in the New Testament. It is merely a doctrine which Dr. Robson deduces from the doctrine of the Trinity; and the doctrine of the Trinity is by no means peculiar to the Christian religion. As a great scholar assures us, “the conception of a Divine Trinity is of unknown antiquity: it flourished in Mesopotamia, in Hindostan, in the Platonic philosophy, in Egypt, long before Christianity.” Thus Dr. Robson stands guilty of indulging in the worst form of special pleading. He differentiates Christianity from all other religions on the strength of nothing better than a mere *inference* of his own, which inference might be made from any non-Christian Trinity. As a matter of simple history, Christ himself never taught a single new doctrine. Every one of his sayings can be matched from some other great religion. But even on the assumption that the conception of God elaborated by Dr. Robson is taught by Christianity, we are not one whit better off. *If there be no God corresponding to the conception, of what value is the conception? What*

proof can be adduced from history that an almighty Being exists who is the Father and Brother and Companion of the human race? In forming an estimate of one end of a relationship we must take the other into account. We are surrounded by Christian sweaters, Christian rack-renters, Christian swindlers, and Christian employers who grind the faces of their workpeople—are *these* to be regarded as children and brethren and companions of a just, good, and loving God? Then the fact of the Divine Fatherhood, Brotherhood, and Companionhood—this “threefold relation of God to man”—is of no effect. Who, then, bearing in mind the mournful history of Christendom, and its present condition, can honestly resist the inference that the God so pathetically described by Dr. Robson exists only in imagination?

Therefore we conclude that the “Differentia of Christianity” is pure fiction, and, consequently, that Christianity is but one of many religions, all of which are destined eventually to pass away.

J. T. LLOYD.

The Pope and the French Republic.

[This article is from the well-known historian A. AULARD, Professor at the Sorbonne, and Vice-President of the National Association of Freethinkers of France.]

WHEN Mr. Denys Cochin was lately consulted about the Pope's Encyclical he exclaimed: “What magnificent language! What force of argumentation!”

Did I not know that Mr. Cochin is a sincere Catholic, cordially regardful of the Pope, I would think that he spoke ironically.

For what is most remarkable in the Encyclical on disestablishment is the banality of the language, the feebleness of the reasoning, the incoherence of the argumentation.

The few extracts inserted in it, from the prose of Leo XIII., shine with a lustre which puts into relief the mediocrity of the remainder.

Decidedly, this Merry del Val is not strong. First comes the protestation against the principle itself of the laicity of the State, which the Pope judges, in the tone of a seminary student, “an absolutely false proposition, a most pernicious error.” And why? “Because God desires not only a private cult, he demands a cult public and social.” To laicise the State is to ruin it; for “civil society cannot prosper nor last long when room is not left in it for religion, supreme rule and sovereign mistress when the question is of the rights of man and of his duties.”

And what historic proofs does the Pope allege in support of his assertion? None. He rehearses a school phrase without perceiving that the most Catholic nations have in our times prospered the least. The nation which leaves the widest room to religion is certainly Spain. Does the Pope find that Spain is a pattern of prosperity? The non-Catholic nations are the richest; and as for France, half de-Catholicised and half Freethinking, I defy the Holy Ghost himself to prove that she is less prosperous to-day, in 1906, than she was before 1789, though then the Catholic religion was the religion of State, and the people had preserved the faith inviolate.

None the less does the Pope assert in his lamentation over the rupture of the connection between the Church and the French State that “this union has given birth to the true grandeur of France and to her purest glory.”

In reading this, I ask myself if the Pope is not minded to Canonise Father Loriquet, the clerical apologist. Nothing but the shade of this illustrious historian could have suggested the astonishing and audacious historical view—the bewildering paradox. Hitherto we had believed that if Bonaparte concluded a concordat with Pius VII., it was for the purpose of becoming emperor and of reigning through the Pope over consciences. What did the concordat bring us? The establishment of the empire, the consecration of Napoleon by the Pope, war with

all Europe, the massacre of our finest youth, the hatred of the nations, destitution, ruin, two invasions, the dismemberment of France. These are the benefits of the concordat! Such is the prosperity which we gained by the restoration of the union between the Church and the State!

That is the reality! So much the worse for it! He vaunts the concordat and exalts the Catholic religion considered as an agent of French grandeur. He curses the “impious sects” that seek to de-Catholicise France. “They seek,” says he to the French people, “to eradicate from your hearts the very last roots of faith which has crowned your forefathers with glory, the faith which has rendered your fatherland prosperous and great among the nations.”

To say nothing of the massacre of St. Bartholemew, of the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, of the dragonnades, of the Vendean insurrection, of all the miseries and crimes from which France has suffered through the Roman Church, I will only remind the Holy Father that the Empress Eugenie had an active faith, a faith according to the heart of the Holy Father, and that it was her influence which, by keeping our troops in Rome, prevented Italy from joining with us against Prussia, and thus aggravated our disasters. Yes, if we have lost Alsace and Lorraine, if we have paid five milliards, if we have endured the invasion, they are the effects, indirect but certain, of the preponderance of the Catholic Church in court circles in 1870.

Nevertheless I own that the Pope has a right to complain of the lay form which the Republic takes more and more every day, I recognise that the laicisation of France is a serious check for the Roman Church, I recognise that the Church has not received a more serious blow since the Reformation. I am not surprised that the Pope laments it; but I am surprised that he laments it with so little eloquence, in so feeble an amplification; and that the Holy Ghost has breathed into his secretary, in support of the ancient classical position of the Church, nothing but historical sophisms of inferior quality. Evidently the art of writing and composing is being lost at the Roman court.

The Encyclical is not only a protestation against the principle itself of laicity; the disestablishment law is criticised in it in some detail.

The Pope dares to state that this law “wrests from peaceable citizens, who are still the great majority of France, the sacred right of practising their own religion.”

Is there one single Frenchman who is prevented from going to mass?

Certainly not; but to “practise religion” does not consist, according to the Pope, solely in the exercise of a cult. There is much more. There is the social and political ambition of the Roman Church. The State wrongs the Church in this: that “it puts obstacles in the way of her influence, always so beneficent on the people, and paralyses her action in a thousand ways.”

Ah! in what gallant terms are not these charges expressed! If the Roman Church is not in a position to rule civil society, if she is not preponderant, then she is not free; and if she is not free, then the Catholics are not free. It is in vain for you, miscreant republicans, to strive and secure for them every possible liberty for the exercise of their cult; in vain will you grant to them, and to them only, the perpetual enjoyment of the churches, along with the church goods. You are tyrants: a Catholic who freely exercises his cult does not *practise his religion*, to use the Pope's expression, if the Church does not govern the French Republic.

While advising the faithful to oppose mildness to our tyranny, the Pope foretells, in menacing tones, civil disturbances which “in the present situation of Europe especially” will do much harm to us Frenchmen. He loves France so much, this good Pope! There he is admonishing his French following that if they revolt against the law in the presence of

Germany prepared to invade us, they will take a fine and savory revenge on the republicans.

That vengeance is well known to us, most Holy Father. Of yore, in 1793, when the English, the Austrians, the Spaniards invaded our territory, your priests in Vendée planted a knife in the back of France when she struggled desperately against the foreigners. Then your predecessor Pius VI. incited the kings against us; he was the soul of the coalition, and when Napoleon brought to France in the form of booty, the archives of the Vatican, there were found the proofs of the violent and hostile hatred with which the Pope had sought us enemies. We have not forgotten this solicitude of the Pope for France which he loves, certainly, when she sends him gold for his budget, but which he denounces to the world and besets with snares when she inclines towards Freethought.

Nevertheless Pius X. names bishops, gaily publishes the list of them, profits by the law of separation which gives him so many advantages and which is so highly favorable that no Catholic would have dared to expect so much. At the same time at which he receives these favors from the republicans, the Pope insults them, he "condemns and reproves" the law by which he profits, he utters cries of war and of hatred.

