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PRICE TWOPENCE

Principle is a passion for truth.—HAZLITT.

A National Scandal.

THE new Education Bill has practically been carried by the House of Commons. Clause One and Clause Four are decisive of its character. "Extended facilities" for special religious instruction are allowed to the various denominations, at their own expense; but only one form of religious instruction is to be given in the State schools by State teachers at the State's expense, and that is "Simple Bible Teaching."

No definition is to be found of this "Simple Bible Teaching." It is left undefined for various reasons. But the principal reason is that any attempt to define it would set even the Nonconformist Churches by the ears. All these Churches know that their very existence is bound up with the Bible. Formerly they had no hesitation in saying *how* their existence was bound up with it. They had a definite theory about Holy Writ. It was the Word of God. It was absolutely inspired from the first verse of Genesis to the last verse of Revelation. All its statements were true, all its doctrines were vital, and all its commands were binding. There were some differences of interpretation, and upon these the different Nonconformist Churches were founded; but their general view of the Bible was one and the same; and they supported the Blasphemy Laws under which that view was enforced by penalties upon every citizen of Great Britain. To bring the Bible, as they understood it, into disbelief and contempt, was a crime that was punishable—and often punished—with heavy fines and heavier imprisonment. But a change has come over the scene. Science on the one side, and what is called the High Criticism on the other, have rendered the old view of the Bible impossible. It was always impossible to the sceptics, but it is now impossible to Christians themselves. And one of the results of this change is that the theory of inspiration can no longer be stated in language that will bear investigation, or even in language that is strictly intelligible. The Churches agree that the Bible is the Word of God, but *how* it is the Word of God, in *what sense* it is the Word of God, they decline to say—because they know that the attempt is fraught with infinite danger. Hence the new State religion established in the elementary schools by the Evangelical Protestant Churches, through an accidental great majority in the House of Commons, is an undefined and undefinable "Simple Bible Teaching," which will be kept as orthodox as possible, not by any open declaration, but by a tacit understanding between the Educational Authorities and the School Teachers.

"Simple Bible Teaching" has existed, of course, ever since the first Education Act. For thirty-five years it has been in operation under School Boards and their successors under the Act of 1902. But hitherto it was only one form of religious instruction among many, all of which were recognised and paid for by the State, while henceforth it will be the sole form that the State will provide and pay for, and for which it will accept complete responsibility. It is

this fact which radically alters the situation. We have now two forms of established and endowed religion; the religion of the Prayer Book in the Church of England, and the religion of "Simple Bible Teaching" in the public schools. The parsons control the former, and Dissenting preachers will control the other. And the public will be crucified between them.

Children are to be taught "faith and conduct," to use Mr. Birrell's expression in introducing the Education Bill, from the Bible. This is to be done by State law and State teachers at the State's expense. And now comes the national scandal which is referred to in the title of this article. Should the children really take the Bible as their rule of "faith and conduct" they will find themselves liable to pains and penalties. They will be arrested by State policemen, prosecuted by State lawyers, sentenced by State judges, and kept under lock and key by State warders. This may sound odd, but we shall see its truth presently.

One Sunday evening last winter I (for the "we" must be dropped for a moment) sat side by side in a public tramcar with a Christian, and both of us had been in trouble over the Bible. I had "done" twelve months in an English prison for "bringing the Holy Scriptures into disbelief and contempt." He had "done" four months in another English prison for believing and obeying the Holy Scriptures. We shook hands as honest men who had suffered for our convictions; and we agreed, for good reasons, that England was a funny country; for I was a Freethinker and he was one of the Peculiar People, and I had been punished for declaring that the Bible was false, and he had been punished for acting as if it were true.

The name of that honest Christian (no wonder he was *Peculiar*) in the tramcar with me was Thomas George Senior. I did not know him from Adam until he introduced himself, but I had broken a lance in his defence when he was arrested, brow-beaten, and sent to prison by his hypocritical fellow Christians. Some of my readers may remember my Open Letter to Mr. Justice Wills on that occasion. I told his lordship plainly what I thought of the case. I expressed the opinion that the only honest Christian in court during the trial was the prisoner in the dock. And I asserted that his sentence was an infamy, in view of the fact that his plea was that he had obeyed the book which is set up as the Word of God by the law of the land, and that neither the prosecution nor the judge had considered that plea worth discussing.

Now let us get back to the editorial "we"—in connection with another Peculiar People case. It was singular, and we noticed it at the time, that the very morning on which the newspapers reported the carrying of Mr. Birrell's Clause I, by an overwhelming majority they also reported the prosecution of James Cook, of Church-street, Clapham-road, London, on the charge of causing the death of two of his children by refusing them medical attendance in their illness. Such a charge might lead people to fancy that this man had been indifferent to his children's welfare, and that he refused them medical aid either because he did not care what became of them or because he would not put his hand in his pocket for their necessities. But this would be a serious misconception. It was admitted that the

father, and the mother too, had done everything they could for the children except calling in a doctor. The charge against him was really hypocritical. Not calling in a doctor was the negative side of his offence; the positive side of it was acting upon the instructions of the Bible. He should really have been prosecuted (if at all) for imperiling his children's lives by obeying the superstitious commands of Jesus Christ and his reputed brother Saint James.

