

THE Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

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Nothing else can sufficiently inure and steel a man against the prevailing prejudices of the world but that habit of mind which arises from non-conformity to its decisions in matters of religion.—HAZLITT.

Some Personal Notes.

FOR the seventeenth time I have been elected President of the National Secular Society. Sixteen elections have taken place at Annual Conferences. The first election took place at a special members' meeting at the Hall of Science in February, 1890, when the great Charles Bradlaugh (who died within a year) resigned the Presidency and nominated me as his successor. I have therefore given sixteen years and a half of honorary service to the post.

It is too much to expect that I shall give another sixteen years and a half of such service. Long before the end of that period, if I am alive, I hope to see a younger man leading the fighting forces of popular English Freethought.

In the meanwhile I shall go on with my work, doing the best I can, and trusting that I shall receive not only the general support of the party, but also a generous judgment of my performance. For few positions are more difficult than mine, and I have never heard of any rush of candidates to fill it. Had I consulted my own ease of mind and body I should have declined Bradlaugh's nomination in 1890; but he told me that it was my duty to accept it, and I felt that he was right, so I faced the painful thorny road of official leadership, just as I had faced the prison gates seven years before.

One quality, I believe, the Freethought party felt sure of in me. I was never fond of turning my back on my enemies. The party had seen me stand firm in the greatest press prosecution of the last fifty years, and had a reasonable assurance that I should not run away from any danger. How far that assurance has been justified I leave it to others to determine.

What I am most disposed to pride myself upon, in the moments of self-satisfaction that overtake all mortals, is the devising and establishing of the Secular Society, Limited. The thing looks easy enough now; everything looks easy when it is once done; but nobody knows the trouble it gave me in its inception. I took the idea to bed with me, I got up with it in the morning. Everybody I approached told me it was an impossibility. I had to convert them to my way of thinking. The last unconverted person, I believe, was the late Mr. Holyoake. Mr. J. M. Robertson, in his new *History of Freethought*, which I am going to review shortly, has a reference to this matter. He speaks of "the importance of the economic basis" in propaganda, and points out how bequests for Freethought purposes were frustrated by the Blasphemy Laws:—

"And as regards the main source of most religious endowments, bequest by will, freethought is in this country absolutely interdicted from any save circuitous provision. Not till the present President of the National Secular Society discovered that bequests to a registered company escape the old law could any such provision be made."

This shows that Mr. Robertson is fairer-minded than some of his associates. Had he read all that I have written about the Secular Society, Limited, I do not think he would even have used the word "circuitous." There is nothing circuitous in the provision that may be made for Freethought through such an Incorporation. If he reply that such a registered Society is not a Trust, I should rejoice that it is better than a Trust; more direct, more certain, more secure, and, at the same time, more flexible.

Several legacies have already accrued to the Secular Society, Limited—every one of whose Directors, by the way, is a member of the National Secular Society. I may add that the Society is sole residuary legatee under the will of the late Mr. Joseph Townsend, of Southport, who died last September, while I was attending the Paris Congress. Some legacies are payable, and the estate is further chargeable with certain annuities; but the balance of income, and eventually the whole residue of the estate, will accrue to the Secular Society, Limited. I am myself one of the executors, and it would be well, I think, to appoint me so in any will under which the Society is to benefit in the same way, or very materially in any way.

I wish now to deal with a very different subject. From time to time I am requested to attend funerals. Loyal Freethinkers, who have read this journal for many years, and have been members of the party all the time, sometimes turn, quite naturally, to the Editor and President in their hour of trial. But I am sure they will see, when I point it out, how impossible it is for me to accede to such requests except on very rare occasions. I am a very busy man, my work does not get less, and I do not get younger. Twice within the last month I have been asked to attend a funeral in the very north of England. The second request reached me on Sunday morning, the funeral was on Monday afternoon, and to attend it I should have had to travel first of all to London, then all night to the north, and all night back, in order to be at my office on Tuesday morning. Two consecutive nights out of bed are a trying experience, and I am really not able to stand it unless the call is a great one. Moreover, I am under an obligation to bring the *Freethinker* out properly, and this is a duty I cannot think of neglecting. Had I been freer I would have strained a point to carry what comfort I could to the tortured heart of a woman who has lost a beloved daughter in the bloom of her youth and the height of her promise. I bow to a loving mother's heart, especially in its hour of loss and grief, before anything else in the world.

And now I want to say a few words on a very delicate matter. I have more than once stated that the *Freethinker* has improved in circulation during the past eighteen months. This is perfectly true, and the paper would just pay its way (including editorial expenses) if it stood separately. But it is bound up with a rather expensive establishment, which the Freethought Publishing Company is obliged to maintain because of the very nature of its business. There is no security unless we print and publish the *Freethinker* ourselves; at least there is no such security at present. And the result is a deficiency which I have to bear the burden of, for the simple reason that there is no one else to bear

it. My salary as editor of the *Freethinker*, as well as managing director of the Company, is a very modest one, but for a considerable time I have been unable to obtain it. Before the winter season begins I shall have to lay the situation more openly before the Freethought party with a view to improving it financially (which I believe is not difficult) in the immediate future.

In the meantime my friends, and the friends of the *Freethinker*, will be able to estimate the importance of Mr. de Caux's appeal. A complete holiday, with full freedom from work, is a thing I cannot look forward to. I am unable leave the paper for any length of time. But I can still spend a portion of the summer, by weekly instalments, in recuperating my energies for another hard winter's work. It is not merely a holiday, therefore, that Mr. de Caux's appeal aims at; it is a deeper and broader object which all who have read so far will easily understand.

Mr. de Caux's appeal will not be inserted again. It must be known now to all who would be likely to respond; it cannot be allowed to drag along for many weeks.

Only one thing is to be added. A few good Freethinkers have sent small subscriptions, such as five shillings and even half-a-crown, after reading last week's issue of this paper. I raise my hat to these generous souls, but I do not want to take anything from persons as poor as, or poorer than, myself. The appeal is to those who are better off. There are quite enough of such in our party to do what is necessary, and I never yet heard of a man (or woman) who gave in this way and regretted it afterwards. On the contrary, I believe that if well-to-do Freethinkers subscribed more liberally to the cause they would love it all the more, and would come to feel its welfare as bound up with their own.

G. W. FOOTE.

A New History of Freethought.—II.

(Concluded from p. 355.)

THERE are many other omissions in Mr. Benn's book, some of which I will here mention but briefly. His record of people legally punished for blasphemy stops, in what is now the orthodox manner, with the punishment of Mr. Holyoake in 1842. Richard Carlile, with his years of struggle on behalf of free speech, has but the barest mention. James Thomson (B.V.) is noticed on account of his "City of Dreadful Night," but with no mention of his Freethought writings in other directions. The immensely popular movement associated with the name of Charles Bradlaugh is likewise without notice. A very brief notice is given of Bradlaugh's parliamentary struggle, which is somewhat misleading, probably because of its brevity. Mr. Benn states that Bradlaugh carried a Bill by which members who objected to being sworn might affirm. The Bill certainly did this; but it did more than this. It covered all courts of law, coroners' courts, and wherever an oath might be administered. And when Mr. Benn remarks that in this contest "neither the hostile majority nor its victim greatly distinguished themselves for dignity of behavior," one must be permitted to observe that the striking about the contest was that Bradlaugh maintained his dignity throughout the whole of the proceedings in the face of great provocation to the contrary.

Mr. Benn defends the scant notice of Bradlaugh and his not giving any place to his opinions on the grounds that he does not find any addition was made thereby to the "rationalism of Hume and Mill, nor that they have influenced the general trend of English opinion. But this I hold to be an altogether erroneous view. Much might be said on that blessed word "originality," and it might be argued that in a very good sense of the word—that of making every argument he used his own and stamping it with his own individuality—Bradlaugh could even lay some claim to that title. But one would first observe that

the rule that shuts out Bradlaugh would shut out many others dealt with by Mr. Benn—Paine, for example, and many of the Deists. Paine, as is pointed out, added little or nothing to what had gone before. What he did was to set forth in a plain and forcible manner the results arrived at, and to democratise Freethought at once and for ever. Not that Paine's readers were confined to the "lower orders." Mr. Benn points out that Paine's readers were drawn from all classes of society, and mentions the case of Sir James Fitzjames Stephens, who was "much affected by the arguments of Paine," and who ended with a complete rejection of Christianity.

In the next place, one must bear in mind the comparatively large circulation of Bradlaugh's writings, the large number of his admirers throughout the country, and the fact that for years his name was a household word. Now it would be indeed a miracle if under these conditions some influence had not been exerted on English thought, sluggish as it is. In other directions Mr. Benn admits the influence of broad popular movements and the large circulation of certain forms of literature. Of Colenso's work he remarks that "we can hardly suppose that a work of which many thousand copies were sold and eagerly studied left no permanent impression on the beliefs of its readers," and he also points out that the revival of pietism about the middle of the nineteenth century was probably due to a gradual upheaval of the more uneducated and sentimental classes, bringing with them their character and conceptions, and imposing them at last on the highest summits of thought," thus admitting that the "leaders" of thought are affected by the spread of opinion among the mass of the people. And if this holds good of Colenso's writings and of religious popular movements, why not of the writings of other people, and of movements that are not religious? In fact the statement would hold with greater truth of Freethought than of most other things. For, putting on one side that Freethought literature—particularly Freethought journals—circulates in much "higher" quarters than Mr. Benn seems to think, its readers may be fairly said to be drawn from the more thoughtful classes of the community. It does not appeal to a momentary sensation or to the prospect of immediate gain. In the main it makes an appeal to the love of truth, and the type of mind responsive to such an appeal certainly counts for something in the intellectual life of a nation. Of course, those affected by the writings of Bradlaugh and other Freethinkers were hardly likely to express their acknowledgment openly; the views themselves would be sufficiently unpopular without adding to their unpopularity by associating therewith the names of religious and social outlaws.

Mr. Benn makes the mistake of assuming, generally, that thought only works from above downwards, and does not allow for any movement in a contrary direction. But suppose that heretical writings had all been in Latin, or confined within a narrow circle of scholars, does anyone imagine that Freethought would have been anything like so pronounced or so general as it is? Popular agitation could not, of course, produce those results that could only come from profound scholarship or long-pursued scientific investigation. But it has helped to provide the medium in which such results could live once they were established, and so strengthened the hands and made easier the task of investigators. And it is one of the plainest of facts that this popular propaganda has called the attention of many to problems to which they would otherwise have paid little attention, and driven many of the clergy into concessions and admissions such as would never have occurred in its absence. In fact it is only the broadening of the support on which scientists and others may rest that gives their ideas any security of tenure. Ideas and teachings that do not, as it were, find a social environment suitable to them have an unfortunate habit of disappearing.

