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The first man on whom the light of an idea dawned, did in that same moment receive the spirit and the credentials of a lawgiver: and as long as man shall exist, so long will the possession of that antecedent knowledge (the maker and master of all profitable experience) which exists only in the power of an idea, be the one lawful qualification of all dominion in the world of the senses.

—COLERIDGE.

A Word to Mr. Keir Hardie.

SOME fourteen years ago we wrote an article in the *Freethinker* entitled "Keir Hardie on Christ." The honorable gentleman was then beginning to make his way in public life. A certain sagacity is in the Scotch blood and he had his share of it. He had the practical sense to see that a politician can only succeed by representing a material interest. Principles are all very well in their way; they lend elevation and fervor to eloquence; but they are rather the ornament than the motive power of political agitation. Principles alone may make a great apostle, but they never made the fortunes of a political leader. He must stand for a party, and a party always stands for a definite demand. And this demand is, at bottom, an earthly one. For as Don Quixote, the wise madman, told Sancho Panza, there are but two real parties in the world—the *Haves* and the *Have-nots*. And the strife between them is the cause of all the politics that ever were or ever will be. This may not have been philosophically grasped by Mr. Keir Hardie. We do not suppose it was. But his native shrewdness, which may act unconsciously, pointed out to him the road to success. Organised labor was just then entering the political sphere. He allied himself with it, he aimed at being its spokesman; and Scotch pertinacity, combined with a moderate amount of intellect, has carried him to his present altitude. There are far more brilliant men in the Labor movement, but their very brilliance may be a disadvantage. "In learning the useful part of every profession," as Goldsmith said, "very moderate abilities will suffice; even if the mind be a little balanced with stupidity, it may in this case be useful. Great abilities have always been less serviceable to the possessors than moderate ones." Mr. Keir Hardie's abilities are usefully moderate; he has also the convenient balance of stupidity; and in his case it takes the direction of a sneaking fondness for Christianity. And it is possible that his share of stupidity and his share of sagacity are allies in this particular matter; for it seems pretty certain that political leaders cannot hope to triumph in this country, at least for the present, unless they either patronise the Christian religion or carefully conceal their hostility to it. The former course is preferable, and the latter course often leads to it by insensible gradations.

When we wrote the article already referred to Mr. Keir Hardie was being courted by the Churches, and he was by no means repelling their advances. Being interviewed by the *Christian Commonwealth*, he was pawky enough (he is so still) not to commit himself to any Christian denomination; indeed, he hinted

that "the old theological sects" were dying; on the other hand, the "humanitarian Christianity of Christ was coming to the front." What this meant he did not explain—and he was wise in his reticence. But on another point he was more precise. "His father," the interviewer said, "is a very vigorous and militant Atheist, so that the son was brought up without any religious belief." This was perfectly true. It might have been added that his mother was an Atheist too. They were both members of the Glasgow Branch of the National Secular Society to the day of their death. Mr. Keir Hardie came out of the bosom of a Freethought family. But there was nothing wonderful in that. Many Atheists, including Charles Bradlaugh and George Jacob Holyoake, came out of the bosom of Christian families. In such cases, whether on the one side or on the other, the parents may have been admirable people, and the children were exercising a natural right in thinking for themselves. Mr. Keir Hardie did not say anything derogatory to his parents then. He gave them praise when he buried them two or three years ago. But he seems to be in a different mood now. He appears to have forgotten his affection and respect for one of the worthiest couples that ever drew the breath of life.

Mr. Keir Hardie was the principal speaker at a Socialist and Labor demonstration in the Queen's Theatre, Liverpool, on Sunday evening, April 1. Mr. Robert Blatchford was in the chair, and the country is ringing with the echoes of his attack on religion. Was it by way of anticipation that Mr. Hardie attended a P.S.A. meeting in the afternoon and declared (according to the *Daily Post*) that "When people said that Socialists were Atheists or Agnostics they either spoke out of the depths of profound ignorance, which was pitiable, or from a spirit of uncharitableness, which was even less excusable." This sounds like a challenge to Mr. Blatchford and the *Clarion* party. It also suggests that Mr. Hardie looks upon Atheism or Agnosticism as a mental or moral disease. Not that his opinion on this point is of much importance. He is not a thinker. His views on religion are hardly worth criticism. It is something else that calls for comment. We refer to the extraordinary aspersion he cast upon the worthy souls to whom he owes his own existence.

This is how Mr. Keir Hardie is reported in the *Daily Post* of April 2—the honorable gentleman speaking from the pulpit of Crescent Church:—

"He was brought up as a child not only without religious belief, but in open and strong hostility to every form of religious belief. Subsequently he felt a revolt in himself at the ideas he held and had been taught, and even then as a youth he desired to feel a sense of fellowship and comradeship with all whom he came into contact; and yet he was taught that his first business was to look after himself and get on in life, that he had no right to concern himself about others, that it was the business of everyone to look after number one, and that anything else than that of individual selfishness was wrong. But as he grew older and began to form opinions for himself, he realised more and more that in the teachings of Jesus of Nazareth there was found a completeness and unity, a simplicity and a dignity, which he could find nowhere else. And he accepted Christianity, and even now, looking back over a long period, he could remember the time when his conversion to Christianity became not merely an intellectual acceptance of it, but a whole-hearted belief in it."

Before saying what we think of this remarkable utterance we desire to add that, although it was greeted with loud applause, the speaker, like a good many others who never know when to stop, proceeded to undo all he had done. He told his audience that his conversion to Christianity did not bring him happiness. He was still tortured by the problem of poverty. Why was it that those who did least were the wealthiest, while those who worked hardest were the worst off? In spite of his acceptance of Christianity he was more puzzled than ever. At length he came across the writings of Henry George, and these apparently supplied him with what he had been unable to find in the matchless and complete teachings of Jesus Christ. Thus he became converted from Individualism to Socialism—although, by the way, Henry George was an opponent of Socialism—and “felt that at last his Christianity had been rounded.”

This extraordinary hodge-podge was still more loudly applauded. But what is there that a Christian audience will not applaud if it is supposed to contain a tribute to their faith? Sir Edward Russell, who was present, and moved a vote of thanks to the lecturer—or should we say the preacher?—took the opportunity of suggesting that too much importance should not be attached to their honorable friend's Socialism; the great thing was that this distinguished man “should ask nothing better than that all the affairs of the world and all the projects of nations and all the policies of statesmen should be judged by a Christian standard.” Whereat there was more loud applause, and the meeting dispersed in a high state of sentimental excitement. It does not appear to have occurred to anyone to ask what the “Christian standard” was, or how it is that the most opposite political and social parties range themselves under its hospitable banner.

But enough of this. Let us return to Mr. Keir Hardie's domestic confession. His parents brought him up without any religious belief. They taught him selfishness. They told him that his sole business in life was to look after number one. They warned him that it was folly to trouble about the interests of anyone but himself. This is what he is reported as having said at Liverpool. It is so shocking that we must hope he is misrepresented. If he really said what is attributed to him he was guilty of libelling his own parents. And for our part, if we had to make a choice, we would much rather he did that as a Christian than as an Atheist.

Mr. Keir Hardie's parents were not selfish themselves, and they could not have taught him to be so. They joined a Society whose principles they approved, they contributed towards its funds, and they subscribed in addition, out of their poor earnings, to various outside Funds that seemed to call for their assistance. Their names used to appear in the subscription lists in the *Freethinker*. They were deeply interested, in their humble way, in what concerned the welfare of humanity. We believe they were admirers and followers of Charles Bradlaugh. They were not Christians, they were not Socialists, but in their own way they were true friends of liberty and progress.

This is not the place to discuss Socialism, but, whatever its value, it was preached by Atheist missionaries in Great Britain before Mr. Keir Hardie was born, and its founder in this country was Robert Owen, who declared that the religions of the world were all false, and that the recognition of this fact was indispensable to the regeneration of human society. We might also remind Mr. Hardie that the founders of the more recent continental Socialism were Freethinkers, that its principal leaders are still Freethinkers, and that many of the Socialist leaders in England are also Freethinkers. We might further remind Mr. Hardie that Auguste Comte, the founder of Positivism, with its Religion of Humanity—a great seminal thinker, from whom many have borrowed without acknowledgment—proposed to re-organise society without God; and yet was so far

from being selfish that he adopted “Live for Others” as the motto of his philosophy.

Perhaps we but waste our time in speaking of these things to Mr. Keir Hardie. We have already said that he is not a thinker. But he might try to be a man.

When a Roman was asked why they had no law against parricide, he said that they were afraid to suggest the possibility of such an infamous crime. Mr. Keir Hardie has not lifted his hand against his parents, but (unless he is misreported) he has lifted his tongue against them. He has attacked their reputation. He has slandered them in their graves. His first duty now is repentance and atonement. Dr. Johnson, when his hair was white, stood uncovered for a whole hour in Uttoxeter market, on the very spot where, fifty years before, he had refused to attend in order to oblige his poor sick father, who sold books there from a stall. The memory of that refusal rankled in his mind; he resolved to atone for his fault; and all he could do then was to stand in that solemn, pathetic way in the very midst of the restless crowd of buyers and sellers, revolving far other thoughts than those which filled their busy heads. Mr. Keir Hardie (again we say, unless he is misreported) has committed a much greater fault than Dr. Johnson's, and should undertake a much greater penance. The form of it must be left to himself, but the essence of it is beyond doubt. He is bound in common honor, and even in common decency, to unsay that wretched slander on the beings who gave him birth.

G. W. FOOTE.

Rome or Reason?—II.

(Concluded from p. 213.)

THE best commentary upon the modern plea that the Protestant Churches were intolerant because of their alliance with the State, is that for many years after the Reformation it was the influence of the State that imposed some measure of mutual forbearance upon the religious bodies. So far as the Churches themselves are concerned, both here and abroad, their energies seemed devoted to proving that in persecution at least they were the equals of the Church from which they had seceded. In England and Scotland during the Stuart period the laws were as intolerant and the practice as savage as anything in civilised history. Even Milton, author though he was of one of our classical pleas for liberty of thought, distinctly upheld the rights of the magistrates to suppress Roman Catholicism, not on civil grounds, but because it was opposed to Biblical teaching. In Holland, for many years the only country in Europe where anything like tolerance was practised, and as late as the end of the seventeenth century a gathering of Protestant clergymen, driven from France and England by persecution, protested against the teaching that magistrates have no right to crush heresy as “false, scandalous, and pernicious.”