Let us see what these Peculiar People actually do. First of all they pay Jesus Christ the respect of believing that he meant what he said—which is the last thing that the ordinary professed Christian ever thinks of doing. Well now, amongst the "signs" which Jesus Christ said should "follow them that believe" is this: "They shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover." He did not say that they *might* recover; he said that they *shall* recover; the promise is absolute. If the Catholic priests, Church parsons, and Nonconformist preachers were really of "them that believe" they would be able to show this "sign." And if they are unable to show it, as seems to be the case, they must admit that Jesus Christ was a liar or that they are impostors. So much for the words of the "Savior" himself. The words of Saint James are quite as positive and more explicit.

"Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up."

Nothing could be clearer. These words cannot possibly be misunderstood. The man who wrote them is alleged to have been inspired. His writing is a part of the Bible. Of course it is as much inspired as the rest of the book. Those who doubt the inspiration of this particular passage should state what reason they have for accepting the inspiration of the context. And if the inspiration of James breaks down, what becomes of the inspiration of Peter and Paul, or of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John?

James Cook read what Jesus Christ said, and what Saint James wrote; he had no doubt whatever about its meaning, neither had he any doubt as to the duty he was under of obeying it; accordingly he called in the elders, who anointed his children with oil, and laid hands upon them. That they did not recover was no fault of his. Neither was it any fault of the elders. It was the fault of the Bible which said that they *would* recover.

The Peculiar People say that if a man, a woman, or a child does not recover under this treatment it means that the will of the Lord is otherwise. But this is what all other Christians say in relation to the prayers which are enjoined in the Bible. It is useless, therefore, to urge that the Peculiar People show any special illogicality. Their fellow Christians have certainly no right to throw stones at them.

The plain truth is that James Cook obeyed the Bible. He honestly accepted it as his guide in "faith and conduct." And for doing so he is now a felon in a Christian gaol. We call it a *Christian* gaol because it is in a Christian country, and has a Christian chaplain attached to it, in order that the prisoners may have Christian instruction.

"If I am wrong," he said, before sentence was passed upon him, "the Book is wrong." It was a plain, honest, and manly statement. But the judge took no notice of it. He treated the man as a fool for believing the Bible and a rogue for obeying it.

Mr. Justice Bigham indulged in a little religion on his own account. "It was no answer to a charge of this kind," he told the jury, "for the prisoner to say it was against his religious views to call in medical aid." But what an evasion is this! The prisoner said nothing about his religious views. He appealed to the religious views of the *Bible*—the book which he was taught, probably at a Board school, to regard as the Word of God; the book which he knew to be established as such by the statute and common law of England; the book, on a part of which containing

the very texts he relied upon, he had seen the twelve jurymen sworn to return a true verdict, and the witnesses sworn to tell the truth in their evidence; the book on which the judge himself had been sworn into his judgeship. To talk about an unchallengable quotation from that book as James Cook's peculiar religious views was a miserable mockery. Nor was Mr. Justice Bigham any wiser or more decent in telling the jury, and indirectly the prisoner, that: "All persons were bound to take all reasonable precautions to protect the lives of the children which God had placed in their hands." Reason is all very well in its way, but how can a Christian let it stand against a direct command of the Deity? Besides, the prisoner did take all reasonable precautions short of disobeying that command; he surrounded his children with every loving attention—he even strained a point (as it seems to us) in using a bronchitis kettle. Certainly, if there be a God, he placed those children in James Cook's hands; but just as certainly, according to the teaching in Churches and State schools, as well as according to the law of the land, God placed the Bible in James Cook's hands to instruct him what to do with his children. As an honest Christian he cited that book in justification of what he had done; and the jury, in finding him guilty, recommended him to mercy because he had acted under religious belief. This showed qualms of conscience on their part, for which we are glad to give them credit. But the judge had no such weakness. Like a Jewish gentleman in one of Shakespeare's plays, his motto was, "I stand here for law." Perhaps that was all right in a judge, but his lordship forgot that the law itself was complicated and confused. On one side of James Cook was the judge-made law that fathers must call in doctors to their sick children; on the other side of him was the divine law (printed in a book which ancient as well as modern English law declared to be the Word of God) that fathers must call in the elders to their sick children. James Cook obeyed God. "Nonsense," Mr. Justice Bigham said, "you must obey me." Yet his lordship talked about "God" just as fluently as the prisoner; and we cannot help saying that he shone very poorly in contrast with the man in the dock. Logic, honesty, and courage were on the side of the prisoner. However wrong he may have been from one point of view, he was not wrong as against any other Christian either in the jury-box or on the bench. And it must be said of him that he stood firmly to his position. He preferred suffering to desertion. And it is really refreshing, when so many men live and flourish on Christianity, to meet with one man who is ready to bear pain and disgrace for it. We have some contempt for the jury, we have more contempt for the judge, but we raise our hat to the prisoner.