Is it really clever on his part? Ah! a Pope counselling a cheerful acceptance of the separation might have been much more dangerous for our lay policy.

—*La Raison.*

Translated by F. BONTE.

Acid Drops.

The European (Christian) Powers are still pressing advice on the Sultan of Turkey and still settling the affairs of Morocco. In the meantime it is estimated that 28,000 Jews have been massacred in Russia, and 100,000 more or less seriously injured. Not a single "representation" has been addressed by any Christian Power to the Russian government on the subject of these frightful excesses. "Christian Power" is merely a synonym for "Pious Humbug."

Rev. Archibald Forder, speaking in Tremont Temple, Boston, made a sad confession (not a new one) about the Christians in Palestine, where he has been working as a missionary. A crowd of Christians gather at Bethlehem to celebrate the birth of Christ every year; but a dreadful shadow lies over the celebration—the presence of armed Mohammedan soldiers "to keep the Christians from shedding each others' blood on the sacred soil." Dr. Forder added that the Christian priests themselves are armed with revolvers—made in Massachusetts.

According to the *Wolverhampton Express* a local meeting of the Church Association has been entertained by some striking remarks on prayer by Mr. A. L. Vernon. When this gentleman was a youth, in 1848, he went to see the cricket match between Eton and Harrow at Leeds, his brother being captain of the Harrow eleven. The best Etonian batsman took his stand at the wicket, and Mr. Vernon prayed for his downfall. The Eton crack was immediately bowled. That proved the efficacy of prayer. Mr. Vernon picked up a stone and made a mental vow to remember the incident all his life. And at the Church Association meeting he produced the stone. Who could resist the demonstration? All that now remains to be done is this: Mr. Vernon should leave his brain to the Royal College of Surgeons.

Evan Roberts visited the Independent Chapel, Penygroes, and delivered a short address to the crowd who had followed him there. Afterwards he knelt in silent prayer, and a minute later he told the congregation that the Devil had whispered a verse into his ear and he could not go on. We believe he was mistaken. We don't think the Devil would trouble so much about him.

Eve said that the Devil tempted her to eat that apple. But did he? Perhaps she only wanted to see Adam in pyjamas.

Mr. Will Crooks, M.P., is a versatile gentleman. One day he receives an ovation at the Free Church Conference at

Birmingham, where the representatives discuss the better observance of the Lord's Day. The next day he attends the annual dinner of the National Sunday League in London, and responds to the toast of "the House of Commons." The National Sunday League exists to provide amusements and excursions on the Lord's Day. Mr. Crooks is a marvel.

At a recent meeting of the United Free Church Commission at Edinburgh, with Principal Rainy in the chair, an urgent and almost despairing appeal was read from Dr. Ross Taylor on behalf of the Sustentation Fund. Things were so bad, he said, that the prospect lay "like a nightmare" and affected him "physically, almost to sickness." We fancy there will be more of this kind of sickness in Scotland.

At the Ayr branch of the Scottish Colportage Society, the Rev. W. Cairns Duncan lamented the spread of unhealthy literature. Sporting literature was superabundant and an unmitigated evil. He had almost reached the stage where he would be thankful for more scepticism and more positive and intelligent opposition to religion, instead of the simple apathy and sheer indifference which prevailed. Well, the reverend gentleman has our sympathy, and we hope he will be as good as his word and push along the circulation of the *Freethinker*.

Paisley United Free Presbytery has resolved to help on Sabbath Observance by special services of united prayer. It is thought that the Lord could not resist such an united attack of Scotch accents. No doubt motor-cars will stop dead on the highways, and bicycles refuse to budge.

No doubt the *Star* knows that general readers like something pappy and sentimental. So it printed again the other night the account of Robert Applegarth's farewell at the bedside of the dying George Jacob Holyoake. Our contemporary says (once more) that the dying veteran whispered to his old friend:—

"I have warmed both hands at the fire of life;
It sinks, and I am ready to depart."

The *Star* writer seems unconscious of the authorship of those lines. They are quoted from Landor, and spoiled in the quoting. Landor had a poet's ear, and could never have written a line so abominably bad as the first of these. What he did write was this:—

"I strove with none, for none was worth my strife;
Nature I loved, and, next to Nature, Art;
I warmed both hands against the fire of life;
It sinks, and I am ready to depart."

Landor wrote those lines early in 1849, five years after he had passed the three score years and ten, and, in sending them in a letter to Forster, called them the "Dying Speech of an Old Philosopher." They were true of himself—and they were his own. He was too original to bid farewell to life, or a friend, in a quotation.

Here is another epigram of Landor's, written later and published in the *Last Fruit off an Old Tree*:—

"Death stands above me, whispering low
I know not what into my ear;
Of his strange language all I know
Is, there is not a word of fear."

The unsubduable old Roman!—as Carlyle so well called him.

Why does the *Westminster Gazette* gloss over the real facts of Shelley's expulsion from Oxford? It says that the "harsh treatment" he experienced there is "not difficult to understand," as "almost every college contains one or more wild-eyed and long-haired bard whose life is one long warfare with dons and conventional undergraduates." This is nonsense—and ill-conditioned nonsense too. Shelley was expelled from Oxford for writing a pamphlet in defence of Atheism.

Turning over the pages of Coleridge's *Table-Talk* the other day, we came across a passage that we had marked when we first read the book, the Lord knows how many years ago. Of course there are other marked passages in it, but this one will interest our own readers especially. Coleridge notes that Lord Kenyon, who presided at the trial of a bookseller for publishing Paine's *Age of Reason*, in his charge to the jury enumerated many celebrated men who had been sincere Christians. He enforced the example of Locke and Newton. But both of them, Coleridge says, were Unitarians, and "therefore not Christians." After this blunder, his lordship proceeded to make one far more extraordinary. This is how Coleridge reports him:—

"Nor, gentlemen, is this belief confined to men of comparative seclusion, since men, the greatest and most distinguished both as philosophers and as monarchs, have enforced

this belief, and shown its influence by their conduct. Above all, gentlemen, need I name to you the Emperor Julian, who was so celebrated for the practice of every Christian virtue that he was called Julian the Apostle."

Those who know the facts of the case will find this reference to the Emperor Julian so supremely delicious in its absurdity, that comment would only impair their delight. Those who do not know the facts, or do not quite remember them, may be informed or reminded that the Emperor is known as "Julian the Apostate," because he renounced Christianity for Paganism, and endeavored to restore the latter as the religion of the Empire. It is Julian of whom the mythical story is told that when dying of a wound received in battle, he saw the futility of his opposition to Christianity, and exclaimed, "Thou hast conquered, Galilean."

Dr. Macnamara, M.P., the gentleman who is so attached to Bible teaching in elementary schools, is going to introduce a Juvenile Smokers Bill this session, and has promised to consider a clause to provide a birching for young persons found smoking in the streets. This is what the love of Bible teaching comes to. Holy Writ recommends the "rod" for children, and Dr. Macnamara is quite ready to adopt it. Common sense would suggest that the really guilty persons are the adults who supply the juveniles with cigarettes.

President Roosevelt—who played the "bounder" by calling Thomas Paine a "dirty little Atheist": three lies in three words—favored the Bill providing for the whipping of wife-beaters in the district of Columbia, which includes Washington. But the Bill was smothered with ridicule and perished by a hostile vote of 153 to 57. It is odd that "strenuous" Christians should be so prone to flagellomania.

Mr. John Hodge, M.P., one of the Labor members, speaking at Gorton, said that some people objected to political subjects being discussed inside church, but for his part he had difficulty in knowing what is religious and what is political. Well, if he would read the New Testament—which he ought to do, being a professed Christian—he would soon find out. Jesus Christ said: "My kingdom is not of this world." His Kingdom, therefore, is of the next world. The province of Christianity, therefore, is Kingdom-Come. What relates to this world is secular; and what relates to the next world is religious. We hope Mr. Hodge understands it now.

