

# THE Freethinker

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*There is a great difference between theological and scientific controversy. Theologians are proverbially vituperative: because it is a question of veracity: the truth of their views, their moral perceptions, their intellectual acumen. There exists no test but argument on which they can fall back. If argument fails, all fails. But the man of science stands calmly on the facts of the universe. He is based upon reality. All the opposition and controversy in the world cannot alter facts, nor prevent the facts being manifest at last. He can be calm because he is a witness for the Truth.*

—FREDERICK W. ROBERTSON.

## John Stuart Mill.

JOHN STUART MILL was born in London a hundred years ago last Sunday. He died at Avignon on May 8, 1873. He was not exactly an old man. Sixty-seven is reckoned quite a juvenile age amongst public men to-day; witness the evergreen Mr. Joseph Chamberlain. But if Mill was not an old man, according to present reckoning, he had done a vast deal of work in the world. His great treatises on Logic and Political Economy, his voluminous criticism of Sir William Hamilton's philosophy, his books on Utilitarianism, Liberty, and the Subjection of Women, besides his many and various articles in magazines and reviews, constituted an intellectual output with which any man might have been satisfied. When the end came, he who had been watching by his wife's grave so long, was probably not sorry that he was going to his rest.

Herbert Spencer once remarked that it seemed to him superfluous "to insist upon the wideness of" Mill's "influence over the thought of his time, and consequently over the action of his time." Mr. John Morley, writing in the *Times* Literary Supplement last week, said that "nobody who claims to deal as a matter of fact with the intellectual fermentation between 1840 and 1870 or a little longer, whatever value the historian may choose to set upon its products, can fail to assign a leading influence to Mill." Mr. Morley had long before referred to Mill as the wisest man he ever knew.

Mill was the son of a father who had been intended for the Scotch Presbyterian ministry, but had thought himself out of Presbyterianism, and even out of Christianity. James Mill was undoubtedly an Atheist, like his friend Bentham. He was determined that his boy's mind should not be warped by superstition. He conducted the boy's education himself, and his regimen was too severe, but he turned out a scholar who was capable of independent thinking. Mill was brought up without any religious belief whatsoever. He was taught to regard Christianity as a part of ecclesiastical history. The religions of the world were so many phenomena to be studied from the historical and critical point of view. In his own

words, he never lost religion, for he never had it. Professor Alexander Bain, his friend and his biographer, said that "in everything characteristic of the creed of Christendom he was a thorough-going negationist. He admitted neither its truth nor its utility."

It is well to remember this in view of the dishonest use which has been made of Mill's tribute to Christ in the posthumous essay on Theism. In a pamphlet of mine now out of print, which I hope to include with other things in book form shortly, I subjected that tribute to a searching examination. It was in many respects unfortunate, and it showed that Mill was very imperfectly acquainted with the facts of New Testament criticism. But when all is said and done the solid fact remains that Mill's tribute to Christ did *not* show that he was becoming a Christian. He distinctly placed the Prophet of Nazareth amongst "the men of sublime genius," and declared that the assumption of godhead on his behalf would have seemed to him a shocking blasphemy. But this is lost sight of by the untrained orthodox persons who hear the famous passage read, and too often garbled, at public meetings. They catch only the emotional part of the panegyric, and think of the eloquent writer as "almost persuaded." And the charlatan on the platform loves to leave them in that maudlin condition.

The essay on Theism, in which that tribute to Christ occurs, was never prepared by Mill for publication. It would have been a very different thing if he had revised it in his careful and rigorous way for the press. This is practically admitted by his daughter-in-law, Miss Helen Taylor, who published the essay after his death. There were grave reasons against publishing it at all. Perhaps it saw the light the more readily because it coincided with Miss Helen Taylor's own ideas and sentiments. And it must be added that it is inferior to the other and earlier essays in the same volume, not only in point of composition, but also in vigor and logicity.

What a pity it was that Mill did not publish his religious opinions during his lifetime. They were not altogether concealed. Discerning persons could read them between the lines of several passages in the essay on Liberty and in the book on Hamilton. But they were not openly stated. He entered into many controversies, and he often defended the unpopular side. Why did he hesitate to contribute his quota to the controversy of controversies? It was not because he had no definite and settled opinions. Neither was it because he was a coward. He had plenty of courage up to a point. He must have known the damage it would do him as representative of a constituency like Westminster when he sent a cheque towards the expenses of Bradlaugh's candidature at Northampton. Mill had far more real courage than Carlyle. In the days of their early friendship, when they were walking

together in West London, and Carlyle was inveighing in characteristic fashion against the windy creeds of his countrymen, Mill said to him in substance, "You are just the man to tell people this; why don't you do it?" Carlyle looked at Mill and answered "Humph!" Probably he meant, "Do it yourself, old man." Mill did other bold things, but he did not do that. It was too bold even for him. And I think we may read the secret in his face. There is intense and serious conviction in it, sleepless intellect, and keen sensibility, but not the electricity of heroism. He did all that he had the nerve for—and let us be thankful for that.

Mill was a great influence making for reason and righteousness. He was not a great seminal thinker like Comte. There is in Comte's face a suggestion of what Napoleon might have been if he had taken to the intellectual life instead of the life of action. Mill was of less powerful build. But it cannot be denied that his influence was great, or that it was uniformly exercised in the cause of freedom, justice, and progress.

The influence of Mill's wife is most apparent in the essay on Liberty and the essay on the Subjection of Women. To both it imparted a certain emotional force which was often lacking, where it might have been valuable, in his earlier writings. In many respects the plea for women is a very noble composition. The spirit of it is the same as that of Shelley's cry, "Can man be free if woman be a slave?" Its radical defect is that it is pre-Darwinian. Evolutionists see that the relative positions of men and women in the social organism are not determined by pleas and arguments, but by the basic conditions of human existence. A society that forgets or ignores this will suffer and decay, and give place to a healthier if wilder human stock; for the problem of civilisation is ultimately the problem of children. This aspect of the matter was overlooked by Mill, perhaps from constitutional reasons. For the rest, however, his essay is valuable and stimulating, and has in it the seeds of much good yet to be.

G. W. FOOTE.

### Crime and Secular Education.

THE prominence given to the Education question at present is my excuse for writing yet another article on this topic. And it is a valid one; if for no other reason than because it is so seldom that one can get the British public to take any serious interest in the question. For the great B. P. never has taken up with the subject as one of urgent public importance. It agreed—with much grumbling—to an Act of Parliament making education compulsory; it has grumbled ever since at having to pay rates for its working, and it has generally regarded the Act as a concession made to a number of faddists with whom it was more comfortable to make peace than continually fight. Because education is concerned with children it has, presumably, been regarded as a subject that was of only subordinate importance. In reality it is exactly this reason that makes the question of supreme importance. We cannot create capacity, but we can develop it; and the only way to secure that the next generation shall use in the best manner whatever capacity it possesses is to see that it is set in the right path from the commencement. Whether the battle of Waterloo was or was not won on the playgrounds of Eton may be a matter of opinion, but there is little room for questioning the statement that the celerity with which the social victories of the future are gained will be largely determined by the degree of suitable character developed in our public schools.

Even now I am afraid it is not true to say that prominence is being given to education as education. Prominence is given to a quarrel in which education is involved, and that is nearly all. Were it otherwise the quarrel would soon be settled by the people adopting a policy which common sense dictates, and which even its opponents admit is logical and honest.

And even though many of these same opponents admit that ultimately the solution of the education problem will have to be adopted, they fight against it as long as possible, and in the interests of the present system fall back upon the time-honored religious defences of slander and misrepresentation. Two or three weeks ago reference was made in these columns to the statements made by Christians in England concerning the evil effects of a policy of Secular Education in Australia. The falsity of the statements were then pointed out, as they were many years ago; but despite an authoritative denial coming from the Chief of Police of Victoria, they will doubtless still continue to do duty on many a religious platform. Since those notes were written, however, a much fuller refutation has been issued by Mr. T. A. Coghlan, of the New South Wales Government Agency. Writing on behalf, and at the request of the Agents-General of the Australian States, Mr. Coghlan puts the facts before English readers and then leaves them to draw certain inevitable conclusions. The Education Act, which is said to have produced such deplorable results, was passed in 1878. Consequently, if the number of people arrested under thirty years of age be taken, we get all those who have been brought up under a system of Secular Education. The figures are as follows:—

	1881.	1891.
Age 10 and under 15, per 10,000 of population...	111	96
" 15 " 20, " " " " ...	335	305
" 20 " 25, " " " " ...	720	688
" 25 " 30, " " " " ...	823	777

By the same reasoning the people arrested under thirty years of age will give us those who were not brought up under the Secular Education Act. These are—again per 10,000 of population—

	1881.	1891.
Age 30 and under 40 ... ..	865	869
" 40 " 50 ... ..	721	1,053
" 50 " 60 ... ..	623	760

It will thus be seen that the only increase in criminality is amongst those who got religious instruction with whatever education they were favored with.

Further, taking the number of people—per 10,000 of population—arrested during the last thirty years, the following is the result:—

1875.	1880.	1890.	1900.	1904.
380	382	347	254	242

The decline in serious crime is also shown by the fact that the number tried by the superior courts—same proportion—were: 1875, 16; 1880, 15; 1890, 12; 1900, 7; 1904, 8.

And quite as striking as these figures is the complementary fact that, while in 1881 the proportion of non-Australian-born prisoners to every hundred Australian-born was 142, in 1901 the proportion had risen to 175.

Here, then, the advocate of religious instruction is met on his own ground. He asserts the value of religious instruction, and prophesies the decadence of character that ensues when it is ignored. And yet, where Secular Education has been in force, to quote Mr. Coghlan, "the Australian has become resolutely well behaved, his face is set steadily against drunkenness and its concomitant evils, and statesmen of all shades of opinion are united on this common ground that the surest defence the country possesses against crime is the education of its people." Yet, so profound is the faith of the clergy in the ignorance and gullability of their congregations, that I have not the slightest doubt but that the lie will be repeated wherever occasion demands, as though its veracity had never been questioned.

Mr. Coghlan's figures will surprise religious people, but not others. Brought up to regard religion as indispensable to morality, and to count its absence as more or less synonymous with immorality, they are prepared, by education, to believe in the demoralising consequences of a school system that is exclusively secular. But to those who make an unprejudiced and careful study of our school system it is always

evident that whatever good results therefrom comes from precisely that portion of which religious people think so little. The training of a child's character can no more be effectively trained by a given forty-five or sixty minutes instruction, whether it be called moral or religious instruction, than it can be done by reciting the multiplication table. This can only be effected by the whole and constant influence of the teaching staff, and by the "atmosphere" which they create. And in any school worthy of the name this is going on during the whole of the school-time. The child is, or ought to be, constantly trained in habits of order, regularity, attention, straightforwardness, and cleanliness. Every teacher with an intelligent appreciation of method knows that where this is done, and is at all effective, improved character is the result. And where it is done, or where it is ineffective, the character of the children remains quite unaffected by any religious instruction, definite or indefinite, that may be given. Secular instruction may be the means of helping the development of character; religious instruction not only fails to do so, but in the nature of the case must fail.