And now for James Cook's sentence. It was positively atrocious. He could not have been treated worse if he had been the most vulgar and brutal criminal. Mr. Justice Bigham addressed some severe words to him and ended with the curt sentence of "Nine months." Not "I regret to have to sentence you to nine months' imprisonment," nor even "I sentence you to nine months' imprisonment," but just the peremptory and contemptuous two words "Nine months." His lordship might have been more considerate to a dog. And the man before him was a fellow Christian.

"Nine months." The words quickly fall from a judge's lips. They take very much longer to realise. Day after day of weary waiting for liberty and decent existence, week after week of sick disgust and enforced association with the lowest of the low; all the glorious pageant of summer will pass away, autumn with its harvests will come and go, winter will bring its short dark days—shorter and darker in the prison cell, Christmas with its festivities will roll by, and the earth will be bursting out into the beauty of a fresh spring, before James Cook will be able to press another kiss upon the lips of the wife whom he loves, we dare say, as fondly as Mr. Justice Bigham loves his.

We call that sentence upon James Cook a national scandal. It is enough to make the Devil—who is as much a Bible character as God—go into the House of Commons some fine night and shake the walls and roof with inextinguishable laughter. And we could join in the merriment if honest men's liberties, and possibly their lives, were not at stake. As it is we feel angry. We beg to ask Mr. Birrell, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, and all the rest of the Liberal ministry, who are pushing through this Education Bill with its "Simple Bible Teaching," whether they mean to let James Cook rot in gaol for nine months for believing and acting upon that "Simple Bible Teaching." Mr. Birrell places the Bible in the schools (we use his own words) as the rule of "faith and conduct." James Cook accepted it as such. Is he to spend two hundred and seventy-three days in prison in consequence? And will these "Simple Bible Teaching" politicians let him lie there without a protest. We appeal to Mr. Gladstone, the Home Secretary—a Christian and the son of a Christian. What is he going to do? Will he quietly allow a Christian to go through nine months' imprisonment for being a Christian? If so, we must say that Shakespeare was inspired when he made Hamlet describe "a politician" as "one who would circumvent God."

But we have not done yet. We have a word for Dr. Clifford—the "Cromwell of the Passive Resistance movement," the champion of "Simple Bible Teaching." If he raises no protest against this monstrous sentence upon James Cook he will deserve to be branded as the worst hypocrite in England. The only point he has to consider is whether James Cook has obeyed the Bible or not. That is the real issue. But will Dr. Clifford face it? We fear not. He will probably keep silent, and smile—a crafty Nonconformist smile. In that case every intelligent and candid person will know what to think of him. He will write himself down as a trafficker in sacred things, a selfish shuffler, a double-faced clerical huckster who sells one article from the front of his cart and a totally different one from the tail, who knows but one market, wherever he can get his price, and but one policy, the policy that pays.

G. W. FOOTE.

Sidelights on the Education Question.

THE discussion on Mr. Cecil's amendment to Clause 4 of what the Government facetiously call an Education Bill, was the occasion of two pronouncements, neither of which ought to be passed without notice. There was, first of all, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman's plain declaration that the Bill *does* aim at establishing in the schools, and, at the expense of all, religious teaching in the shape of the "common elements of Christianity," which quite clears away all Nonconformist hypocrisies, and justifies the description of the measure as an endowment of one special form of Protestantism. The Prime Minister also affected surprise that this should be objected to by Church of England ministers and expressed amazement that a "prelate of the Church" should have said that Bible teaching was dangerous "unless accompanied by his standards." The amazement was no doubt very effective as a political trick, but a moment's reflection will show that the Bishop was only acting on the principle that governs *all* Christians wherever the Bible is concerned. Mr. Birrell and his leader know full well that if a teacher in school, in giving the Bible lesson, were to tell the pupils the truth about the Bible, he would be immediately brought to book. If he were to tell the pupils what most educated Christians now admit, that its book are anonymous in origin, defective in its science, its history, and its ethics, that its records of miracles and the like are the mistaken readings of nature by unscientific people, or the record of pure myth, he would be ordered to desist, or be discharged. And what does this mean but that the Bible must be taught in

schools according to a standard officially laid down? And if by the standard of one party, why not by that of another? Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman's surprise, and the theatrical declaration that "standards are based on the Bible, not the Bible on standards," is, therefore, pure humbug. And the Prime Minister may as well, to use his own phrase, "stop this fooling," which convinces no one and deceives no one.

The other pronouncement came from Mr. Balfour. He very rightly fastened upon the phrase, "the common elements of Christianity," and twitted the Government with adopting the view that "the local bodies in the country are the people who are qualified to determine that which philosophers and theologians have been searching for in vain through the centuries, and yet which every town council is supposed to be able to understand by the mere light of natural reason." No one who considers the matter impartially can deny the justice of the statement from more than one point of view. No one can dispute that theologians and philosophers have been searching in vain for a form of Christianity that all believers would support, and it is also true that any education act providing for religious instruction will leave the selection of the "true" religion to the officials charged with its administration. The strange thing is that the statement should have been made, not in favor of the State leaving religion severely alone, but in the interests of a special form of Christianity.