Dr. William Bonner Ryan, charged before the Manchester justices with attempting suicide, complained that he went to a Roman Catholic Home at Moston to be cured of alcoholism, and was there supplied with as much drink as he wanted. "It was quite a common thing," he said, "for men to be drunk—priests as well as others."

"God forgive me and be merciful to you and the children." Thus wrote John Owens, costunier, Oxford, to his wife before committing suicide. Not an Atheist, this time.

"The Bible and the Boy" was the title of a long and interesting article by B. Paul Neuman in the *Westminster Gazette*. Mr. Neuman points out, as we have often done ourselves, that clericals and politicians, and even parents, all claim a hearing in this Education controversy, but "the one voice that is silent is that of the small corpus who is the subject of our ingenious experiments." For the last fifteen years, he says, he has himself been in close touch with hundreds of boys who have been or are scholars of London elementary schools, and he proceeds to deal with the question from their point of view, and to state "what the boys really think and feel with regard to the Bible and other religious lessons."

Mr. Neuman frankly confesses that the Sunday-school is very unpopular with boys. They go because they are sent there, but not five per cent. of them have "any affection or gratitude" for the institution; and it appears to be a recognised principle that "the first use a boy makes of his independence should be to leave his Sunday-school."

Boys don't take to the Bible kindly. Mr. Neuman wishes that they did, and he suggests that they would if it were presented to them "as literature." But meanwhile the fact remains that they *don't* take to it. There is, however, a book that they *do* take to—and that book is the *Book of Books*—the writings of William Shakespeare—the man who (so to speak) knew everything and saw everything, including that delicious picture, hit off in a single sentence, of

"the whining schoolboy, with his satchel
And shining morning face, creeping like snail
Unwillingly to school."

But let us hear Mr. Neuman's own words:—

"But the fact which on the whole has, I think, impressed me most is this—that in the day-school the most popular lesson is Shakespeare and the most unpopular is religion.

I do not think there can be any doubt as to this. In a club that takes boys directly from the elementary school and insists on attendance at, say, two classes, if you offer a choice of half a dozen subjects, you will find that the Shakespeare class will be crowded, while it will be a portent if a single boy, uncoerced and uncajoled, puts down his name for Scripture."

Could anything be plainer? And, in its way, could anything be more pregnant with importance? While the spiritual doctors are wrangling over his proper treatment the patient has found out his own remedy. All that the grown-up, fussy, stupid people—in parliament and elsewhere—have to do is to back up the boy's unsophisticated preference, and let him have the nutriment and medicine that suit his constitution. Give him Shakespeare, and he smiles and cuts capers. Give him the Bible, and he groans and collapses. Why? Because the Bible is the Book of God, and Shakespeare is the Book of Man. And the boy is not a God—bless him! He is a little man in the making.

The Free Churches Conference met at Birmingham, which was the centre of the struggle for Secular Education in 1870. What was known as "the Birmingham policy" was supported vigorously by Mr. Joseph Chamberlain and the Rev. R. W. Dale, but it was lost through the treachery of the majority of Nonconformists to their own principles. Mr. Chamberlain reminded them of this lately. He added that he had not changed his mind on the subject, but he was obliged to admit—and as a politician to act upon it—that the Nonconformists had made Secular Education impossible. And now, after the lapse of a whole generation, the Nonconformists meet at Birmingham in annual Conference, and once more declare that they will not have Secular Education if they can help it, but will go on fighting for the control of religious education in their own interests. A more disgraceful and disgusting spectacle was never witnessed.

Dr. Clifford was there, of course, and he moved the old fatuous resolution again, and again it was carried. The Free Churchmen declared that the Government must give them (and inflict on other people) the policy of undenominational Christianity. That is what suits their book. And if it does not suit Anglicans, Catholics, Jews, and Freethinkers, so much the worse for *them*. And this is the party that is always mouthing about religious liberty and equality.

"Simple Bible teaching, according to the existing syllabus" is what Dr. Clifford proposed and the Free Church Conference carried. What this really means we will show at some length in an early number of the *Freethinker*. Many years ago Dr. Clifford sent us a syllabus that commanded his approval. We dealt with it then, and we will deal with it again. And our readers will see that its ethical character is a minus quantity.

Of course the Free Church Conference passed resolutions on the "drink" question. The mountebank men of God, who boast of their "spiritual" mission, are not satisfied with the steady fall in the national drink bill. They are in a hurry; they are also Puritans, and they love dragooning their fellow-citizens into what they call godliness. They therefore demand that all licensed houses shall be closed at eleven o'clock at the very latest—even in London, and not opened at all on what they are pleased to call the Lord's Day. This is mere Sabbatarianism naked and unashamed. Every sane person is perfectly aware of the real object of these clerical gentlemen. They simply want to make it difficult for anything to be done on Sunday except gospel-grinding. They want the day to be devoted entirely, or at least as far as possible, to their own business. They are professional exhorters clamoring for Protection.

Much as Church and Chapel hate each other, they are at one where their common interests are concerned. So the Free Churchmen burst into loud applause when the Chairman read to them a letter from the Archbishop of Canterbury, in which "his Grace declared his willingness to co-operate with them in their efforts to preserve the sanctity of the Lord's Day," and "rejoiced that this was a matter in which they could combine notwithstanding their differences on other subjects." Yes, they can combine on *that*. It would be wonderful if they couldn't.

Mr. Perks, M.P., was perky enough in his speech on Sunday Closing. "We do not ask for it," he said, "we demand it. We are not supplicating, we are in a position to issue our

commands, and the mandate must go forth, 'No public-houses open on the Lord's Day.'" This language should be pondered by Freethinkers. It is a mistake to suppose that the State Church is responsible for all the bigotry and persecution. There would be just as much of both if Nonconformists ruled the roost. There might even be more. Instead of the State controlling religion, they would have religion controlling the State.

The Archbishop of Canterbury's advisory committee on Sunday Observance, appointed last October, report that there is complete unanimity among leaders of every section of national Christianity as to the necessity of proclaiming and safeguarding the true ideals of the Christian Sunday. On May 9 there will be a Conference in London, over which the Archbishop will preside, representing all religious sections in every part of England, with a view to considering the Committee's conclusions. We shall watch it with some interest. The Black Army contemplates some fresh move against English freedom.

Rev. Sidney Harris, a Wesleyan minister, of Middlesbrough, having been to gaol as a Passive Resister, has contracted a zeal for prison reform. His proposals, as set forth in a letter to the *Daily News*, would make the Humanitarian League smile. He is anxious that better provision should be made for the spiritual needs of the prisoners. To this end he suggests that the Bibles in the cells should be printed in bigger type, and that the devotional books in the prison library should not be exclusively Anglican. "A prisoner who chances to be a Nonconformist," he says, "ought to have the choice of books of another type." The reverend gentleman says nothing about Freethinkers. Perhaps he thinks there will always be too few of them to trouble about in such establishments.

Albert Davies, farm laborer, and a deacon of Providence Chapel, St. Brides, appeared in the Newport County Police Court on an application made by Nellie Ward, domestic servant, for the birth and burial expenses of a male child which she placed to his credit. The case was dismissed as it appeared in evidence that the child was still-born, and consequently no order could be made. So the deacon got off easily, and we hope he is proud of it.

Alphonso the brave and his fair Imogen—we beg pardon, his fair Ena—arrived at San Sebastian, where they were met by Queen Christina and the chief officials, and welcomed by the townspeople. The crowd cheered as the royal party drove to Miramar. One man shouted, "Long live liberty!" The awful villain was arrested on the spot.

Princess Ena hasn't got her husband yet. But she has got her new religion. And the more substantial part of the bargain is coming along. In the meanwhile she publicly accepts the Catholic faith as true, and anathematizes every heresy—"especially that to which hitherto I have had the misfortune to belong." And the one she had the misfortune to belong to is the religion of King Edward, and the one he swore to maintain at his coronation. It is a pretty little play—with amusing lessons in it for the cynical philosopher. Altering the title of one of Dryden's plays, we might call it: "All For Love: or a Religion Well Lost." At present, of course, the play is a comedy. But it would become a tragedy if anything happened between this and the date of the wedding to King Alphonso. The lady would then have no husband and the wrong religion. For anyone who regards her conversion as a "spiritual" process is far too good for this wicked world.