And this for two reasons; one positive, the other negative. I put on one side, of course, the secular instruction that is so often given under a religious covering, as when the time for religious instruction is devoted to a purely ethical homily, and confine myself to religious lessons pure and simple. And religion quite fails to develop a healthy, moral consciousness, for the simple reason that conduct is placed by it upon quite an unsound basis. In the hands of the average religious teacher the reason for telling truth rather than lies, for being honest instead of dishonest, is simply that God loves or hates, rewards or punishes. And such instruction develops the same kind of moral consciousness that exists in the criminal who sees in the proximity of a policeman the sole reason for not doing wrong. Mere instruction is at all times sufficiently ineffective, but it is ridiculously so when given in such a form. And there need be little surprise that as the child grows older, and these beliefs begin to weaken, that it is accompanied by a corresponding exhibition of undesirable conduct. There is, from this point of view, a grain of truth in the statement that some people get worse when they throw off their religious beliefs. But the explanation is not, as these people think, flattering to religion. It is quite the reverse. The explanation is that religion has quite failed to develop their character in the right direction; it has formed no enduring moral habits, and the disappearance of religious belief may well leave them an ethical wreck, seeing that they were never turned out morally seaworthy.

Negatively, religious instruction in schools injures by sheer obstruction. My own faith in the power of mere instruction as a formative influence is of a very limited character. Much more may be done for the encouragement of good habits by methods that are unobtrusively enforced and more or less unconsciously followed. But so much as direct instruction may do, religious instruction often hinders being done. There is, first of all, the fact that as religion is the officially indicated character builder, the tendency is for teachers to lose sight of this end once the time for religious instruction has passed. And, next, the religious instruction stands in the way of whatever beneficial teaching might be given. It would be possible by building up from the child's home life and its circle of friends to instil into it some rudiments of a consciousness of the nature of its relation to that larger family—society; and in this way a moral character based upon a gradually developing moral consciousness might be formed. The child would thus leave school with some conception of itself as a member of a larger organism, a portion of a great whole—a conception that nothing in its after life could destroy, but much would strengthen. It is to be noted, too, that the demand of the Church and Roman Catholic organs that the children in every hour of their school lives should be made to feel themselves part of a great church is really the same thing on religious

instead of on social grounds. But if this feeling can be developed in relation to a church why not in relation to society? For the church can only be, in anyone's life, a mere part. But society is all. It cannot be evaded; and thus every hour of subsequent experience would enforce the teacher's lesson.

There is only one thing in the way of this being done—religion. And so long as we prostitute our schools to religious uses, so long shall we be turning out children with their social sympathies undeveloped, and their moral sense, so far as it is conscious, based upon a set of beliefs that time seldom strengthens but often emasculates. The remedy lies in our hands. It is to take up the work of education as the most serious of all tasks; to keep the parson to his pulpit and the teacher to his desk; to treat the children, not as mere counters in a partizan or sectarian game, but as part of a sacred trust upon the right use of which depends the future of the race.

C. COHEN.

### The Argument from Design.

THE Rev. Newman Smyth, D.D., LL.D., of America, is one of the most eminent liberal theologians of the day. In his own school he is looked upon as a great authority, while the orthodox Church denounces him as a dangerous heretic, who is doing his utmost to undermine the Christian Faith. Dr. Smyth is an earnest student of Science, and long ago avowed himself a thorough-going evolutionist. He has published several most readable books bearing on the relation between Science and Religion, the most recent of these being on "The Spiritual Quality of Evolution," which appears as No. 7 in the interesting series of *Essays for the Times*. It is to be borne in mind that Dr. Smyth invariably writes as a theologian, never as a scientist. He has studied Science in the interest of Religion. He approaches every scientific subject with theological prepossessions, and all his reasonings are conducted on purely religious lines. He does not love Science for its own sake, though as a man of deep and broad culture he cannot ignore its many discoveries. He is an evolutionist because his trained intellect will not allow him to be anything else; but it is as a Christian preacher that he discusses even the doctrine of evolution. Of course, we cannot blame him for this; but the inevitable result is that he is often betrayed into misleading half-truths and some unconscious falsehoods.

In the essay just mentioned he declares that "to thoughtful men there is something of an anachronism in the phrase, the conflict between Science and Religion," because "there never really was such conflict." From Dr. Smyth's point of view, this may be perfectly true; but then Dr. Smyth seems to forget that he reached his present point of view by the help of Science, not of Religion, and that the very harmony between the two, in which he now glories, is the outcome of a tremendous conflict. When the theory of evolution was first proclaimed, the whole Christian Church violently opposed it as a deadly heresy, as a mortal enemy to the Christian religion. The theological conviction was that the establishment of Darwinism would inevitably eventuate in the disestablishment of Christianity. When the theory of Evolution began to win its way to public favor, the theologians were in despair. Then the more enlightened and far-seeing among them, realising that the triumphant march of Science could not be resisted, resolved to capitulate with the enemy and secure peace at any price. The price paid for the alleged peace between Religion and Science was the surrender, on the part of religion, of several doctrines which up to that time had always been included among the essential contents of the Faith. The fact is, and Dr. Smyth cannot deny it, that the advance of Science hitherto has resulted in a corresponding retreat of Faith. Ever

since the advent of Science the number of Christian doctrines, held by cultured theologians, has been gradually reduced.

This is a fact which Dr. Smyth himself virtually admits. He says that "ignorance is the mischief-maker in both camps"; but is he not also aware that, while Religion is based on ignorance, the one object of Science is to introduce knowledge? Religion lives and moves and has its being in the realm of the unknown. The doctrine of the Fall was based upon ignorance of man's true origin. When Science succeeded in flinging its search-light on human beginnings, the doctrine of the Fall was clearly seen to be a myth; and divines had to choose between the ignorance of Faith and the knowledge of Science. Many chose the former, while such men as Dr. Smyth preferred the latter.

Evolution does not solve the riddle of the Universe. The riddle is with us still as grimly mysterious and puzzling as ever. Evolution is merely a working hypothesis which most scientists since Darwin have adopted and found satisfactory. According to evolution Nature is one, complete in itself, and working in obedience to forces resident in and part of itself. Nature is in a state of perpetual flux, without beginning and without end, but never stationary, or inactive. This is our only explanation of the appearance and disappearance of solar systems, and the rise and fall of different species of plants and animals. Beyond this we cannot go. Now, Dr. Smyth accepts this doctrine in its entirety. As far as the scientists go he is completely with them. But he insists on going much further than they do. He oversteps the bounds of knowledge. He grants that Science is accurate and minute up to a certain point. It correctly reads Nature's text and grammar, and in this he rejoices; but he claims that over and above this Lower Criticism of Nature there is needed a Higher Criticism "to disclose the true interpretation of its meaning as a revelation of some unifying and co-ordinating power." That is to say, Science is not complete without Religion, and the theologian must both precede and follow the scientist.

Now, this "unifying and co-ordinating power" must reside either within or without Nature. If it is within Nature it is of necessity a part of and cannot be distinguished from Nature; that is to say it is a natural power; but if its abode is outside Nature it must exercise a controlling influence over all natural operations: that is to say, it must be a supernatural power. But is there any evidence whatever of the active existence of such a power? Science knows of none, and theology can only dogmatise. To say that "Nature wears an intellectual aspect and has a spiritual tone," or that "there is a spiritual expression on the face of Nature, and a spiritual revealing throughout the one process of evolution" is to betray a religious bias unjustified by the facts as disclosed by Science. The scientist, *as scientist*, is not aware of anything spiritual in the Universe. He does not look "upon the world as hiding some secret of divinity, or as veiling some invisible presence." Nature of itself makes no such impression upon the mind and heart of man. The impression left upon the mind of the scientist is not that Nature is intelligent, or guided by intelligence, but that intelligence is a product of Nature and now forms a part of it, not that the movements of living things are controlled by a wise Creator, but that all organisms perform their functions chiefly in virtue of their chemical composition.

Can Dr. Smyth adduce any data on which to discredit this impression? He does not do so in this essay. He asserts that Nature is spiritual and purposeful; but bald assertions prove nothing. Has human life a meaning? Yes, says Dr. Smyth, if you look upon it as a whole. "As we gain some position from which we may survey events as a whole, we may perceive more truly their purport." Then he adds:—

"The evidences to a religious man of providential leading in his life, often seem lacking when he is down in the midst of things, shut in by narrowing circumstances,

or able in the darkness only to feel his way one step at a time; but once let him reach some clear point of rest and retrospect, from which he may look backwards and forwards, and he will understand that the seemingly purposeless windings, and dark descents, and weary stretches of his path were all parts of one course and one will for him better than he knew. Partial vision may be faithless vision; trust is always the larger vision."

To the non-religious man there are no evidences whatever of a providential leading in his life." He knows that the success or the failure of his career is solely due to perfectly natural causes; and it is only with supreme difficulty that even a religious man, in spite of all his training, manages, once in a long while, to believe the opposite. His constant temptation is to act the Atheist.

Dr. Smyth pronounces man the masterpiece of evolution. It was to produce man that the evolutionary process was set in motion. "Its end actually attained," he says, "is a being 'breathing thoughtful breath,' and a heart beating with unselfish love. Man at the end of it is the measure of the worth of all evolution before him." But this is wild rhetoric, not sound argument. Again: "Evolution is primarily a spiritual process. Materialism is a depressing misunderstanding of all Nature's ways and loveliness. A child's first self-conscious thought is above it. The spirit which is in man cannot endure it." This may be religious rhapsody of the best kind, and quite acceptable to blind believers; but to non-believers it makes no appeal, not being ever intelligible. Some of the greatest and wisest men living do not believe in the spirituality of Nature. Whether Materialism is true or false, we know of nothing apart from and above Nature. What mind is no one can tell; but the best psychologists regard it as a product of matter, and as having no independent existence. Dr. Smyth refers to the light in the human face, "which," he says, "is in it, but not of it"; but is not this the light of life which all living things share according to their place in the evolutionary scale? The human face is a product of evolution; but there is no proof that there is ever anything in it which is not of it as glorified by the flame of life.