Let us note the implications of such an expression. We are told from numberless sources that the permanence of our civilisation depends upon a perpetuation of Christianity. All morality depends upon its acceptance. Education without Christianity is worse than useless—it is dangerous; for, statistics and facts to the contrary, education minus religion involves an increase in criminality. Well, one would imagine that in such a case, dealing with a religion the advantages of which are so obvious, we should at least know what it is that is so valuable, and the disappearance of which would involve so great a disaster. But no, Christians are agreed that morality rests on something—they know not what. Civilisation is dependent upon Christianity, but what Christianity is no one knows. All the better elements of life depend upon something, but what this something is no one knows, no one ever has known, and, presumably, no one ever will know. All are agreed that we cannot do without—something we know not what, and deeply prize—something we are trying to discover. Could anything be more absurd, or more Christian?

Nothing could show more effectively, than such a statement as that of Mr. Balfour's, the worthlessness of the claims put forward on behalf of Christianity. A dispute as to the exact value of Christianity as a factor in civilisation one could appreciate; but an assertion that it is *the* important factor, accompanied by a confession that it has never yet been discovered precisely what Christianity is, is a situation worthy of comic opera. It is, moreover, an admission, conscious or unconscious, that all this agitation is ultimately the anxiety of competing religious corporations to preserve and further their own interests. In the case of lawyers, doctors, and other professions, we admit the operation of class interest and allow for its influence in coming to a judgment. Yet in the case of the clergy, a body with far less public spirit than any other educated class in the community, a large number of people hug the delusion that they are dealing with a body of men animated by nothing but the loftiest of motives.

Mr. Balfour's conclusion from the fact that philosophers and theologians have not been able to agree as to what Christianity is, is that the State should "grant facilities"—which means that the State should pay—for the teaching of all sectarian religion under specified conditions. But the conclusion is by no means inevitable. In the first place, the lengthiness of the dispute and the impossibility of bringing it to a conclusion, suggests that we can appeal to nothing in the nature of fact that is connected

therewith. In other matters, it is true, there is also difference of opinion. But in other matters it is either admitted that it is a mere matter of individual taste or there emerges a constantly growing body of truth to which appeal can be made by all parties. This is obviously the case with science; discussion, no matter how prolonged, is here only the prelude to agreement. But in theology, no such body of truth has ever been, nor is there any probability that it ever will be established. What Christians were quarrelling about generations ago, they are quarrelling about to-day, and to all appearance will continue to do so. There is no agreement even in fundamentals, once we put mere words on one side and search for any definite ideas of which they ought to be the expression.

As with beliefs so with the supposed social value of Christianity. When we are told of the value of Christianity as a social asset, one is warranted in asking, which Christianity? The Roman Catholic form is denounced on this very ground by Protestants, many of them declaring its growth in England to be one of the greatest dangers we have to face. And among Protestants there is exactly the same phenomenon. Dr. Clifford, in a passing spasm of straightforwardness, declared that the education fight was a struggle between Protestantism and Catholicism, and by the latter he meant the Church of England. He and his followers are ever ready to point out how socially oppressive has been, and is, the Episcopal Church. And on the other hand it is the easiest of all things for the Churchman to point out what a heavy load on English life Protestant Puritanism has been. We have, again, an assertion of the incalculable social value of Christianity accompanied by all round denunciations of Christianity in all its forms. One may safely say, in presence of such a spectacle, that in these assertions we are not dealing with statements based upon facts, but merely with extravagant utterances of sectarian fanaticism.

The reasonable conclusion for Mr. Balfour to have drawn would have been that, as Christians never have agreed and never will agree, as England is not in any vital sense of the term a Christian country, the proper policy would be for Parliament to leave religion severely alone. We can agree that where people have failed for centuries local Councils are hardly likely to succeed. But neither is there any reasonable prospect of the House of Commons faring any better at the same task. For there really is not so much difference, after all, between a local Council and the House of Commons. The same type of mind seems to fit both excellently well. And whether Parliament fixes the form of religion that is to be taught, or arrange facilities, at the public expense, for various forms of Christian teaching, it is in either case stepping outside its proper sphere. And, really, if the House of Commons is to vote money for the teaching of religion, it would seem but simple common sense for it to say what kind of religion shall be taught.

But, of course, Mr. Balfour, whatever his private opinion may be, takes no such line. He is fighting for a class, and is loyal to his order. He joins with his political opponents in holding up the Secular Education bogey in order to drive the people into some compromise satisfactory to his religious supporters. It is a game that both sides are playing, but it is a dangerous one withal. For the very prominence of this bogey may defeat the end for which it is displayed. A bogey that one sees or hears occasionally may terrify; but when one sees it continually, sits down with it, so to speak, at every meal, it is apt to lose a great deal of its fearsomeness. And the lavish use both sides are making of Secular Education in order to terrify religious recalcitrants is at least familiarising the general public with it. It is no longer heard of only from the mouths of avowed unbelievers; it is spoken of from platforms and written of in newspapers as a solution that *may* be considered. The people are getting accustomed to the sound of it, and many are begin-

ning to examine it with attention. Many, too, are recognising that it is the only policy that promises ultimate peace, because it is the only policy that serves out equal justice to all. And one day even Christians may discover that honesty is the best policy, and that the path of justice is the path of peace.