If this was the attitude of Protestants on the broad question of religious difference, when their own experience might have been expected to teach them tolerance, it is hardly to be expected that a more enlightened policy would be shown in other directions. That the Roman Church persecuted scientific workers is true; but this, again, was an example Protestants tried hard to better. Luther denounced Copernicus with a more than Catholic energy and in a manner that would have reflected credit on a modern Billingsgate porter. Moreover the strict adherence of the Protestant Churches to the letter of the Bible banned scientific thought far more effectually, at least for a time, than the Roman Church had been able to do; while the effect of the Reformation in making intolerance more of an individual matter had a depressing effect upon the public mind. As a matter of fact, for a long time science

gained more in Catholic than in Protestant countries, Italy being specially prominent in this direction.

It is, too, an example of how quickly people forget recent events, and how easily the obvious is overlooked, to note how, after it is forgotten, that in our own country the bitterest opposition has always been shown by Protestant bodies to scientific progress. It was a Protestant public opinion against which the Royal Society had to fight at the time of its institution. It was a Protestant mob that broke out into riots to get back the days it had been robbed of by the alteration of the Calendar. It was Protestant churches and chapels that fought against the physics of Newton, the astronomy of Laplace, the geology of Lyell, and the biology of Darwin. And the bitterest, the most virulent, and the most ignorant opposition has always come from precisely those extreme sects who pride themselves upon their rigid Protestantism. The Church of England, because it was the Church of England, gave to Darwin a place of burial in Westminster Abbey. Had it rested with the Dissenters the case would have been vastly different.

Even from a religious point of view it is difficult to see wherein lies the superiority of Protestantism over Roman Catholicism. Against the assaults of Freethought Catholicism has at least a reply—an inadequate one, true, but still a reply. Christianity, it says, does not rest upon the Bible, but upon the authority of the Church. Sever it from that authority and it, of course, fails. Protestantism, on the other hand, claims to rest upon the Bible and to appeal to human reason. Yet when this tribunal of reason is appealed to, and its decision is adverse, it denounces the iniquity of judging religious truths by "mere reason," and appeals to some mythical "religious faculty" for support. The Roman Church asks the world to accept it because it is, at least, a living fact. The Protestant Church asks for acceptance because of the Bible. But when its credentials are examined they are found to be almost wholly anonymous, bristling with inaccuracies and obvious faults, and so obviously incapable of acting as a safe basis for Protestantism that "advanced" Christians are actually falling back upon "intuition" and the like as giving them the necessary foundation. As with fundamentals, so with other things. The doctrines taught by the Protestant Churches are fundamentally as unreasonable as those taught by Roman Catholics. Between the miracles of the Bible and the miracles of the Church, between the miraculous cures by the Virgin and the cures by Protestant prayers, between the dogma of the virginity of Mary's mother and the virginity of Mary herself, there is no substantial difference. The weakness that is inherent in the one is inherent in the other. And certainly the claim of the Catholic Church to direct the secular life of man is far more reasonable, and decidedly more honest, than the extreme Protestant disclaimer of any such desire, accompanied by endless intrigues to achieve that result.

The truth is that Protestantism represented at best an impermanent compromise, and at worst a distinct set back to the stream of European thought. Impermanent because while it possessed all the intellectual inconsistencies of Roman Catholicism, it was destitute of either its strength of organisation or coherence of teaching. As Froude pointed out, it reached its full stature at a bound, and since the earlier portion of the seventeenth century it has made no progress worth speaking about. It has even lost ground in some cases, for the Roman Church, which was itself reformed by the Reformation, began to regain lost ground as soon as the first shock of the conflict was over. And in Catholic countries like France, Spain, or Italy, where the Roman Church is losing ground, Protestantism is gaining very little by the change. Some converts to Protestantism, people who are not strong enough to go the whole distance, there are pretty certain to be. But in the main the tendency is for those who leave the Roman Church to refrain from joining any other. They represent

the gains to Freethought. The Protestant cry that Roman Catholicism breeds Atheism is a recognition of this fact, expressed in an oblique manner.

The fact that to day in Catholic countries the change is usually from the Church to Freethought, illustrates what I mean by saying that the Reformation represented a set back in the stream of European development. Protestants too often forget that there were reformers before Luther, and that many of these were without the narrowness and fanaticism that characterised Luther, his fellow workers, and his successors. The movement represented by such men as Erasmus, Colet and More, had it not been checked, would have had a far healthier influence on European thought and life than the Reformation had. For this aimed at a genuine social and intellectual reformation; and it is worth while noting that their aims were expressed with more freedom under Romanism than would have been possible under an established Protestantism. But the effect of the Reformation was two-fold. On the one side, it gave the pill of superstition a gilding of reason, and so made it palatable to those who might otherwise have rejected superstition altogether. And on the other hand, by setting up a rival church to that of Rome; it forced Roman Catholicism to set itself in order, to modify its practice, and so secure a fresh tenure of existence. Intellectually Europe paid penance for a century for the triumph of Protestantism, and it may well be questioned whether—even if one admits all that is claimed—the benefits this country derived by the overthrow of the Roman Church was not dearly paid for by the unlovely characteristics that have been stamped on English life and character.

So far as the effect on life is concerned, whatever virtues Protestantism possesses is of the negative character. It is relatively good not because of what it does, but because of what it does not. If it controlled life to the same extent that Catholicism has done, and still claims to do, all experience forbids one to believe that its effect would be any better. The multiplicity of sects within the Protestant Church forbids any one of them occupying a very commanding position for long. Rivalries, if they do nothing else, secures a degree of practical tolerance impossible under other conditions. But even here the Roman Church occupies the more logical position. It is impossible for any Christian Church to decline to interfere with social or political affairs, should occasion offer, or to seek to make opportunities for such interference when none occurs. To do so would be to sink hopelessly out of touch with life; and the truth of this is seen in the fact that despite all theory the various Protestant bodies have been interfering more and more in social and political life. That is, force of circumstances have driven Protestants to come as near the policy of the Roman Church as circumstances permit.

It is not clear, therefore, that Protestantism possesses any quality or advantage that will give it a better chance of surviving than is possessed by the Roman Church. On the contrary it is inherently weaker. It is a compromise, and it is in the nature of compromises to be sooner or later thrown on one side, leaving the field to clearly opposing principles. In the long run Rome has nothing to dread from Protestantism. Given a fair field it can more than hold its own against its religious rival. The only enemy it dreads is Freethought. And this is the only force that can successfully compete with Rome. For here the whole tendency of human progress is on our side. Every broadening of the intellectual horizon, every step is the growth of a better feeling between human beings, every fresh stage reached in the long process of the humanisation of the world makes for the downfall of all supernaturalism. Against this process Protestantism and Roman Catholicism are equally powerless. A temporary triumph may be gained here or there, but as to which is the side with which victory will ultimately rest, admits of little doubt to those who forecast the future of humanity in the light of its past history.

C. COHEN.

Free Will.—II.

(Concluded from p. 214.)

IN discussing the subject of moral responsibility it is necessary to bear in mind that conscience is not an innate faculty or sense of the mind. No one is born into the world in possession of a conscience. This is one of the great discoveries of modern psychology. The moral sense can be proved to be an acquirement. It is an acquirement of each individual as well as of the race. Each individual, in a sense, begins life *de novo*, and it depends on his environment what he shall become. There is a large school of psychologists who do not believe that acquired characters are transmissible, and there are many facts which seemingly give support to their contention. Here is a savage boy of six, whose parents are uncivilised. They are neither better nor worse than the generality of their tribe. But the boy is adopted by Europeans of exceptional nobility and refinement of character. They bring him up as if he were their own son. He receives the best and most thorough education available, and his progress is both rapid and genuine. He becomes a splendid scholar and at the same time develops the most excellent character. In the country to which he belongs black people are looked down upon and despised; but he stands high in the estimation of the most prejudiced whites, and is universally acknowledged to be a very superior man. The appearance of such a character proves beyond a doubt what an enormous influence is exerted by environment. To change a man's environment may result in his forming a totally new character.

And yet education cannot do everything. There is a hereditary deposit in every human being which seriously limits the power of environment. Behind all of us lie innumerable generations of ancestors, all of whom have done their share to enrich or impoverish our inheritance. Our organic quality has descended to us from the past. Whether high or low, good or bad, we are largely at its mercy. Heredity bequeathed it to us and we must take it as it is. Within it are wrapped up stupendous possibilities of good or evil. If it is large, the lines have fallen to us in pleasant places; but if small, we shall go through life fearfully handicapped. The point to be noted, however, is that environment may greatly modify heredity, or that the law of inheritance is subject to the law of education. I referred to the case of the savage boy for the purpose of showing that the savage tendencies he had inherited were neutralised by a thoroughly civilised education. At the same time, I admit that his organic quality may have been thoroughly good, in consequence of which he may have been all the more easily influenced by a changed environment. In other outwardly similar cases the same change of environment has signally failed to produce identical results, which proves that sometimes, at least, heredity is more powerful than environment.

Whatever theory of heredity we may adopt, the fact remains that conscience is not an intuition of the mind, or an inborn faculty, but an acquirement. If the quality of my organism is good, I shall develop a powerful conscience, and live a highly moral life, without much difficulty; but if my quality is low, my moral sense will never excel. This difference in organic quality makes it natural for some people to be good and for others to be vile. Where, then, does the sense of responsibility come in? If a man cannot help being what he is how can he be responsible? Well, as a matter of fact, thousands of people round about us are not responsible. "In prisons, hospitals, brothels, asylums," says Mr. Garrod, "there die daily men whose lives are a moral wreck: men literally 'conceived in sin' and who could in no way have been better or other than they were. We have all of us come across them casually, and some of us more than casually." The sense of responsibility is a product of moral education. Although the will is bound there is a sense in which every man of average health has "power on

his own act and on the world." Yesterday, in obedience to the dominant motive, you made a choice which to-day you regret. That is to say, the result of yesterday's choice has made a valuable addition to your stock of knowledge, and this additional knowledge reacts upon your emotions or desires, or tends to fortify a desire that was too weak yesterday. Now, in proportion as you convert experience into emotion you will be enabled to act more wisely, or to make better choices. Ethical wisdom is the reward of ethical experience. While we cannot help being what we are, most of us can become better than we are, if we but profit by our experience and knowledge. The consequences of wrong choices should instruct our reason and ennoble our desires. As Dr. Saleeby says: "If I sin against a law of Nature, I suffer; and that is natural consequence. If I sin against a law of society, I suffer, and that—society, like its components, being a natural product—is also natural consequence. My action is thus restrained, modified, determined by public opinion." Thus I develop a sense of responsibility to society, and this becomes a motive that will more and more determine my action.