A section of Mr. Benn's book might also have been devoted to an account of works such as Feuerbach's

Essence of Christianity, Lea's classical *History of Sacerdotal Celibacy*, and Lange's *History of Materialism*. It is true these writers were not English, but neither were Kant, Hegel, Schleiermacher, Comte, and Hegel, whose works are fully and well noticed. It is curious, too, that in dealing with William Smith, author of *Thorndale* and *Gravenhurst*, no mention is made of an important little work on Ethics by the same writer. In this connection we may also note the omission of any notice of Lawrence's *Lectures on Man*, a very outspoken work, and one which, to judge by the replies and references, must have had a wide circle of readers, the author being a very prominent figure in his day. Sir T. C. Morgan's *Sketches of the Philosophy of Life* and *Sketches of the Philosophy of Morals* should likewise have received some mention.

A serious omission in Mr. Benn's book is the failure to supply his readers with an account of the long struggle for the Freedom of the Press, and a connected account of the state of English law on the question of blasphemy. This latter is all the more important as the average Englishman is in a state of deplorable ignorance concerning the nature and operation of the blasphemy laws. It is certain that while the laws controlling newspapers remained unmodified, while they did not affect the promulgation of heresy in other and more expensive forms, they did seriously affect its circulation among the rank and file of the population. Of this long and bitter struggle Mr. C. D. Collet has published a very full and very striking account, and of special interest in view of what has been said above, is his statement that Mr. Bradlaugh's defence in the Court of Exchequer was "the most valuable personal contribution ever made to the liberty of the Press." The blasphemy laws which made it an impossibility—until the formation of the Secular Society Limited—for any one to bequeath money to an avowedly Freethought Society with any certainty of the society ever receiving it, to say nothing of the chances of a criminal prosecution for heresy, have for years seriously hampered the propagation of advanced ideas among the people. And to these one may add the Sunday laws which are in constant operation to the same end, and obstruct propaganda far more than most people imagine. A clear full statement of these facts would have been a valuable contribution both to the history and the future of the movement chronicled by Mr. Benn.

I am loth to close this notice without guarding myself against giving the impression that Mr. Benn's work is one that can be ignored, or for which all Freethinkers should not be thankful. I have laid stress upon its omissions, but it is filled with information that will make it a handy book of reference for all who are interested in the development of Freethought or are animated by a sincere love of truth. Full justice is done to Robert Chambers, the author of the once famous *Vestiges* a work that did its part in making easier the triumph of *The Origin of Species*. There are very full sections dealing with Mill, Comte, and Coleridge, the latter being particularly useful in bringing together that author's opinions on religion, which are scattered throughout his writings. The criticism of Spencer's "Unknowable," that "godsend" to the slipshod religious thinker, is very neatly done and is appraised at its proper value. He is certainly correct in saying that much of what Spencer wrote on this has served to embarrass the position of more consistent thinkers. The Freethought of writers like Browning and Ruskin is also well brought out, as is also the growing scepticism of J. R. Green.

Perhaps the most painful features brought out by Mr. Benn is the amount of insincerity, or at any rate the lack of courage, in English intellectual life. There are numerous instances one might quote; I have space only for a few. The care that Robert Chambers took to hide the authorship of the *Vestiges* is well known. The publishers were, I believe, bound by a penalty of £1,000 not to disclose the author's name. It is not so generally known that Harriet Martineau's harmless book of "Eastern Travel" was

declined by a well-known publishing firm, under clerical pressure, because it suggested a natural origin for the Mosaic religion. It is humiliating, too, to find a man of the rank of Richard Owen while attacking the *Origin of Species* in the *Edinburgh*, and rebuking Darwin for rushing in the face of "the bigoted and unprepared public," privately declaring that he had "no doubt in his own mind of the upward development of species," and referring to spontaneous generation as "morally certain." Sir Charles Lyell, even, could only be brought at dinner parties to disclose heretical opinions that were carefully kept out of his published works. At the side of these instances Lord Broughton's rebuke to Romilly's son that he ought to have proclaimed to the world that his father "was not a Christian" is comparatively mild. Mr. Benn's reference to John Morley "passionately pleading" for Secular Education in 1873, and his account of that gentleman urging the desirability of speaking out plainly about religious beliefs, reads very curiously in the light of Mr. Morley's later career, and his "passionate" silence during the recent education debates. The key is given in Mr. Benn's explanation that Mr. Morley was before all things a politician, and that Radical leaders, "while generally Freethinkers, have habitually kept their opinions to themselves.....in order not to lose the support of Evangelical and Nonconformist voters."

There is little real security for orderly development while such a condition of things continues. While one section of the community imposes a degrading silence as the condition of its support, and others are content to purchase political eminence at such a price, the higher life of the country is bound to suffer. Fortunately for our social health there are men and women who decline to palter with their conscience or suppress what they know to be the truth. Mr. Benn's work contains the record of many such, and in drawing attention to these it may serve in no small measure to encourage others to follow their lead or to emulate their example.

C. COHEN.

Consistency.

IT is a well-known saying of Jeremy Taylor that "we are as water, weak, and of no consistence." Consistency means loyalty to principle, or fidelity to conviction. At bottom, consistency is heroic honesty, dauntless courage, intrepid truthfulness. A consistent man may change his opinions and modify his principles; but whatever these are at any given time, his first endeavor is to do them honor by carrying them into practice at whatever cost. Well may we exclaim, Consistency, thou art a jewel; because consistency, like Christian charity, is a rarity under the sun.

Nothing is more widespread than the belief in liberty, and the boast is often indulged in that Great Britain is the freest country on earth. In reality, however, the British people have no experimental idea of what freedom really is. He who ventures to differ, however slightly, from the prevailing beliefs of his neighbors, soon realises that freedom of thought and speech is nothing but an empty dream. The Church hates Dissent, and, if possible, would speedily suppress it; and Dissent returns the compliment with interest; while the Catholic Church dislikes and would abolish both. The only liberty a politician possesses is the liberty to follow his party. He who outruns or lags behind his party is politically doomed. If a Churchman, who is also a leading Conservative in politics, is asked and promises to take a prominent part at a Free Church function, to what storms of angry protest and denunciation the majority of Free Churchmen give vent. Then when an Atheist turns up, all the Churches forget their differences, and quarrels, and bickerings, and heartily join in the fierce cry, "Crucify him, crucify him." *Theoretically* freedom is universally proclaimed

and belauded; but *practically* it is flagrantly violated on every hand and on every occasion. Consistency is thus non-existent except in imagination.

Take another illustration from the education controversy. On this question Catholics and Churchmen, it must be admitted, are reasonably consistent; but the Nonconformists have thrown consistency to the winds. The fundamental principle of Nonconformity is that the functions of the State are exclusively secular, or that in matters of religion mankind are to bow only to the will of God as expressed through the Church. This is a thoroughly intelligible principle, and early Dissenters were bravely loyal to it. Many of them heroically suffered martyrdom in defence of it. Of this principle Mr. Chamberlain has always been a consistent champion. Long ago he said: "I am an English Nonconformist—bred and born in Dissent—and I am opposed, from honest conviction, to anything in the nature of State interference with or State aid to religion." Of this principle the late Dr. Dale, Mr. Chamberlain's bosom friend, was a valiant supporter. That eminent divine said:—

"We believe that the Churches are charged by Christ with the work of giving religious instruction, and if the Churches neglect their work, if there is not sufficient zeal in the Churches to impel them to do it, if their resources are not equal to it, according to our conviction it is still a grave offence against the appointment of Christ to call the State in to do the work."

Associated with Dr. Dale in this attitude was his close friend, Dr. J. Guinness Rogers, who has never wavered in his allegiance to it to this day. At one time the Congregational Union endorsed the same principle with "almost complete unanimity. In an assembly of about 500 persons, only about twenty hands were held up against it." How different is the Nonconformist attitude to-day. The old principle for which the fathers of Nonconformity suffered and bled and died now lies bleeding on the ground, trampled upon and crushed by its false friends.

Let us carefully examine the position. It must be borne in mind that the Nonconformists still advocate the principle of Disestablishment. They cannot endure the idea of a State Church. In their thousands they still flock to the annual meetings of the Liberation Society and loudly cheer all denunciations of the Establishment and its ministers. "It is the quintessence of injustice," they argue, "to compel us to support a Church in which we do not believe. Moreover, its connection with the State is the Church's spiritual ruin"; and yet these same people who so vehemently condemn the establishment and endowment of religion in the Church, are moving heaven and earth to have their own religion established and endowed in the school. On the one platform they say: "The State should not interfere in any degree whatever with matters of religion"; but on the other they insist upon the teaching of religion in the Government schools. The two voices are utterly irreconcilable; and the inconsistency involved is so profound as to be synonymous with insincerity.

Dr. Guinness Rogers is wise enough to discern the radical inconsistency of his brethren, and he is also courageous enough to condemn it in no sparing terms. The *British Weekly* also has made the same discovery, and now eloquently argues for Secular education. This is how Dr. Robertson Nicoll puts the case:—

"Our first objection to what is called simple Bible teaching by the State is that religious teaching is the business of the Church. Allow the establishment of religion in the school, and you cannot logically deny it in the Church."

The *Freethinker* has been saying the same thing for years, and will continue to say it as long as there is need. But Nonconformists as a body, or rather their official leaders, wilfully close their eyes against the truth.

What is the explanation of this glaring inconsistency of the Nonconformists? Is it fear? Mr. Silvester Horne gives no quarter to the advocates

of Secular Education. This is how he describes them:—

"Some are so convinced that the Bible lesson must mean a party interpretation of religion that they have made up their minds to make that lesson illegal. Others are Secularists in the accepted meaning of the term, and regard this fight as one further step in the destruction of the religious sense of the English people. Others again, and these, if not numerous, are by no means an influential party, are animated by the desire to secure in England what we may call an anti-Protestant settlement."

On reading that passage, Dr. Robertson Nicoll said: "We rub our eyes in amazement. For our own part, we take none of those views." Of course, Dr. Nicoll is a thorough-going Protestant, and he has no sympathy with Secularism "in the accepted meaning of the term"; but he is sufficiently candid to observe that "by simple Bible teaching the vast majority of Nonconformists mean the teaching of simple evangelical truths," and the establishment of this would be equivalent to establishing and endowing Nonconformist religion in the schools.

We share with Dr. Robertson Nicoll the conviction that religious teaching is not the business of the State, and that on no other ground can Nonconformists consistently oppose the establishment of religion in the Church; but we cannot comprehend the position taken up by Mr. Silvester Horne. Is this gentleman really afraid that, in the event of a secular system of education being adopted, religion would gradually disappear from the land? Does he think that the Church is not strong enough to keep religion alive without the direct assistance of the State? Does he admit that religion is not ingrained in human nature, but is a thing that must be acquired by a slow process, like arithmetic or astronomy? If religion is of God, or if man is by nature religious, why should religious teachers be so supremely anxious to secure religious instruction in day-schools? Their very anxiety is a confession of the weakness of their case. Our contention is that the teaching of religion is not the business of the State, and that the State has no moral right to compel citizens to pay for a form of education in which they do not believe.