C. COHEN.

Delusions.

DR. ABBOTT, as we have noticed, admits the presence and asserts the usefulness of illusion in Religion. His teaching is that illusive beliefs and illusive doctrines are undeniably of high ethical and disciplinary value, and ought, therefore, to be retained even in spite of their falseness. Whatever may be the religious estimate of that teaching, there can be no doubt whatever that common sense is bound to pronounce it terribly unsound and dangerous. Now, if it be granted that Religion bristles with *illusions*, does the statement seem at all incredible that its champions must of necessity entertain many strong *delusions* concerning it? I make such a statement now, and proceed to prove and illustrate it.

Among the beatitudes in the Sermon on the Mount is the following: "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." Asked if these words are true, every Christian boldly answers, "Of course they are." They are read and preached upon from every pulpit in Christendom as containing a priceless gem of truth. And yet historically this beatitude has been the falsest ever uttered; and nowhere has it been less true than in Christendom. Gentle, mild, soft, yielding, pacific, unassuming, humble people have never won in the race of life. However noble and admirable such people may be, they have invariably failed in the mighty struggles of the world. Look at any Christian country under heaven, and I challenge you to honestly affirm that the meek in it are in possession of wealth and power.

The meek are usually poor and unimportant—people of no consequence. In this connection let us take another saying ascribed to Jesus: "Blessed are ye poor, for yours is the kingdom of God." So far as this world is concerned those words are simply not true. Poverty is *not* a state of blessedness, but of misery and suffering and hopelessness. The poor may be meek, but their meekness does not throw the earth into their lap. They never wear crowns or sit in the front seats. Jesus is also reported to have said, "Swear not at all," "Resist not evil," "Give to him that asketh thee," "Love your enemies"—four commandments which Christendom has taken supreme delight in deliberately breaking: it has never even pretended to keep one of them.

Competition is said to be anti-Christian; and yet competition is the rule of the day, not only in commerce and labor, but also in the Christian Churches themselves. Everywhere the strong flourish, and the weak languish and disappear. Religious sects are doing their utmost to cut one another out, as it is abundantly proved just now in connection with the Education Bill. Sectarian rivalry is a notorious fact.

Christianity is called the religion of peace. When the angels came down to sing at Christ's birth, the burden of their song was that henceforth there would be peace on earth and goodwill toward men. The Savior of the world is denominated the Prince of Peace; and the apostles were sent forth to preach "good tidings of peace by Jesus Christ." Well, has Christianity conferred the blessing of peace on the world? As a matter of fact, it has cursed the world by fostering the warlike spirit and setting nation against nation. Indeed, it is on record that the Prince of Peace himself said, perhaps more than once: "Think not that I came to send peace on the earth; I came not to send peace, but a sword"; "I am come to cast fire upon the earth, and what will I if it is already kindled? Think ye that I am come to give peace in the earth? I tell you, Nay; but

rather division" (Matt. x. 34; Luke xii. 49, 51). If Jesus ever spoke in that strain, history has more than fulfilled his prophecy. Christian wars have been more numerous and more disastrous than all other wars. Of all "the nations of the earth, small and great, unequal in size, in strength, and in the capacity of self-assertiveness," it is admitted that "on various pretexts and from differing motives, the stronger crushed the weaker, annexed territory, enslaved peoples, or made them pay tribute. In the Christian era, and in the name of the Prince of Peace, this went on for a long time with as much zest and readiness as in any Pagan era. Last century saw Poland divided among three Empires, two Danish provinces annexed by Prussia, two French districts conquered by Germany, and Madagascar laid hold of by France. Our own Empire has been swelling the whole century by similar means, of which the later acquisitions are Burmah, Transvaal, and the Orange Free State." Such has been the history of Christendom in all ages, in spite of the fact that the Prince of Peace has always been sung as King of kings and Lord of lords.

The question naturally arises, What has Christianity done for the world? What has it done for Great Britain? We pride ourselves on being the very first, the most highly civilised and Christianised, of all living nations: from pulpits and platforms, in newspapers and magazines without number, we are being told continually how great and powerful we are, all others being unworthy of mention in the same breath; and yet we know very well that we are guilty of trampling upon and taking advantage of the weak, of making unjust wars on savage tribes and appropriating their territories. We deliberately stole the Diamond Fields from the Orange Free State, and afterwards, out of very shame, paid a ridiculously inadequate sum for them. And now we are being brought face-to-face with reports of bribes and corruptions, on a gigantic scale, in connection with the late South African war. I do not now refer to these things for the purpose of heaping blame on the British people, but merely in order to show how vain a delusion it is to imagine that Christ has triumphed in our midst. Whatever our country is or is not, nothing is more patent than that it is not Christian. Mr. Garrod tells us that our best qualities are not of Christian but Gothic origin. And yet we are assured that if Christ were taken away from our life, we would lose our most precious possession; but what of Christ have we got? His spirit, someone says. Where? In Parliament, in our law-courts, in our prisons? To no department of our life can an honest person point and say, "There the Sermon on the Mount is lived up to; there the Spirit of Christ prevails."