It is by the same law that morality comes. The idea of Free Will makes morality the most chimerical thing under the sun. By morality is meant that habit or way of life which conduces to the well being of society, and surely if a man loves humanity he is not free to be immoral. No one can be both good and bad at one and the same time. And yet that great divine, Dr. South, assures us that "the morality of an action is founded in the freedom of that principle, by virtue of which it is in the agent's power, having all things ready and requisite to the performance of an action, either to perform or not perform it." Such a definition of morality is extremely ridiculous. Of course, to Dr. South morality was dependent upon the will of God. To be moral was to please God, or to do what God told us to do, and simply *because* He told us. But to regard morality as subject to the will of God is to degrade it, or to strip it of its moral quality. The truly good man is moral to *please himself*, or because he cannot be otherwise. He obeys an inward impulsion, or compulsion, of his own being. *Only a bad man can observe the moral law merely to please God, and only a bad man can choose to be immoral.*

Mr. Garrod speaks of the Process of Nature which to him is the Purpose of God: "Once conceive the universe as an all-embracing whole, all the parts of which are parts of one process:—outside an all-embracing whole there can be no extraneous compelling force (or the whole would not be all-embracing)." That is quite patent, but does it follow that "the world-process is free?" In what sense is it free? Does Mr. Garrod mean that it could have been different, or does he mean that it is free of guidance? If he means the latter how can he call the process a Purpose? If he means the former he has surely ventured beyond his depth. "To our relative vision, the process is doubtless upward and onward; but there is nothing at all to show that it is free, or might have been radically different. Speaking of the Universe as a whole, we perceive no sign whatever of an eternal purpose to which it is moving. Astronomy knows nothing of such a purpose, but is bewildered at the sight of solar systems forming and then collapsing, as if the whole process obeyed some blind unconscious force or forces.

Then what does Mr. Garrod mean by saying that "in the Universe as a whole there is no limitation?" Must not that which is true of the parts be true also of the whole? Is the whole greater than all its parts? Has the whole a will independently of all its parts? I ask these questions in order to point out the fallacy of the remark that "the will that binds all is free." This observation contradicts the previous statement that the universe is "an all-embracing whole" outside which there "can be no extraneous compelling force." If the universe is "an all-embracing whole" the existence of "a will that binds all wills" is unthinkable. And now if we

could conceive of the existence of such a will we could not think of it as free. All wills are subject to the law of their nature. No will *can* be free.

Mr. Garrod says that "a man may accept Determinism without losing the consciousness of power in himself and faith in that power"; and we are bound to agree with him. But when he adds that this power is not man's own we must confess our inability to follow him. A man's power is undeniably a part of himself; it inheres in his very constitution. But what is this power? It is the power to learn from experience, and the power to turn the learning to good account. This is the power that makes life a source of perpetual joy. We have power to adapt ourselves to the requirements of society which form a part of our environment, and this process of adaptation consists very largely in improving the environment of the unfortunate among our neighbors. Herein lies the power we can exert on the world. We can help others to develop the power that is nearly dead within them. We can help them mentally, physically, and morally. This is the power of education as described by Herbert Spencer.

But the possession of this power is no indication whatever of the freedom of the will, because however powerful for good a man may be he cannot but do the thing he likes best. We *must* obey our strongest motive. Power and freedom are two different things; but power *involves* responsibility. It is the developed sense of responsibility that impels to the exercise of the power. Power inheres in us; but it is education that brings it out and tells us what use to make of it.

Now, the conclusion of the whole matter is that Determinism is the only doctrine that gives morality its true value. Even "Free Willers" abandon their dogma when they treat of their anthropomorphic Deity. God, they say, *cannot* do wrong; the Judge of all the earth *must* do right. God is, therefore, only free to be himself on all occasions. Well, we maintain that, in order to be consistent, these theologians ought to say the same of man. Man is only free to be himself. If he *is* good he cannot *do* evil, and if he *is* evil he cannot *do* good. What made one man good and another evil? Heredity and environment. Alter the environment and you will eventually improve the heredity. Given an improved environment, first causing and then acting in conjunction with an improved heredity, and the result is bound to take the form of an improved condition of society generally. Mr. Garrod observes, concerning the moral wrecks with whom society abounds, that "they are parts of a whole which have only no meaning because I do not comprehend the whole." Whether moral wrecks have a meaning or not, they can be of no benefit, and are a source of injury to the whole; and the sooner they are eliminated the better. If they cannot be saved, and Mr. Garrod seems to take this for granted, their disappearance would be a boon. Now the mission of education is to introduce such conditions everywhere as will by degrees render the manufacture of moral wrecks a moral impossibility.

One cannot but admire Mr. Garrod's sympathetic reference to those moral wrecks; but is it not an egregious mistake to leave them to the mercy of God? Their suffering may be very great, and there is "so little apparent purpose" in it, but the mercy of God has never yet alleviated it. Would it not be better to refer all such suffering to the mercy of good men and women, whose philanthropy will lead them to adopt such measures as will help them to give relief under existing evils, and to produce such physical, mental, and moral conditions, as will render such evils impossible in the future? It is our conviction that the belief in Free Will and in the mercy of God has been and is largely responsible for most of the pain and misery in the world, and that a profound realisation of the truth of Determinism would eventuate in the establishment of a thoroughly scientific system of education, and in the consequent reconstruction of society on lines similar to those suggested by Herbert Spencer in his famous book.

J. T. LLOYD.

"There is a Green Hill Far Away."

THE hymn with this title, such a favorite with Christians, and so inculcated into children, is much inferior to Milman's

"Bound upon the accursed Tree,
Faint and bleeding, who is He?"

Yet both are false, we think, in statement, and erroneous and pernicious in doctrine.

If Jesus ever really suffered the death of the Cross—as many learned Jewish and other writers dispute—it does not establish the doctrine of either an Atonement or Redemption, but simply that he precipitated himself against the laws then in force and the prejudices of the Jewish people. If a person known by the name at which Paul says "every knee shall bow" perished as a martyr to his convictions, it is no proof of his divinity. Nor can it bear testimony to his being more than an enthusiast involved in a chain of disastrous consequences invoked by himself. If he imagined he was divine, and sent to expiate the sin of others, the tragedy of his crucifixion dispelled that cherished fancy. God did not interfere to save him any more than any other martyr in the arena or at the stake. There is no historical proof of any convulsions or demonstrations in nature at his death. And as we have stated, many Jewish writers confute the statement that the historical Jesus—if he *was* historical—never suffered, but that another person, a fanatic running wild in the streets of Jerusalem, crying "Woe! woe!" excited the people, was apprehended and executed as a malefactor, even as an Anarchist might be in modern Europe. Even as in "free America" Chicago hanged its obnoxious Anarchists, so in old and bound Jerusalem they put a public revolutionary out of the way.

Neither the Gnostics, the Docetæ, nor the Arians believed that any Divinity expired on the Cross. Only the Patripassionists—a strange sect—held to it. Only when Latin Christianity became dominant was the doctrine of an Atonement set up as the orthodox standard, even as the Christian "Labarum" supplanted the Roman eagles. And Unitarians, whom the "orthodox" can hardly acknowledge as Christians, and often do not do so, reject the figment of Atonement, however much they may admire Jesus as a hero or esteem him as a martyr.

But the Atheist cannot possibly grant that on that "green hill far away" anyone ever "died to save us all." And Christian pulpits only proclaim it as a *sine quid non* of orthodox faith. Only if you believe in Jesus as your Savior and Redeemer can his death be of any efficacy to you, or cleanse you from your sins. Regardless of your merits and virtues otherwise, there is but one alternative—acceptance or rejection, faith or perdition. And the hymn asserts, "He only could unlock the door of heaven, and let us in." This tremendous statement exalts Jesus above any power of Father or Holy Ghost, or any intercession of Virgin Mother, or angel, or saint. "He only"! Does it not seem incredible that enlightened minds can accept such a statement, and whatever it implies?

We do not undervalue the sincere work or sufferings of any true martyr of any creed or no creed, Jewish, Christian, Mohammedan, heathen, or Atheist. For *anyone* who dies for a principle we have reverence, and can bow at their name, even if Paul could not. But we do not and cannot hold that such an one can expiate the sins of others, or by his self-sacrifice can elevate them—let them in—to any supposed heaven or hereafter of bliss. His act of sacrifice, personal to himself, may help others as an example, or fortify and encourage them to do what they regard as their duty and to walk in his noble footsteps. How can it do more than this?

And so "Good" Friday can but be the commemoration of a martyr—supposing Jesus Christ to have been that martyr. Easter Day, the festival of the sun and the genial spring, and the annual return to

the vernal season, is sufficient to awaken our rejoicings more than any fable of a Resurrection. Nothing more? Yes; it testifies to the triumph of Nature in its renewed forces, far greater and grander than the resuscitation of a mythical personage "on the third day" from his rocky tomb, whence we believe he never issued alive, but has lain there these ages—

"Rolled round in earth's diurnal course,
With rocks and stones and trees."

GERALD GREY.

Acid Drops.

Easter Eggs, a newspaper says, are getting more popular than ever. Will somebody tell us what they have to do with the crucifixion or resurrection of Jesus Christ? They are a part of Paganism. Eggs symbolised the fecundity of nature; and rightly so, for all animal life, as biology now shows us, really comes from an ovum. And these symbolic eggs were used at Easter, which is simply the Spring festival—the resurrection of nature from the cold and darkness of winter.

Railway Companies offer all sorts of attractions to trippers at Easter. Christians go about in myriads enjoying themselves. Quite right too. But what a farce to pretend that they are commemorating the death and resurrection of their Savior! They are really taking part in the Spring festival, which existed a long while before Christianity and will probably exist a long while after it.

Christian divines say that the time of Christ's crucifixion and resurrection is fixed by the Jewish Passover. But the Jewish Passover is itself but a Spring festival. Its original and natural meaning was obscured by priestly arts and legendary stories. It has absolutely nothing to do with the passing of the Jews out of Egypt—an event which never really happened. The only *passover* in the matter is the sun's passing the vernal equinox.

How odd it is that the ordinary Christian never wonders why Easter is determined by astronomical calculations, and shifts its position every year. If it commemorated the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ it would be a fixture. The date of any person's death would always be the same. It is not so in the case of Christ. Why? Because he is not a historical but a mythological character.

That unspeakable person, the Czar of Russia, really ought to be in the Chamber of Horrors. Having helped to drag his country into the bloodiest war of modern times, having signed a treaty of peace with Japan in order to be able to use his soldiers against his own people, and having ever since dipped his hands daily in the blood of his subjects, who are still being murdered wholesale—this pious hypocrite signalises his new Easter by sending round fresh invitations for another Peace Conference at the Hague. With the murder of myriads fresh on his conscience, he mouths the old platitudes as though nothing had happened to make anyone doubt his sweet and amiable intentions. And we dare say the Christian Powers, including the one that Roosevelt bosses, will blandly help this crowned criminal to play through his projected farce. It is enough to make the very name of "Christian" stink in the nostrils of all the decent men and women in the world.