Now, the Secularist platform is perfectly logical. We do not believe in any religion, and we assert that it is unjust to make us financially responsible for the teaching of any. To our opponents we say: "By all means keep religion alive, if you can; teach it to your children from morning till night; in season and out of season impart full instruction in all its doctrines, but see to it that, in doing so, you do not infringe on the rights of people that differ from you, who are as fully entitled to hold their opinions, without molestation, as yourselves." Secularists have never posed as Passive Resisters. They have always made their protest and paid their money.

"Consistency, thou art a jewel!" Is it consistent to persecute and penalise Secularism? Is it consistent to preach "Love your enemies," and, at the same time, to hate and revile the Atheist? When you discover that your tailor, or your grocer, or your baker is a Secularist, is it consistent with your Christian profession to deprive him of your custom on that account? You may regard such men as your enemies, as the enemies of society, but your Lord and Master tells you to love your enemies and to pray for them, and you show your love by availing yourselves of every opportunity to injure them—is that consistent? "He is an Infidel," you say; and then, forgetting the commandments of your Savior, you pour insult and slander and calumny upon his unfortunate head, and then you kneel down and thank God you are not as the rest of men. O the sad pity and hollow hypocrisy of it all! Yes, consistency is a jewel.

But let us not despair. They who have the truth are on the winning side, however much they may have to suffer meanwhile. Secularists know that they possess the truth, because all they teach is capable of amplest verification. They never seek to transcend

Nature. They always keep within the bounds of the known. A Christian says, "I serve my brother man for God's sake, for Christ's sake, or for heaven's sake," the natural inference being that if there were no God, no Christ, and no heaven, it would not be worth while serving him; but the Secularist says, "I serve my brother man for his own sake, because I love him, and can realise myself only by ministering to him." A Christian says, "I want to be good because God requires it of me"; as if the value of goodness were contingent upon the existence of God; but the Secularist says, "I endeavor to be, and to do, good, because goodness justifies itself and is its own reward, or because there is no genuine happiness in evil." We teach that the difference between good and evil inheres in the constitution of human nature; that morality is a necessity of a happy and prosperous social life, and that the only worthy motive of good conduct is love of humanity. This position is thoroughly logical, and we can hold on to it in life with perfect consistency.

J. T. LLOYD.

Faith and Reason.

HERBERT SPENCER, in his Autobiography, referring to his twentieth year, wrote: "Criticism had not yet shown me how astonishing is the supposition that the Cause from which have arisen thirty millions of suns with their attendant planets, took the form of a man, and made a bargain with Abraham to give him territory in return for allegiance. I had not at that time repudiated the notion of a deity who is pleased with the singing of his praises and angry with the infinitesimal beings he has made when they fail to tell him perpetually of his greatness. It had not become manifest to me how absolutely and immeasurably unjust it would be that for Adam's disobedience (which might have caused a harsh man to discharge his servant) all Adam's guiltless descendants should be damned, with the exception of a relatively few who accepted the 'plan of salvation' which the immense majority never heard of. Nor had I in those days perceived the astounding nature of the creed which offers for profoundest worship a Being who calmly looks on while myriads of his creatures are suffering eternal torments. But, though definite propositions of this kind had not arisen in me, it is probable that the dim consciousness out of which they eventually emerged produced alienation from the established beliefs and observances."

Charles Darwin, concluding his epoch-making work, *The Origin of Species*, published in 1859, wrote: "It is interesting to contemplate a tangled bank, clothed with many plants of many kinds, with birds singing on the bushes, with various insects flitting about, and with worms crawling through the damp earth, and to reflect that these elaborately constructed forms, so different from each other, and dependent upon each other in so complex a manner, have all been produced by laws acting around us. These laws, taken in the largest sense being growth with reproduction; Inheritance which is almost implied by reproduction; Variability from the indirect and direct action of the conditions of life, and from use and disuse: a ratio of increase so high as to lead to a struggle for life, and as a consequence to Natural Selection, entailing divergence of character and the extinction of less-improved forms. Thus from the war of nature, from famine and death, the most exalted object of which we are capable of conceiving, namely, the production of the higher animals, directly follows."

Ethics, not theology, will be the religion of the future. To call the "Church of England" a national Church is to misuse language. It is but a wealthy sect now in a state of chaos—a rabble. Its bishops are handsomely paid, but what do they know of Darwinism? The Church is supposed to propagate the highest truth. Does it do so? No, it lives on lies and legends; and many of the clergy are beginning to realise this. That unconscious humorist the

Bishop of London may stick his head in the sand and smile. But it is not possible to stifle truth indefinitely. And all the ranting *Daily Mail's* in the world cannot prevent evolution of mind, which will enable a deluded people to see through the sophistries of their misguided "leaders." People must learn to face facts as they are. The universe was not made by a sort of glorified Grandfather Christmas worshipable in the form of a gaseous invertebrate (ghosts cannot have much backbone), who looks on with sorrow mixed with anger at the poor fools who are asked to eternally praise him.

Man has developed from lower animals. The acquirement of the power of speech and of accumulating thought has raised him from a grovelling beast to the being we now know. He possesses, or should possess, the faculty of enjoyment, and if he inherits decent health and is given fair-play he will find the present life well worth living. The Theistic conception and the idea of future existence will die out, and the emotion now spent on an imaginary being will be diverted into the race. The period of change may be painful, but it is inevitable, and in the long run humanity will benefit. Morality we cannot dispense with. Man must subdue his passions or they may subdue him. The higher type must strive for the higher morality, and endeavor to do the right apart from any question of reward. There will always be a mental satisfaction resulting from beneficent actions. But philanthropy must be judicious; otherwise evil rather than good may ensue.

It is sheer folly to go on ignoring the real facts as to man's origin, and to teach children to pray and sing to an imaginary juggler; and to delude them with the idea of eternal life is criminal. To declare that it is impossible to teach children to be good without deluding them is to take a very low estimate of human nature. We cannot live on negations, but it is possible to cultivate the best that is inherent or developable in every individual and to subdue the worst. Morality is a developed and developable faculty, liable to perversions and reversions. Individuals are not altogether responsible for their temperaments, but inherited tendencies or peculiarities may be controlled by proper training. Viciousness in children or adults is regrettable, and may result in mental and moral shipwreck. The inculcation of theological dogma does not necessarily prevent impurity. Distinct and definite advice and warning on the part of the parent would be beneficial. Many parents are too reticent in these matters. Physical sin will be more effectually dealt with when the Theistic idea has been eliminated.

J. A. REID.

The fantastic notions which the Christian Church disseminates as to the eternal life of the immortal soul after the dissolution of the body are just as materialistic as the dogma of "the resurrection of the body." In his interesting work on *Religion in the Light of the Darwin Theory*, Savage justly remarks: "It is one of the standing charges of the Church against science that it is materialistic. I must say, in passing, that the whole ecclesiastical doctrine of a future life has always been, and still is, materialism of the purest type. It teaches that the material body shall rise and dwell in a material heaven." To prove this one has only to read impartially some of the sermons and ornate discourses in which the glory of the future life is extolled as the highest good of the Christian, and belief in it is laid down to be the foundation of morality. According to them, all the joys of the most advanced modern civilisation await the pious believer in Paradise, while the "All-loving Father" reserves his eternal fires for the godless materialist.—*Haeckel*.

The dark night has ended and dawn has begun;
Rise, hope of the ages, arise like the sun,
All speech flow to music, all hearts beat as one!

—Whittier.

Every country must be instructed either by *writers or preachers*; but as the number of readers increases, the number of hearers is proportionably diminished, the writer becomes more useful, and the preaching Bonze less necessary. *Goldsmith*.

Acid Drops.

John D. Rockefeller has crossed the Atlantic. He is on a trip, which he can afford to pay for, being worth £100,000,000. We hope he will visit Palestine before he goes home again. Such a good Christian as he is known to be should look up the spot where Jesus Christ said "Blessed be ye poor" and "Woe unto you rich."

The new Cunarder, the biggest and fastest ship afloat, and the newest big battleship, were launched on the same day. The ship destined to commercial purposes was launched in the ordinary way. The ship destined to fighting purposes was launched after a religious ceremony, in which a hired man of God invoked the divine blessing upon her. Thus the old alliance between religion and war-ism continues. We commend the fact to the attention of Freethinkers. Christians also might ponder it with advantage.

The Welsh papers are full of the case of Mrs. Mary Jenkins, of Llangelen, who is said to have been cured of paralysis by the Holy Ghost. They don't tell us why Mrs. Jenkins was singled out for this favor, and why all the other paralytics in Wales are left without divine assistance. It appears that many prayer-meetings were held in Mrs. Jenkins's bedroom. Several men of God, with the valuable co-operation of Mr. Evan Roberts, knelt down by her bedside and wrestled with the Lord on her behalf. Eventually she got up and walked, and the credulous Welsh people cry, "A miracle! a miracle!" They forget, or do not know, that a good deal of paralysis is partly imaginary; and that it is sometimes curable, at least temporarily, by strong excitement. These cures, however, are seldom lasting; and it will be interesting to see how Mrs. Jenkins gets on in another year or two.

Dr. A. T. Evans, who has watched the case, has no belief in the miraculous character of Mrs. Jenkins's recovery. "The woman," he says, "was never paralysed. The vicar's pulpit opinion as to her inability to walk has about as much value as my opinion on an abstruse point in ecclesiastical procedure. Had I met the revivalist Mr. Evan Roberts, previous to his call at her home last year, I could and would have cheerfully helped him to a cheap miracle. I wondered at the time why the sensational feat was not then performed. With the praying and the Eben Fardd doggerel I have nothing to do. To me the whole thing is only a disgusting story of a woman's perverted imagination and her craving for a sensational climax to an imaginary illness. I think it very sad that a clerical gentleman should ask us to 'cast aside for a moment our critical tendencies'—the main feature which distinguishes us from the brute creation, and prevents us from making fools of ourselves."

Rev. J. L. Saywell, of St. Paul's Vicarage, Stanningley, has been tickling the bump of wonder of the readers of the *Yorkshire Post*. "Some eighteen or twenty years ago"—the reverend gentleman is not very precise—he was summoned to the bedside of a dying man. The case was one of acute pneumonia, and the request was that "Mr. Saywell would come at once and anoint him." On the way the benevolent Mr. Saywell bought a phial of olive oil at a chemist's. With this fluid he anointed the sick man's forehead and chest in the name of the Holy Trinity. Fifteen minutes afterwards the patient sat up in bed and asked for a mutton chop. That was "some eighteen or twenty years ago"—and probably beyond present investigation. During the interval the reverend gentleman does not appear to have repeated the performance more than twice, but in each case with "similarly happy results." This fact, however, is very little to his credit. If he can practise so successfully with twopennyworth of olive oil, he ought to be in constant employment. We hope he will place his remarkable services at the command of all his parishioners, and even work the surrounding districts.