America is now the classic land of religious cranks. Old Dowie, of course, is a Scotchman by birth, but it is in America that he flourishes. Jesus Christs start up there in a perfect profusion. One of the latest is called George Huffman. Things went hard with him, however, at Perth, in Kansas, where the mob treated him to tarring and feathering.

An American paper called the *Conservator* prints on its front page a high-and-mighty utterance of that great man, and veteran thinker, Mr. Gilbert Chesterton. One passage of it may amuse our readers. "We have laws," he says, "against blasphemy—that is, against a kind of coarse and offensive speaking in which nobody but a rough and obscure man would be likely to indulge." Mr. Chesterton is perhaps thinking of the law against profane language in public places. He really ought to know, since he ventures to write about them, that the Blasphemy Laws were directed against any denial of the truth of Christianity. The famous Statute of

Blasphemy, passed in the reign of William III., does not contain so much as an allusion to "offensive" language. It pronounces frightful penalties against persons denying any article of the Christian faith, or declaring the Bible not to be the Word of God.

Thomas Paine's *Age of Reason* was sought to be suppressed under the Blasphemy Laws. Many men and women, including the heroic Richard Carlile, went to prison, and some of them for years, for publishing and selling it. Mr. Chesterton may regard Thomas Paine as "rough." Very likely he does. It is just the view he would take of a strong and serious fighter. But not even Mr. Chesterton could affect to regard Thomas Paine as "obscure." Paine was a great political writer, and the personal friend of Washington, Franklin, Jefferson, Fox and Burke, before he challenged the combined tyranny of the Altar and the Throne. Then he became infamous. But he was never "obscure."

Telegrams from Zion City to Old Dowie appear to have been returned undelivered, and it is reported that his private bookkeeper has disappeared. Great efforts are being made to prevent a total collapse of the church.

Two more men of God in the latest list of deceased paupers. Rev. F. J. Coleridge, vicar of Cadbury, Devon, has left estate sworn at £8,423. Rev. W. Major Paull, of Clifton, Bristol, Congregational minister, has left estate sworn at £7,650. And theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

A picture of Voltaire was presented by Mrs. Clarence Mackay to the pupils of Public School No. 59 in East Fifty-seventh-street, New York. This appears to have raised a hubbub. Mrs. Mackay was accused of trying to introduce "infidel" ideas into the schools. She has therefore withdrawn the gift. And the picture of Voltaire wears an extra ironical smile.

Clear the Way.

Men of thought! be up and stirring,
Night and day;
Sow the seed—withdraw the curtain—
Clear the way!
Men of action, aid and cheer them
As ye may.
There's a fount about to stream,
There's a light about to beam,
There's a warmth about to glow,
There's a flower about to blow;
There's a midnight blackness changing
Into gray;
Men of thought and men of action,
Clear the way!

Once the welcome light has broken,
Who shall say
What the unimagined glories
Of the day?
What the evil that shall perish
In its ray?
Aid the dawning, tongue and pen;
Aid it, hopes of honest men;
Aid it, paper—aid it, type—
Aid it, for the hour is ripe,
And our earnest must not slacken
Into play.
Men of thought and men of action,
Clear the way!

Lo! a cloud's about to vanish
From the day;
And a brazen wrong to crumble
Into clay.
Lo! the Right's about to conquer,
Clear the way!
With the Right, shall many more
Enter, smiling, at the door;
With the giant Wrong, shall fall
Many others, great and small,
That for ages long have held us
For their prey.
Men of thought and men of action,
Clear the way!

—CHARLES MACKAY.

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, March 18, Stanley Hall, Junction-road, London, N. (near "The Boston"): 7.30 p.m., "Is There a Future Life?"

March 25, Coventry.
April 1, Manchester; 8, Stratford Town Hall; 22 and 29, Queen's Hall.
May 6, Liverpool.

To Correspondents.

C. COHEN'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—March 25, Stanley Hall. April 1, Stratford Town Hall; 8, 22, and 29, Liverpool.

J. T. LLOYD'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—March 18, Liverpool; 25, Liverpool. April 1, South Shields; 2, Hetton Downs; 15, Stratford Town Hall.

N. S. S. BENEVOLENT FUND:—Miss Vance acknowledges:—L. Deveraux 2s. 6d.

RIDGEWAY FUND.—J. Partridge acknowledges: G. G. 2s. 6d.

G. HULL.—Thanks for cuttings. But please recollect in future that if such things reach us after Tuesday morning they are too late for use in the next number of the *Freethinker*. This journal passes out of our hands on Tuesday evening, and is printed on Wednesday.

H. THOMAS.—See "Acid Drops." Thanks.

PLASMARL (Swansea).—We cannot make out your signature. You had a perfect right to affirm as a witness in the case, and the magistrate and clerk who told you to stand down acted illegally as well as impudently. Those who tendered you as a witness should have persisted. If you were summoned as a witness we think you were entitled to the fee. There is no N. S. S. Branch at Swansea.

A. WEBBER.—Thanks for cuttings.

A SECULAR SAINT.—We must keep to the religious side of the matter. Thanks, all the same.

GEORGE JACOB.—Sorry you take it in that way.

W. R. JAMESON.—We are keeping our eye on the Education question, and looking out for Mr. Birrell's new Education Bill. Should the Nonconformist policy be fastened upon the nation by the Liberal government, we shall have a policy to propose which even some Freethinkers may regard as startling.

D. DONOVAN.—Thanks for cutting. But we are not specially concerned to champion Freemasons—who, we dare say, can defend themselves—against the attacks of "Alphonsus" in the *Catholic Herald*. No doubt the Socialists can defend themselves too.

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

D. MALINGER.—Pleased to hear you value the *Freethinker* so highly. Shall be sent.

G. ROLAFFS.—See paragraph. Thanks.

J. BROUGH.—We gave the name of the *Labor Record* editor in our article. Perhaps, as you suggest, the paper is not one of much importance, but in that case a good deal of money must be spent upon it. Cuttings received with thanks.

H. THOMAS.—We have dealt with it.

ANTI-BIBLICAL.—Will have sent as requested. Your suggestion is noted. Thanks for good wishes.

W. MACKAY.—Glad you have read the *Freethinker* since 1892 and still derive benefit from it; also that the number of Freethinkers increases, to your knowledge, in your locality.

FRANK HILL.—That you got acquainted with the *Freethinker* during our defence of Paine and Ingersoll against Torrey and Dixon, that you have read it with pleasure and profit ever since, and that you regard it as the best weapon you know against tyranny—these are gratifying facts. We can understand how bigotry reigns in your district, but is it really true that three members of the N. S. S. have been asked to resign from a newly formed Branch of the I. L. P.? It is true, it is very shameful. Mr. Keir Hardie himself came out of the bosom of a Secularist family, and we understand that he is privately still an "infidel."

W. P. PEARSON.—See paragraphs. We wish you better weather to-day.

F. M. BARKER (Chicago).—You would probably find our gallant and able contemporary, the *Truthseeker*, published in New York City, the kind of paper you are looking for over there.

V. C. M.—We note contents of your interesting letter re the Rev. Mr. Spurr's Bible Class, with its mythical contingent of "professed" unbelievers.

G. R. J.—Always glad to receive cuttings. Of course we may have seen the matter, but also we may not.

J. BROOK.—Pleased to hear it. Pray put yourself into communication with Miss E. M. Vance, the N. S. S. general secretary.

C. F. S.—It takes the cake. Thanks.

V. PAGE.—Glad to hear you had such good audiences for Mr. McCabe's lectures at Nelson, and that the local press reported fairly. The new N. S. S. Branch has our best wishes.

F. J. GOULD.—Of course we gladly print your letter of explanation. H. P. HUNTER.—See "Sugar Plums." A copy will be forwarded to you by the shop manager as soon as ready.