General Booth has got off a big batch of his emigrants to Canada. It is admitted, even in the *Daily News*, that they were not prison men or "colony" men, but picked men of good physique and good character; in fact a recruiting sergeant said it made him sick to see a crowd of such fine fellows leaving England. Ten thousand of this sort the General hopes to export this year, and next year he hopes the number will be twenty thousand. Yet our Christian statesmen (heaven save the mark!) stand by and let this religious charlatan go on exporting the manhood of the country. Nothing could be easier than sending men out of England; it is a mere question of money—and Booth is a good beggar. The difficult thing is the social problem that remains. And by exporting the manhood of the nation, and leaving all the refuse here, this religious charlatan, and his abettors among the Christian statesmen, are doing their best to render that problem hopeless.

Dr. Pereira, Bishop of Croydon, recently confirmed seven men and thirteen women in the Kent County Lunatic

Asylum. A newspaper cutting sent us, without identification, expresses surprise at this, and thinks it must be the first function of the kind ever held in any lunatic asylum. But it is not so. A good many years ago the Bishop of Exeter confirmed a number of lunatics at an asylum in Devonshire, and he took occasion to observe that he had always found such persons peculiarly susceptible to religious influences. Which we can well believe.

The Glasgow U. F. Presbytery has been holding an important meeting, which was reported at considerable length in the *Glasgow Herald*. Dr. Corbett submitted "an exhaustive and interesting report on Home Missions." There were influences at work in the towns, he said, that "threatened to destroy all attachment to the Church, if not all real faith in Christianity itself." On a moderate calculation "about fifty per cent. of the population of the great city of Glasgow were non-churchgoers." How to get these people into the house of God was a pressing problem. How to settle it was another matter. Various suggestions were made, but they seem likely to have as much effect upon the fifty per cent. as tickling has upon an elephant. The fact is that Scotland is going through a stage which England has already passed. The non-churchgoers in London are far more than half the population, and the proportion is steadily increasing.

Dr. Duff deplored the state of things among the church-goers themselves. "Heartlessness and indifference," he said, "prevailed even among their own members. A large number of their congregations did not care anything, so far as one could see, in regard to foreign missions or in regard to their own family spiritual interests." Terrible!

The same sort of wailing went on at the meeting of the Edinburgh U. F. Presbytery, where "Dr. Dykes Shaw opened a conference on the State of Religion." He mentioned "the wave of materialism which had spread over the population during the past and present generation." There was a hostile tone to Christianity in a very large part of the popular literature of the day. The divisions in the Church of Christ also did a great deal of harm, and "men had come to look upon the churches as so many rival concerns." Thus the reverend gentlemen went on, one after another, bemoaning what is in fact simply the decay of Christianity.

Naturally the drink question occupied attention at these Presbytery meetings. Elder D. MacNair, at Glasgow, proposed that unfermented wine should be used in the Holy Communion. He maintained that they ought not to countenance the use of alcoholic wine as an emblem of the Blood of Christ. He even declared that the Bible condemned it. But this is nonsense—as we have demonstrated in our pamphlet on *Bible and Beer*. Mr. Carnegie Simpson, one of the speakers who followed Elder MacNair, took the same view as ours. He was against the use of fermented wine for present-day reasons, but he denied that the practice was condemned in Holy Writ, and he had no doubt that at the Last Supper the Lord used the ordinary wine of the country. He might have added that the wine which Jesus manufactured at Cana was clearly not a teetotal drink. Such an idea is inconsistent with the language of its eulogist.

At the meeting of the Paisley U. F. Presbytery the drink question was well to the front. It was decided that public-houses should all be closed on holidays. They are already closed on Sundays. So it comes to this that in Scotland, which prides itself on being the most godly country in Christendom, the religious training of the people from the cradle upwards is powerless to keep them out of the drink-shops whenever they have a good chance of filling them—and their pious pastors have to call in the police to do the job at the finish.

Christians pretend to worship Christ. They would, however, be the very last to welcome him if he appeared again. If they find anybody imitating him they soon draw back their snarling muscles. Down at South Broomham, in Somerset, there is an itinerant preacher named Gill, who was once a prosperous farmer, but he sold all he had and gave the proceeds to the poor, and devoted himself to religious work. He dwells in a cottage placed at his disposal free of charge, and makes no collections at his meetings, but lives on the voluntary gifts of those who come under his influence. Just like Jesus, you see. But the gentle Jesuites hate him for it. One night last week some of them let fly eggs, stones, and other missiles as his auditors left the meeting-place. Several females were hurt, one man was rendered unconscious, and the preacher was so injured that he had to be conveyed home. And all this after nearly two thousand

years of Christianity, and after thirty-five years of Christian teaching in the elementary schools of England! Were we not right in calling it the impossible creed?

At the close of last year there was a performance of the "Messiah" in the Palace Theatre, Blackburn, in aid of the Lifeboat Funds. This act of charity has just been made the subject of a remonstrance by the Rev. G. Denyer, of Christchurch Vicarage, in the *Northern Daily Telegraph*. Thirteen other Church clergymen "concur in this protest," and their names and addresses are all printed under it. The fourteen men of God implore the people not to tolerate the thin end of the wedge of the "Continental Sunday." Let them uphold the sanctity of the Lord's Day. No plays, no concerts—not even sacred concerts for a benevolent object. In other words, there should be no rivalry against the sky-plots on Sunday. Long live Clerical Protection! Hallelujah! Amen!

The rector of Lowestoft objects to "sightseers" in his church. No one will in future be admitted to confirmation services without a ticket. The reverend gentleman intends to keep out those who only want to "look at the dresses of the candidates." He seems, however, to have an eye for costume himself—for he also announces that he keeps bridesmaids' caps to put on the heads of young ladies who assist at weddings "with nothing on their heads." This man of God seems about fit for the bun and lemonade department of Sunday-school beanfeasts.

Rev. Dr. William Barry, the well-known Roman Catholic, advances a new objection to Secular Education. He denounces the "proposed tyrannical exclusion of the Christian teaching from schools built and supported by Christian parents." But he does not state where these schools exist. According to information received, as the police say, we believe that the elementary schools of this country are supported, not by Christians, but by citizens. All citizens have to pay rates and taxes. Many of them are Christians, and many are Non-Christians. We have therefore to answer Dr. Barry's objection by another one. Why should the Christian teaching be allowed in schools built and supported by Non-Christian parents?

"Victorian" replies in the *Tribune* to the nonsense of that pious Jingo, the Rev. Dr. Fitchett. He traverses all Dr. Fitchett's statements about the "Secularism" of public education in Victoria. For instance, he accused the "Secularists" of knocking a verse out of Longfellow's "Wreck of the Hesperus." "Victorian" admits that it was knocked out, but he says that the "Secularists" had nothing to do with it. The knocking out was done by a Department officer who thought it "might give offence to the Jews." The verse dropped out of Burns's "Cottar's Saturday Night" was inadvertently dropped out by a Scotchman who sent an imperfect copy of the poem to the printer. "Victorian" admits that the Churches are always trying to upset the present system of education, but the citizens cannot be reduced from the policy of "free, compulsory, and secular."

Some months ago—of course it was before the general elections—the dear *Daily News*, in a moment of convulsive virtue, declared itself in favor of the "secular solution" in education. But on the eve of the introduction of Mr. Birrell's Bill our slippery contemporary wobbled off the track again. In "A Final Word" it takes cognizance of the fact, which we have often drawn attention to, that "already the Roman Catholics and a section of the Anglicans are threatening a passive or active resistance to that simple Bible teaching which probably most of the English parents would acquiesce in, if not actively desire." This is really no joking matter, and the organ of the Nonconformist conscience appears to see it. What, then, must be done? Why this. The fullest facilities must be given outside the school curriculum for the teaching of any religion the parents desire. But this is "the right of entry"—and this is what the Congregational Union deputation warned Mr. Birrell that they could not accept. Even with regard to the "simple Bible reading" the *Daily News*, while now advocating it, admits that "even here the delicate conscience might protest." But it appears to be our pious contemporary's view that all delicate consciences should be sent to the hospital.

It is very evident that the Nonconformists will have to have the cheek taken out of them. The other day a deputation from the Congregational Union waited on Mr. Birrell. They brought him six resolutions, which they appeared to think he was in duty bound to incorporate into his Education Bill. They wanted the School Boards back, for one thing;

they also wanted all schools to be of one class—which means the abolition of all Church and Catholic schools; they further objected to what is called "the right of entry," by which denominational teaching might be given out of school hours but in the school buildings; and finally they wanted their own religious policy carried out, after excluding everybody else. Here are their own words, or rather the words of the official resolution, which was introduced by Mr. Albert Spicer, M.P. :—

"(5) This council, whilst affirming as a principle that no teaching in religion should be given at the expense of the State, is willing to accept an arrangement by local authorities for the use in individual schools within their area of simple Bible reading or Biblical instruction, as is general at present in provided schools. The Cowper Temple Clause and the Conscience Clause to be operative in all schools."

Impudent hypocrisy could hardly go further. A principle is affirmed only to be abandoned. Then comes the assertion that any violation of the principle—their principle—must be to their own advantage. On that condition they are willing to see it trampled under foot. What they stipulate for is "simple Bible reading"—in other words, the religion of Evangelical Protestantism. Every other section of the Christian Church, to say nothing of Non-Christians, is to be treated as possessing no rights whatever. Such is the attitude of Nonconformity. And in one sense we are glad; for it is a good thing to have the Dissenting sects showing themselves in their true color. To some outsiders it will be a revelation; to all a warning.

We shall have something to say about that "simple Bible teaching" presently. What we may feel it necessary to say may "shock the feelings" of the Bible-reading party. But that is their business. For our part, we shall not hesitate to do whatever we conceive to be our duty, even if we run a serious risk in doing it.

Sir John Gorst seems to remember the old days when he was a member of the Fourth Party—which consisted of four persons. That party opposed the entrance of "the Atheist Bradlaugh" to the House of Commons. In the same spirit, Sir John Gorst has been telling the Bolton Churchmen, in the Albert Hall, with the Bishop of Manchester in the chair, that Secular Education would be "practically teaching Atheism." It does not take a great deal of intelligence to see the folly of this statement. Only a fanatic (or a charlatan) could say that Atheism is taught in schools from which everything connected with religion—for or against it—is rigorously excluded. Probably this gentleman knows a great deal better than to believe his own words. We may take it that the cry of "Atheism!" is thought by his party to be the best that can be found to create a prejudice against Secular Education.