Rev. Dr. Barrett, the well-known Congregationalist, has been preaching upon the Reunion of Christendom. "The divisions among Christians in England," he said, "were not only a shame to themselves, but were certainly opposed to the Lord's will, and formed one of the chief obstacles to the extension of his kingdom." This is true enough, but what is the remedy? The reunion of Christendom has been talked about for hundreds of years, and it looks further off to-day than ever. Even if the Protestant sects made up the quarrel—which is a most prodigious "if"—there would still be the Catholic Church to reckon with; and everybody knows that the Catholic Church will never lie down with the Protestants unless they are inside. Dr. Barrett should really tackle something more practical.

Rev. T. L. Sanley, vicar of Moulsham, Essex, has accepted the living of Wellingdale Doe, where he will have under his charge two churches standing in one churchyard. This curious phenomenon is due to the quarrel of two sisters, who each presented the parish with a church. How do they manage to stand each other in heaven?

Rev. John McNeill, Lord Overtoun's "kept" evangelist, has just returned to this country after "completing a successful mission at Malta and Gibraltar." John likes to save souls in safe places. Both at Malta and Gibraltar, too, the people were Christians before he went there. He should have gone on (say) to Constantinople and converted the Turks. Perhaps he was afraid that the Turks might convert him—as they intended to convert Don Juan.

Mr. William Archer saw a large, gilt-edged, and brass-clasped family Bible on Ibsen's table. "You keep this close at hand," he said to the great freethinking dramatist. "Oh, yes," Ibsen replied, "I often read in it—for the sake of the language."

Shelley, who was an Atheist, read the English Bible frequently. The editor of the *Freethinker*, in his humbler way, read the Bible a great deal before he was sent to prison for bringing it "into disbelief and contempt"—that is for telling Christians what was in it. You mustn't suppose that not reading the Bible is the sign of a Freethinker. Nor must you suppose that reading it is the sign of a Christian. The reverse, in both cases, is much nearer the truth.

Dr. Clifford is upset by Mr. Chamberlain's prediction that the Education Bill will not be carried, and that there will be a general election in the spring. The reverend gentleman has been thundering against the fourth clause, but he now says that "he would rather the Bill should pass with the objectionable fourth clause than that this Government should go and another Government come in." Dr. Clifford knows very well that the Nonconformists will never get another such a majority in the House of Commons. Hitherto he has urged his co-religionists to use their power unscrupulously for their own ends. Now he sees the danger signal and advises them to let well alone. He is wiser now, but is he wise in time?

Dr. Clifford is living in a fool's paradise. The poor man fancies that the only people who have a conscience are Nonconformists. He laughs at the Lancashire Churchmen's demonstration in London as a "picnic." Nothing but hard blows will teach him that convictions are not confined to his tribe. And the blows will be given—and we are glad of it; for the religious strife this man is stirring up will not only hasten Secular Education but help on the cause of Secularism.

Christian Socialists, headed by Dr. Lueger, met to the number of three thousand in Vienna on Sunday. These disciples of the "meek and mild" one marched to Palace of the Hungarian Ministry and shouted "Down with Hungary." The Hungarian leaders came to the windows to see what was happening, but immediately withdrew; but some Hungarian servants came forward and spat upon the crowd. That was enough. The Christian Socialists' blood was up. They flung stones and smashed the windows. Whereupon the police came and drove the Christian Socialists away.

A clergyman jumped into the sea from a rowing boat at Weymouth. When rescued he was found to have previously cut his throat. A rope and a pint bottle of spirits of salt were also discovered in his pockets. It was a most determined suicide. In spite of Dr. Torrey, however, there is no evidence that the reverend gentleman had been reading Ingersoll's *Is Suicide a Sin?*

David Gardner, an ex-Baptist minister, is in trouble at Aston for bigamy. According to the evidence in the Police Court he wrote to his first wife: "It is awful to be parted like this, but at any rate we shall be reinstated in Heaven, though I am absent from you for some time to come on earth." And all the time, counsel said, he was arranging to join the other woman.

The *Liverpool Daily Post*, which strongly advocates "Simple Bible Teaching" in the public schools, recently printed the following leaderette:—

"David Mallet, the freethinker, whom Macaulay has described as 'a Scotchman of no literary fame and of infamously famous character,' and who lived in the first half of the eighteenth century, used to express his opinions at his own table without reserve. One day a footman, who had often overheard his master's conversation, bolted with the bulk of

Mallet's silver plate. He was captured, however, by the watch, and Mallet went to the prison to interview him. Having been urged to explain his reasons for so wicked an act, the unfortunate man at last looked up at his employer and said, 'Sir, I had heard you talk so often about the impossibility of a future state, and that after death there was no reward for virtue, or punishment for vice, that I was tempted to commit this robbery.' 'Well, but, you rascal,' said Mallet, 'had you no fear of the gallows?' 'Master,' replied the thief, 'what is that to you if I had a mind to venture that? You had removed my greater terror: why should I fear the less?'

This is probably meant to show the value of religious belief to human society, and what immorality must follow the loss of it. The opening reference to David Mallet is decidedly artful. He was a "freethinker" and also a man of "infamous character"—just as if no Christian had ever been a person of infamous character. But no proof is offered. Macaulay's word is assumed to be sufficient. Neither is it stated in what way Mallet's character was infamous. Yet this is very important, for the word "infamous" is susceptible of many different meanings; indeed, it is one of those general expressions which no one can possibly comprehend without details. There can be little doubt that Mallet's infamy depended to a very large extent upon his scepticism. He was a friend of Bolingbroke's, and undertook the task of publishing that great writer's Philosophical Works, in which the Christian religion is treated as a superstition. And considering the rancor of orthodoxy in those days we should hesitate to believe all that was said against Mallet by the bitter enemies of "infidelity." Gorton, in his *Biographical Dictionary*, felt it necessary to close his notice of Mallet with a hint in this direction. "The religious scepticism," Gorton says, "which he openly avowed, may have assisted to darken the portraits usually given of Mallet; but it is quite obvious that no partiality could have rendered it amiable." Perhaps not; but there is a vast difference between unamiable and infamous.

And now for the story. It seems to us sufficiently ridiculous, and is probably manufactured. Certainly the footman's speech is bookish talk and not the language of his calling. But even if he uttered something like it, his words to the master he had robbed might have been no more than a retort. "Well," he may have meant, "I am a thief, but you ought to be a thief too on your own principles, and I only practise what you taught me." This, of course, is an insolent self-defence; a mere personality. As a pretended argument it is absurd. Morality has nothing whatever to do with a future life. Men have been moral without that belief, and immoral with it; and if the editor of the *Daily Post* does not know this he must be very singularly ignorant. For a man to say that he steals because he does not believe in a future life is to invite laughter. The two things have no logical connection. Stealing is an anti-social act, and is thus a crime whether there be another life or not. On the other hand, thousands of thieves have been religious. Ninety-five per cent. of all the prisoners in our gaols have been Sunday-school scholars. They believe in future rewards and punishments, yet they find their way to prison; while those who do not believe in future rewards and punishments are seldom found in such establishments. On the whole, therefore, our Liverpool contemporary had better try again. It may do better; it could hardly do worse.

At the annual meeting of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association the Leicester lady preacher delivered an address. The Rev. Gertrud von Petzold spoke on the "Service of Woman in the Early Christian Church, and Her Place in the Church of To-Day." "She pointed out," the report says, "that the more definitely the early Christian Church developed itself the stricter were the limits which were put on the activity of women within the fold." This is perfectly true, but it is not new. It has been remarked a thousand times. We have often said it in the *Freethinker*. Lecky said it in his *European Morals*. Principal Donaldson said it in his famous *Contemporary Review* article. Surely the lady preacher might have gone a step further. It would have been more of a novelty to her Unitarian hearers if she had shown how the Bible itself was responsible for the degrading of woman in the Christian Church. How the Old Testament deals with woman is pretty well known. One fact is enough. It lumps her in with the house, the ox, and the ass, as the husband's property—and it does not even put her first in the catalogue. In the New Testament the teachings of Paul are almost those of a woman-hater. He tells women to be silent—which seems to show that he never lived with one; he tells them to be in subjection to their husbands; he informs them that they were made for the men, and not the men for them; he bids them inquire of their sterner halves for all the information they require; and, above all, he suffers them not to teach. The Rev.

Gertrud von Petzold is simply flying in the face of the great Apostle, who was specially converted to supplement the teaching and work of Christ. As for Christ himself, the lady preacher, who is said to adore him, should remember that although he was, apparently, very fond of the society of ladies, he took care not to admit one of them amongst the apostles. From swearing runaway Peter down to purse-bearing treacherous Judas they were all men. On the whole it appears to us that a good deal of superstition still clings about the Leicester lady preacher; otherwise she would go further forward and leave Christianity altogether behind her.

The Unitarian Association passed a most hypocritical and ridiculous resolution on the Education Bill. From the resolution finally brought forward by the Secretary all the reference to "confining the instruction given by teachers on the school staff" was cut away. All the resolution did was to congratulate the Government on passing Clause I, and to "hope that when the Bill left the House of Commons the great principle of the abolition of religious tests upon teachers would be equally triumphant." Many who voted for that resolution must be perfectly aware that religious tests upon teachers cannot be abolished while religious instruction is retained in schools.

The *Daily Chronicle* quotes the following nonsense from an American reverend gentleman named Weber, and apparently with approval, which shows how much information on some topics exists in big newspaper offices:—

"Sunday is without doubt a specific Christian institution. For it is found exclusively among those nations where Christianity is the ruling religion. At first simply a custom of the Church, the State took hold of it and made it a legal holiday. Thus it happens that Sunday is not only observed by members of the Christian Church, but also by those who are outside its pale."

Sunday means "The Sun's Day," which is a literal translation of the name of the day in the Roman Empire before Christianity existed. It was the legal day of rest for labor; it was the day of religious worship and general recreation. Christianity did not invent it, or do anything but appropriate it. The early Christians, who were all poor, and mostly slaves, worshiped on the Sun's Day because that was the day on which their neighbors worshiped. In the same way, Secularists hold meetings on Sunday, because that is the day of assembly for the rest of the population. There is no more originality in the one case than in the other.

Rev. F. Minty, rector of Edlaston, in Derbyshire, was arranging the sacramental vessels on the Communion table when the floor gave way beneath him and fell into a deep vault, the arched roof of which had collapsed. Fortunately the reverend gentleman, instead of trusting to the Lord, jumped clear of the spot before the floor descended. We dare say his belief in special Providence (the only honest Providence) is a little weakened, at least for the time.