Dr. Smyth maintains that "all natural science and natural philosophy lead finally up to ethics" and that "the final fact of Nature is that man is here capable of asking the question, Is my life worth living? What is of worth?" With that observation we are in full agreement; but what has ethics to do with divinity? Ethics means nothing but the theory of social life on this earth, and has no connection whatever with any spiritual sphere. Whether life is worth living or not can be and often is determined without any reference to a deity. The kingdom of worths to us is the kingdom of man, not the kingdom of God. Of course, Dr. Smyth's one aim is to give Christianity a semi-scientific interpretation. But a believer in evolution cannot consistently be a believer in Christ. The late Professor A. B. Bruce frankly admits, in his *Apologetics*, that Jesus, as conceived by the Church, cannot be explained on the theory of evolution. But to Dr. Smyth there is no anachronism in the assertion that early in its history evolution produced the highest and best man possible, while to this day all other men are only on the way to perfection. To believe in Christ is to abandon evolution and fall back upon mere dogma. The teaching of Science is that nowhere can we find perfection, physical or moral. Professor Metchnikoff, of the Pasteur Institute, one of the most distinguished biologists, is convinced that there exists in Nature no "law of universal progress tending to the production of organisms more and more perfect." He finds many natural disharmonies even in the constitution of man, and discerns retrogressive as well as progressive organs in his composition. After long and careful examination of the whole field, he has been driven to the conclusion that all religions have failed in their attempts to combat the ills arising from the disharmonies of the human constitution, and that the same thing is equally true of all systems of philosophy. His hope for the future is in Science, and in Science alone. In him the spiritual interpre-

tation of Nature finds no support whatever. According to him, and the bulk of living scientists, Nature, as such, works unconsciously, without design or purpose, in conformity to mechanical laws or forces inherent in itself.

J. T. LLOYD.

### Professor Haeckel's "Recantation."

STORIES of the old-age conversion of lifelong unbelievers to Christianity are usually reserved, like epitaphs, to be published when the subject is under the sod and can neither read nor refute. The Rev. Dr. K. W. Kumm, a co-worker of the evangelists Torrey and Alexander (see *Truthseeker* of April 7), could not wait for the decease of Prof. Ernst Haeckel to detail the circumstances of that distinguished scientist's alleged abandonment of his Infidelity, but ventured to give out the joyous news about a month ago at a noon-day meeting in Philadelphia. He then told how he visited Haeckel, who invited him to stay to tea, and, being asked by the visitor if he was still convinced of the truth of his position, replied that he was not; that he had changed his mind about many things in his writings, and was now ready to admit that he knew nothing. As a person who knows nothing is in the fittest possible shape to accept Jesus, the Rev. Dr. Kumm felt warranted in announcing Haeckel's conversion.

The attention of Professor Haeckel having been called to the matter, he at once denied the whole story, even going so far as to say that he does not recall the honor of the clergyman's visit. This is the letter he has written to a friend in Philadelphia:—

Jena, April 9, 1906.

"DEAR SIR,—The curious story of my Christian conversion, told by Dr. Karl Kumm, in the meeting of the Torrey-Alexander mission, and quoted in the newspapers the 27th of March, is a pure invention of Dr. Kumm. I do not remember the visit (two years ago), and certainly I never said to him that I had given up my monistic conviction. That has always remained the same since fifty years ago. I am quite convinced that I shall never be converted to Christianity.

I am not eighty-five but seventy-two years of age, and have to-day the same monistic philosophy which you know from my books. The false report that I have completely changed my monistic conviction arose from the falsifications of a Jesuit reporter. He telegraphed on the occasion of my first Berlin lecture, April 14, 1905, to London and New York that I recognised the error (instead, the truth) of Darwinism, etc. You will find the explanation of this mystification in my last book, *Last Words of Evolution* (London, Owen, 1906, page 125), the English translation of my Berlin conference on the *Entwickelungs Gedanken*, 9 Berlin, Reim Co., 1905, page 111.

You will find the whole story of my personal development and my scientific activity in the new book, just published by T. Fisher Unwin, London, 1906, *Haeckel, His Life and Work*, by William Boilsche, translated by Joseph McCabe, formerly a priest and Franciscan monk.

Faithfully yours,

ERNST HAECKEL."

So prompt an exposure of the prevarication of Dr. Kumm should be a warning and a lesson to that reverend romancer. It is too much to hope it will cure him of the habit of reporting miracles of grace that never came off, but it will at least show him the necessity of waiting until he can throw such conversions into the form of deathbed repentances. He seems to have risked this Haeckel yarn on the chance that it might not come to the great German's notice, or to the notice of his friends until after his death. If that had happened, the evangelists of the Kumm and Torrey stripe might have met doubters with the query why Haeckel had not denied the story, since it was made public during his life, and they would have argued that his silence attested the genuineness of the report.

Professor Haeckel owes his escape from an edifying end to the vigilance of Mr. Hyman Schor, a young Austrian student now in Philadelphia, who expects

to enter the botany and biology class in the Pennsylvania University next September. Mr. Schor has been repelling the attacks of the evangelists on unbelievers by writing letters to the Philadelphia newspapers.

The man Kumm was introduced to Philadelphia by Torrey, with a considerable flourish, as one "who, for several years, sat at the feet of that most famous of present-day Infidels, Haeckel." It was not at the feet of the Infidel Haeckel that Kumm learned to lie.—*Truthseeker* (New York).

### Deus Regit!

At eve the children's prayers were said,  
Unto their God to guard their way;  
The toiler rests his weary head  
Within the mission by the bay,  
For he who notes the sparrow's fall,  
Is he not loving God of all?

'Twas morning; and the dawning light  
Tinted the portals of the West;  
The infant sleeper's dreams are bright—  
Slay thou the suckling at the breast!  
Strike now, in wrath, thou God of hate,  
The City of the Golden Gate!

High heaves the ground, the toppling tower  
Proclaims his love to man below;  
Fire-gutted homes declare his power:  
It glads his heart to see the glow;  
And a great city is undone  
By him who gave his only son.

See ruin and confusion wrought,  
See fifty years of labor lost,  
The toil of millions come to naught,  
Nor man can calculate the cost;  
Hell, only hell, could hotter grow!  
"Praise God from whom all blessings flow."

Pray, dotards, pray, and tell your beads,  
Let hireling priests for profit preach;  
The while you pray, recite your creeds.  
If he but hear, he'll answer each.  
Mayhap your God did dine and sup;  
Cry loudly: you may wake him up!

The earthquake and the lightning's flash,  
The acorn rooted on the hill,  
The mountain belching fire and ash,  
Tell not of purpose or of will.  
What God would list young raven's cry,  
And gloat to see the children die?

There is no God that we may reach  
With selfish praise or pious plaint.  
Forces of nature fall on each  
Alike—on sinner and on saint.  
The angry ocean flings you down,  
Laughing to scorn your harp and crown.

Frost, flood, fire, famine! Can they be  
A message from the mercy-seat?  
The springtime sun that smiles on me  
Prostrates the Arab with its heat.  
The shrieking gull that skims the waves  
Praises his God o'er ocean graves.

Our Mother Earth, and Father Sun,  
These were our parents, this we see.  
Live fearless now; our duty's done.  
There is no "was" or "is to be."  
Fear and a lying priest made God,  
Who'd change his purpose at our nod.

D. S. MACORQUODALE.

—*Secular Thought* (Toronto).

I believe that the supreme absolute power, uncolored and unmodified by the conditions of knowing, is unknowable. I believe the word "God" is the letter x in an indeterminate equation, and that we have no means of ascertaining what the symbol stands for. I believe Science is the Providence of man. I believe that Agnostics know as much as theologians, and have as much right to have a creed and to express it. I believe that the mistake regarding creeds is in requiring men to conform to them on penalty of punishment here or hereafter.—*Ingersoll*.

## Acid Drops.

There is probably more hypocrisy to the square mile in England than in any other country in the world. While all the jaw is going on over the Education Bill, which proposes to establish "simple Bible teaching" as the one religion to be given in elementary schools at the nation's expense, a Lambeth coroner's jury brings in a verdict of manslaughter against James Cook, one of the Peculiar People, for not calling in a doctor to attend his sick child who died—as children often do when a doctor is called in. James Cook explained that he believed in the Bible and had obeyed it. He pointed to the texts which he had acted upon. But the coroner told the jury that they had nothing to do with such a defence. "It was no part of their duty," he said, "to inquire why these people disobeyed the law." What! No part of the jury's duty to listen when these people say that they have obeyed the Bible? Why on earth, then, is the Bible put into children's hands by the State? Why on earth does Mr. Birrell say it must be used in the State schools as "the rule of faith and conduct"? To give us this book as "the rule of faith and conduct," and then to punish us for obeying it, and to refuse to listen to us when we plead that we have obeyed it—this is carrying hypocrisy to the point of infamy.

Look at the Rev. Dr. Clifford, the clerical leader of the "simple Bible teaching" policy. Does he say a word in favor of these simple Peculiar People, who really believe what he only preaches? Not he—the miserable old hypocrite! He lets them go to prison without a protest. Morally speaking, he sends them to prison. He knows all about it. He reads it in the newspapers. But they may lie there and rot, for all he cares. This is plain speaking, some people will say; yes, and plain speaking is necessary. Somebody should tell the plain truth in the name of common sense and common morality. We will go to the length of saying, before we put the pen down, that if Dr. Clifford does not publicly protest against sending George Cook to prison, and do his utmost to keep him out of it, he will prove himself to be the worst hypocrite in England.

John Angell, F.C.S., F.I.C., formerly hon. secretary of the First Birkbeck School, of 1848, writes a long letter to the *Manchester Guardian* on "The First Secular School." He says it was established in Edinburgh by George Combe, and he tries to make out that it had a religious as well as a moral object. But he mentions James Mill and John Stuart Mill as amongst those who aided it financially, and he ought to know that both were pronounced Freethinkers and, in the proper sense of the word, Atheists. Mr. Angell winds up in this way:—

"Unfortunately for the cause of education, a few months after George Combe had adopted, in the spirit already indicated, the designation 'secular' as applied to his Edinburgh school, certain able and aggressive agitators, whose names I need not now mention, entered on a touring lecture mission in support of simple and direct Atheism, following it up shortly afterwards by the formation of a sect which, borrowing from George Combe but with an entirely different meaning, they described as Secularists. From this unjustifiable and regrettable piracy the cause of real education has suffered ever since, men even of the calibre of Lord Hugh Cecil and Bishop Gore being unable to liberate themselves from its hypnotic poison."

The "aggressive agitators" were George Jacob Holyoake and his colleagues. They are accused of pirating the word "secular" from George Combe. But it did not belong to him. George Combe no more invented the word than he invented the idea. "Secular" had been used by others before him. George Combe borrowed the word and put it to one use; George Jacob Holyoake borrowed the word and put it to another use. That is all. As to real education having suffered from the existence of Secularists, we can only say that the notion strikes us as being peculiarly silly. Real education suffers, and has suffered, from the squabble of Christian sects.

Mr. Percy Alden, M.P., remarks that Scripture can be quoted to prove almost anything—though he did not advance it in support of "simple Bible teaching." He says that he heard a Labor member tell Mr. Birrell a story of a boy who stole a parson's apples. The man of God asked the culprit what the Bible had to say about a thief. After a little reflection the boy answered: "This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise."

Lord Goschen says that Church and Nonconformity will have to unite to fight Secularism. This is true. Perhaps it is truer than he thinks.

Lord Robert Cecil is evidently no fool. He seems to be bent on forcing the hands of the Nonconformist party in the

House of Commons by compelling them to say what they mean by "simple Bible teaching." Amongst the five hundred amendments to the Education Bill his promises to cause the most fun. He is going to move that in all schools, except those to which "facilities" and "extended facilities" are granted under Clauses 3 and 4—that is, in all the schools in which the Nonconformist policy of "simple Bible teaching" is to obtain—the religious instruction "shall comprise the doctrines of fundamental Christianity, as set forth in the Apostles' Creed." If the Nonconformists object to this, they will be on one horn of a painful dilemma; if they agree to it, they will be on the other. Lord Robert Cecil understands the game.