The Marquis Saionji, the Japanese Premier and Foreign Minister, granted an interview to Mr. Alfred Curtis, editor of the *Kobe Herald*, in which Chinese missionaries were referred to. "His Excellency told me frankly," Mr. Curtis says, "that in his opinion there is some warrant for the charges made against them. He unhesitatingly acknowledged the purity of motive of many of them, and paid a high tribute to their zeal and self-denying labors, but he thought it undeniable that many missionaries go beyond their true and lawful province, indirectly meddling in political matters, sometimes affording an asylum to refugees, and interfering with the course of justice and the authority of the mandarins over their own people." This is a very old cause of complaint.

General Booth is going to Japan. Yes, but Japan is not going to General Booth.

The Archbishop of Canterbury deprecated strong talk in the House of Lords about Russian outrages on the Jews. Russia, he said, was passing through a period of stress and strain, and required our sympathy. Of course the Jews had his sympathy too. Yes, and they know the value of it.

Lady Thompson contributes to the *Tribune* a long account of her tour through the stricken parts of Macedonia. Organised massacres are being carried on by "Greek bands"—not Mohammedans, but all good Christians. At one place called Zagorichani she says: "I saw several women and children who had been wounded and crippled for life by the bombs and knives of these so-called soldiers of Christ." They cut off hands and feet quite commonly. When the Turk goes round maiming and murdering, the Christian Churches over here raise a great outcry. When the maimers and murderers are "soldiers of Christ" the Churches don't think it necessary to denounce them. We suppose it is because they belong to the family.

The Liverpool *Daily Post* devotes a column of small type to a correspondence between the Rev. George Wise and Archdeacon Madden. It all arose out of brickbats being used as Protestant arguments. We believe they are fairly matched by Catholic pokers. And perhaps, some day or other, Mr. Wise will find the martyrdom he appears to be seeking. He will then wear a crown with the late Johnnie Kensit.

A lot of Protestant magazines have been burnt in the Roman Catholic Cathedral yard at Sligo. The missionaries conducting nightly services explained that Catholics ought not to read Protestant books. Catholics who had copies should bring them in to be burned. The next step would be bringing in the Protestants to be burnt; but that can't be done yet—not even in Sligo. If it could, roast Protestant would be a common luxury; perhaps with roast Freethinker as a special dish for great occasions.

Marianne Farningham has a story called "A Nurse's Mystery" in the *Christian World*. It begins in this way: "He was the atheist of the village, and he was dying of consumption." The good Christians try in vain to bring him to Christ. At last a nice kind nurse succeeds. His dying words were: "Tell everybody that the parish atheist died a Christian." Marianne Farningham seems to have been studying *The Atheist Shoemaker*.

Mr. Tim Healy, M.P., has christened the Government policy of Education as "Birreligion in the schools." Not a bad nickname. It is likely to stick.

A middle-aged man, described as a painter, but dressed like a clergyman, has been fined ten shillings, or five days, for calling the Bishop of Peterborough a thief. There seems to be a squabble of some sort behind the scenes. It is easy to see which is the Bottom Dog.

Joseph Gulers, aged twenty-six, a Trappist probationer, connected with the Woodleigh Monastery, is doing six months for assaulting Bessie Kelland. We suppose the moral is that if nature is thrust out of the door she breaks into the house through the window.

During the terror in Naples caused by the eruption of Vesuvius people crowded into the churches and passionately prayed for safety. People did the same at St. Pierre during the eruption of Mount Pelée, but they were all killed while upon their knees. It would have been just the same in Naples if the eruption had been more powerful. God only helps those who can help themselves.

Rev. Dr. Aked, of Pembroke Chapel, Liverpool, referred to the execution of those natives in Natal, and to the really infamous proceeding of ordering the friends and relatives of the victims to attend and see them shot. The reverend gentleman noted the fact that a clergyman was "cur enough" to deliver an exhortation to the victims before they were dispatched. "He hoped with all his heart and soul," according to the report in a Liverpool paper, "that those men went to their deaths despising that clergyman, and despising his religion, and despising his God." We dare say Dr. Aked's hope was realised.

Water from the river Jordan is used in christening royal babies. We are not surprised, therefore, to read that a German company has been started to bottle Jordan water and put it on the market. Perhaps they will get a testimonial from J. C. It would go off then.

The Evangelical Association, of Atlanta, Georgia, is having a week of prayer "to move the heart of Andrew Carnegie to give a liberal sum towards the International Medical Missionary College." Instead of asking Andrew direct, they ask him through the newspapers. The "prayer" dodge is simply an advertisement.

According to Mr. Ford Madox Hueffer, in the *London Tribune*, the country parson "is frequently narrow, bigoted, and short-sighted; he is generally quite out of touch with the spiritual needs of his parishioners, and as a rule he is regarded by them with either suspicion or good-natured tolerance."

"Claudius Clear"—that is, Dr. Robertson Nicoll, the editor—says in the *British Weekly* that "the sceptical spirit is strong in much of our best literature, and the effect is very

considerable," but "what used to be called infidel lectures seem to have ceased." Dr. Nicoll can hardly be as ignorant as he appears. Religious editors are in the habit of concealing unpleasant facts from their readers. From that to telling a downright lie is only a step. Dr. Nicoll seems to have taken it.

Another poor apostle of poor Jesus Christ. Rev. Alexander Buchanan, of the Old Rectory, Doynton, Bristol, and Incumbent of King's Walden, Lynn, Norfolk, left estate which is valued at £27,984. "For yours is the kingdom of heaven."

Rev. Frederic Howse, of Belgrave-road, Torquay, Devon, left estate which is valued at £13,134. "Blessed be ye poor."

Alderman Raffan, of the Monmouthshire Education Committee, says that "one good mother is worth a bench of bishops." He might have included a shipload of Dissenting ministers in the estimate.

Frank Cecil, a Salvation Army insurance agent, being charged with stealing a bicycle at Malvern, set up the defence that he was in a "spiritualistic trance." Perhaps he was in the same trance when he seduced Mary Ann Harris, a Salvation Army officer. Anyhow, he is now doing four months—and there's no trance about that.

"Paradise Plantation" is the name of Old Dowie's projected new enterprise in Mexico. The white-bearded prophet is said to be going in strong for polygamy. It is surprising how many elderly agents of heaven have been attracted by that ideal. We believe it has a physiological explanation.

Old Dowie is said to have telegraphed from Mexico that he is on his way to Zion City with £2,000,000 in gold. He also informs the faithful that he is going to work a miracle. But he will want no other miracle than the money. That will do the trick.

Probably neither Old Dowie nor the faithful realise what bringing along £2,000,000 in gold really means. It would weigh nearly eighteen tons.

PATIENCE IN THE REALISATION OF IDEAS.

It is better to wait and to defer the realisation of our ideas, until we can realise them fully, than to defraud the future by truncating them, if truncate them we must, in order to secure a partial triumph for them in the immediate present. It is better to bear the burden of impracticableness, than to stifle conviction, and to pare away principle until it becomes mere hollowness and triviality. What is the sense, and what is the morality, of postponing the wider utility to the narrower? Nothing is so sure to impoverish an epoch, to deprive conduct of nobleness and character of elevation.—*J. Morley.*

FEUERBACH ON FINAL CAUSES.

Theism properly so-called, or Monotheism, arises only where man refers Nature only to himself, because she suffers herself to be used *without will and consciousness*, not only to his necessary, organic functions, but also to his *arbitrary, conscious purposes and enjoyments*, and where he *makes this relation her essence*, consequently making himself the purpose, the centre and unity of Nature. Where Nature has *her end outside of herself*, she necessarily also has *cause and beginning without herself*; where she exists *only for another being*, she necessarily exists also *by another being*, and that by a being whose intention or end at the time of her creation was man, as that being who was to enjoy and use Nature for his good. The *beginning* of Nature coincides therefore with *God* only where her *end* coincides with *Man*, or, in other words, the doctrine that God is the creator of the world has its *source and sense* in the doctrine that man is the end of creation.—*Ludwig Feuerbach's "Essence of Religion."*

Ask, is Love divine,
Voices all are, ay.
Question for the sign,
There's a common sigh.
Would we through our years,
Love forego,
Quit of scars and tears?
Ah, but no, no, no!

—*George Meredith.*

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

April 22 and 29, Queen's Hall.
May 6, Liverpool.

To Correspondents.

C. COHEN'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—April 22 and 29, Liverpool.

J. T. LLOYD'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—April 15, Stratford Town Hall; 29, Manchester.

RIDGWAY FUND.—W. Murray 2s., Constant Reader of the *Freethinker*, £1. J. Partridge also acknowledges: A Secularist 4s.

A. D. CORBICK.—Charles Bradlaugh was only in his twenty-first year in 1855. He was not then the famous "Iconoclast." But even then, if he married in a church, it was because he had to. Shelley, who was expelled from Oxford for Atheism, had to marry in a church. The present facilities for secular marriage did not then exist. Thanks for your good wishes.

J. KNOX.—Thanks. See paragraph.

G. C. K.—We quite understand the Rev. F. B. Meyer's advice that family prayers should be based upon reading the family Bible right through—"missing only those portions which are unsuitable." We congratulate the reverend gentleman on the "unsuitable." It is an excellent euphemism for the "brutal, the absurd, and the beastly."

J. BATES.—The N. S. S. Birmingham Conference is not on Easter Sunday, but on Whit-Sunday. Mr. Foote is keeping in tolerably good health. Thanks for cutting. Order transferred.

F. B.—We are perfectly aware that Jews, like other people, have to "obey the laws of the land they live in." But the laws may be bad laws, and murdering the Jews wholesale is not jurisprudence. Is it?

A. A.—Thanks for your efforts to promote our circulation. Our readers can easily assist us in placing the *Freethinker* in fresh hands. You say you have secured three new subscribers in this way during the past six months. We wish others would do the same. The letter you enclose is an excellent one and should do good where it appears. Glad you have so enjoyed reading the articles on Churchill and Bradlaugh.

J. BROUGH.—Thanks for cuttings.

W. WILLIS.—There is no such edition of *Bible Heroes* at present, but a sixpenny edition is in preparation. Sorry we cannot tell you the value of the Church property in England and Wales exempt from taxation.

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

H. THOMAS.—Received and used.

A. H. JONES.—It may fill a corner. Glad to have your appreciative and encouraging letter.

A. COBBAN.—Our best wishes go with you.

RED-HOT FREETHINKER.—Too common a way of raising the wind to call for any particular comment.

DIPLOMA.—All our space was already occupied. Why don't the teachers repudiate Dr. Macnamara's cheap religious heroics?

E. S.—You can buy a copy of Cobbett's *Legacy to Parsons* for sixpence, and it contains all the information you require.

J. S. HAXELTINE.—The vicar's circular is an impudent document. We have no knowledge of the particular cemetery to which you refer. You should apply for a copy of the rules of the Cemetery Committee. On the face of it, we should say that by paying the full fee you could arrange the inscription with the Cemetery Committee.