"A new commandment I give unto you," said Jesus Christ, "that ye love one another." It was not new, for it was hundreds, and perhaps thousands, of years old; and the Christians have never acted upon it. No only do they hate the "infidels," but they hate each other. And when they happen to be of different colors they hate each other perfectly. Over in America the white Christians "love" the black Christians with a most lively affection. Every now and then they get hold of a black Christian and send him by special train to heaven. This process is called lynching, and is a common sport in some parts of the land which sent us Moody and Sankey, and Torrey and Alexander, and many another troupe of soul-savers. Some two months ago a couple of negroes were hurried off the earth in this way. It was at Springfield, Missouri. The negroes were charged with maltreating a white woman, and evidence was not thought necessary, so the white Christian mob riddled them with bullets and burnt their bodies to ashes. Since then the grand jury has investigated the charges against them, and has decided that the negroes were innocent. We should think better of the white Christians if they carried on such investigations before instead of after the verdict, sentence, and execution.

Now the hot weather is coming along a certain section of the London press has another attack of Piggotry. "The Messiah" and the "Abode of Love" are once more figuring in the newspapers. We are gravely informed that Messiah Pigott has denounced "the lying press," as though that were one of his worst crimes. The *Evening News* actually sent a "representative" to his London residence, but the said representative "could glean no further tidings of 'The Messiah.'" In other words, Pigott would have nothing to do with the busybody—which was quite right. Let us give him credit where we can.

Motoring, bicycling, and anti-Sabbatarianism generally, are responsible, the Bishop of Peterborough says, for the growing difficulty in obtaining Sunday-school teachers. We are glad to hear it.

A Nonconformist "leader," whose name was concealed, wrote to the *Daily News* denouncing the Rev. R. J. Campbell for getting Mr. Balfour to speak at the City Temple bazaar, which is intended to raise funds for the Dr. Parker memorial chapel. Mr. Campbell has also invited Mr. Lloyd George to favor the bazaar in the same way. But that goes for nothing. The hated Mr. Balfour—Bloody Balfour, they used to call him—ought not to be allowed to enter a Nonconformist church. Your average Nonconformist is evidently a politician first and a Christian afterwards.

Murder is a bad thing, whether committed by Monarchists or Anarchists. But it is idle to fancy that execrating the man Morales who threw the bomb at King Alphonso is all that the situation requires. The *Messagero*, a Roman paper, prints the following sensible words:—

"Spain, once rich, great, and powerful, is a country where these tests of good government have been least of all applied; a country ruined by the prejudices and abjection of its people, upon whom presses the slavery of a Jesuitical education which even now stunts the whole country, from the lowest classes to the Court, where the confessor governs, even if he does not reign; a country in which Anarchists of every grade undergo atrocious persecution, reported in the press of every nation. Besides all this, there exists a depth of human misery unspeakable, especially in agricultural districts such as Andalusia."

Spain will have to set her house in order. She must spread education and put down priestcraft.

The bomb-throwing at Madrid and the grounding of the battleship *Montagu* on the rocks of Lundy Island were nearly synchronous. Both, according to the Rev. Charles Sterling, were God's judgment on the Alphonso-Ena marriage and the "unhallowed alliance with a Popish dynasty." Men's gods are their own creations. Mr. Sterling's god is worthy of his creator.

In 1729 a pious Hoxton gardener named Thomas Fairchild died, and left a sum of money for a lecture to be given every Whit-Tuesday on either "The Wonderful Works of God in Creation" or "The Certainty of the Resurrection as Proved by the Changes in the Vegetable Kingdom." The lecture was delivered this year by the Rev. E. H. Pearce, vicar of Christ Church, Newgate-street. We suppose there will always be somebody to do the job while the "consideration" lasts.

The clergy don't preach for a living. Oh dear no! They save sinful souls for the love of God. Yet the Rev. C. E. French, of West Hatch Vicarage, says that: "It is notorious that there is difficulty in getting an adequate supply of suitable men for the needs of the Church, and that one of the obstacles in the way is the great reduction in the income of many benefices."

Vicar French might write better English. There is no need to say "in the way" after "obstacles." Obstacles are *always* in the way. That is what they mean. "Obstacles in the way" are like round circles or three-sided triangles.

The Mayor of Carnarvon recently announced to the Town Council that the Lord Mayor of London, who is a Welshman, would preside at the first meeting of the National Eisteddfod in August, and moved that the corporation present him with an address in honor of his visit. An ardent councillor hoped the address would be in Welsh. "I am afraid," the Mayor replied, "that my knowledge of Welsh is somewhat limited. I can understand a Welsh sermon, and on occasion do a little swearing in Welsh. But that is all." This roused the indignation of an ex-Mayor. "There are no swear-words," said he, "in Welsh, which is the language of Paradise."

It is a curious thing that the smallest nations are the ones who claim that their lingo is talked in heaven. The people of the Basque province of Spain are firmly of opinion that their language is spoken by the angels, and of course by the Holy Trinity as well. The Jews pretend that God conversed with Adam and Eve in Hebrew. St. Jerome and St. Augustine had no doubt of this. Grey, in his notes to Butler's *Hudibras*, mentions the learned Goropius Becanus, who tried to prove that the heavenly language was High Dutch. This idea is referred to in Ben Jonson's *Alchemist*, where Mammon alludes to a treatise penned by Adam, and tells Surly it was written in High Dutch, which proves that "it was the primitive tongue." And it was the same idea that induced

Butler to make the crack-brained hero of his poem wonder, with respect to Eve,

"Whether the Devil tempted her
By a High Dutch interpreter."

Jews, Welshmen, and Dutchmen belong to the little nations. Hence their assurance on this point. They think it ridiculous to suppose that God and the heavenly hosts would condescend to talk Greek, Latin, Italian, French, German, or English. Such languages might be good enough for Plato, and Virgil, and Dante, and Moliere, and Goethe, and Shakespeare, but not for the four-limbed fowl of Paradise.

At the Sweated Industries Exhibition on Saturday, June 9, there was some remarkable speaking. Mr. P. W. Wilson, M.P., declared that the conductors of sweated industries "robbed God." He might have added that God takes it with wonderful serenity. Even the Bible-folding business at twopence an hour this God allows to go on without remonstrance. Bibles—his Bibles—are printed for distribution to the ends of the earth, and English girls are paid twopence an hour for folding the sheets; the pious Bible-distributors not caring a rap how the young women eke out their starvation incomes. Mr. Wilson himself drew attention to this branch of the sweated industries. Why, then, did he mouth the name of God? It would have been more to the point if he had quoted two lines from Swinburne's *Before a Crucifix*:—

"What manhood in that God can be
Who sees their worship, and is dumb?"

Better still if he had reflected that this twopence an hour for Bible-folding, after nearly two thousand years of Christianity, and under the auspices of a body like the British and Foreign Bible Society, is the finest object-lesson that could be concerned in the value of the Book—and the value of its God.

Wesleyans have been holding an eight days' mission in Hyde Park—much to the annoyance of all the other meetings there; for public speaking is not easy with psalm-singing going on in the immediate neighborhood. The peculiarity of this mission was its being continuous. On Sundays it went on from eleven in the morning to half-past nine at night—when we suppose the souls saved were counted for banking the next day. On week-days it went on from three in the afternoon till bedtime. Yet, according to all reports, heaven is as empty as ever.

One of the speakers at the Wesleyan mission was the Rev. Ensor Walters, who spoke from the text, "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ." Of course he isn't. Why should he be? The Gospel of Christ pays; there are heaps of money in it—millions and millions a year. The Gospel of Christ is fashionable—all the people who are anybody patronise it. The Gospel of Christ leads to social distinction—in what other walk of life would men like the Bishop of London, Mr. Campbell, and Dr. Clifford attract so much attention? We dare say Mr. Ensor Walter does better, financially and socially, in the Lord's vineyard than he would do in any other labor market. Why should he be ashamed of the Gospel of Christ?

A Christian Scientist doctor in England is awaiting his trial on a charge of manslaughter. In America the Christian Scientists have just built and dedicated a cathedral church at a cost of £400,000. One side of the Atlantic or the other is mistaken in this matter.

Mr. Keir Hardie told a *Tribune* interviewer that the career of Mr. Richard Seddon was "a striking illustration of the superiority of common sense over intellect." We wish Mr. Keir Hardie would say whether it was common sense or intellect that made him slander his own parents because they were Secularists.

Mr. Seddon's sudden death is reported with the usual decorations. He appears to have said "Oh, mother!" and rested his head on his wife's shoulder and expired. This is developed into "Good-bye, dear, I'm going." Perhaps the religious papers will add "to glory."

Probably the religious press will also play upon Mr. Seddon's farewell telegram to the Prime Minister of Victoria: "Leaving to-night," he said, "for God's own country. Hope Australia become Paradise." "God's own country" was a frequent expression of his for New Zealand. But the pious people will say, "Ah, he must have meant Heaven." We believe he preferred New Zealand to Heaven. Most people would if they had a choice.

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

(Lectures suspended during the Summer.)

To Correspondents.

MORGAN JONES.—Wales going mad over Mrs. Jenkins is a miserable spectacle. The Principality needs something a good deal more drastic than the Education Bill. Thanks for your warm good wishes.

L. JACKSON.—Mr. Foote's *Shadow of the Sword* is out of print. The Humanitarian League will publish a new edition shortly.

BOOKLOVER.—One of the good things that the late Professor Henry Morley did was to edit a cheap reprint of Florio's Montaigne—no doubt the translation that Shakespeare used. Messrs. Routledge & Sons were the publishers, and we believe the volume is still in print. Florio has been included in more than one series since—in the Temple Classics, the World's Library, etc., and there is a dainty pocket selection, with an introduction by Charles Whibley, in the Red Letter Library. But the pioneer credit, in this case, belongs to Professor Morley and Messrs. Routledge.

G. ROLEFFS, one of the Liverpool delegates to the N. S. S. Conference writes:—"I think the delegates and friends of the N. S. S. ought to feel very grateful to our energetic friend, Mr. Partridge, for the splendid way he managed the excursion to Stratford-on-Avon, and looked after the comfort and pleasure of the party. We were all sorry that our President could not be with us." Thanks for cuttings, etc.

A. HEAPE.—Contents noted; thanks.

C. W. STYRING.—See paragraph. Thanks.

WATCHFUL.—We have written a paragraph on the subject. It is not worthy of more attention. Thanks for your trouble.

E. B. (Liverpool).—Retaliation is a very poor policy, but even retaliation should not be inflicted on the wrong people. Some years ago we spoke at a public meeting in Trafalgar-square protesting against the wanton tortures inflicted on Anarchist prisoners in Spain. You can hardly expect us to approve of the wanton tortures that Anarchists choose in turn to inflict on other people. We object to cruelty on both sides—which is fair and honest. And we shall continue to object.