In the face of facts that cannot be disputed it is impossible to maintain that Christianity is gaining ground. In point of fact, it is steadily losing ground throughout Christendom. In France, Secularism has become the dominant philosophy and the morals of the people are gradually improving. In our own country, the Secularist spirit is permeating the whole of society. The Churches are being abandoned, except those whose pulpits are occupied by men of winsome eloquence and magnetic personality. The mere fact that he is preaching Christ brings no man a crowded audience. Each successive census of Church and Chapel attendance testifies to a marked decrease in the number of worshipers. When we take this fact in conjunction with the further fact, that never before have the Churches made such vigorous and persistent efforts to reach and convert the out-lying masses, it becomes irresistibly evident that the Christian religion is hopelessly impotent. Here again Mr. Garrod comes to our help with the confident assurance that never was the hold of Christianity upon the minds of the youth of this country weaker than it is at present.

Someone may exclaim, "But think of the wonderful conquests which missionaries are making in heathen lands, such as China, India, and the Islands of the Sea." We have thought of those triumphs

and have discovered that they are not one whit more wonderful than the triumphs achieved by some Pagan religions in Great Britain. These latter are never even hinted at in Exeter Hall during the May meetings. Theosophy has made as many converts in this country as Wesleyanism has made in India. The fact is, that Christianity has made no signal conquest for many centuries, and that the obstacles to its success are becoming more formidable every year.

Some labor under the delusion that all good people everywhere are Christians without knowing it. Mr. A. E. Fletcher asserted in the *Clarion*, a few weeks ago, that the best Christians living just now are the Secularists. But such an assertion has absolutely no foundation in fact. Secularists are *not* Christians. They do not recognise the authority of Christ at all. Christ believed in God as Father and in Providence; they believe in neither. Christ believed in heaven and hell beyond the tomb; they do not. Christ taught that no one could be saved without believing in him, or abide in his love without keeping his commandments; Secularists have no more faith in Christ than they have in Confucius or Buddha; while they regard some of his commandments as impracticable and foolish. I repeat, Secularists are *not* Christians, and it is an act of injustice and of theft to claim them as such. Indeed, there is not one genuine Christian on earth to-day; nor has there been throughout the centuries. There are many people who *profess* to be Christians; but their profession is a hollow mockery. "If ye love me," Jesus said, "ye will keep my commandments." Those who would not do his sayings He bluntly called fools. The majority of his precepts are utterly disregarded by all who call themselves by his name; and, according to his own teaching, often repeated, He knows them not as his followers. Bishop McGee, in Christ's own name, pronounced the moral maxims of the Sermon on the Mount impossible. Mr. Garrod does the same to-day. My only point, however, is that people who do not do whatever Christ commands have no right to call themselves Christians. Therefore, all professing Christians, if sincere, are unconscious hypocrites, pretending to be what they are not.

The mission of Secularism is to deliver mankind from the tyranny of their delusions. The knowledge of God is a delusion to be got rid of as quickly as possible. No man living knows that there is a deity. All descriptions of such a being are pure inventions. No one has a right either to affirm or to deny the existence of an infinite Being. For the same reason all who maintain the Divinity of Christ are deluded, because no one knows what Divinity is. They whose one ambition is to insure themselves for the Hereafter are likewise deluded, for immortality is only a dream, a hope, a conjecture, not an ascertained fact. When the world was young, and the darkness of ignorance covered its face, to harbor such delusions was natural and excusable. But in these days of rapidly growing and spreading knowledge, when Nature is opening her heart and telling her secrets, our delusions ought to melt away, leaving us free to commune, undisturbed and undismayed, with our mother, and to live our life unhampered by any supernatural considerations whatsoever. Such is the emancipation for which humanity waits, and more or less consciously longs; and such is the happy consummation, the arrival of which the theologians are doing their utmost to delay as long as possible. But their efforts are doomed to fail, for Science and Nature are in league against them and shall prevail. Already

"The day is breaking in the east
Hurrah, the day is breaking,
From the fevered dream of ages
At last the world is waking!"

J. T. LLOYD.

Duty grows everywhere, like children, like grass.—Emerson.

The Divinity of Jesus.

I WOULD like to know what a man means when he speaks of "the divinity of Jesus." The Unitarians deny that Jesus was God, but say that he was divine. I would like to have somebody explain to me what a divine person is: whether he is a man-god or a god-man; and which part of him is divine and which part human.

To me there is no sense in calling a being in human shape divine. I care not how great, how good, how noble a man may be, his greatness, his goodness, his nobility is human. It is measured by his humanity.

There is too much loose language used by men and women, language which has no legs to stand on. Words do not always stand for things. The word "divine" is not flesh and blood, nor skin and bones. It is the inside of a soap-bubble.

If Jesus was divine, how did he become so? If he was divine, what made him so? What was there about him that showed his divinity?

I hold that everything that has been mentioned as evidence of the so-called divinity of Jesus is but a religious lie; just this and nothing more.