D. K. MURRAY.—There are plenty of Freethinkers in Glasgow, which is not so far from where you live, and which you may sometimes visit.

C. W. STYRING.—You only waste your time in trying to bring the *Daily News* to book over that alleged quotation from Voltaire. You might as well try to hold an eel with buttered fingers.

H. P. K.—A very good letter for its local purpose, though we don't see how we can make use of it in our own columns. Thanks, all the same.

W. P. MURRAY.—See acknowledgment. Yes, as you say, the younger soldiers of Freethought should not forget the veterans.

A. M. E. G.—See "Acid Drops." Thanks. Probably it would be better to have help from Leicester in the first place. Glad to hear you enjoy reading the *Freethinker*.

G. ROLEFFS.—Pleased to receive cuttings.

W. T. MORGAN.—Yes, we saw Mr. Gould's letter in the *Tribune*, and we trust it influenced some readers, as it was calculated to do. Mr. Gould has fought gallantly for many years on the side of sense and justice in the matter of Education. His treatment by the London School Board, although an affair of long ago, is one of the proofs that Nonconformist talk about "equality" and "no tests for teachers" is all humbug.

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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.

Mr. Foote will deliver two special lectures at the Queen's (Minor) Hall on Sunday evenings, April 22 and 29. The first lecture will be devoted to the Education Bill of the Liberal Government. Freethinkers from all parts of London should muster in strong force on this occasion. There will be some first-class music before the lecture.

Mr. Foote had a fine audience at Stratford Town Hall on Sunday evening, and it was a remarkably appreciative and enthusiastic audience. Mr. Marshall, of the West Ham Branch, who occupied the chair, warmly invited questions and discussions after the lecture. A good many questions were asked and answered during a very lively half an hour, but no discussion was forthcoming. We must not close this paragraph without noticing, with much pleasure, the attendance of a considerable number of ladies.

Mr. John T. Lloyd delivers the third and last of the Stratford Town Hall lectures this evening (April 15). We dare say the local saints will see that a little extra advertisement is thrown into this meeting. Some one allowed the Freethought big bills outside the Town Hall to be posted over on the Thursday preceding Mr. Foote's lecture, and people began to wonder if the lecture was cancelled. The West Ham Branch will doubtless put pressure on the "officials" to prevent a recurrence of this incident. Meanwhile a little extra advertising of Mr. Lloyd's lecture will be a wise precaution.

Mr. Cohen had good meetings at Liverpool on Sunday in the new Hall of the local N. S. S. Branch. No doubt there will be better meetings still when he visits Liverpool again on April 22 and 29, admission will be "free" also on those occasions. We hear that Mr. Cohen was in first-rate form on Sunday, and that his lectures were much applauded.

Mr. Foote has been able to forward the Liverpool Branch another £10, which, like the previous £20, is a donation from Mr. F. Bonte.

Liverpool "saints" will please note that the great Picton Hall has been secured for a lecture by Mr. Foote on Sunday evening, May 7.

There is a special reason why Freethinkers should muster in strong force in connection with the National Secular Society's Annual Conference at Birmingham on Whit-Sunday. Efforts have been made for some years to boycott the Birmingham Branch out of existence, and it would encourage the Branch to feel that it has the moral support of the Freethought party all over the kingdom. Of course a letter or a resolution is good in its way, but a shake of the hand is much better. Let us rally then at Birmingham on Whit-Sunday. We have got the grand Town Hall for our evening public meeting, although our use of it is placed under restrictions that do not apply to any other body in the city. We shall also have a room for the morning and afternoon business sittings of the Conference. But we do not say where it is for the moment. No thanks are due, anyhow, to the Birmingham Education Committee. The Sites and Buildings Sub-Committee, having an application for the use of a schoolroom from the Branch, replied through its Secretary that it "would not depart from its previous decision not to let any of the Council Schools to your Society." Church and Nonconformity agree in this infamous policy of excluding Secularists from the common rights of citizenship. The only freedom Secularists have in Birmingham is the freedom to pay.

Mr. Thomas Bennett, 10 Harcourt-terrace, Peurhimceiber, Mountain Ash, South Wales, is ready to resume Freethought

lecturing in the district. He will be happy to send terms and list of subjects on receipt of stamped addressed envelope.

The ideas for which the *Freethinker* has been fighting for twenty-five years are now making rapid headway. Even a paper like the *Daily Chronicle* prints in the ordinary way a review of Dr. Westermarck's new book on *Moral Ideas*, signed by Mr. Edward Clodd, which starts by quoting an Emerson passage which has often appeared in our own columns:—"Ethics and religion differ herein, that one is the system of human duties commencing with men; the other, from God." Starting from this text Mr. Clodd proceeds as follows:—"This is not in accord with long, persistent notions, which base actions on assumed supernatural permissions and prohibitions, making disobedience to these to be sin against divine commandment. But the world is coming round to Emerson's view, for it sees that the foundations of right and wrong are in human relations; that the moral sense or conscience is the fallible voice of the community, and, therefore, that there is no fixed ethical standard, but only the evolution of a moral order through human experience. That which one age complacently accepts a later age regards with abhorrence. Take the familiar case of slavery. It is a common impression that the abolition of that institution is due to Christianity. Nothing of the kind. The improvement in the condition of slaves in Rome was pro-Christian, and all that apostolic and post-apostolic opinion conceded was that the slave was spiritually, but not socially, equal. For centuries the Church was the bulwark of the infamy."

A declaration in favor of the principle that "secular instruction alone should be given in State or rate-aided schools" has been signed by Dr. Russel Wallace, Professor Lankester, Mr. Edward Clodd, Mr. Frederic Harrison, Dr. Charlton Bastian, Dr. Beattie Crozier, Professor Beesly, Sir Hiram Maxim, Mr. Sidney Lec, Earl Russell, Dr. Furnival, and Mr. George Meredith. A copy of the declaration has been sent to every member of parliament. The declaration protests against the use in any elementary schools of any ceremonies or formularies, whether of the Church of England or of any other Church, sect, or combination of churches and sects; also against "the use of the Bible in such schools except in so far as selected Scriptural passages of non-theological import may be introduced into lessons on secular morality."

Mr. Birrell's Education Bill was introduced in the House of Commons on Monday afternoon. We want to see it in print before we submit it to careful criticism. In the main, however, it is obvious from Mr. Birrell's speech that he has practically surrendered to the Nonconformists. Happily the standard of revolt has already been raised in the House by the friends of Secular Education.

MUTABILITY.

From low to high doth dissolution climb,
And sink from high to low, along a scale
Of awful notes, whose concord shall not fail;
A musical but melancholy chime
Which they can hear who meddle not with crime,
Nor avarice, nor over-anxious care.
Truth fails not: but her outward forms that bear
The longest date do melt like frosty rime,
That in the morning whitened hill and plain
And is no more; drop like the tower sublime
Of yesterday, which royally did wear
His crown of weeds, but could not even sustain
Some casual shout that broke the silent air,
Or the unimaginable touch of Time.

—Wordsworth.

HUMAN RANGES.

We do not hear that Memnon's statue gave forth its melody at all under the rushing of the mightiest wind, or in response to any other influence divine or human than certain short-lived sunbeams of morning; and we must learn to accommodate ourselves to the discovery that some of those cunningly-fashioned instruments called human souls have only a limited range of music, and will not vibrate in the least under a touch that fills others with tremulous rapture or quivering agony.—*George Eliot, "Adam Bede."*

Reason's whole pleasure, all the joy of sense,
Lie in three words, health, peace, and competence.

—Pope.

The Pope's Grievances.

I HEAD this the "Pope's Grievances" because the Pope by his Encyclical Letter to French Roman Catholics has made himself the mouthpiece of the French branch of his church. But his present Grievances are merely those of Romanists in France; and not the stock "Grievances" of the Papacy which extend over the whole world, and are most specially Italian. Since Napoleon dragged the Pope to Paris and made himself, as he said at St. Helena, practically "Archbishop Bonaparte," the Pope's Grievances have been the history of Western Europe; and have served to demont and to destroy the clear perception of the plainest facts, not only in puzzle-pated enthusiasts and compromising politicians, but even in philosophers like John Stuart Mill, who prided themselves on living in an atmosphere of unimpassioned calm. That power of distorting intellects and of inverting facts has not departed from the consideration of ecclesiastical affairs, as we see in the Pope's present Grievances, which are on the road to throw the French nation into a civil war over a determined mental reversal of what is really a very clear and simple fact. That distortion is very succinctly put in the article of M. A. Aulard, translated in these columns on March 18th. He says that Cardinal Merry del Val—who, he assumes, is the author of the Encyclical—protests "against the principle of the laicity of the State." This exactly gives a portion of the Pope's position. In which the Papacy exhibits that inversion of facts which is always the real cause of dissensions on religion and ecclesiastical affairs. Can anything be more grotesque and peurile; imbecile even—than a protest against a purely—the purely lay organisation of mankind being "lay"?

But M. Aulard falls into precisely the same inversion of the position; for what is done is not merely the declericising of lay institutions—but the declericising of the existing French Church—and he sees this as securing to Roman Catholics in France "every possible liberty for the exercise of their cult," notwithstanding that he most inconsistently admits that he recognises "that the Church has not received a more serious blow since the Reformation." Now the blows aimed at the Church at the Reformation were intended to destroy it, and in many countries it did destroy it; it decatholicised it—but at the Reformation the thing was done frankly and honestly, there was no hypocrisy about it—the Pope was denounced as Antichrist, and his emissaries were hanged. They were not insulted by the absurd assertion that the "decatholicising" Reformation secured to them every possible liberty.

The Pope's Grievances, as they are set forth in the Encyclical Letter, are as follows. I divide them into two classes: those in which the Law of Separation intrudes on Religion and the Church as a Society; and those in which it clears Government and the State, as a Society, from the intrusion of the Priest. To start with, in regard to the Concordat the Pope has a grievance that he has been insulted and outraged by the manner in which it has been repealed, and protests that that repeal is illegal; and that it is not annulled, seeing that it is a treaty between two powers and that the State abrogates it by its authority alone.

By this Law of Separation all ecclesiastical edifices anterior to the Concordat—that is to say erected before the Great Revolution—are taken from the Church and become State property, either of the shires or municipalities. I take it, that to say they are to be handed over to the County Councils and Borough Councils would be a fair English equivalent to the fact in France. But they are not closed. They are to be used for a public worship directed not by the French clergy, but by the as yet non-existent lay committees.