M. BARNARD.—We don't think the book is worth more than a few pence. Swift had been dead half a century before the date you mention.

HAROLD GRAFTON.—Thanks for copy of the *Birmingham Gazette* containing T. H. Aston's letter. We have often corrected this man's lies and nonsense, but he always comes up with them again as fresh as ever. He is too small game to be so often tracked and hunted down. His story about the "infidel lecturer" who collapsed "some time ago" on being asked a question ought to satisfy decent Christians as to the character of the rest of his communication. What he alleges that "Mr. Foote admits" is simply a falsehood—and the fellow knows it as well as we do. If you let him alone he will be unheeded. Birmingham attaches no importance to anything he says.

T. H. ELSTON.—We quite understand, and you deserve great credit for all your honorable efforts in the emergency. Please accept our thanks and best wishes.

G. SCOTT.—By all means attend to your health first. Subject to that condition we shall always be glad to receive your valued contributions. Much pleased to hear of the "continued interest" with which you read our own and our principal contributors' articles, and to note your personal view that "Somehow one does not tire of the *Freethinker* as one often does of other papers." The reason of this, we take it, is that we all have our hearts as well as our heads in the work. The driving power of strong conviction, when any brains at all go with it, is incalculable. That is why, if you will allow us to say so, your own articles always have salt in them.

W. C. SCHWEIZER.—Sorry your business in Ireland prevented your attending the N. S. S. Conference, where you would have been very welcome as president of the Liverpool Branch.

OLD ADMIRER.—There was no room for a front article from our pen last week. But as all the "Acid Drops," "Sugar Plums," and Answers to Correspondents—as well as the five-column annual N. S. S. report—came from our pen, we were not unrepresented. When the late J. M. Wheeler was alive we had an ideal sub-editor. Since his death, in May, 1898, we have had to bear the whole burden, and we sometimes wonder how we have done it. Look at the six columns of "Acid Drops" this week. They took some writing—didn't they?—besides collecting the material.

W. P. BALL.—Many thanks for cuttings.

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

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

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

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

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

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

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

Sugar Plums.

A Greenock correspondent, sending his first quarter's subscription to the *Freethinker*, writes: "I was entirely unaware of your publication until some months ago, when I received one promiscuously from a friend, for which I am now extremely thankful. It opened to me a world of literature I never before thought of entering. I thank you for sending me the *Freethinker*, and must frankly admit that I admire the journal." This should encourage our friends to keep passing the *Freethinker* on to their friends. They can also continue sending us the addresses of persons who might become regular subscribers if the paper were properly introduced to them. We will send a gratis copy post-free to all such addresses for six consecutive weeks.

Mr. Foote has had the pleasure of forwarding another £10 to the Liverpool N. S. S. Branch as a donation through him from Mr. F. Bonte. This makes £40 in all contributed to the Branch in the same way by Mr. Bonte during the present year.

We are indebted to Mr. Cohen for the portion of the N. S. S. report which appears in this week's *Freethinker*. We tender him our thanks.

At the recent Co-operative Congress at Birmingham the following resolution was moved by Mr. J. C. Gray, seconded by Mr. Vivian, M.P., and carried unanimously:—

"That a building bearing the name of the late Mr. G. J. Holyoake be erected as a habitation for the headquarters of the movement, in which facilities may be found for carrying on all kinds of work for the spread of Co-operative ideals as advocated by him; and that a suitable memorial be placed over or around his grave."

As a special fund is to be raised for the purpose the success of this scheme will depend upon the subscriptions to hand during the next twelve months.

Mr. Bottomley's new paper, *John Bull*, is like other papers in this, that it is not to be judged by its first number. First numbers are always tentative, and nearly always disappointing. The following paragraph, under the heading of "The World, the Flesh, and the Devil," seems to show that Mr. Bottomley does not intend to be orthodox:—

"The other day an eminent divine referred to the recent San Francisco disaster as 'a most mysterious act of God.' We trust the Deity appreciates the compliment. Personally, we should have been more disposed to have ascribed it to the Devil!"

In another paragraph there is a lively reference to the 24,437 persons who were in prison on the 28th of March last, of whom there were only 26 of "No Religion." "And Dr. Macnamara and other educational authorities," Mr. Bottomley says, "tell us that our present system of State Schools has worked well during the past thirty years."

DOGS AND MEN.

Of all the beasts that graze the lawn or hunt the forest a dog is the only animal that, leaving his fellows, attempts to cultivate the friendship of man; to man he looks in all his necessities with a speaking eye for assistance; exerts for him all the little service in his power with cheerfulness and pleasure; for him bears famine and fatigue with patience and resignation; no injuries can abate his fidelity, no distress induce him to forsake his benefactor; studious to please, and fearing to offend, he is still an humble steadfast dependant, and in him alone fawning is not flattery. How unkind then to torture this faithful creature who has left the forest to claim the protection of man; how ungrateful a return to the trusty animal for all his services.—*Goldsmith*.

To Freethinkers.

DEAR FRIENDS,—

I am making my annual appeal on behalf of Mr. G. W. FOOTE, President of the National Secular Society, Chairman of the Secular Society, Limited, and Editor of the *Freethinker*.

During the summer, which is now arriving, Mr. Foote should be recuperating his physical energies as far as possible, with a view to another active and fruitful winter campaign. He cannot escape his literary work, but his platform work should be dropped entirely until September.

During this period of partial rest Mr. Foote should not be harassed by want of means, and I am sorry to say that he has little to trust to except the response to this appeal. He is still unable to draw his salary as Editor of the *Freethinker*. Other payments in connection with the paper are duly maintained, but the chief of the enterprise has to go on waiting for a happier prospect of affairs. Those who have read the *Freethinker* during the past year will agree with me, I think, that the financial difficulty has not affected either the quality or the quantity of his writing.

There is one point to which I would draw particular attention before I conclude. It is exactly twenty-five years this month since Mr. Foote started the *Freethinker*. During the whole of that time, with the exception of one year, he has edited the paper himself; and during that one year of absence he was a prisoner for Freethought in Holloway Gaol. I think we ought to remember this quarter of a century of effort in determining the amount of our subscriptions this year.

Subscriptions can be sent to me, or direct to Mr. Foote, at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, London, E.C. Every subscription will be acknowledged by Mr. Foote himself. Trusting that there will be a prompt and generous response to my appeal,

Believe me to be,

Yours faithfully and fraternally,

J. W. de CAUX, J.P.

92 St. Peter's-road, Great Yarmouth.

The Triumphs of Reason.

BY DR. J. E. ROBERTS.

THE great factor in human progress has been the human brain. When Nature domed and rounded the tower of thought, she mutely uttered the prophecy of progress. All that has been achieved in this world is the result of the partnership between the brain and the hand. It is the brain of man that has discovered the world, has weighed the stars in the balance, has unlocked the treasures of the world, and filled the earth with the light of knowledge. It is the brain and the hand of man working in happy union that have made of deserts fertile fields, spanned rivers, penetrated mountains, conquered the sea, subdued the land, "annihilated distance and made a jest of time."

It is the brain and hand of man that has filled the world with poetry, literature, art and song. It is the brain and hand of man that has combated disease, hunted pestilence to the hiding-places where it yeasted and bred, made life livable and the world half-way divine. Not religion has done these things, not altars, nor cathedrals, nor sacrifices, nor ceremonies, nor priests, nor bishops, nor popes. If asked to name a great ecclesiastic of any church or any creed whose name will live forever identified with the progress of the world, right quick, whom would you name? About the only ecclesiastic celebrated for progress and good deeds, whom most of you here would name, is Monsieur Muriel, the Bishop of D—, and he was half an Infidel. But there isn't a school child who can not name astronomers, dis-

coverers, philosophers, inventors, scientists, and poets. Their names are familiar as household words. This is because the world's progress has been led forward by the thinker rather than the worshiper. It has been not the church, not the religionist, but the thinker, and he usually an Infidel. Reason has to a great extent civilised religion. It has shown the absurdity of the Bible; it has rescued from the aspersions of the church the character of God; the Infidel has dared to proclaim that God was not responsible for wars of extermination, for religious persecution, for the destruction of women and men and children and the aged, and the carrying away by the soldiers of the maidens to their camps; the Infidels have rescued the Bible from the disgrace of its sacredness; the Infidel has made man open his eyes and look on the pages of that book, and has shown him that it is simply the story of human life with all its mistakes and wrongs and cruelty and oppressions and crime, and that to hold God responsible for these things is to blaspheme God. The reason of man has rescued religion and rescued the human conception of God. The reason of man has made the doctrine of the vicarious atonement more than an absurdity. It has shown that that doctrine has tended to breed extravagance in sin. The reason of man has made it no longer possible for the moral coward to give his heart to God and his sins to Jesus Christ. The reason of man has at last brought in the day when, in his heart of hearts, every man in earnest knows that there is one law in this universe that cannot be evaded, the law of consequences, that every man in the harvest field of character and destiny must reap as he has sown. The reason of man has made the old doctrine of eternal hell a thing to be laughed at. The preachers themselves no longer take it seriously, because nobody believes it any longer, and just as fast as the preachers are persuaded that people no longer believe things they stop preaching them. Reason has done this, reason and humor and wit. The doctrine of hell has been eliminated.

We are living in a time when reason, armed and equipped, has made conquests and triumphs so vast that we, seeing them too near, do not recognise their magnitude. Within the space of forty, or thirty years, religion has been born again; the church has had a change of heart; the pulpit has lost its stress; the Bible has fangs and claws no longer. The eternal form remains the same, and we do not recognise the change, but the struggle has not been in vain; reason has conquered in the battle of intelligence and Freethought; and the work is not done—this world is yet but half civilised.—*Truthseeker* (New York.)

WEST LONDON.

Crouch'd on the pavement, close by Belgrave Square,
A tramp I saw, ill, moody, and tongue-tied.
A babe was in her arms, and at her side
A girl; their clothes were rags, their feet were bare.
Some laboring men, whose work lay somewhere there,
Pass'd opposite; she touch'd her girl, who hied
Across, and begg'd, and came back satisfied.
The rich she had let pass with frozen stare.
Thought I: "Above her state this spirit towers;
She will not ask of aliens, but of friends,
Of sharers in a common human fate.
She turns from that cold succor, which attends
The unknown little from the unknowing great,
And points us to a better time than ours."

—Matthew Arnold.

Would but some winged Angel ere too late
Arrest the yet unfolded Roll of Fate,
And make the stern Recorder otherwise
Enregister, or quite obliterate!

Oh Love! could you and I with Him conspire
To grasp this sorry Scheme of Things entire,
Would we not shatter it to bits—and then
Re-mould it nearer to the Heart's Desire

—Omar Khayyam (*Fitzgerald's*)

The Making of the Gospels.—I.