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

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

Sugar Plums.

In spite of the violent gale a good audience assembled at Stanley Hall on Sunday evening, when Mr. Foote delivered the second lecture of the present course on "Does God Help Man?" Mr. Cowell, who occupied the chair, courteously invited discussion after the lecture, but none was forthcoming. On the other hand, a large number of questions were asked and answered, which kept the meeting alive until nearly half-past nine. After that a private meeting was held of persons desiring to take part in forming a new Branch of the National Secular Society in the neighborhood.

"Is There a Future Life?" is the subject of the third and last of Mr. Foote's lectures at Stanley Hall this time. We hope the local "saints" will do their best to bring some of their more orthodox friends along to this meeting. On the following Sunday (March 25) the final lecture of the present course will be delivered by Mr. Cohen. During April there will be two Sunday evening lectures by Mr. Foote at the Queen's Hall. We trust it will be possible to have these lectures (April 22 and 29) preceded by some first-class music.

West Ham and district Freethinkers will bear in mind the new course of Sunday evening lectures, under the auspices of the Secular Society, Limited, in the Stratford Town Hall during April. The first lecture falls to Mr. Cohen's lot this time, on April 1. Mr. Foote follows on April 8, and Mr. Lloyd on April 15. There are sure to be fine meetings, but we should like to see them extra-fine this time, with good collections towards the expenses. All seats are free.

Mr. Foote has hitherto had to leave the Stratford Town Hall meetings rather early, in order to catch his ridiculously timed last train home. On April 8, however, he intends to sleep in London, and will therefore be able to give his West Ham friends full measure, besides dealing with any number of questions and any amount of discussion that may arise.

Branches and members of the National Secular Society should be looking forward to, and preparing for, the Annual Conference, which will be held on Whit-Sunday (as usual) at Birmingham. The splendid Town Hall has been secured for the evening public meeting. The morning and afternoon business sessions of the Conference will take place elsewhere.

The Liverpool Branch of the N. S. S. held a most successful Social and Cinderella in Milton Hall on Tuesday, March 8. It was attended by upwards of sixty members, who pronounced it the best entertainment of the season. The event of the evening was a presentation of books and a gipsy tea-kettle, made by the president, Mr. W. C. Schweizer, on behalf of the members, to Mr. and Mrs. Pearson as a marriage gift, and also as a mark of the Society's esteem and appreciation for the efficient manner in which Mr. Pearson had fulfilled the duties of secretary to the Branch. The next social will be held on Tuesday, April 3; tickets for which, if taken before April 1, will be 6d. each.

Mr. Lloyd's audiences at Liverpool on Sunday were affected by the terrible weather. We hope the conditions will be

more propitious to-day (March 18), and that the local "saints" will rally round Mr. Lloyd and the N. S. S. Branch at the Milton Hall. As a new departure there are threepenny seats at this special course of lectures. This will meet the case of the poorer members who want to attend all the meetings. It will also enable members who are not poor to purchase and distribute more tickets amongst their "unsaved" friends and acquaintances.

The *Liberal Review*, Chicago, quotes the conclusion of our article on the death of the late George Jacob Holyoake, but it refers to us as "Mr. G. B. Foote." Such is fame. Perhaps the "B." got in as being one of the initials of our very good friend, the veteran Dr. E. B. Foote, of New York.

If this meets the eye of any American friend who can enlighten us, we should be glad if he (or she) will do us the favor of informing us what has become of Mr. Mangasarian, who used to edit the *Liberal Review*.

The boldest "blasphemer" in America was the late Charles C. Moore, for twenty-two years editor of the *Blue Grass Blade*, of Lexington, Kentucky. Mr. Moore's death, after a six months' illness, is reported in our American exchanges just to hand. He was sixty-eight years of age. All his life he was a fighter. He was several times arrested for "blasphemy" and was more than once "behind the bars"—as he called the story of his first imprisonment. We met Mr. Moore when we were at Chicago in November, 1906. He had an extraordinary shock of hair, and comically boasted of it as his chief superiority to Ingersoll, who was bald. Mr. Moore was not an Ingersoll, but he was a brave man, and could always be depended upon to stand up for his convictions.

We like to hear all men talking sense—including parsons. The following is from the pen of the Rev. W. Manning, vicar of St. Andrew's, Leytonstone:—

"I would prefer purely secular education in the State schools. Let the Church do its own work in its own way. Religion must be absolutely free, spontaneous, and voluntary. The Church of England, with its 25,000 clergy paid to teach religion, should not want the State policeman to send the children to school nor the rates to pay day teachers to do work for which endowments are provided. The cry of godless education is silly."

This is the view to which sensible men of all parties are gravitating.

We are printing a fresh supply of Catalogues of books and pamphlets published at our office, and also getting a fresh supply of Paine's *Rights of Man*. Many orders for the latter are booked, and will be executed as quickly as possible. Those concerned will please note, and thus save correspondence.

WISDOM AND MORALITY.

Wisdom discovers our relations, duties, and concerns, in respect of men, with the natural grounds of them; thereby both qualifying and inclining us to the discharge of them; whence exceeding convenience, pleasure, and content ensues. By it we understand we are parts and members of the great body, the universe; and are therefore concerned in the good management of it, and are therefore obliged to procure its order and peace, and by no irregular undertaking to disturb or discompose it; which makes us honest and peaceable men; that we proceed from the same primitive stock, are children of the same father, and partake of the same blood with all men; are endowed with like faculties of mind, passions of soul, shape of body, and sense of things; that we have equally implanted in our original constitution inclinations to love, pity, gratitude, sociableness, quiet, joy, reputation; that we have an indispensable need and impatient desire of company, assistance, comfort and relief; that therefore it is according to the design of nature, and agreeable to reason, that to those, to whom our natural condition by so many bands of cognation, similitude, and mutual necessity, hath knit and conjoined us, we should bear a kind respect and tender affection; should cheerfully concur in undergoing the common burdens; should heartily wish and industriously promote their good, assist them in accomplishing their reasonable desires, thankfully requite the courtesies received from them, congratulate and rejoice with them in their prosperity, comfort them in their distresses, and, as we are able, relieve them; however, tenderly compassionate their disappointments, miseries, and sorrows. This renders us kind and courteous neighbors, sweet and grateful companions. It represents unto us the dreadful effects and insupportable mischiefs arising from breach of faith, contravening the obligations of solemn pacts, infringing public laws, deviating from

the received rules of equity, violating promises, and interrupting good correspondence among men; by which considerations it engages us to be good citizens, obedient subjects, just dealers, and faithful friends. It minds us of the blindness, impotence and levity, the proneness to mistake, and misbehavior that human nature necessarily is subject to; deserving rather our commiseration than anger or hatred, which prompts us to bear the infirmities of our brethren, to be gentle in censure, to be insensible of petty affronts, to pardon injuries, to be patient, exorable, and reconcilable to those that give us greatest cause of offence. It teaches us, the good may, but the evil of our neighbor can in nowise advantage us; that from the sufferings of any man, simply considered, no benefit can accrue, nor natural satisfaction arise to us; and that therefore it is a vain, base, brutish, and unreasonable thing, for any cause whatever, to desire or delight in the grief, pain, or misery of our neighbor, to hate or envy him, or insult over him, or devise mischief to him, or prosecute revenge upon him; which makes us civil, noble, and placable enemies, or rather no enemies at all. So that Wisdom is in effect the genuine parent of all moral and political virtue, justice, and honesty.—Barrow, "*Sermon on the Pleasantness of Religion*."

DAILY RULE.

Begin the morning by saying to thyself, I shall meet with the busybody, the ungrateful, the arrogant, deceitful, envious, unsocial. All these things happen to them by reason of their ignorance of what is good and evil. But I who have seen the nature of the good that it is beautiful, and of the bad that it is ugly, and the nature of him who does wrong, that it is akin to me, not [only] of the same blood or seed, but that it participates in [the same] intelligence and [the same] portion of the divinity, I can neither be injured by any of them, for no one can fix on me what is ugly, nor can I be angry with my kinsman, nor hate him. For we are made for co-operation, like feet, like hands, like eyelids, like the rows of the upper and the lower teeth. To act against one another then is contrary to nature; and it is acting against one another to be vexed and to turn away.—*Marcus Aurelius*.