Dr. Macnamara, who, for some reason not quite understood by his friends and acquaintances, has taken the religious education of children under his sheltering wing, close to his heart, has almost given orders to the Government to make Clause 4 of the Education Bill mandatory instead of permissive, and to allow all teachers to give sectarian instruction if they choose. This is far from winning the approval of the *British Weekly*. "We say without hesitation," it declares, "that if Dr. Macnamara's proposals are accepted by the Government, it is the immediate duty of every Nonconformist member to turn the Government out." What a hornet's nest Mr. Birrell has stirred up! Why didn't he go straight for Secular Education? It would have given him less trouble and worry.

We are glad to see the *British Weekly* continuing to advocate the secular solution of the Education difficulty. It points out, exactly as we have done, that the Education Bill "provides for the State endowment of Protestant teaching," and it asks how Catholics and others can be expected to put up with this any longer than they are unable to put an end to it. Our contemporary points out too, exactly as we have done, that the Nonconformists are betraying the very first principle of Nonconformity—namely, that the State should have nothing whatever to do with religion. It hopes, however, that they will move forward "towards their old position" and co-operate with the Labor Party in this matter. "We should then," it says, "have in England a truly national and equitable system. The State would control secular education and appoint teachers simply as civil servants, and the Churches would have thrown upon them the whole question of the religious education of the young."

Mr. Birrell, in his recent address on George Whitefield, referred to the fact that the famous eighteenth century preacher expressed no detestation of slavery—just as, although he did not mention it, John Wesley sided with George III. and denounced the American colonists for gaining their independence. "While it is right," Mr. Birrell said, "that we should cultivate humanitarianism to the very utmost, we must remember that religion is in the main concerned with the life to come, and it was not altogether a disadvantage to Whitefield and Wesley that they cared chiefly to fit the souls of men for eternity." Mr. Birrell the politician, especially in the House of Commons, talks as though religion were mainly a matter of ethics; Mr. Birrell the Nonconformist talks of religion as a matter of kingdom-come. The former view is advanced for convenience; the latter view is the one he really holds—and it is true.

Gipsy Smith, at the anniversary meeting of the West London Mission, is reported to have "denounced those Methodists who played whist, danced, drank intoxicants, and went to the theatre." Fancy a man being paid £1,000 a year with extras to talk in this way! Of course we understand Gipsy Smith's objection to the theatre. Better performances than his own may be seen there. Ay, there's the rub.

They still talk about the poverty of the clergy. Yet of four wills recorded in a recent number of the *Daily Chronicle* two were those of lately defunct men of God. Rev. George W. Corbet, of Pinley Manor, near Shrewsbury, formerly Prebendary of Lichfield, left estate valued at £42,345. Rev. Dr. W. F. Taylor, late Archdeacon of Liverpool, left estate valued at £22,998. Why don't the clergy equalise a bit instead of eternally cadging from the laymen? There is quite enough money amongst them to go round. What is wanted is a little levelling up—which, of course, really means levelling down.

Another wealthy disciple of the poor Carpenter of Nazareth was the late Rev. Robert Dawson, of Hampstead, ministerial secretary of the London City Mission, whose estate is valued at £62,205 net. If the New Testament be true there can be no doubt about the reverend gentleman's present address.

More poor servants of the Lord. Rev. John Sikes Watson, of Lowick, North Hants, rector of Lowick and vicar of Slipton, has left £26,059. Rev. Sir George Shiffner, of Coombe Hamsey, Sussex, left £23,714. Poor Jesusites!

Rev. Stuart Bain confesses to having set fire to the Baptist Church at Waterloo, New York State, of which he is pastor. At first he denied it, but he subsequently admitted that he had obeyed an uncontrollable impulse. The reverend gentleman is subject to "mental lapses." Very likely. A lot of people, in prisons as well as in lunatic asylums, are subject to the same malady.

John Simeon Isaacs, of West Dulwich, who committed suicide in Wandsworth Gaol recently, left a letter written on his cell slate full of accusations against his wife interlarded with religious expressions. He was a Jew by birth, but had been converted to Christianity eighteen months before his decease. He had often threatened to murder his wife, and had suffered eight years' and five years' penal servitude for shocking assaults on his own children, besides twelve months for fraud. The Society for converting the Jews will probably not boast of this convert.

According to the *Tribune* reporter a good deal of vigorous language goes on among the religious debaters in Hyde Park. One was heard to say: "You can't teach me anything. I'm a ——— Christian, I am!"

Sir Archibald Geikie in his new book, *The Founders of Geology*, notices how Christianity hindered this science. "If an observer," he says, "who found abundant sea-shells embedded in the rocks forming the heart of a mountain chain ventured to promulgate his conclusion that these fossils proved the mountains to consist of materials that were accumulated under the sea, after living creatures appeared upon the earth, he ran imminent risk of prosecution for heresy, inasmuch as, according to Holy Writ, land and sea were separated on the third day after creation, but animal life did not begin until the fifth day." Dr. Geikie observes that not many men could be enthusiastic enough to court martyrdom on behalf of such speculative opinions; accordingly all sorts of shifts were adopted "in order to harmonise the facts of nature with what was supposed to be the divine truth revealed in the Bible." Happily all that is now ended—no thanks to Christianity.

Both the military and the clerical parties have been crushed in the recent French elections. The Pope will have to wake up the celestial personage he claims to represent—or all is lost.

Theoretically the Pope is God's viceroy on earth; practically he is the figure-head of the long firm called the Papacy at Rome. Just now he is in disfavor with the general body of directors, and the poor old man is much cut up in consequence—has taken to his bed and called in the doctors. Nearly thirty Cardinals are domiciled at Rome, and for some time they have boycotted the Holy Father, because they don't approve his policy, methods, and manners. To the world at large they preach his infallibility; behind the scenes they treat him as a good-natured old fool. And this farce is imposed upon hundreds of millions of true believers as the Church of God.

The theological spider is at his old game—and the latest victims are the Socialists. Mr. George Lansbury, for instance, is invited to open a discussion on Socialism before a large gathering of clergy and laity at the London Diocesan Conference. Probably he feels flattered; at any rate, he accepts. But what he says is not reported. What the Bishop of London says is reported. That right reverend father in God gets up and boasts his love of burning questions. Socialism is very much in the air, he says, and "in God's name let the Church of God discuss it, thrash it out, and find what the real truths about it are. What the Bishop really means is "Let us exploit it and suck it dry." The Church tries to nobble every movement as soon as it looks worth while to do so. For the rest, the idea of the Church of God acting as a discoverer of truth is so rich that we wonder it does not upset the stomach of even Mr. George Lansbury.

Anthony Comstock it was who started that lie about Colonel Ingersoll being paid to promote the circulation of obscene literature in America. The lie was eagerly seized upon by the baser sort of Christian preachers, and in time it was adopted by Dr. Dixon and Dr. Torrey, who circulated it during his revival mission in England. How we challenged

Dr. Torrey, how he crawled away from his responsibility, how he was then challenged by an honest Christian, Mr. W. T. Stead, and how at last we were able to crush the lie by detailed evidence; all this is well-known to our readers. What we want to do now is to show what Anthony Comstock really is and really does. He is an unctuous Christian. He is also the secretary of the American Vice Society. He gets his living by hunting down what he calls obscenity. America has sunk so low as to let the Post Office officials confiscate any books, pamphlets, or periodicals that Anthony Comstock chooses to object to. He calls straightforward Freethought "obscenity"—he calls all discussion of marriage and sex problems "obscenity"—indeed whatever he dislikes is "obscenity." And the American judges back up the American Post Office. They will actually send an American citizen to gaol for mailing what the Post Office officials, instigated by Anthony Comstock, choose to regard as "obscene." Without any further evidence, apparently, the judgment of those officials is endorsed by the judges; and American citizens who incur the displeasure of Anthony Comstock may thus be imprisoned without practically any trial whatever.

Mr. Stead has declared that Comstockism is a disgrace to America and an outrage on civilisation. This is about the plain truth of the matter. And we should like to have an opportunity of driving it into the ears of Americans themselves. Not because we wish to be unpleasant. Quite the contrary. We have looked to America to sustain the cause of freedom, and if she betrays it we shall suffer a grievous disappointment.

But let us go back to Anthony Comstock. He has just succeeded in getting Moses Harman, of Chicago, the editor of *Lucifer*, sent to prison again—this time for a year. Moses Harman is nearly seventy-six years old. To imprison a man at that time of life is nearly a sentence of death. But what difference does that make to the pietists and puritans of America? They call Moses Harman an "obscene" wretch. Is he, though? No one alleges that any obscene language has appeared in his paper. It is his ideas that are branded as obscene. But how can *ideas* be obscene? And what ideas of Moses Harman's, or his journal's, are singled out for reprobation? Here is one of them. It was contended, in perfectly decent language, that in the interest of the unborn child there should be strict abstention from sexual intercourse during the whole period of pregnancy. Fancy calling that *obscene*! Fancy putting a man in prison for it as a *felon*! Fancy the intellectual and moral degradation of a society that sanctions these things! The "bird o' freedom" must be sick and moulting. We hope the creature's illness is but temporary. But if it doesn't improve shortly we are afraid that its friends will soon have to attend its funeral.

Anthony Comstock has recently been at work in New York. He has been prosecuting Bernard MacFadden, the physical culturist, for exhibiting in his physical culture restaurant in Broadway posters advertising the physical culture show held in Madison Square Garden. The posters contained pictures of some of the star athletes, male and female, who competed in the previous year's exhibition. Our trustworthy contemporary, the New York *Truthseeker*, which can always be depended upon to be sedate enough in such matters, declares that "the pictures involved are about as harmless as the illustrations of union undergarments published on the 'ad' pages of the magazines." One judge said that he could see nothing objectionable in the pictures so they couldn't have been *very* bad. But two other judges, one of them of curious notoriety, agreed with Anthony Comstock, who demanded that MacFadden should be severely dealt with. The judge who saw no harm in the pictures rebuked Comstock for his malignancy. What the other judges have since decided to do we don't know. Their decision is not yet to hand. But whatever it is such cases can only bring the administration of justice into derision and contempt.

When Mrs. Mary J. Paulson, of Cashton, Wis., died not long ago she willed to her son Peter \$100 per annum for fifteen years on condition that he attend the regular meetings of the Emanuel church when not prevented by unavoidable occurrence. Peter contended that the condition requiring him to go to church was void, but the circuit court upheld the will. He appealed therefrom to the Supreme Court, and that court has affirmed the decision of the lower one, so that he must either attend church regularly or forfeit the money. If he concludes to submit to being bribed from the grave and go to the meetings he will have the consolation of knowing that he is not alone in foregathering there against his will. All of the children will be there under pressure, and most of the men, if they were to tell the truth, would confess that business or social reasons brought them to the synagogue.