UNDER the title given above is now published in book form the substance of six lectures delivered in Manchester Cathedral by the Rev. J. J. Scott, Canon of Manchester. The object of these lectures, as stated in the Preface, is to make known to the Christian world "the results of Biblical criticism, so far as they are accepted by our best English scholars," which include Bishops Lightfoot and Westcott, Dr. Salmon, the present Dean of Westminster, Professor Sanday, Professor Swete, Professor Ramsey, Dr. Plummer, Professor Burkitt, and Mr. Kenyon. We have thus presented in one small volume the latest views of the Gospels held by the great luminaries of the present-day Christian Church. And this being the case I make no apology for calling attention to them and making a few necessary comments thereon.

Lecture I. is an apologetic attempt to place the composition of the Gospels in the first century. Canon Scott commences by saying that "God has given us these Gospels in the form of a book, and therefore he intended us to exercise our faculties upon them, as upon any other historical book: that is, God intended us to criticise them, and to learn about them all that the science of criticism could unfold to us of their history, their composition, their date, and their authority." This statement, I need hardly say, would be considered rank heresy a quarter of a century ago; but, whether "God intended" the Gospels to be criticised or not, they certainly are criticised now, and will continue to be until their true character is fully admitted, and they are recognised by all as merely the record of a great fraud perpetrated by some members of an ignorant and superstitious sect of the second century.

It would be tedious, as well as waste of time, to follow all the lecturer's arguments respecting the probable dates of the Gospels. We know, to begin with, that Greek copies of the four evangels were in use in the days of Irenæus (A.D. 185). It will only be necessary, then, to see how Canon Scott attempts to demonstrate their existence a century prior to that time. Well, in the first place, the Christian Father Tertullian wrote in Latin (and quoted from the Gospels) about the year 200; so there must have been a Latin version—a translation from the Greek—in use in his days. This, of course, is not contested.

Next, says our apologist, a number of Christian martyrs suffered at Carthage "on July 17, in the year 180," and "they apparently had in their possession a copy of the Gospels and of the Epistles of St. Paul. And these *must have been* in Latin." Upon these two assumptions—that the (probably imaginary) Scillitan martyrs had a copy of the Gospels, and that this copy was written in Latin—we are to take it as a matter of history that the old Latin version of the Gospels was in circulation some decades earlier than A.D. 180, say in A.D. 150. The words I have italicised indicate, without further comment, the flimsy character of the evidence advanced. It may also be stated that the date of these alleged martyrdoms is usually placed at A.D. 200.

The next "evidence" for assigning an early date to the Old Latin version is drawn from the account of a persecution of the Churches of Vienne and Lyons (A.D. 177), preserved by Eusebius. "The present Dean of Westminster," we are informed, "has shown that though the letter is written in Greek, yet the New Testament used by the author was the Old Latin, not a Greek, New Testament, and an Old Latin edition akin to the editions used by Tertullian and St. Cyprian." Really! What a clever man "the present Dean of Westminster" must be! Now, were the account of the persecution mentioned full of quotations from the books of the New Testament, and had we for the purpose of comparison a copy of the Old Latin version of about the year 200, it might then be easy to ascertain whether the fact stated is correct. But the Epistle of Vienne and

Lyons in the History of Eusebius, though extending to about fifteen pages, contains only a casual reference, here and there, to matters found in the New Testament; while the earliest MS. of the Old Latin version now extant is of the fourth or fifth century. All that is possible now to do is to compare the Epistle preserved by Eusebius with quotations in the writings of Tertullian and Cyprian (A.D. 200; A.D. 250); that is, supposing one or other of these writers to have quoted the same passages cited in the Epistle. And the probability that they have done so is very small indeed.

Let us look for a moment at the references and quotations in the Epistle. The writer, in most cases, merely makes use of a word or phrase found in the Christian Scriptures. Thus, he speaks of "living water," of "the Paraclete," of "Sons of perdition," of "the marriage garment" of the saints, of "Zacharias," and of "Stephen the perfect martyr." He quotes correctly, according to the Greek text, John xvi. 2, Phil. ii. 6, Rev. xiv. 4, and a portion of Rev. xxii. 11. The only other passages quoted are Luke i. 6 and Acts vii. 20, and in each of these there is only *one word* which differs from the Greek text. It is idle to ask whether Tertullian or Cyprian has cited these two passages. I do not know, and think it very unlikely indeed. The question is of no importance whatever. Two divergent Greek words are insufficient to settle anything, and, at the same time, it is as likely as not that they may be found amongst the countless variations in some of the Greek MSS. I must therefore say again that "the present Dean of Westminster" is a wonderfully clever man. Furthermore, Scrivener in his lectures on the text of the New Testament says of the variations in copies of the Old Latin version collated by Jerome for the purpose of getting a more correct Latin text: "By the time the end of the fourth century was reached, the lack of conformity between the several types of the Old Latin version became a practical inconvenience which was no longer tolerable. 'There are almost as many models as there are copies' exclaims St. Jerome to Pope Damasus in A.D. 384; and for once the facts of the case left no room for Jerome's characteristic habit of exaggeration." And it was from some of these divergent copies our extant Old Latin MSS. were derived.

The third evidential proof advanced for the early date of the Gospels is the mythical *Diatessaron* ascribed to Tatian, "a native of the Euphrates valley" (A.D. 170). This imaginary Harmony of the Gospels, we are told, "was so popular that it was universally used in place of the four Gospels by Syriac-speaking people"; but, unfortunately, "no Syriac copy is at present known to exist, and until comparatively recently the *Diatessaron* was only known through the quotations made from it by the Syrian Fathers." Moreover, "since A.D. 1719 there has been in the Vatican Library an Arabic MS. of the *Diatessaron*, quite unknown and forgotten," which was published in 1888 in Arabic with a Latin translation, and six years later with an English translation. Of this everlastingly adduced "*Diatessaron*," it is only necessary to say that neither of the Harmonies mentioned can be traced to the second century Tatian, whose only work extant—"An Address to the Greeks"—is written, not in Syriac, but in Greek. It is true that Ephraem the Syrian and Aphraates, the latter a Persian bishop (both of the fourth century), wrote commentaries on the Gospels, the text used being of the nature of a Harmony; but whether they arranged the passages themselves—anyone acquainted with the Gospel narratives could so arrange them—or found a Harmony in use ready made, there is no evidence to show. In any case, this fourth century Syriac Harmony cannot be traced back to the heretic Tatian, whose Gospel was not a Harmony at all, but one used by many heretical sects in the second century—"The Gospel according to the Egyptians."

Lastly, coming to the dates of the Gospels, the lecturer without either rhyme or reason states that "the volume of the Gospels must have come into

existence about A.D. 100, or at any rate not much later. And the single Gospels must have been written before that." Finally, with regard to the latter he says: "I suggest to you A.D. 63 or thereabouts for St. Mark, and A.D. 70 for St. Matthew and St. Luke, and A.D. 96 for St. John." The vexed question of the dates being thus satisfactorily settled, it is not in the least surprising to be further told that "It is now absolutely certain that all the four Gospels were written within the possible lifetime of the men whose names they bear." This statement, I have not the slightest doubt, is perfectly true—though not exactly in the sense the lecturer intended. And, since Canon Scott has been so good as to suggest a number of early dates for the composition of the Gospels, I take the liberty of suggesting, with more reason and probability, some later ones. These are the following:—

- A.D. 136—Gospel of Mark—compiled by Mark, the first Gentile bishop of Jerusalem.
- A.D. 145—Gospel of Matthew—compiled by a Jewish Christian named Matthew.
- A.D. 150—Gospel of John—composed by John the presbyter, a friend of Papias.
- A.D. 156—Gospel of Luke—compiled by Luke, a presbyter of Antioch, for the benefit of a distinguished convert, Theophilus, afterwards bishop of the church at Antioch (A.D. 168—181).

Now, I venture to say that the names and dates given above are far more likely to be correct than those suggested by the Canon of Manchester; from which, also, it will be seen that "all the four Gospels were written within the possible lifetime of the men whose names they bear."

ABRACADABRA.

(To be continued.)

National Secular Society's Annual Conference.

(Concluded from page 365.)

THE list of vice-presidents nominated by the Executive being carried, the following new vice-presidents were added:—Mrs. Pegg (Manchester), Mr. Richard Johnson (Manchester), Mr. G. F. H. McCluskey (Plymouth) Mr. W. White (South Shields), and Mr. W. Davey (London).

The election of vice-presidents having been concluded, the Conference proceeded with Motion

7. Election of Auditor. Mr. F. Cottrell was re-elected Auditor for the ensuing year, with Mr. Spence, West Ham.

8. Motion by West Ham Branch:

"That a Treasurer be appointed to the National Secular Society."

Mr. Spence, in moving this, said that it was felt by the Branch he represented, and probably by others, that more confidence would be felt if this Society followed the example of other organisations in appointing a treasurer at each Conference. This having been seconded, the President thought it would help the members if he briefly explained the present position and the position in the past. The Society had for years a treasurer, but owing to the state of English law on the subject money standing in his name was legally his. The result of this was that on the death of the last treasurer his business, good enough while under his superintendence, was wound up, and on a forced realisation was found to yield only a small dividend. In this case the N. S. S. only ranked as ordinary creditor, and suffered with the rest of the creditors. On the treasurer's death, therefore, the Executive resolved that in future its funds should be banked as a sub-account of the Secular Society, Limited, thus securing both a moral and a legal guarantee as to their security. Neither the election of a treasurer nor of trustees could give anything like the same security as was given by the incorporated Society. Mr. Nicholson (West Stanley) said that after hearing the explanation of the President he thought it would be well if the Conference advised other Branches to act in the same manner in such cases when their funds reached any considerable amount. Branches that trusted either to a treasurer or to trustees were exposed to the same dangers, and should guard themselves in the same manner. This being put in the form of an amendment by Mr. Mason (Birmingham) was carried with practical unanimity.

At this point the Conference adjourned for luncheon. On reassembling at 2.30, Motion 9, standing in the name of the Executive,

"That this Conference protests against the establishment of 'Simple Bible Teaching' as the State religion in elementary schools, to be given daily by the ordinary staff at the public cost, and calls upon the Liberal party to revert to its old principle of the neutrality of the State in matters of religion—a principle which is violated by appropriating the money of all citizens to pay for inculcating the religious ideas of a section of the people; and this Conference further declares its opinion that, apart altogether from justice and equal citizenship, it is impossible to bring the educational strife to a peaceful conclusion except by the policy of Secular Education,"

was formally moved by Mr. G. W. Foote. Mr. J. T. Lloyd, in seconding this, pointed out that the motion was really an embodiment of the Secular position in relation to State Education. As Secularists we objected to the endowment of all opinion, even our own. The Nonconformists, too, in supporting "Bible teaching," were false to their own professed principles. There was, moreover, no such thing as simple Bible teaching. Bible teaching meant Christian teaching, and the only way of keeping the Bible in the schools was to teach Christianity at the public expense. The resolution was then put and carried unanimously.