MORALITY INDEPENDENT OF THEOLOGY.

To place anything in God, or to derive anything from God, is nothing more than to withdraw it from the test of reason, to institute it as indubitable, unassailable, sacred, without rendering an account *why*. Hence self-delusion, if not wicked, insidious design, is at the root of all efforts to establish morality, right, on theology. Where we are in earnest about the right we need no incitement or support from above. We need no Christian rule of political right; we need only one which is rational, just, human. The right, the true, the good, has always its ground of sacredness in itself, in its quality. Where man is in earnest about ethics, they have in themselves the validity of a divine power.—*Ludwig Feuerbach*.

ENGLAND.

Bitter is the weight that crushes
Low, my Bard, thy race of fire.
Here no fair young future blushes
Bridal to a man's desire.
Neither chief, nor aim, nor splendor
Dressing distance, we perceive;
Neither honor, nor the tender
Bloom of promise, morn or eve.
Joined we are; a tide of races
Rolled to meet a common fate
England clasps in her embraces
Many: what is England's state?
England her distended middle
Thumps with pride as Mammon's wife;
Says that thus she reads thy riddle,
Heaven! 'tis heaven to plump her life.
O my Bard! a yellow liquor
Like to that we drank of old—
Gold is her metheglin beaker,
She destruction drinks in gold.
Warn her, Bard, that Power is pressing
Hotly for his dues this hour;
Tell her that no drunken blessing
Stops the onward march of Power.
Has she ears to take forewarnings
She will cleanse her of her stains,
Feed and speed for braver mornings
Valourously the growth of brains.
Power, the hard man knit for action,
Reads each nation on the brow.
Cripple, fool, and petrification,
Fall to him—are falling now!
—George Meredith "*Aneurin's Harp*."

Luxury.

A GREAT cry is sounding out from Church and Christian pulpits against luxury and extravagance, and the chief sinners, according to bishops and clergy, seem to be their own dear people—and no doubt they are conspicuous offenders. A ramping, roaring ecclesiastic, seemingly an Anglican "monk," as he imagines himself, appears to have "a Bully time of it" (to pun on his name) condemning richness of attire, jewels, rings, and other goods, as "poms and vanities." Although he exhorts the bedecked, bedizened faithful to renounce these things altogether, and devote the proceeds to the poor—always convenient as a handle—and especially to that other convenient handle—missions—we fancy that his tirades will have little effect. Fair saints and foul will, after all, pay little heed. Milliners, dress-makers, tailors, jewelers, furniture dealers, decorators, etc., will be patronised as much as before, even by the godly. Splendid jewels and sparkling rings will still flash in the churches and chapels of this degenerate land and be seen even on priestly forms; rich and costly vestments, gorgeous mitres, pectoral episcopal crosses will be worn, beautiful jeweled staves be carried before humble bishops, magnificent altar cloths and costly chalice and candlesticks adorn sanctuaries, and it is only the wicked layman or woman who will be admonished and exhorted to simplicity and the simple life.

But as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be; luxury of life and person and pleasure will go on unchecked, though Church dogs and Chapel ones "bark and bite, for 'tis their nature to." Put a little more in the plate, subscribe to this or that religious object and the growling will be modified or cease. A donation is a grand mouth-stopper; even the fiercest ecclesiastic can be calmed down and soothed by it, and the jeweled hand that drops a gold piece in the collection is blessed—especially if it requires no change back.

St. Paul, sourest of ascetics, hater of women and domestic happiness, led the way in the crusade against luxury. He was followed up by numberless fathers and doctors of the Church, from Augustine down to Calvin (who certainly doctored the Church with some very stiff, unpleasant doses). Then the countless ascetics, rhapsodists and saints, down to this present day, the calomel-and-jalap pious ones, who have tried to make life as disagreeable as possible in view of the fictitious "heavenly inheritance." Strange hallucination of disordered minds! Extraordinary fancy of unhinged intellects! To abandon present comfort and happiness in view of speculative future reward seems lunatic, does it not? Yet it is the burden of most religious teaching and the theme of most of the Christian hymns. Paul planted, Apollos watered, but Brother Sourberry gave the increase.

A judicious luxury is commendable. A riotous luxury, entirely selfish, is a great error. To live and dress well, to have ornaments and artistic environments, to indulge one's tastes, to be immune from want and poverty, is the right, the just right, of every human being. Alas, that so many cannot enjoy its full possession! Would that every human being might have its complete realisation! Then we should hear fewer growls and grumbles from the pulpits and fewer denunciations—if religion ever *can* forget to denounce—and religious journals would lose some of their spite and venom, for of all issues of the press none are so virulent, vindictive, and uncharitable as the religious papers, or even the daily journals that are tinctured with the paregoric of piety.

GERALD GREY.

There is hardly a man in the United States to-day, of any importance, whose voice anybody cares to hear, who was not nursed at the loving breast of poverty. Look at the children of the rich. My God, what a punishment for being rich!—Ingersoll.

Wordsworth.—I.

HIS FRUGAL TEMPER—WIDE APPEAL—DEFECTS.

WORDSWORTH lived from 1770 to 1850. But, as far as his work goes, dates count but partly. Wordsworth's training (thanks chiefly to his residence at Cambridge University) bringing him into company with the classics in literature, and himself being of that genius which discounts what one may term the accidents of history, his own work is of that order which depends little on the time of production. With one exception. Wordsworth believed that with the French Revolution a new era for man was dawning; and once thought of offering himself to the French as a leader in that effort to sweep away a corrupt aristocracy. Nor did he revolt at the bloodshed in France. To remedy rooted evils, he said, you cannot keep clear of violence. But when the spirit of self-deliverance changed to one of military glory and foreign aggression, and the nation assailed itself with idolatry of Napoleon, Wordsworth turned his face from the French. Truly, he had reason; but never after did he do the French justice in appreciation. His life thenceforth was one of little outward event. He married, and had a large family. For forty years he was hard-working and constant in the production of verse, albeit far from constant in the quality of his verse.

When Wordsworth was in his early prime, a neighbor of his, Raisley Calvert, dying of consumption, seeing in Wordsworth the signs of a genuine poet, bequeathed to him about £900 to enable him to pursue the art. In a sonnet putting on record this benefaction, Wordsworth says:—

"Calvert, it must not be unheard by them
Who may respect my name, that I to thee
Owed many years of early liberty.
This care was thine when sickness did condemn
Thy youth to hopeless wasting, root and stem—
That I, if frugal and severe, might stray
Where'er I liked; and finally array
My temples with the Muse's diadem."

"If frugal and severe." There you have the cue to Wordsworth's practice; there, half the secret of his power. Frugality and severity; taking little, and choosing well. This temper with Wordsworth became a second nature. He was plain in his diet, took no intoxicant, was reservant in conversation. His sonnet on "Personal Talk" (one of the best things in our language, with its surly humor, half a-doze) reflects him to a hair. This temper, too, enters into Wordsworth's poetic style. In that style there is nothing perfervid, nothing sensational. Wordsworth has other faults of style, but he has not these. With the bulk of readers, unsifted and indolent, seeking nothing beyond cheap sensationalism, Wordsworth did not win many to read him. But neglect did not weaken his purpose. In a sonnet to the painter, Haydon, affirming the virtue of holding fast to that which is true in art, Wordsworth points to the "bright reward"; the reward, not of fame or gold, but of good work finally accomplished.