Nobody goes to church because he wants to. It is either a penance or a "duty" reluctantly performed. In getting about two dollars per attendance, Peter Paulson will derive more benefit from his devotions than any other member of the congregation.—*Truthseeker* (New York).

"Jezreel's Folly" fell into the hands of the Philistines and the upper part has been demolished, but the lower part is still intact and the work of demolition is suspended. The founder of the Jezreelites spent £40,000 upon it and left it unfinished, and there have been no funds to go on with the building since his decease. Eventually the building was seized for debt, and the hopes of the Jezreelites were blasted. It was in that building that the 144,000 elect were to be gathered from the ends of the earth to meet the Lord when he comes in his glory. Imagine the feelings of the faithful, then, at beholding the Mount Zion disappearing stone by stone. But it appears that the place is to see better days. Michael Keyford Mills, who calls himself the "Prince," has come over from Detroit, Michigan, and has purchased both the building and the land it stands on. He means to accomplish the restoration of Jezreel's Tower. Whether he succeeds or not, we fancy the Lord is not likely to put in an early appearance. It is easier to raise towers up than to bring Christ down.

Mr. Donald Maclean, M.P., speaking at the annual meeting of the Christian Evidence Society, referred to the great number of earnest Christians in the House of Commons. There was a prevalent idea that the Labor members were Secularists, but "he did not know one man amongst them who could be described as either an atheist or an agnostic." This is all very well, Mr. Maclean, especially at a Christian Evidence meeting; but who on earth—or above it, or under it—constituted you an authority on the religious opinions of the Labor Party?

The noble Maclean actually went on to assure the annual meeting that the Christian Evidence Society could "reasonably congratulate itself on the fact that many of its lectures had considerably influenced the minds of many of those who represented and spoke in the interest of labor." This is enough to make a cat laugh.

When the Anglican Church and the Free Churches get to work under their new alliance for protecting the sanctity of Sunday they will probably drive bigger and bigger crowds of Englishmen, and especially Londoners, to spend the week-end in Paris. Already the third class week-end ticket to Paris and back is as low as £1 on the S.E.C.R. and as low as 17s. on the L.B.S.C.R. The Churches will have to try a new game. A law will be necessary to keep Englishmen in England on Sundays. "Down with Paris Week-Ends!" will be the next cry of the godly Sabbatarians.

There seems to be no room to doubt the death of Father Gapon, but it is not so certain that he was killed as a traitor by the revolutionists. His remains were buried on May 17 and the hearse was followed by some hundred and fifty workmen, several of whom spoke strongly against the police as the instigators of his murder. This is a view that really requires attention. When the Russian police want to get rid of a man they can lie about him as well as extinguish him. Father Gapon's book struck us as being the work of a sincere if not exactly a strong man. There was certainly a note of personal sincerity in his denunciation of the Russian priests for their drunkenness, profligacy, and subservience to the autocratic authorities. Gapon's account of himself was that he had lost belief in Christianity before he began organising the St. Petersburg workmen, and that he continued wearing the priest's robe only because it gave him easier and safer access to them. For our part we are not willing to believe he was an unmitigated scoundrel without proper evidence.

*Horner's Weekly* is publishing a series of "remarkable stories from the diary of a chaplain." Very remarkable stories! One is entitled "How I met the Infidel." It is romantic nonsense from beginning to end, and we have some sort of recollection of having read it many years ago. Of course the nameless chaplain converts his infidel. That always happens. It is so easy to convert atheists on paper. But the nameless chaplain makes one mistake. He states that the real name of his infidel was Henry Ware, of Leicester, who was converted to infidelity by a "rabid" infidel called Pincott. Both preached their atheistical doctrines in the streets—Henry Ware in London. Well, that is enough. The name alone proves the narrative to be imaginary.

James Berry, the hangman, jerked many a murderer to Jesus. He is now trying to fill heaven in a more peaceable

manner. James Berry has gone into the mission business. And he draws. Of course he does. All the people who have escaped hanging, and feel they deserve it, have a natural curiosity to see the gentleman who might have put the rope round their throats. A lot of other people, too, would naturally flock to see a famous ex-hangman out of mere morbid fascination. James Berry therefore draws—and Gipsy Smith will have to look to his laurels.

Thirty whiskies a day, used to go down James Berry's throat. Now he is a teetotaler. He used to smoke, but he doesn't smoke now. He used to go to theatres and music halls; now he goes to mission meetings. He used to read newspapers; now he reads the Bible. He used to hang people; now he is opposed to capital punishment. On the whole, perhaps, he is to be congratulated on the change. But when he sets up as a public moralist and soul-saver he is a "bit too thick."

James Berry is telling the story of how he hung a young man at Gloucester for shooting a policeman, and the young man said he was innocent. Some time afterwards he officiated at the execution of three burglars, and one of them said that he shot that policeman. He also confessed to other murders for which innocent people had been hung. What a remarkable proof of the providential government of human affairs! One would think that even James Berry would talk less about "God" in face of a fact like that.

Why doesn't some moderately competent Christian take up the orthodox side in the controversy initiated by Mr. J. W. de Caux in the *Yarmouth Mercury*? Are we to understand that the better instructed sort of Christians are too conscious that their faith will not bear open discussion, and that it is therefore a case of "least said soonest mended?" Last week the whole defence of the Bible was left to a disputant called E. S. Palmer. We don't know what sex the writer belongs to, but from his referring to a lady writer as "poor childish woman" we judge that Palmer wears trousers. So much for his legs. His upper part must be remarkably furnished. "I am sure," he says, "the Resurrection did take place, or there could have been no Ascension." That takes the cake. Comment would only spoil it.

Rev. J. H. Jowett, of Birmingham, had a call to Christ Church, Westminster. After thinking it over he decided not to accept it and said he did not feel it was a call from the Lord. Full reports of this affair appeared in the "Liberal" newspaper—that is to say, the Nonconformist newspapers. It looked as though the fate of England were trembling in the balance. But what on earth does it really matter to England whether Mr. Jowett goes to London or stays in Birmingham? The chief thing we know about him is that he connives at the disgraceful persecution of Secularists in his own city.

Straws show how the wind blows. Monday's *Daily Chronicle* gave a few extracts from "a long letter" sent in by Dr. Clifford on the subject of the Education Bill in Committee. Nearly a column and a half was given, in a prominent part of the paper, the same day, to an article by Sir George W. E. Russell, written from the High Churchman's point of view, showing what a delightfully vague thing "simple Bible teaching" is, and advocating the secular solution of the problem as the only one that will satisfy reasonable men all round. It looks as though Dr. Clifford's day were nearly over. Have his incessant assertions and evasions palled at last? And shall we have Secular Education carried in Committee? It is almost too good to be true—but you never can tell. The unexpected often arrives with a rush.

#### NOT IN EXTREMITIES.

Kind Lady: If I give you something to eat, will you wash your face and hands?

Poor Hobo: Youse misunderstood me, lady. I said I wuz hungry—I didn't say I wuz starvin' an' desperate.

#### THE FIRST CATALOGUE.

Adam has just gotten the job of naming the animals. "Lucky they aren't cigars," he cried, "for there is nobody to name them after!" Herewith he started his task.

"How do you know that you will ever attain great wealth?" sternly asked the girl's father. "Sir," confidently replied the suitor, "I am both deeply pious and thoroughly unscrupulous." "Take her, my boy, and be happy."



### Mr. Foote's Engagements.

June 3, N. S. S. Conference, Birmingham.

### To Correspondents.

C. COHEN'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—May 27, a. and e., Victoria Park. June 3, Birmingham.

T. D.—We shall look through the Benson-Pater book with interest.

W. EMSLEY.—(1) You ask us what we think of the Rev. W. S. McKee's pamphlet. Rubbish! Why was the lecture delivered "to men"? Was it because no women were silly enough to listen to it? (2) With regard to the alleged Shakespeare portrait, we confess that we never heard of it before. You say it belongs to Mr. Shakespeare Hirst, that it was painted by Adani Elsheimer at Rome, and that Mr. Hirst "found" it some twenty years ago. This is very interesting, of course, but what proof do you offer? Subjective evidence is of no value; objective evidence is necessary. Kindly inform us.

J. K. BARCLAY (Kansas City).—Thanks for your pleasant postcard with the news about Mr. Mangasarian. Curiously enough we received a letter from *him* only a post in front of your communication. We shall be glad to hear from you at any time in that part of the world. Think of it.

H. THOMPSON.—See "Acid Drops." Thanks.

J. T. HANKS.—The earliest manuscripts of the New Testament are supposed to belong to the fourth century after Christ. That is to say, the writing belongs to that period. There are no original manuscripts in existence. Your suggestion that the subject should be written upon at length in our columns shall be attended to as soon as possible.

J. B.—Sorry to see you misled by the nonsense about the abortive execution of Lee, the Babbicombe murderer. The apparatus would not work because of purely natural reasons, and the man was respited, not because there was any doubt about his guilt, but because it seemed inhuman to take him to the scaffold again. Lee's guilt was perfectly clear. He was not "innocent." And if you think the Lord saved him from hanging, perhaps you will explain why the Lord left him to languish in prison.

R. CHAPMAN.—Slight condensation was necessary through exigencies of space. Mr. Foote is very sorry he could not attend the funeral of so old and esteemed a friend as Mr. Middleton; but owing to a pre-allocation of work, which could not be postponed, the time he would have had to spend in going, returning, etc., was just the very time available for his *Freethinker* duties, which he could not have neglected without serious damage to the paper. We hope the friends realise how full of work his hands are, and how little time he has left for special calls.

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

J. BROGH.—Yes, we saw Mr. Thompson's reference in the *Clarion* to when "the blasphemy laws were last set a-foote."

W. J.—We do not print verses to "oblige" the writers. We print them when we think they would, or should, interest our readers. Your verses may reach that level in time; they do not reach it yet.

C. McDUGALL.—Your letter is deeply interesting. We congratulate you on the bold fight you have made, and on the happy results that now seem probable. Thanks for addresses.

R. RIECK.—Thanks for the book. Glad you were so pleased with our last Queen's Hall lectures.

W. HALL.—Must read your long communication in time for next week.

G. BRYANT.—We answer ordinary questions in this column, but do not discuss metaphysical problems.

T. O'NEILL.—Glad to hear you have profited so much by reading *Freethought* literature. You only heard of the *Freethinker* for the first time twelve months ago. Fancy! But there are multitudes ignorant of its existence, and we are going to advertise this journal more in the immediate future.

T. FISHER.—Shall have personal attention. Many thanks.

H. P. K.—A very good letter. We wish the "saints" would do more in this way in their local newspapers. Of course we are only too pleased when our paragraphs help them in that direction.

G. ROLETT.—Cuttings always welcome.

C. W. STYRING.—Are you not a little too severe on the gentleman?

F. G. ANDREWS.—Sorry to hear the rain stopped Mr. Cohen's lecture at Brixton. It was a public loss. Thanks for address.

W. CROMACK orders twelve copies of the *Freethinker* for June 3 (Whit-Sunday) and hopes all Secularists who can afford to distribute copies during the holidays will do ditto. Not a bad idea. We must try to make that number specially interesting.