These committees—"lay associations"—the constitution of which, further than they are purely "lay," the Encyclical does not describe, and about the creation of which, whether by election or nomination

there seems to be no information; but which, according to the *Times*, are to consist of seven persons who must be parishioners, will, according to the Pope, "alone have civil rights and responsibilities" in the eyes of the law; while the ecclesiastical authority will manifestly have no power over them. These are to have the use, not only of the ancient edifices; but are to hold "all the ecclesiastical property." They will administer the goods, regulate the collections and receive the alms and bequests destined for public worship. They will not only administer the property, but also the interior of the churches; which in effect gives them the arrangement of the services; and even the worship to the extent that they could prevent the erection of altars and statues to new saints; such as the Curé of Ars or Joan of Arc. And this while they are absolutely independent of the clergy.

That they are so absolutely independent, and that their authority is the Council of State, which thus becomes absolute master of the Roman communion in France is the Pope's great grievance. The keystone of all his injuries is, that all this is opposed to the essential constitution of his church; which is purely theocratic, authoritative and hierarchical; and would if submitted to, reconstitute it into a series of democratic societies governed by laymen. This is not his mode of putting it, but it is his point.

In regard to structures, the Law leaves all edifices erected since the Revolution the property of the Romanist body; but puts them into the hands of these lay associations, which is, in plain fact, confiscation by the Council of State. All other buildings are confiscated and become the property of the State, the Departments, or the Communes, but are left in the use of Roman Catholics through the associations in the same manner.

The Law annuls all foundations for worship or prayers for the dead, and transfers all endowments of Christian schools or benevolent institutions to lay establishments.

The budget of worship which provided the Romanist—and all other—clergy with salaries, is suppressed.

In regard to this the Pope makes an accusation against the Government of an actual breach of faith. The Encyclical declares that the Concordat did not make the clergy grants to suitably provide for the maintenance of religious worship "by way of gratuitous concession," but as a virtual exchange, the Church undertaking not to trouble the holders of the Church property confiscated by the Revolution, in consideration of these grants under the budget; which were to be "in perpetuity."

The position therefore of the Roman Catholic clergy in France in the future will be that they will depend on the Council of State for every source of income, even to the collections at the services performed by them; thus they will be *de facto* servants of the State without a single right or privilege; but on the contrary they are subjected by this Law to "a whole series of proscriptions outside the Common law."

The French pride themselves on their logical faculty, yet they call this the *Separation of the State from the Church*. In reality it is the kidnapping of the clergy by the State; yet, according to the *Daily News* of the 14th ult., no less a personage than M. Clemenceau, the new Home Secretary who will be responsible for the execution of this law, is so astounded by a hide-bound prepossession as to be astonished at the action of the priests in fomenting the recent riots: "A word from them would stop" them, he has said. "All they have to do is to explain to their parishioners that the inventories are only a preliminary to handing over of ecclesiastical affairs to the local associations which have yet to be formed." Can anything be conceived more demented? Explaining to the people that the inventories are only a "preliminary to handing over ecclesiastical affairs to associations" yet to be brought into existence, is precisely the thing the priests have been doing; and which has naturally produced all the trouble. The congregations, as a fact, have only the ostentatious spectacle of the vulgar exciseman making a catalogue of the churches' effects; what are they to think;

what are the clergy to think when this is done in the interest of a corporation which has no existence?

M. Clemenceau's perception of the disturbances as mere risings of ignorant peasants, is but another instance of that determined ignoring of actual fact which seems to immediately seize all parties when there is a conflict with religious communities. Peasants may be rising here and there, but the persons who have resisted the Inspectors of the Ministry of Finance most determinedly, have been aristocrats and townsmen. It is not illiterate work-people who have been riotous in the churches, but the aristocrats and rich. The persons who are most unable to perceive the legality of the inventories are the wealthy donors of votive offerings—notably amongst whom is the Prince of Bulgaria—who are insisting on their return; and it is incredible that these persons, princes, nobles, and officers in the army, do not grasp the whole truth of the situation. They undoubtedly do; and their view is not religious but practical. They regard the Law solely as an attack on private property. This was the defence made by an officer, Major Hery, on his arrest—and it puts a new light on the matter—a very different one from that which shows that the country can be tranquilised by informing the congregations that the property of the Church is about to be handed over to some unknown committee of seven!

The second class of grievances have been quoted sufficiently in the press; it consists of those removals of clerical influence and observances from lay institutions, of which the placing hospitals entirely under medical control is an example. Here, so far from sympathy with his protests, one is able to read between the lines of his denunciations; and to see that it is possible that this has as yet been done inefficiently, however histrionically parts of the process were effected. He does not complain that chaplains have been removed from the army and navy prisons or any similar institutions in which their salaries are covered by other budgets than that of worship; nor that compulsory attendance at religious services and observances of Sundays and holidays have ceased in them, yet every detail in which Christianity affects the working of the State organisation is an infringement on the essential and primitive liberty of the citizen. Moreover, and this is a thing we English overlook, a vast number of indictable actions which revolt the popular hypocrisy, are nothing but breaches of Roman Catholic extravagance. The Pope has not to complain that the French code has been cleansed from the madnesses of his church's ethics.

I do not see that as yet the resistance to the new Law has arisen from any religious sentiment. The belief that it attacks private property is sufficient to explain the defiance of the Inspectors. But that the enthusiasm will spread to the ignorant and poor, it is safe to predict. It needs no excitement from the priests to raise fanaticism. The Christian invests his life in his church. According to Leo XIII. the Romanist speculates his "reason" and his "intellect" on the reality of the Papal and Catholic claims. The base of those claims is the fact of the Pope ruling—to destroy the real mastery, is to destroy the whole fabric of Catholicism. The Government has assumed the ownership of all the assets of the Romish community both past and to come. The most unlettered devotee can grasp the fact that his religious insurance is valueless if the man who imprisons him *at once* for his many vices—the man who hitherto has been tributary and dominated over—suddenly reverses the position, seizes the whole substance of, and suppresses the agency which is to pay him eternal recompenses for his few virtues and uncountable sufferings.

And, emphatically, it is not the Pope who will preserve France in tranquility. Metaphorically he has ascended to the peaks of the Alps, and while raising the torch of civil-war, screams a war-cry of rage and vehemence. In his peroration he fulminates in the style of the pulpit of St. Lazarus-the-Loss, while his voice becomes falsetto as he calls:—

"They wish to force out of your hearts every trace of the Faith that sustained you in trouble, that maintains

tranquility and peace at your hearth, and that opens the way to Eternal Happiness. You feel that you must defend that Faith with your whole Soul. But let there be no misunderstanding; unless you are strongly united all labor and efforts to repel the attacks which will be made upon you will be useless.....ensure that.....your union shall be as firm as it should be amongst men who fight for the same cause. If you wish within the limits of your power, and as it is your imperative duty to do, to save the religion of your ancestors from the dangers that threaten it, it is absolutely necessary that you should in large measure show courage and generosity..... As for the defence of religion, if you desire to undertake it in a manner worthy of the Faith," two things are necessary—live according to "Christian law" and remain closely united to the clergy and especially "this Apostolic See." "Thus armed for the struggle advance without fear for the defence of the Church; but take good care that your confidence be entirely founded upon God, whose cause you sustain, and pray to him continually that he may help you. For us, as long as the struggle against danger lasts, we shall be heart and soul with you; troubles, trials, sufferings—we shall share all with you; and at the same time addressing God..... shall beg of him to cast upon France a look of mercy, to rescue it from the waves beating around it and to give it soon calm and peace."

And it is possible that the statesman who is now the acting authority against whom this is addressed, can conceive that; with this appeal to "fight" ringing in his ears. Jaques Bonhomme is to be tranquilised by the assurance that no more is intended than to hand over his church and its effects to an "association" as yet in the air! This is all the more astonishing as this peroration has been boasted of in France as rising to the power of the denunciations of mediæval Popes. However, in regard to this assertion the fact is overlooked that what was terrific from the overlord of a score of kings, is emasculate bombast and hysteria from an impotent and exhausted and all but obsolete institution. It is impossible to conceive Innocent III. in raising a crusade telling his people that "amongst men who fight for the same cause.....each ought to voluntarily sacrifice something of his own opinions"—as Pius X. does in his call to arms. This is an echo of "Soapy" Sam of Winchester, not of Julius the Second. To call on Frenchmen to "save" their religion and show "courage," when to place the country under an interdict would be suicidal to the Papacy from the contempt it would raise—and when there is no king to damn and depose—is senile.

GEORGE TREBELLS.

Correspondence.

MR. HOLYOAKE'S ATHEISM.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Mr. Jacob's letter in the *Freethinker* of April 1 is an amusing example of unreason. I will deal with his pointless points seriatim. He says that I have—

(a) "entirely failed to prove that the late Mr. G. J. Holyoake ever called himself an Atheist during the last fifteen years."

This is absurd, because my letter shows clearly to any logical mind that I was not trying to "prove" anything; I was merely stating a fact of my own experience. *External* proof is not required by the logical reader of Mr. Holyoake's writings; and, of course, the illogical reader does not understand them. He says:—

(b) "Bare assertions, now the good man is dead, are useless."

Perhaps; but, my clear "bare assertions" are at least as useful as are Mr. Jacob's vague suggestions of "bare" counter-assertions. I make an explicit "bare assertion" of fact which accords with the logic of Mr. Holyoake's life and writings; Mr. Jacob makes an implicit "bare assertion" of fancy which contradicts it. Certainly, Mr. Holyoake was a "good man"; and every thinker knows that a "good" Atheist's goodness is wider and deeper than is that of a "good" Theist, because the latter is cramped and degraded by his constantly necessary attempts to justify and to imitate his evil-doing God. The atheistic attitude of philosophic detachment from the mental crutches and bandages

of supernaturalism seems to be one of the essential antecedents to strong, practical, all-round goodness. He says:—

(c) "Mr. Mackenzie certainly ought to explain why he kept his extraordinary statement 'bottled up' for four years, whilst Mr. Holyoake was living."

Well, my statement is not "extraordinary"; and it was not "bottled up" for even "four" hours. Within ten minutes of my interview with Mr. Holyoake I "unbottled" it, in one room, to more than a dozen of my friends and acquaintances, the greater number of whom were familiar with his writings. I have also "unbottled" it, on scores of occasions, to audiences in Hyde Park, and elsewhere, whilst contradicting, correcting, and instructing the followers of the Lamb.

Although the statement is ordinary, it is a quotation from an extraordinary man; and, therefore, in face of extraordinarily false statements—which, being mainly Christian, are ordinary—it is worth repeating. My true statement would, probably, never have appeared in print, were it not that Christians and others are printing so many false ones "now the good man is dead."

Although many can testify that my statement was thus "unbottled," Mr. Jacob must not fall into his usual illogicality, and imagine that I would regard such testimony as "proof" that I am truthful. He says:—

(d) "Mr. Mackenzie says: 'These are his own words. I made a note of them at the time.' For what extraordinary purpose this 'note' making? unless the confession was to be a secret till after Mr. Holyoake's death."