The broad lines of Wordsworth's work, the secret of its appeal, Matthew Arnold has stated for us in his own best way. He says:—

"Wordsworth's poetry is great because of the extraordinary power with which Wordsworth feels the joy offered to us in nature; the joy offered to us in the simple primary affections and duties; and because of the extraordinary power with which, in case after case, he shows us this joy, and renders it so as to make us share it. The source of joy from which he thus draws is the truest and most unfailing source of joy accessible to man. It is also accessible universally. Wordsworth brings us word, therefore, according to his own strong and characteristic line, he brings us word—

'Of joy in widest commonalty spread.'

Here is an immense advantage for a poet. Wordsworth tells of what all seek, and tells of it at its truest and best source, and yet a source where all may go and draw for it."

"Nevertheless," continues Arnold, "we are not to suppose that everything is precious which Wordsworth,

standing even at this perennial and beautiful source may give us.....To give aright what he wishes to give, to interpret and render successfully, is not always within Wordsworth's own command. It is within no poet's command.....In Wordsworth's case, the accident, for so it may be called, of inspiration, is of peculiar importance. No poet, perhaps, is so evidently filled with a new and sacred energy when the inspiration is upon him; no poet, when it fails him, is so left 'weak as is a breaking wave.'"

Wordsworth's work, then, is unequal; the greater portion of it, one must add, inferior. How is it? Partly that Wordsworth, in rebellion against the artificial style of poetry in vogue through the preceding century, carried that rebellion too far. And partly that, for a man of University training, his notion of poetry as an art is strangely unequal. Sometimes, in one and the same poem, we get lines that for force and felicity it would be difficult to match in company with others we should deem flat in a book of nursery rhymes. Compare with the last three stanzas of "Simon Lee" the two that precede them. With the fourth stanza of "Fidelity" compare, say, the seventh.

Nor alone is it that Wordsworth is often caught nodding in his art. There is this more. The obverse of each excellence of his shows as a defect. Let us trace this out. When Wordsworth is dealing with things human, his merit is, he is natural and homely. The appeal is instantaneous, the effect profound. But he often treats with solemn earnestness themes trite or mawkish. While, on the one hand, we have from him "Michael," "The Brothers"; while he has given us that peerless ballad, "The Founding of Bolton Priory," (peerless, in spite of the little theological platitude at the end) we have, on the other hand, the watery-eyed "Margaret," (was ever such a wealth of poetry wasted on such a damp theme?) the inebriate "Waggoner," "Peter Bell" with his donkey, "The Idiot Boy," "We are Seven," and that model of childlike vacuity, "The Highland Boy." Byron, it will be in mind, gave some of these productions inglorious advertisement in "Don Juan."

Let us trace the correlation of excellence and defect in Wordsworth through another line. Another outstanding feature with him is reflectiveness. So sound, indeed, is this his faculty, it puts the stamp of universality on all his best work. Sometimes, too, when a subject would appear insufficient, it enables him to produce a poem of rare quality, as in "Star-Gazers." But this same faculty, run to seed, becomes a defect. Wordsworth grows solemn and ponderous over matters of no importance. In his poem entitled "Gipsies," he speaks of an idle day on the part of a troupe of those vagrants in terms of reproof that, as Coleridge says, would barely be justified if one were speaking of the stagnation, for four thousand years, of the Chinese Empire. One might enjoy that as an oddity; (the piece is a short one) but when, in a work of sleepy prolixity, Wordsworth sets an old theological tune in the key of settled complacency, it is too much for the patient student of poetics.

"A drowsy, frowsy poem, call'd 'The Excursion,'
Writ in a manner which is my aversion,"

is Byron's summary of what Wordsworth calls his "unfinished song."

H. BARBER.

(To be continued.)

Ingersoll's First Lecture.—VII.

(Concluded from page 157.)

LIBERTY TRIUMPHED.

LIBERTY, that most sacred word, without which all other words are vain, without which, life is worse than death, and men are beasts! I never see the word Liberty without seeing a halo of glory around it. It is a word worthy of the lips of a God. Can you realise the fact that only a few years ago, the most shocking system of slavery—the most barbarous—existed in our country, and that you and I were bound by the laws of the United States to stand between a human

being and his liberty? That we were absolutely compelled by law to hand back that human being to the lash and chain? That by our laws children were sold from the arms of mothers, wives sold from their husbands? That we executed our laws with the assistance of bloodhounds, owned and trained by human bloodhounds fiercer still, and that all this was not only upheld by politicians, but by the pretended ministers of Christ? That the pulpit was in partnership with the auction block—that the bloodhound's bark was only an echo from many of the churches? And that this was all done under the sacred name of Liberty, by a republican government that was founded upon the sublime declaration that all men are equal? This all seems to me like a horrible dream, a nightmare of terror, a hellish impossibility. And yet, with cheeks glowing and burning with shame, before the bar of history, we are forced to plead guilty to this terrible charge. We made a whipping-post of the cross of Christ. It is true that in a great degree we have atoned for this national crime. Our bravest and our best have been sacrificed. We have borne the bloody burden of war. The good and the true have been with us, and the women of the North have won glory imperishable. They robbed war half its terrors. Not content with binding the wreath of victory upon the leader's brow, they bandaged the soldier's wounds, they nerved the living, comforted the dying, and smiled upon the great victory through their tears.

They have consoled the hero's widow and are educating his orphans. They have erected a monument to enlightened charity to which time can add only grandeur. There is much, however, to be accomplished still. Slavery has been abolished, but Progress requires more. We are called upon to make this a free government in the broadest sense, to give liberty to all. Standing in the presence of all history, knowing the experience of mankind, knowing that the earth is covered with countless wrecks of cruel failures; appealed to by the great army of martyrs and heroes who have gone before; by the sacred dust filling innumerable graves; by the memory of our own noble dead; by all the suffering of the past; by all the hopes for the future; by all the glorious dead and the countless millions yet to be, I pray, I beseech, I implore the American people to lay the foundation of the Government upon the principles of eternal justice. I pray, I beseech, I implore them to take for the corner-stone, Universal Human Liberty—the stone which has been heretofore rejected by all the builders of nations. The Government will then stand, and the swelling dome of the temple will touch the stars.

CONCLUSION.

I have thus endeavored to show you some of the effects of slavery, and to prove to you that a step in order to be in the direction of progress must be in the direction of freedom; that slavery either of body or mind is barbarism and is practised and defended only by infamous tyrants or their dupes. I have endeavored to point out some of the causes of the abolition of slavery, both of body and mind. There is one truth, however, that you must not forget, and that is, that every evil tends to correct and abolish itself. I believe, however, that the diffusion of knowledge, more than everything else combined, has ameliorated the condition of mankind. When there was no freedom of speech and no press, then every idea perished in the brain that gave it birth. One man could not profit by the thought of another. The experience of the past was in a great degree unknown. And this state of things produced the same effect in the mental world, that confining all the water to the springs would in the physical. Confine the water to the springs, the rivulets would cease to murmur, the rivers to flow, and the ocean itself would become a desert of sand. But with the invention of printing, ideas began to circulate, born of the busy brain of the million—little rivulets of facts running into rivers of information, and they all flowing into the great ocean of human knowledge.

This exchange of ideas, this comparison of thought, has given to each generation the advantage of all the past. This, more than all else, has enabled man to improve his condition. It is by this that from the log or piece of bark on which a naked savage floated, we have by successive improvements created a man-of-war carrying a hundred guns and miles of canvas. By these means we have changed a handful of sand into a telescope. In the hands of science a drop of water has become a giant, turning with swift and tireless arm the countless wheels. The sun has become an artist painting with shining beams the very thoughts within our eyes. The elements have been taught to do our bidding, and the electric spark, freighted with human thought and love, defies distance, and devours time as it sweeps under all the waves of the sea.

These are some of the results of free thought and free labor. I have barely alluded to a few—where is improvement to stop? Science is only in its infancy. It has accomplished all this and is in its cradle still.

We are standing on the shore of an infinite ocean whose countless waves, freighted with blessings, are welcoming our adventurous feet. Progress has been written on every soul. The human race is advancing.