H. G. WHIPP.—See "Acid Drops." Thanks.

ALGREN.—Too late for this week; may be useful for our next.

J. B.—The verses would not be so interesting to the general reader.

H. JOHNSON.—The evangelist who says that Ingersoll died raving has a Christian imagination. Ingersoll died suddenly, of heart trouble, with a smile on his face.

R. CLARKE.—Thanks for your interesting letter.

W. J. HODGETTS.—We hope your efforts to promote our circulation will win the success they deserve.

V. C. MARTIN.—Is the reverend gentleman worth any more trouble at present?

E. G. JAMES.—Rather off our beat.

A. G. F.—Very glad to read your good news.

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

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### Sugar Plums.

This is practically the last announcement we shall be able to make of the National Secular Society's Annual Conference, which takes place at Birmingham next Sunday (Whit-Sunday). The business sittings will be held in the small theatre of the Midland Institute, Paradise-street. The evening public meeting will be held in the great Town Hall. Mr. G. W. Foote will preside, and will be supported by Messrs. C. Cohen, J. T. Lloyd, F. A. Davies, and other well-known *Freethought* representatives. There will be an organ recital for an hour before the speaking begins.

We appeal to N. S. S. Branches, and to members and friends of the N. S. S. generally, to make this Conference a grand success. A great demonstration in the Birmingham Town Hall, chiefly on Secular Education—although other topics will not be neglected—should be of considerable value in its influence on public opinion. It will also be of great importance to show Birmingham that the N. S. S. Branch in that city has many good friends outside. This may help to free the Branch from the wretched persecution it has suffered for the last seven or eight years. After being officially excluded from the City school buildings, which are freely used by other local bodies on Sunday, the Branch is at last—without any form of trial, and without being heard in its defence—prohibited from selling *Freethought* literature at Town Hall meetings. This is a condition which applies to the N. S. S. Branch exclusively. And, as a matter of fact, books that were complained of when the Branch sold them are sold by other bodies at Town Hall meetings without let or hindrance. One of the books so complained of was Mr. Blatchford's *God and My Neighbor*. Selling that book is part of the offence for which the N. S. S. Branch is deprived of the common rights of citizenship. We informed Mr. Blatchford of the fact, and we hoped he would make some kind of protest, but we have been disappointed. All the more reason, therefore, why Secularists from all parts of the country should go to Birmingham on Whit-Sunday and give the persecuted N. S. S. Branch the benefit of their moral support.

The Conference reception room will be at the Market Hotel in Station-street. Delegates and visitors arriving on Saturday afternoon or evening should go there, if they are missed by the stewards (wearing the old Bradlaugh colors) who will do their best to meet all trains, if duly notified beforehand. Station-street is close to the London and North Western and Midland railway stations, and about half a mile from the Great Western station.

Owing to the Co-operative Society's Conference being held at Birmingham at the same time as the National Secular Society's Conference there is a great demand for hotel accommodation. Delegates and visitors to the N. S. S. Conference will please remember this, and secure what accommodation they require by writing at once to Mr. J. Partridge, 183 Vauxhall-road. Early application should also be made for tickets (2s.) for the Whit-Sunday dinner at the Market Hotel, between the morning and afternoon sittings of the Conference.

On Whit-Monday there will be an excursion to the greatest place of pilgrimage on earth—Stratford-on-Avon, the birth-place of William Shakespeare. Tickets at 5s. 3d. each will cover train fare, a substantial meat dinner, and an hour's trip by steam launch on the river. Train fare alone is 2s. 3d. Special arrangements are being made for visiting spots of special interest, including the Memorial Theatre.

The Independent Labor Party's demonstration at Queen's Hall on the Education Bill passed a resolution which ended as follows: "That all sections of the community shall be put upon terms of equality by strictly confining the teaching to secular subjects only." Mr. Ramsey Macdonald moved

the resolution, and it was seconded by Mrs. Cobden Saunderson, who said that more than fifty years ago her father, Richard Cobden, had, in sheer despair of carrying any system of education in connection with religion, declared in favor of secular education. Mr. Keir Hardie, who presided, took the proper view that religious belief was, and ever must remain, a matter of individual opinion and judgment, and that the State should not interfere either with children or with adults in the matter. There was a very odd omission, however, in Mr. Hardie's enumeration of the various sections of the community who were agreed upon secular teaching while disagreeing about religion. He included Jews, Catholics, Protestants, Churchmen and Dissenters, but left out Non-Christians who are far more numerous than is often imagined.

Mr. D. E. Bonvoni, President of the Fishguard Teachers' Association, Pembrokeshire, informs us that Notice of Motion (No. 9) re the Education Bill on the N. S. S. Conference Agenda "had the approval of the members at their monthly meeting" on May 19, and that "copies of the same have been authorised to be sent to other Associations of Teachers for approval." Mr. Bonvoni hopes to meet us at Birmingham on Whit-Sunday.

"The Resurrection of Christ" was the subject of an admirable letter on the Freethought side by Mr. J. W. de Caux, extending to nearly a column and a half of small type, in the last issue of the *Yarmouth Mercury*. It is replete with arguments, details, and exact references. The conclusion that "the Christ of the Gospels, like the Gulliver of Dean Swift, is a mere phantom of the imagination" will probably give a mental shock to some East Anglian Christians. But the shock will do them good, and we congratulate the *Mercury* on its intellectual hospitality.

A Scotch Freethinker of many years' standing, who went to America last year, writes us as follows: "Dear Mr. Foote, —I have just noticed in a belated *Freethinker* your enquiry re Mr. Mangasarian, of Chicago. He resigned his editorship of the *Liberal Review* six months ago, but has been delivering lectures regularly throughout the winter. I have heard him nearly every Sunday since last November—went there for the last time a week ago to-day (May 5) and had the happiness of shaking hands with him after the lecture. One sees many things to marvel at in Chicago—not the least of which is Mr. Mangasarian at the head of a movement which appeals mainly to finely-dressed *grandes dames* who come in their silks and motor-cars and say nice things about his eloquence. In a word, my dear friend, Mr. M. is fashionable." We are not sorry to hear it. The rich want converting as well as the poor.

Mr. Mangasarian has written us himself. He has evidently not seen the *Freethinker* for months. It was sent to the office of the *Liberal Review*, which he tells us why he left in the fall of last year. We are now sending him a weekly copy of the *Freethinker* direct. Mr. Mangasarian is good enough to say that he is so fond of our writings that he wishes to possess them, and begs us to send him a full list of them. Of course we are sending him more than the list. Mr. Mangasarian supposes that we read in the *Liberal Review* the notice of his withdrawal from that publication. We did not. That number did not reach us. "My work as lecturer of the Independent Religious Society," Mr. Mangasarian adds, "has progressed wonderfully during the past year. We have moved into a larger hall, seating 2,500 people, and located on the finest boulevard of the city by the lake." Mr. Mangasarian closes with a cordial and generous—"wishing you great success in a great work for which you possess all the gifts." Prettily said—over the mark—but showing an appreciation which we value.

Mr. Mangasarian sends us with his letter the new (fourth) edition of his well-known *New Catechism*. It contains six fresh chapters on the Ten Commandments, the Church and the Republic, Christianity and Woman, Marriage, the Church and Marriage, and Divorce and the Church. These chapters are very important and greatly enhance the value of the Catechism. We shall have more to say about them presently.

Mr. J. M. Robertson lectures at the Secular Hall, Manchester, afternoon and evening, to-day (May 27). His subjects are up-to-date and interesting, and the South Lancashire "saints" should go to hear him. These are the last special lectures at Manchester until the autumn.

Priests are eternally disputing against each other, and those mouths that want argument are filled with abuse.

—Goldsmith.

## From Fiction to Fact; OR, HOW I CEASED TO BE A CATHOLIC.—IV.

BY FRED. BONTE  
(Late a Prison Minister.)

(Continued from p. 316.)

WHEN the false cosmogony of the Bible is urged against the claims of the Church, it is the fashion to reply that the Bible was not meant to teach science. But the undeniable fact is that the Bible and the Church have taught science, and their science has turned out such a dismal failure that men are forced to ask themselves whether Christianity, which had so woefully blundered in its conception of this world, was likely to be more successful in its conception of another; if they floundered so deplorably in their interpretation of visible things, how could they be trusted in their pretended knowledge of the invisible?

If the Mosaic cosmogony is a disgrace to the Church, its anthropology is no better. We learn from it that man came perfect from the hands of his Maker, but was quickly degraded by a trifling disobedience, which made him liable to ignorance, vice, sickness, and death. Here, again, science teaches the very opposite. Man, evolved from lower animal forms in the remote past, has traversed many successive stages of evolution—the ice-age, the stone-age, the bronze-age—ever rising to his present condition. The flint instruments, discovered all over the earth, show what man has been in the infancy of the race, and laugh out of court the fiction of Tubalcain's expertness in forging metals. Had such advantage been possessed at first it could never have been lost. Evolution is no longer a theory; it is a principle acknowledged by all scholars, and operating from the nebula, the plant, and the man, to morals, sociology, and even religion. When it was first heard of it met with a storm of abuse and ridicule, being anathematised as vehemently as the cosmology of Galileo. Christianity is now reconciled to the earth's diurnal and orbital motion, but continues to snare and sneer at man's descent from lower forms of life. For thousands of years had it been preached and pictured that Elohim made a figure of clay, breathed life into its nostrils, and then made Eve out of one of its ribs—fit stories for the Aborigines of Australia. Science has now so firmly established the evolutionary origin of man that the *Daily Chronicle*, in reviewing Haeckel's work on the subject, was compelled to acknowledge that "it is indeed incredible that any impartial student can read these volumes without arriving at the conviction that man is related to, and evolved from, lower animal forms. If there lives a man who is prepared, after reading these volumes, to question their main thesis, he is to be complimented on his inviolate mind; neither fate nor facts can touch him." On the same subject the *Daily Telegraph* says: "It is a grand conception, this of the great physiologist, that every man, in the brief term of his pre-natal development, should go through these successive changes by which man has, in countless ages, been evolved from the primitive germ-cell."

From testimonies like these it is clear that the theologians will have, in the end, to surrender their venerable fiction. Their plight is pitiable, and they will defend their old fortress bravely. But when the foundations are shaken, when Elohim and the Firmament, Adam and Eve, the Apple and the Serpent are discredited, the time of capitulation cannot be far off. Unfortunately, the surrender will not end the wizards' spell; credulity is inexhaustible, and will be exploited as in the past. The chameleon will change his color again, as he has done before, in accepting the motion of the earth, the antipodes, the change of days into periods. In all these retreats the Church is the counterpart of Kouropatkin in the late war—after each defeat he prided himself on his wonderful

strategy and the improved position he occupied, and dared the foe to dislodge him.