Note Mr. Jacob's use of the word "confession" with its secretive and sinister connotation. Mr. Holyoake's statement was not a "confession"; it was merely a matter-of-fact conversational observation to one whom he knew to be already acquainted with the facts, and who, therefore, would appreciate the absurdity of the lies. His statement was not meant "to be a secret"; on the contrary, he expressed his pleasure when I told him that I would like to tell my friends, and that, doubtless I would have occasion to quote his words, in combating his godly traducers. With regard to the "extraordinary purpose of the 'note' making," I entered the statements in my pocket notebook (immediately after leaving Mr. Holyoake) in accordance with my twenty-five years' constant habit of writing personal notes and observations, every day. Mr. Jacob will, no doubt, regard this as "extraordinary"; but I can assure him that if he will start and continue a similar habit he will thereby sharpen his mental faculties—if it is not too late.

(e) Mr. Jacob also asks why I mention in my letter that "I made a note of them [Mr. Holyoake's words] at the time"; and he suggests that I did so in order "to strengthen the reader's belief in his [my] veracity."

A logical person would see that my words could not have been intended to strengthen belief in my "veracity," because, obviously, they could only appeal to those who had no doubts of my veracity, by increasing the probability of the verbal accuracy of a statement that was based on more than my mere memory. But, Logic is not Mr. Jacob's strong point.

(f) "Where did the meeting take place?"

If Mr. Jacob thinks that *locale* is necessarily a factor of *bona fides*, he has little sense of logic; and if he does not think so, his question shows that he has little sense of humor; however, as he appears to desire particulars, I hereby inform him that the meeting took place at the north end of the west footpath of Craven-street, at a distance of about 18 feet 9 inches from the Strand line of shop-frontage, London. I have just measured it. Mr. Jacob can ascertain the altitude of the spot above Ordnance Datum by comparison with the nearest Bench-Mark; or, he may get it from an Ordnance Sheet, price 2s. 6d. He says:—

(g) "Within fifteen years I wrote Mr. Holyoake three letters, begging him to avoid the doubtful reticence and indecision of Messrs. Huxley and Ingersoll by juggling with the word 'Agnostic.' He never answered me."

Never answered him! I should think not, indeed. Although Mr. Holyoake was a courteous man, surely Mr. Jacob did not really expect replies to such stupidly impertinent letters. Mr. Holyoake must have inferred, of course, that Mr. Jacob knew little of Huxley, and absolutely nothing of Ingersoll.

Mr. Jacob's obviously defective reasoning power, and his lack of that supremely important logical faculty, usually called "a sense of humor," excite my sympathy.

G. L. MACKENZIE.

"THOROUGH."

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—As a regular and interested reader of your journal who rarely trespasses on your space, I should be obliged if

you would allow me a word in your columns upon a theme which gains in interest as the years fly by. Since I became an active propagandist in the Freethought movement I have been struck with the apparent apathy of many Freethinkers, as also with the fact that there seems to be a general belief abroad that the shifting of their ground, indulged in by clerics, necessitates a proportionate amount of compromise on our part. As, however, the application of a little reason to one's consideration of these pious opinions will suffice to show how erroneous they are, and as it is necessary that at the beginning of the open-air propaganda we should not surrender an inch of ground, I would direct your readers' attention to the fallacies underlying these contentions.

In the first place, it is assumed that the clerics have entirely shifted their attitude as far as the Bible is concerned; their "evidences" having now become more philosophical and metaphysical than hitherto. Hence it is concluded that all need for assaults on the Bible has ceased to exist. But surely, although a great advance has been made in the realm of modern scholarship, it is too much to pretend that the masses have got beyond the iconoclasm of Bradlaugh's days; whilst the idea of Bishop Ingram or even Dean Robinson having produced writings of greater philosophic depth or of a more distinct metaphysical nature than the works of a Swift, a Middleton, a Watson, or a Forster, is distinctly humorous. Indeed, if anything, the scholarship of those days was far superior to our own. Not that I would have your readers suppose that the work of a Carlyle or a Bradlaugh has been in vain, nor that, so far as a large proportion of the people are concerned, the theological battle has not lost much of its Biblical tone and centres now more directly about the "character" and "person" of God. But there still exists the need for "Bible-smashing," as but a superficial acquaintance with modern Christian evidences would reveal. Yet I distinctly remember being opposed in Hyde Park last summer by an "Agnostic," because he held that the N. S. S. lacked scholarship and failed to recognise that we were "all Atheists now." And he was cheered by many Atheists present! What nonsense! We may be "all Atheists now"; but until we recognise that the basis of the social reforms we advocate is an Atheistic one we shall ever be in danger of being betrayed in the hands, once more, of religious bigotry and godly fanaticism. Let your readers but look at the new Labor party—with the exception of Will Thorne, and possibly Keir Hardie—and note how their Non-conformist breeding occasionally betrays itself. Let them remember the battles waged for liberty of the press by Carlyle and Bradlaugh, and note the canting hypocrisy and principle-selling that characterises our conventional "free press." Can it be pretended, in the face of such facts, that the battle is won? Time has neither changed the ethics of our cause, the principles for which we fight, nor the nature of our message. Freethought is still the source of inspiration to the consistent, the logical, and the human; still the message of light, of liberty, and of heroism; still the creed which calls on man to serve his higher self. And the message shall reach the ears of humanity, not through the lips of compromisers with orthodoxy and devotees of respectability, but through the agency of those apostles who, whatever their errors, bore the brunt of the battle and fought in its vanguard. To such as these shall alone be the glory of victory; and knowing, as I do, the consistent and heroic part the N. S. S. has played in the battle, I trust that none of us will be led by the cant of conventionalism to cease to fight in its service. When other societies have wavered, it alone has stood firm. By what banner, in this day of bogus causes and illegal societies, shall we stand, therefore, if we would not surrender the fight and betray the cause in whose service so many have starved and died?

GUY A. ALDRED.

A Ballad of Priest and King.

Spirit of Progress, moving through
The undercurrents of the world,
Slowly arrives the crowning hour
When War's red banners shall be furled.
Awakened from their iron sleep,
A people, strong to do and dare,
Shall yet be free;—for lo, are heard
Prophetic voices in the air.
One voice that speaks in clarion tones,
Through crowded marts in open day;
Altar and throne shall tumble down,
And all things base shall pass away.
The bells shall toll their last sad dirge,
Full loud and deep from crumbling tower,
And sound the knell of Priest and King,
With all their pomp, and pride, and power.

Ay, ring the knell of the craven priest,
And rid the snake of its deadly sting;
In such an hour that he wots not of
The sceptre falls from the hand of the king.

The king who rides on the backs of slaves,
And drinks red wine to quench his thirst,
Is one with the shaven priest, whose breath
Makes the living and dead alike accurst.

O baleful shadow of the cross!
When, from the Tiber to the Rhine—
And farther, flashed a name blood-red,
And that one name, pale Christ, was thine.

A thousand years of dungeon and chain,
Of rack, and faggot, and flaming fire,
When God's sweet love, and Christian hate
Strove together in fierce desire.

Stretch human hands and hide from sight
The bones of those who bled and died,
Blot out forever from the light
The face of Him once crucified.

Advance, my comrades to the front,
But leave no track of blood behind;
The banners of a glorious cause,
Are borne aloft upon the wind.

For Truth still lives, and moves, and fills
All human hearts with one accord,
And man has risen—glorified,
Above the ashes of his "Lord."

WILLIAM EMSLEY.

TOLSTOY ON "SCRIPTURE HISTORY."

Besides the history of the Old Testament you also impart the New Testament to children and to ignorant people, in a way that makes the importance of the New Testament consist not in its moral teaching, not in the Sermon on the Mount, but in the conformity of the Gospels with the stories of the Old Testament, in the fulfilment of prophecies, and in miracles, the movement of a star, songs from the sky, talks with the Devil, the turning of water into wine, walking on the water, healings, calling people back to life, and, finally, the resurrection of Jesus himself, and his flying up into the sky.

If all these stories, both from the Old and New Testaments, were taught as a series of fairy-tales, even then hardly any teacher would decide to tell them to children and adults he desired to enlighten. But these tales are imparted to people unable to reason, as though they were the most trustworthy description of the world and its laws, as if they gave the truest information about the lives of those who lived in former times, of what should be considered good and evil, of the existence and nature of God, and of the duties of man.

People talk of harmful books! But is there in Christendom a book that has done more harm to mankind than this terrible book, called Scripture History from the Old and New Testaments? And all the men and women of Christendom have to pass through a course of this Scripture History during their childhood, and this same history is also taught to ignorant adults as the first and most essential foundation of knowledge—as the one, eternal, truth of God.—*From "An Appeal to the Clergy."*

I admit that all religions, all creeds, all priests, have been naturally produced. I admit, and cheerfully admit, that the believers in the supernatural have done some good—not because they believed in gods and devils—but in spite of it. I know that thousands and thousands of clergymen are honest, self-denying, and humane—that they are doing what they believe to be their duty—doing what they can to induce men and women to live pure and noble lives. This is not the result of their creeds—it is because they are human. What I say is that every honest teacher of the supernatural has been and is an unconscious enemy of the human race.—*Ingersoll.*

In every country the bonzes, the brachmans, and the priests, deceive the people; all reformations begin from the laity; the priests point us out the way to heaven with their fingers, but stand still themselves.—*Goldsmith.*

O, sons of earth! attempt ye still to rise,
By mountains piled on mountains, to the skies?
Heaven still with laughter the vain toil surveys,
And buries madmen in the heaps they raise.

—Pope.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, etc.

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

LONDON.

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S. (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): April 13 (Good Friday), Twenty-fifth Annual Ball for Members and Friends, 8 p.m. to 2 a.m. Sunday, April 15, Freethought Parliament: 3.15, F. Vickers, a Lecture.

KINGSTON-ON-THAMES HUMANITARIAN SOCIETY (Fife Hall, Fife-road): 7.30, F. A. Davies, "Did Christ Rise from the Dead?"

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Town Hall, Stratford): 7.30, J. T. Lloyd, "Christianity in Mortal Peril."

OUTDOOR.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Parliament Hill, Hampstead): 3.30, F. A. Davies, "The Resurrection."

WOOLWICH BRANCH N. S. S. (Beresford-square): 11.30, Henry Stewart Wishart, "Atheism: A Reply to Stanley Parker."

COUNTRY.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N. S. S. (Milton Hall, Daulby-street): 3, O. C. James, a Lecture; 7, W. C. Schweizer, "When It Was Light." Annual Meeting of Members after the evening lecture.

NEWCASTLE RATIONALIST LITERARY AND DEBATING SOCIETY (Lockhart's Cathedral Cafe): Thursday, April 19, at 8, J. N. Bell, "Some Notes on Burns."

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