10. Motion by Birmingham Branch:

"That this Conference requests the Executive to take steps to arrange demonstrations in support of Secular Education in the principal towns of England and Wales."

Mr. Whitwell, in moving, said that his Branch was of opinion that just now, while the education question was before the people, great good would be done by a series of demonstrations held in the principal towns and cities in England. Mr. F. A. Davies supported the motion, and felt that they ought not to forego the credit due for having brought Secular Education within reasonable distance. There was, moreover, great danger that unless the N. S. S. did keep the agitation alive some new compromise between the religious bodies might be effected, and thus leave us just where we were. Mr. Lye (Coventry) thought that Secular Education would come more from the logic of events than aught else, and that our hands would be strengthened if we could bring together all those organisations that were in agreement with the policy of Secular Education. He therefore moved, as an addendum, that all such organisations be invited to co-operate with the N. S. S. to that end. This having been agreed to by the mover, the resolution was then carried.

11. Motion by Executive:

"That this Conference calls upon all non-Christians to take advantage of the new Conscience Clause in the Education Bill by withdrawing their children from school until the religious instruction is over and the legal attendance sheets are marked for the secular instruction."

Was carried after a brief discussion.

12. Motion by Executive:

"That steps should be taken by N. S. S. Branches, and by progressive societies generally, to guard against the sinister alliance of the otherwise inter-militant Christian Churches for the purpose of restricting Sunday freedom and suppressing counter-attractions to the various forms of religious worship."

The President formally moved this resolution on behalf of the Executive. Mr. C. Cohen, in seconding, said that it was too often forgotten that the question of Sunday was more than a mere religious or anti-religious one. It was a question that involved grave social and moral issues. It was impossible to make any exact calculation, but when one remembered the long reign of the Puritan Sunday, the fact that by shutting off the people from all rational and enlightening recreation it had condemned them to habits of inactivity or lounging about the streets; then it seemed that more bad habits had been developed by the Christian Sunday than by any other day in the week. There comes now a combined attack being made on the little recreation that was permitted. Much of it had been curtailed during the past few years, and, unfortunately, some of the labor leaders seemed playing the religious game, and so undoing their own work. Mr. Spence (West Ham) said that, while agreeing with the resolution, when he noticed how children were employed on Sunday, he felt a certain sympathy with those who agitated against Sunday labor. Mr. T. Thurlow thought that what we had to do was to kill the superstition of a seventh-day rest, and go in for a fair amount of leisure—one day in five, if possible. Mr. R. Chapman (South Shields) and Mr. C. Pegg (Manchester) pointed out that much good might be done by local effort. Very many of

the Sabbatarian efforts could be checked if people who lived in the locality took a keener interest in the matter, and by interviewing councillors, or by writing to the press, called public attention to what really was being done. Several other speeches were made, and Mr. Cohen, having pointed out that the resolution in no way advocated Sunday labor, but was aimed at preventing the establishment of a puritanical day of rest or of demoralisation, the motion was put to the vote, and carried.

13. Motion by Kingsland Branch :

"That this Conference strongly protests against the exclusion of the *Freethinker* and other Freethought publications from the tables of rate-supported public libraries."

Mr. W. Davey, having proposed this resolution in a neat little speech detailing the unfair treatment of the *Freethinker* in various public institutions, and other speeches having been delivered, Mr. Lye (Coventry) proposed that the *Freethinker* should be supplied by the Executive to all institutions that were willing to receive it. This would secure continuity of supply, whereas, so long as it was supplied by individuals, it might be discontinued at any moment. Both resolution and addendum were then put to the vote, and carried.

14. Motion by Executive :

"That this Conference hails with satisfaction the friendly understanding which now exists between Great Britain and France, and hopes the same friendly understanding will be extended to other countries; and further trusts that the present Parliament will take practical steps to promote and consolidate the principle of international arbitration, in the interest of the peace of the world and the progress of mankind."

On behalf of the Executive this resolution was moved by the President. The motion, he said, was quite in line with the printed objects of the N. S. S., and all the members of that Society would welcome the better understanding that now existed between this country and France. We should all like to see this extended to other nations, as a step towards the humanisation of the world's politics. We could not settle the justice of particular wars, but we could make an appeal to the common sentiments of all people in favor of arbitration and peace; and this appeal could, because of England's incontestable naval superiority, come with better grace from this country than from any other.

15. Motion by Mr. T. J. Thurlow :—

"That this Conference earnestly hopes that the Government, in the exercise of its power of veto in the case of all new legislative enactments by self-governing British dependencies or crown colonies, or in the granting of self-government thereto, will see that the aborigines are justly and humanely treated, and that such treatment is secured to them by statute law."

Mr. Thurlow said that he brought this matter before the Conference because in his opinion it was of great importance to safeguard the interests of those races coming under British influence or control. He did not say that the blacks were as good as the whites, but he did say that England was strong enough to be just, and justice was not done unless the liberties of these people in Natal and elsewhere were guaranteed. After a few remarks from Mr. Davies and Mr. Cohen, the resolution was put to the meeting and adopted.

16. Motion by Mountain Ash Branch :—

"That in view of the reaction against religion caused by the Welsh revival it would be advisable to carry on a strong Freethought propaganda in South Wales, under the management of the N. S. S. Central Executive."

In moving this, Mr. T. Bennet (Mountain Ash) told the Conference what work had been done in the face of extreme difficulties in South Wales, and asked the Society to assist them in carrying on further propaganda. Mr. Lloyd gave his experience in South Wales, and said that the more thoughtful of the Welsh people were so sick of the emotional orgies of the revival that they would welcome a Freethought propaganda in their midst. The President also pointed out that the offer had been made to the South Wales Branch that provided those on the spot would undertake the necessary local arrangements, lecturers would be sent down from London to see what could be done.

The time of the Conference having nearly expired, after the resolution standing in the name of the West Stanley Branch, that the Society should adopt some emblem whereby the members could recognise each other, was carried, the final resolution,

"That the N. S. S. be represented in what manner is possible at the approaching International Freethought Congress in South America."

was adopted without discussion. A few congratulatory words from the President brought the proceedings to a close.

Correspondence.

THE CLERGY AND THE UNEMPLOYED.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—The following correspondence will show you how indifferent at least one of the clergy is to the wants of the unemployed.

JOHN W. WHITE.

"1 Christmas-street, Bristol,
June 4.

To the Rev. H. P. Cronshaw.

DEAR SIR,—On Sunday last you preached in Westminster Abbey; and from a report of your sermon in the *Daily Mail* of this date I quote the following: 'God would break down the world with his hammer as a pavement beneath his feet.'

I have read that the weight of the 'world' is about 6,070 trillions of tons; hence the God who is about to carry out the breakdown has a big contract on hand; and, therefore, would require much manual labor. In this city there are many thousands of men out of employment who would gladly work in the scheme of destruction; and I feel interested in obtaining the men employment.

Kindly answer the following as early as convenient :—

- (a) When does the breaking commence?
- (b) How many men would be required?
- (c) What is the hourly rate of wages?
- (d) Where is the rubbish to be carted?

Yours faithfully,

Stamped envelope enclosed.

JOHN W. WHITE."

"St. Stephen's Vicarage, Westbourne Park, W.
June 5, 1906.

SIR,—I have to acknowledge the receipt of your communication.

Faithfully yours,

H. P. CRONSHAW."

FROM ANIMISM TO ATHEISM.

So far as the rationality of the conception is concerned, it makes no difference whether the universe is conceived to be dominated by one personality or two, by an oligarchy of personalities or by innumerable personalities. All such conceptions rest on the same kind of insecurity. The primitive conceptions are animistic, and all the innumerable forms found among the more evolved races of the earth to-day are differentiations from this original protoplasmic type. There are concatenations of evolving gods, and the saints, seraphs, devils, and deities of civilised folk are the evolved and educated posterity of the spirits of the fastnesses and the ghosts and witches of the night wind. The evolution from animism to polytheism, and from polytheism to monotheism, parallels rudely the evolution of the generalising talent of the human mind. The age of animism, when every individual rock, glen, and event has its own spirit or personality, is the period of particularisation in the human intellect. As the generalising power develops, phenomena are grouped, and instead of conceiving a personality for each object or event, each class has a single superintendent who dominates the phenomena of his particular department. There are superintendents of the sea, fire, war, wine, agriculture, love—gods of the ingleside, gods of the storm, good gods, bad gods, sylvan gods, and so on. This is polytheism. And polytheism, as mind grows more conscious and cosmic, is superseded by a single supreme executive, assisted by the subordinates whom he has evolutionally outstripped. The conception of the universe as a self-sufficient and self-destined mechanism is the sequent of monotheism.—*J. Howard Moore, "Better-World Philosophy," pp. 65-67.*

Obituary.

We deeply regret to have to record the death of Miss Jeannie Wren Hatty, aged twenty-two, a member of the Newcastle-on-Tyne Branch of the National Secular Society. The circumstances are peculiarly sad. Miss Hatty was a very bright girl and had studied apparently beyond her strength. She gained the degree of B.Sc. in her twenty-first year, and died only a brief while after obtaining it. She and her mother were singularly devoted to each other, and the loss to the latter is immeasurable. Fortunately she has two young sons left to comfort her as far as may be, and above all to engage her attention. The funeral took place at Elswick Cemetery on Monday afternoon; Mr. Elstob, the Branch secretary, conducting a Secular Service at the graveside. Many members of the Branch were present, with Mr. R. Chapman and others from South Shields.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, etc.

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

LONDON.

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Fountain): 3.15 and 6.15, F. A. Davies.

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S.: Rushcroft-road, Brixton, 11.30, Ernest Edwin; Brockwell Park, 3.15 and 6, C. Cohen.

CLAPHAM COMMON: 3, A. D. Howell-Smith, B.A., "The Pentateuch."

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (Ridley-road, Dalston): 11.30, Mr. Cohen.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Parliament Hill, Hampstead): 3.15, H. S. Wishart, "Christianity and Atheism"; 6.30, J. Rowney, "God's First Week's Work."

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (The Grove, Stratford): 7, W. J. Ramsey, "Immortality."

COUNTRY.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N. S. S. (Milton Hall, Daulby-street): 7, A. E. Killip, "Marcus Aurelius."

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, Market-place): 7.30, Annual Meeting: Conference Report and Election of Officers.

WEST STANLEY BRANCH N. S. S. (2 William-street, South Moor): 3.30, Andrew White, "People I Have Met."

OUTDOOR.

WIGAN BRANCH N. S. S. (Market Square): Tuesday, June 19, at 7.45, H. Percy Ward, "Bible and Bung."

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