The account of his origin, the narrative of his miracles and the story of his ascension, are all falsehoods, pure and simple. Take away the lies in the four gospels about Jesus, and he is no longer divine.

Jesus is called "the Son of God" by Orthodox Christians, and he himself called God his father, according to the gospel writers. Of course, no one knows who wrote the story of Jesus or whether there is a word of truth in the narrative, but the writer does not say that God was the father of Jesus, although he gives credence to the absurd notion that his mother was "overshadowed by the Holy Ghost." The only way to make Jesus divine or half divine is to prove that God registered as the Holy Ghost when he called upon Mary.

I know of nothing that is divine. Under every label of divinity there will be found a fraud.

If Jesus ever lived it is safe to bet that he was a man. If he had a human mother it is ten to nothing that he had a human father. Gods do not live on earth, even if they live somewhere else.

It is said in support of the dogma of the divinity of Jesus that man could not have wrought the miracles recorded in the gospels, and therefore that Jesus must have had divine power. I admit that man could not have worked the wonders attributed to Jesus, but that is no reason for believing that Jesus was divine. It is more reasonable to believe that Jesus could not do these miracles and that they were big stories told to deceive the ignorant and superstitious.

Christians teach that God is a single Deity, that he was never married, that he had no divine partner, and that his only child was born of a Jewish maid, and still there are persons who pretend to be astonished that so many religious people go wrong. What God does man can imitate. What is godly should be manly. The only way to save the reputation of the Christian's God is to deny the New Testament story of Jesus.

If that is true, God is a character that respectable men and women cannot honor.

L. K. WASHBURN.

—*Truthseeker* (New York.)

I consider theology to be the rhetoric of morals. The mind of this age has fallen away from theology to morals. I conceive it an advance. I suspect that, when the theology was most florid and dogmatic, it was the barbarism of the people, and that, in that very time, the best men also fell away from theology, and rested in morals. I think that all the dogmas rested on morals, and that it is only a question of youth or maturity, of more or less fancy in the recipient; that the stern determination to do justly, to speak the truth, to be chaste and humble, was substantially the same, whether under a self-respect, or under a vow made on the knees at the shrine of Madonna.—*Emerson*.

Acid Drops.

Christianity is making its mark in Egypt, and will no doubt soon have a multitude of Mohammedan converts. The four natives who were condemned to death for the murder of Captain Bull and the attack on other British officers were duly executed on June 28. We will not discuss, at the moment, whether all the blame of that affair was justly attached to the natives; it is their execution we are concerned with at present. A gallows was erected, but that was not enough, there was also a whipping-post. One man was lashed and then hung, and left hanging. Then, in sight of the dangling corpse, another man was lashed and hung. The two others were served in the same way. And while the four bloody corpses were hanging in mid air, a number of other prisoners concerned in the affair were treated to a public flogging. All the condemned men met death calmly, but the flogging drew forth groans and cries from the native onlookers—who were kept at a safe distance by troops posted round the enclosure. Such is Christian civilisation in Egypt—two thousand years after Christ came to save the world with "the gospel of love." What an immense success it has been!

There is a map of London down in one of the London Railway Tubes, with the "places of amusement" marked red. One place marked in this way is Spurgeon's Tabernacle.

David Nelson was committed for trial at Bristol on the charge of wounding his wife with a coal-hammer and attempting suicide in his cell by strangulation. He raved and writhed about so much that several policemen had to carry him from the dock to the cells. The secretary of the Bristol Temperance Federation stated that Nelson was at one time prominently connected with the Socialist movement in Bristol, and had been an infidel preacher, but was converted by Gipsy Smith. This means, of course, that it was not an "infidel" but a "converted infidel" who was in trouble. And we might leave it at that. As a matter of fact, however, we never heard of any "infidel preacher" called Nelson at Bristol. The only "Nelson" we ever heard of in that line was Mr. Wallace Nelson, of Sheffield, who went out to the antipodes some twenty years ago, is still living there, is honorably connected with the Labor movement, and has not been converted to Christianity. We fancy that Gipsy Smith's converted infidel belongs to the same category as Dr. Torrey's. David Nelson and Robert Pitman are both Bristol diamonds.

The dear *Daily News* chronicles the Tory candidate's "lively reception" at Bodmin. He was interrupted all through his speech, and rotten eggs were afterwards thrown at him in his carriage. At a subsequent meeting mud was thrown in his wife's face. We do not gather that our pious contemporary has any strong objection to such proceedings. No doubt the mud and rotten egg slingers are excellent Nonconformists.

We believe in letting every party run its own meetings in its own way. To interfere with them shows a want of elementary civilisation. We cannot help feeling, however, that Mr. Keir Hardie would have been the better for a little sense of humor on Sunday. He was speaking at a Trafalgar-square demonstration in favor of woman suffrage, convened by the very ladies who have made it a policy to create disorder at Liberal meetings, and to cause the utmost personal annoyance to public men who do not happen to share their opinions. Naturally there was disorder at the ladies' demonstration. You cannot go about kicking up a row without occasionally meeting one you don't want. Mr. Keir Hardie, who seems to support Miss Billington and her associates, forgot this; and being a highly religious man—with a great dislike of Secularists, even when they are his own parents—he failed to see the funny side of the situation. Accordingly his language was more vigorous than persuasive. We know he admires the Prophet of Nazareth, but we hope he will not carry his Imitation of Christ too far. The example of the said Prophet on the occasion of his last visit to Jerusalem is more honored in the breach than the observance. We refer especially to his language.