Nor are these the only points on which the Church has retreated. Dr. Mivart has pointed out many other subjects on which Catholic teaching has fundamentally altered, showing thereby how vain is its boast of being *semper eadem*, unchangeable in its magisterium. Usury (lending money at interest), condemned of yore by many popes and councils, is now freely practised by popes and priests; the fate of unbaptised infants is no longer eternal damnation, but natural happiness in a newly-invented place called *limbus infantium*; neither are non-Catholics now in a state of damnation, but are saved if in good faith; the proximate end of the world, the second advent within the lifetime of the first generation of Christians, and the millennium, were at first firmly held by all Christians; witchcraft, diabolical possession, ghosts, compacts with the Devil, selling the soul to the Devil, succubæ and incubi, werewolfism, were all believed in both by laity and clergy until recent times; the theatre, and all connected with it, were excommunicated until the times of the French Revolution; rebellion, under all circumstances, was held as sinful by the unanimous consent of the early fathers. On these and several other points has the belief and magisterium of the Church veered round in consonance with the dictates of science and the advancement of civilisation. Yet these changes do not prevent her perpetuating the claim that her teaching never changes. At the sight of these audacious pretensions Dr. Mivart bursts forth in this lengthened protest:—

"What a contrast is offered by the quibbling, verbal jugglery and shuffling of these apologetic theologians to the proceedings of men of science and of historical experts in their search after truth! The conception, 'truth,' does not even seem to enter into the minds of these apologists, but only ideas as to what may be expedient, and so serve their turn for the present. Catholics are crying out piteously to their ecclesiastical mother to be fed with the bread of wholesome doctrine as to scriptural truth. They might as well address a dumb idol, for no clear or decisive response will they obtain. Persons are generally under the impression that the authorities of Rome pre-eminently love what is clear and definite, and like to have issues well defined. That Church is supposed to thoroughly know her own mind, to say what she means and mean what she says, and to have the courage of her opinions. But the facts are not so. The Church will not—because she cannot—give a plain answer to a plain question of that kind. The parade of trustworthy authority and infallible guidance is but a solemn sham, as is the profession of tender consideration for the souls of her children. She gives stammering, equivocal replies. You must, at the risk of your salvation, believe the decrees of the councils, yet what they mean you may disregard. It is absolutely necessary to declare that the Bible contains no errors, yet you may regard a number of its narratives and assertions as widely divergent from the truth. It is enough to make the gorge of any honest man rise through profound disgust at such trifling and double-dealing with things declared to be so sacred that matters of mere life and death are nothing in comparison. What can well be more heartless and cruel than to preach publicly to the multitude that they will be damned if they do not believe certain statements, while a select few are informed, in private, that such belief is in no wise necessary? The questions asked with such pitiable insistence about the Bible are not answered, because they cannot be answered; and they cannot be answered because the ecclesiastical authorities are either themselves devoid of the necessary knowledge, or—and that is generally the case—they dare not avow the truth..... An assembly of men, such as the Pope and the Bishops of the Vatican Council, solemnly declaring that dogma shall undergo no change or modification in meaning 'as long as the world shall last,' seems to me comparable with an assembly of ants solemnly declaring that the stability of their nest shall know no end..... What we may expect is that the Church of Rome, the Church of the Petrification, will in future centuries be followed by a very gradually decreasing number of members, for religions die slowly..... However clearly the fact may be demonstrated that *Roman Catholicism is founded on absolute falsehood as regards Scripture and is intellectually untenable*, no marked results are likely to

follow that demonstration, because *the religion of the majority of mankind reposes not on reason but on feeling.....* The Egyptian religion lasted more than six thousand years. What may be the state of the Christian religion in the year 4,000? It is impossible to repress a smile as we ask: Will its dogmata then be absolutely the same?" (*Nineteenth Century*, March, 1900).

If these considerations on cosmogony, evolution, and kindred subjects tended to weaken the foundations of my belief, the discriminate reading of the New Testament helped to confirm the tendency. Christian ministers, nowadays, naturally turn their attention in that direction when they find the Jewish Scriptures so gravely discredited. They seek to save their position by exalting the teaching and character of Christ. But their efforts are bound to end in failure. The New Testament has fared no better than the Old in passing through the crucible of criticism. Its glamor is gone, the awe which once surrounded its main character is sensibly lessened; the proverb, "As true as gospel," has lost its force. The various tracts forming the Testament have been stripped not only of divine, but even of serious human authority. Most of the biographical details and alleged doctrines of Christ are either doubted or denied. The miraculous conception and the birth in Bethlehem are unhistoric. The visit of the Magi with the massacre of the innocents, and the flight into Egypt, are proved to be spurious by the narrative of Luke stating that after the presentation in the temple the family returned to Nazareth. What estimate are we to form of the character of Christ? Was he endowed with exceptional goodness or knowledge? We have a glimpse of his supposed perfection in the so-called loss in the temple. Being God, he must have deliberately stayed behind and known that his parents were seeking him in distress. If he wished to remain in the temple and teach the doctors he should have warned his parents. A boy causing his parents a sorrow, which could have been easily avoided, is not only inexcusable, but guilty of sin; and it is impossible to hold him up as a pattern to other boys in this respect. Did he not evince imperfection in causing jealousy among his apostles by his favoritism? Did he not display anger in his fierce denunciation of the Pharisees? And how can we justify his conduct in choosing Judas as an apostle, knowing he should be betrayed by him? Or in going to Jerusalem when he knew he was to be put to death there? Can we distinguish such action from that of a man who lays himself across the line at the approach of a train?

Nor is his doctrine irreproachable. Many of his precepts are either impracticable or pernicious: "Resist not evil"; "labor not for the meat which perisheth"; "give to him that asketh of thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not away"; "if a man wants to take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also"; "be not solicitous what you shall eat or put on"; "lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth." What would become of human society if those rules were followed? Men would drift into universal thriftlessness, beggary, and flabby helplessness. Luckily Christians have, from the first, been better than their creed. They have ever resisted evil, been solicitous what they should eat, and laid up on earth all the treasure they could.

Again, the words and acts of Jesus are often in conflict. He commands us to love our enemies, but he burns his own; or, "As for these mine enemies, who would not have me to reign over them, bring them hither and kill them before me." He praises humility, but says of himself: "Behold one greater than Solomon here; all who came before me were thieves and robbers." In fact, he has taught us nothing of practical utility, and all his commendable moral sayings were current in the East centuries before him.

But his worst record is his sins of omission. He throws no light on such burning questions as education, labor, capital, slavery, gambling, the position of women, on the form or history of the globe, the stars, America, negroes, steam-power,

electricity, hygiene, medicine, anæsthetics, anti-septics. Why did he not start a printing-press which could most effectively have propagated his doctrines and hastened civilisation by fifteen centuries? Could we excuse a man from blame who was possessed of knowledge that would importantly advance the welfare of mankind and kept his secret to himself? Could a person who withheld a signal benefit from the world be regarded either as good or perfect?

Neither does he shine as an instructor. He uses parables lest the people should understand, and be saved. His disciples frequently misunderstood him. "The kingdom of heaven" remained a mystery to them to the last; for, on the very day of his alleged ascension, after three years' schooling, they asked him: "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom of Israel?" And he did not dispel the delusion under which he labored himself. He had been led by circumstances to assume a rôle which he had not at first thought of, and which he had not abandoned even after his despairing cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" To this day his doctrines are a tangle, which two thousand years of efforts have failed to unravel. They promise to remain a battlefield for disputants to the last. Only one institution has benefited by his coming. To the priesthood, Christianity is indeed good-tidings of great joy, an inexhaustible source of power, position, and wealth. As for his prophecies, they are either unfulfilled or were written after the events, like those touching the siege of Jerusalem. A dozen times did he foretell his return in the clouds with great power and majesty during that generation. The only rational conclusion to draw from a conscientious and impartial survey of history is that he possessed very little knowledge, none certainly above that of his time, and no goodness above the best of his contemporaries.

(To be continued.)

#### Ingersoll's Lecture on Superstition.—IV.

(Continued from p. 294.)

V.

In the dear old religious days the earth was flat—a little dishing, if anything—and just above it was Jehovah's house, and just below it was where the Devil lived. God and his angels inhabited the third story, the Devil and his imps the basement, and the human race the second floor.

Then they knew where heaven was. They could almost hear the harps and hallelujahs. They knew where hell was, and they could almost hear the groans and smell the sulphurous fumes. They regarded the volcanoes as chimneys. They were perfectly acquainted with the celestial, the terrestrial and the infernal. They were quite familiar with the New Jerusalem, with its golden streets and gates of pearl. Then the translation of Enoch seemed reasonable enough, and no one doubted that before the flood the sons of God came down and made love to the daughters of men. The theologians thought that the builders of Babel would have succeeded if God had not come down and caused them to forget the meaning of words.

In those blessed days the priests knew all about heaven and hell. They knew that God governed the world by hope and fear, by promise and threat, by reward and punishment. The reward was to be eternal and so was the punishment. It was not God's plan to develop the human brain, so that man would perceive and comprehend the right and avoid the wrong. He taught ignorance nothing but obedience, and for obedience he offered eternal joy. He loved the submissive—the kneelers and crawlers. He hated the doubters, the investigators, the thinkers, the philosophers. For them he created the eternal prison where he could feed forever the hunger of his hate. He loved the credulous—those who believed without evidence—and for them he prepared a home in the realm of fadeless light. He delighted in the company of the questionless.

But where is this heaven, and where is this hell? We now know that heaven is not just above the clouds and that hell is not just below the earth. The telescope has done away with the ancient heaven, and the revolving world has quenched the flames of the ancient hell. These theological countries, these imagined worlds, have disappeared. No one knows, and no one pretends to know, where heaven is; and no one knows, and no one pretends to know, the locality of

hell. Now the theologians say that hell and heaven are not places, but states of mind—conditions.

The belief in gods and devils has been substantially universal. Back of the good, man placed a god; back of the evil, a devil; back of health, sunshine and harvest was a good deity; back of disease, misfortune and death he placed a malicious fiend.

Is there any evidence that gods and devils exist? The evidence of the existence of a god and of a devil is substantially the same. Both of these deities are inferences; each one is a perhaps. They have not been seen—they are invisible—and they have not ventured within the horizon of the senses. The old lady who said there must be a devil, else how could they make pictures that looked exactly like him, reasoned like a trained theologian—like a doctor of divinity.

Now no intelligent man believes in the existence of a devil—no longer fears the leering fiend. Most people who think have given up a personal God, a creative deity. They now talk about the "Unknown," the "Infinite Energy," but they put Jehovah with Jupiter. They regard them both as broken dolls from the nursery of the past.