Forward, oh sublime army of progress, forward until law is justice, forward until ignorance is unknown, forward while there is a spiritual or temporal throne, forward until superstition is a forgotten dream, forward until the world is free, forward until human reason, clothed in the purple of authority, is king of kings.

Saint John the Divine, Snake-Seer.

A RATIONALISTIC REVELATION.

Did John the Divine have a supper of pork
'Ere he wrote that last book of the Bible?
Not wisely, too well use his knife and his fork
'Ere he published that "blasphemous libel?"

If he hadn't the meal that I've mentioned to you,
I submit that he must have been boozing;
For a boozier sees "snakes," and he spotted a few
At a time when he must have been snoozing.

He spotted Old Harry, the king of them all;
He was crawling about on his belly.
Old Nick, though a "gent.," isn't upright and tall,
As depicted by Marie Corelli.

Says John—and he must have been full to the brim—
"In the spirit was I on a Sunday."
But the spirit—to judge from his book—was in *him*
From the dawn of the previous Monday.

Yes, plainly the saint had been pulling too long
At the tankard, the bowl, or the flagon,
For he speaks of our friend, who had done him no wrong,
As the "Devil," "Old Serpent," and "Dragon."

He copies his Master, "Our Savior," J. C.,
Who referred to his foe as a "viper,"
Cursed and swore like a trooper one day at a tree,
When he wanted its figs to be riper.

Not so bad as "Our Father" is Nick the accurst,
So we gather from Moses's journal;
He's the Father of Knowledge, scholmaster the first,
Though consigned to the regions infernal.

Says Johnny, an angel caught hold of Old Nick,
And a thousand years' "penal" he gave him.
When a saint is "revealing," he piles it on thick
To intimidate man and enslave him.

Some beasts "full of eyes" met the muddled one's gaze—
They'd apparently got 'em inside 'em.*
In those days men were jays, hadn't met with X rays,
So the Lord only knows how he eyed 'em.

He spotted a leopard with many a spot,
Though it hadn't been made quite correctly;
Seven heads and ten horns had the animal got—
Take a warning and live circumspectly.

He spotted the Lamb "without blemish or spots,"
Christianity's founder, confound Him!
On His Father's right hand He unceasingly squats,
With His Army of cringers around Him.

Some scorpion-locusts he spotted, 'tis said,
With stings in their tails that will hurt you,†
Unless you've the mark of the Lord on your head—
Though it isn't the hall mark of virtue.

Now a spade is a spade, and a fact is a fact,
Of my words I'm no chooser and picker:
"Revelation" reveals that the writer was cracked,
Had the nightmare, or wrote it in liquor!

ESS JAY BEE.

A FAIR EXCHANGE.

The Hon. Joseph H. Choate tells of a meeting at a London club of a bishop and Lord Rosebery. During the course of their conversation the reverend gentleman observed to his lordship:

"I've an invitation to dine this evening. What a nuisance it is—a long dinner, I mean. There are two things I absolutely dread—a long dinner and a long sermon. I contend that, however good they may be, neither the dinner nor the sermon should take more than twenty minutes at the most."

Rosebery smiled. "It seems to me," he said, "that the matter might be nicely arranged by knocking ten minutes off the sermon and putting it on the dinner."—*Harper's Weekly*.

TIMELY ADVICE.

"Now," began the tiresome man who goes in for queer science, "what would you say if I were to tell you that all the rivers in the world would dry up within a ——" "I would say," interrupted the weary listener, "'Go thou and do likewise.'"—*Washington Star*.

ALWAYS GOOD.

"Do you know why chickens are the most devout of all fowls?" asked Governor Hoch of a colored preacher who had called upon him for a subscription. "No, sah, Goveneh; why am it?" "Because more of them go into the ministry."

UNNECESSARY PRECAUTION.

Mrs. Goode (a clergyman's wife): "My husband always says a short prayer before each meal." The New Cook (indignantly): "Well, he needn't take sich precautions phwhile I'm at th' range; I'm no cookin'-school gradooate!"

A VEGETARIAN.

MRS. HOYLE—"Does your husband say grace before meat?"
MRS. DOYLE—"No; he is a vegetarian and says grace before grass."—*Judge*.

SADDENING.

"O my friends!" exclaimed the orator, "it makes me sad when I think of the days that are gone, when I look around and miss the old familiar faces I used to shake hands with."—*Modes and Fabrics*.

The most wonderful instance of presence of mind was that of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. In the midst of the fiery furnace, they kept cool.

He says I'm no use! but I won't reply.
You're lucky not being of use to him!
On week-days he's playing at Spider and Fly,
And on Sundays he sings about Cherubim!
Nailing shillings to counters is his chief work;
He nods now and then at the name on his door:
But judge of us two at a bow and a smirk,
I think I'm his match: and I'm honest—that's more.
—*George Meredith, "The Beggar's Soliloquy."*

The necessity for external government to man is in inverse ratio to the vigor of his self-government. Where the last is most complete, the first is least wanted. Hence, the more virtue the more liberty.—*Coleridge*.

Correspondence.

FOR LEICESTER READERS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—The difficulty in getting copies of the *Freethinker* here is easily explained. The book shop adjoining the Hall closed two weeks ago, and the Society does not sell any kind of literature on week-days. As soon as the shop was closed we announced, through the chairman at our Sunday evening lecture (and it was again announced on Sunday, March 11), that any friend may be supplied with Freethought papers, if duly ordered, and if customers will come to our stall on Sundays (6.15 to 7.45 p.m.) in the Lecture Hall.

F. J. GOULD,

Secular Hall, Humberstone-gate, Leicester,

Science is the real redeemer. It will put honesty above hypocrisy; mental veracity above all belief. It will teach the religion of usefulness. It will destroy bigotry in all its forms. It will put thoughtful doubt above thoughtless faith. It will give us philosophers, thinkers, and savants, instead of priests, theologians, and saints. It will abolish poverty and crime, and greater, grander, nobler than all else, it will make the whole world free.—*Ingersoll*.

* "They were full of eyes within" (Rev. iv. 8).

† See Rev. ix. 4, 18.

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.

STANLEY HALL (Junction-road, N.): 7.30, G. W. Foote, "Is There a Future Life?"

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S. (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 3.15, Louis B. Gallagher, "Dr. Aveling's *The Immortality of the Soul*."

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Liberal Hall, Broadway, Forest Gate, E.): 7.30, W. J. Ramsay, "The Insanity of Jesus."

COUNTRY.

FAILSWORTH SECULAR SUNDAY SCHOOL (Pole-lane): 6.30, Mrs. Owen, "Should Women Have a Parliamentary Vote?"

GLASGOW BRANCH N. S. S. (110 Brunswick-street): 12 (noon), Discussion Class: D. J. Lindsay, "Current Topics"; 6.30, Social Meeting.

GLASGOW RATIONALIST AND ETHICAL ASSOCIATION (319 Sauchichall-street): Monday, March 18, at 8, J. Blair Smith, "Francis Adams."

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N. S. S. (Milton Hall, Daulby-street): John T. Lloyd, 3, "The Birth and Resurrection of Jesus Christ"; 7, "Evolution, the Key to all History."

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Rusholme-road, Oxford-road, All Saints): H. Percy Ward, 3, "Which Came First—the Hen or the Egg? Or the Origin of Life"; 6.30, "What Has Become of the Devil?" Tea at 5.

NEWCASTLE RATIONALIST LITERARY AND DEBATING SOCIETY (Lockhart's Cathedral Cafe): Thursday, March 22, at 8, T. T. Lodge, "Introvolution."

PORTH BRANCH N. S. S. (Room, Town Hall, Porth): 6.30, M. Jones, "Jesus Christ our Savior."

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, Market-place): 7.30, Lecture Arrangements.

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

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The Society has a considerable number of members, but a much larger number is desirable, and it is hoped that some will be gained amongst those who read this announcement. All who join participate in the control of its business and the trusteeship of its resources. It is expressly provided in the Articles of Association that no member, as such, shall derive any sort of profit from the Society, either by way of dividend, bonus, or interest, or in any way whatever.

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