The men or women who ask for evidence—who desire to know the truth—care nothing for signs; nothing for what are called wonders; nothing for lucky or unlucky jewels, days or numbers; nothing for charms or amulets; nothing for comets or eclipses, and have no belief in good or evil spirits, in gods or devils. They place no reliance on general or special providence—on any power that rescues, protects and saves the good or punishes the vile and vicious. They do not believe that in the whole history of mankind a prayer has been answered. They think that all the sacrifices have been wasted, and that all the incense has ascended in vain. They do not believe that the world was created and prepared for man any more than it was created and prepared for insects. They do not think it probable that whales were invented to supply the Eskimo with blubber, or that flames were created to attract and destroy moths. On every hand there seems to be evidence of design—design for the accomplishment of good, design for the accomplishment of evil. On every side are the benevolent and malicious—something toiling to preserve, something laboring to destroy. Everything surrounded by friends and enemies—by the love that protects, by the hate that kills. Design is as apparent in decay, as in growth; in failure, as in success; in grief, as in joy. Nature with one hand building, with one hand tearing down, armed with sword and shield—slaying and protecting, and protecting but to slay. All life journeying toward death, and all death hastening back to life. Everywhere waste and economy, care and negligence.

We watch the flow and ebb of life and death—the great drama that forever holds the stage, where players act their parts and disappear; the great drama in which all must act—ignorant and learned, idiotic and insane—without rehearsal and without the slightest knowledge of a part, or of any plot or purpose in the play. The scene shifts; some actors disappear and others come, and again the scene shifts; mystery everywhere. We try to explain, and the explanation of one fact contradicts another. Behind each veil removed, another. All things equal in wonder. One drop of water as wonderful as all the seas; one grain of sand as all the world; one moth with painted wings as all the things that live; one egg from which warmth, in darkness, woos to life an organised and breathing form—a form with sinews, bones and nerves, with blood and brain, with instincts, passions, thoughts and wants—as all the stars that wheel in space.

The smallest seed that, wrapped in soil, has dreams of April rains and days of June, withholds its secret from the wisest men. The wisdom of the world cannot explain one blade of grass, the faintest motion of the smallest leaf. And yet theologians, popes, priests, parsons, who speechless stand before the wonder of the smallest thing that is, know all about the origin of worlds, know when the beginning was, when the end will be, know all about the God who with a wish created all, know what his plan and purpose was, the means he uses and the end he seeks. To them all mysteries have been revealed, except the mystery of things that touch the senses of a living man.

But honest men do not pretend to know; they are candid and sincere; they love the truth; they admit their ignorance and they say, "We do not know."

After all, why should we worship our ignorance, why should we kneel to the Unknown, why should we prostrate ourselves before a guess?

If God exists, how do we know that he is good, that he cares for us? The Christians say that their God has existed from eternity; that he forever has been, and forever will be, infinite, wise and good. Could this God have avoided being God? Could he have avoided being good? Was he wise and good without his wish or will?

Being from eternity, he was not produced. He was back of all cause. What he is, he was, and will be, unchanged,

unchangeable. He had nothing to do with the making or developing of his character. Nothing to do with the development of his mind. What he was, he is. He has made no progress. What he is, he will be, there can be no change. Why then, I ask, should we praise him? He could not have been different from what he was and is. Why should we pray to him? He cannot change.

And yet Christians implore their God not to do wrong. The meanest thing charged against the Devil is that he leads the children of men into temptation, and yet, in the Lord's Prayer, God is insultingly asked not to imitate the king of fiends.

"Lead us not into temptation."

Why should God demand praise? He is as he was. He has never learned anything; he has never practised any self-denial; was never tempted, never touched by fear or hope, and never had a want. Why should he demand our praise?

Does anyone know that this God exists; that he ever heard or answered any prayer? Is it known that he governs the world; that he interferes in the affairs of men; that he protects the good or punishes the wicked? Can evidence of this be found in the history of mankind? If God governs the world, why should we credit him for the good and not charge him with the evil? To justify this God we must say that good is good and that evil is also good. If all is done by this God we should make no distinction between his actions—between the actions of the infinitely wise, powerful and good. If we thank him for sunshine and harvest we should also thank him for plague and famine. If we thank him for liberty, the slave should raise his chained hands in worship and thank God that he toils unpaid with the lash upon his naked back. If we thank him for victory we should thank him for defeat.

Only a few days ago our President, by proclamation, thanked God for giving us the victory at Santiago. He did not thank him for sending the yellow fever. To be consistent the President should have thanked him equally for both.

The truth is that good and evil spirits—gods and devils—are beyond the realm of experience; beyond the horizon of our senses; beyond the limits of our thoughts; beyond imagination's utmost flight.

Man should think; he should use all his senses; he should examine; he should reason. The man who cannot think is less than man; the man who will not think is traitor to himself; the man who fears to think is superstition's slave.

(To be continued.)

### The Man who Divorced Church and State in Mexico.

It was Benito Juarez who did for his nation what the French Republic has recently accomplished—the rending of the ancient ties which bound the State and the Church together. The recent celebration throughout Mexico of the first centenary of his birth should encourage the leaders of the separation movement in France. The life and work of Juarez are thus summarised by the Mexican *Herald*:—

When Juarez was born a century ago in the little village of San Pablo Guelatao, in the state of Oaxaca, Mexico was still under Spanish rule; and while Mexican independence was achieved while he was still a boy, it was reserved for him, in the fullness of time, to give the death-blow to the last colonial traditions, and to lay the real foundation for the national life.

For it must not be forgotten that while Hidalgo, Morelos, Guerrero, and Iturbide made, or helped make, Mexico independent, they did not, and could not, all of a sudden, change the habits of thought, the vicious practices, the political incapacity, the theocratic rule, the routine methods of administration, which were the outgrowth of centuries of blind and unconditional submission to a distant power once very great and always characterised by many noble qualities, but which, in an early period in the seventeenth century, had constantly lagged behind the march of progress.

But what the authors and achievers of Mexico's political independence did not do, Juarez accomplished, making a clean sweep of the last remnants of the colonial system.

It suffices for the fame of Juarez, as for the fame of those other great men, that he achieved a colossal work, and that in its achievement he gave proof of steadfastness of purpose, an iron will, self-sacrifice, patriotism, executive talent, the personal magnetism which gained ascendancy over other men, and enlisted their services for the national cause, a grasp of complex situations, capacity for the direction of multiple affairs, an unquenchable faith in his country's destiny, the power of enkindling his own enthusiasm in others, and in general the qualities that stamped him as one of the great statesmen of all time.

The admirers of Juarez need not be worried because his personality has been discussed of late. It is the privilege of

nonentities not to be discussed, while men in public station, who are truly great, arouse both warm enthusiasm and bitter antagonism.

The place of Juarez in history is assured, and, when hostile criticism shall have done its worst, it will be seen how impotent it was to obscure the fame of a national hero, who, in the hearts of his countrymen, occupies a place as secure as that of Nelson in the affections of loyal Britons.

When we consider the towering figure of Juarez in Mexico's annals, and the controversies that have raged as to his personality, we are reminded of the fine lines of Goldsmith:—

"As some tall cliff that lifts its awful form,  
Swells from the vale and midway leaves the storm;  
Though round its breast the rolling clouds are spread,  
Eternal sunshine settles on its head!"

—*Truthseeker* (New York).

### Correspondence.

GIRARD COLLEGE, PHILADELPHIA.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—As no one, apparently, has replied to the "infamous perversion" charge made in the *Freethinker* of May 13 against this admirable institution, I would like to say that the main stipulation in Stephen Girard's will as to the strict exclusion of ministers of religion of all denominations from the College is still, I believe, rigidly enforced.

Anyhow, I can testify as to what I was an eye and ear witness of when there—rather less than two years ago. While in the porter's lodge I saw two men arrive dressed in ordinary attire—with nothing whatever of the cleric in their appearance or manner, and heard them apply for permission to enter the building. On the question being put, "Are you a minister of religion of any kind?" which I understand is invariably put to every stranger seeking to enter the College, one at once replied "No," while the other just as frankly admitted that he was. The result of the ingenuous answer by the cleric was that he was not allowed to accompany his friend inside, but was obliged to remain behind in the lodge until he returned to him, when I saw them both depart together.

The chapel—a building erected in 1877—is probably the *gravamen* of the charge now made, but as moral and religious instruction is given on all suitable occasions both in the schools and section rooms, and the officers and pupils attend worship daily in the chapel before the opening of the schools and after their close, and as the religious instruction is given by lectures and addresses delivered by the president of the College or some *layman*, and never by a minister of religion, one fails to discover how the charge of "infamous perversion" could have arisen.

F. S.

[This letter is very interesting from one point of view, and we thank the writer for giving our readers the benefit of his personal experience upon it. But we do not see our way to withdraw the charge of "infamous perversion." We beg to assure our correspondent that the abuse of the Stephen Girard trust is often denounced in the American Freethought papers. The trustees keep the strict letter and violate the spirit. They keep out religious ministers, but they let in religion—which is obviously against Stephen Girard's intention.—EDITOR.]

### Obituary.

I REGRET to have to record the death of one of our oldest and most respected supporters at Shields. Mr. William Craig Middleton, of North Shields, was a member of the local N. S. S. Branch and a vice-president of the N. S. S. itself. He was well-known and highly esteemed in his native town, where he always liberally assisted political, temperance, and other causes. Many of our lecturers have been indebted to him for hospitable entertainment in the old times when the battle of Freethought was harder than it is now. After a careful and industrious life Mr. Middleton enjoyed a healthy and vigorous old age until only a few months before his decease. Always quiet and modest in his habits, he took no public part in the work of the Branch, but earnestly advocated the principles of Secularism whenever the occasion arose in his daily life. His death was calm and peaceful. It occurred on Thursday, May 17. The interment took place on Sunday last. Mr. G. W. Foote was asked to officiate, but was unable to do so; he sent a welcome substitute, however, in Mr. John Lloyd, who read an address at the graveside, and a special message from Mr. Foote. Councillors B. Hewett and James Robinson also made touching reference to the deceased's work in connection with the Liberal and Temperance parties. There was a large attendance of relatives and friends. Laudatory notices of the deceased appeared in the Shields *Daily News* and other papers.—R. CHAPMAN (secretary).

**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): 9, General Members Meeting. Business only.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Liberal Hall, Broadway, Forest Gate, E.): 7.30, Carl Quinn, "Christianity—A Comfort?"

**OUTDOOR.**

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Fountain): 3.15, C. Cohen; 6, C. Cohen.

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S.: Rushcroft-road, Brixton, 11.30, James Rowney; Brockwell Park, 3.15 and 6, James Rowney.

HYDE PARK BRANCH N. S. S. (Marble Arch): 11.30, H. B. Samuels, "Bible Morals."

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (Ridley-road, Dalston): 11.30, F. A. Davies, "The Bible in the School."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Parliament Hill, Hampstead): 3.30, F. A. Davies, "Bible Stories for the Young."

WOOLWICH BRANCH N. S. S. (Beresford-square): 11.30, a Lecture.

**COUNTRY.**

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N. S. S. (Milton Hall, Daulby-street): 7, J. Arnold Sharpley, "Shelley Across the Centuries."

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Rusholme-road, Oxford-road, All Saints): J. M. Robertson, M.P., 3, "Christianity and Empire"; 6.30, "Religion in the Schools." Tea at 5.

PORTH BRANCH N. S. S. (Secular Room, Porth Town Hall): 6.30, Debate, "Christianity and Secularism," Messrs. E. Thomas and A. Sylvester.

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