Mr. Justice Bigham, who gave James Cook, one of the Peculiar People, nine months' hard labor, presided at the trial of Dr. Adcock, the Christian Scientist. The jury disagreed, and the case stood over until the next Sessions. His lordship declined to try it again; he said he should return to it with loathing. What a shocking thing for a judge (of all men!) to say while the case is *sub judice*.

Macaulay said there was nothing so ridiculous as the British public in one of its periodical attacks of morality. He had not, however, seen some of the lights of our new halfpenny newspaper world discussing philosophic problems; had he done so he would have seen that there was one other thing at least worthy of honorable mention. The other evening the *Star* devoted a leading article to Father Vaughan's sermons on the sins of the "smart set," and arrived at the conclusion that the moral offences of the fashionable world are entirely due "to the decay of religious belief. The Churches have lost their hold upon the educated classes." Of course the *Star* is a Liberal paper, and the Liberal party is at present under the thumb of the Nonconformists; none the less it is surprising that even a party journalist does not "jib" at so stultifying himself on the altar of political partizanship.

It may be quite true that there has been a decay of religious belief among the "upper" classes, but so has there been with all classes; so that is no special reason for singling out this class for notice on this account. Nor is there anything new in preachers lamenting the "immorality" of the luxuriant classes of society. Such things are only fresh to a certain class of newspaper writers whose chief object appears to be to tickle the palate of sensation-loving readers. Moreover, if the *Star* writer were to pursue his investigations further, he would discover that under Charles II. in England, or under Louis XV. in France, while the "upper classes" still retained their religious beliefs, and were constant attendants at church, their general conduct was anything but admirable. The same holds true of Spain, of Italy, and of Russia. All history bears witness to the fact that profound religious conviction may coexist with almost any form of immorality. And even the *Star* writer admits that the very people whom Father Vaughan is castigating attend his sermons and enjoy them, which certainly looks as though their unbelief was not of a very pronounced character. What the *Star* man should do is to try and discover whether those whose rejection of religious beliefs is reasoned and complete are any worse behaved than the rest of the community. This would be much more scientific than pandering to religious prejudice in so obviously stupid a manner. Nor do we think the writer need travel outside the *Star* office to discover subjects for investigation.

Gertrude Dormer, in a recent letter to the *Saturday Review* in favor of religious education, repeated the "true words" of a Catholic schoolmistress of her acquaintance, which were as follows: "I don't wish to have the cane always in my hand, and what else am I to do, especially with the older boys, if I am not to be allowed to appeal to, and try and develop, their practice of daily religion?" If this lady were a Freethinker, instead of not wishing to have the cane always in her hand, she would wish never to have it there at all. Somehow or other, religion and caning go very well together; and the Bible may be used as the floggor's text-book.

Mr. Ernest Newman, writing in a recent number of the *Speaker* on "The Psychology of Montaigne," quotes the famous old Essayist as saying: "I will go with the best party to the fire, but not into it, if I can help." This is treated as a lack of heroism. But how many men have the right to treat it in that way? Few men would go to the fire, let alone in it. May we ask Mr. Newman if he is quite sure that he would go in it himself?

"The man of faith is always a sunny optimist." So said a preacher whose sermon was reported in Monday's *Daily News*. Maybe he is right—but we shouldn't have thought it. Sunny optimism is not exactly the expression you see on the preachers' faces. We suppose it is a case of "things are not what they seem" again.

Sir Wilfrid Lawson, who has just died at a good old age, was an irrepressible wag. We believe, also, that he was, under the rose, very unorthodox on the subject of religion. He once apologised to a meeting for taking the chair in place of a Bishop who was unable to attend. "No one can regret it more than I do," he said, "for if we had had a Bishop in the chair he could have spoken to you with authority, whereas I can only appeal to your reason."

The Nonconformists who invited Lord Stanley of Alderley to the Caxton Hall Conference must have wished his lordship had been otherwise engaged. Lord Stanley said, in the course of his address: "I think your fault is that you have not had the courage to be true to your own principles. I suppose every one of you has been at some time on a Libera-

tion Society platform. The cardinal principle of that Society is that the State has no call, or duty, or right, or competence to meddle with religious teaching. Yet you are not unwilling to take advantage of a State permission to teach that form of Bible teaching, or fundamental Christianity, whichever you call it, which satisfies you at the public expense; while if somebody goes beyond that you call it an intolerable levying of taxes against your conscience." The quiet contempt underlying the statement was only equalled by its accuracy. And both were sufficiently keen to have cut through even the dense skin of Dr. Clifford, who was one of the preceding speakers.

What a bold man Dr. Macnamara is! Show him that a certain position is sure to secure a sufficient measure of support, and he rushes fearlessly into the fray. But let it be uncertain how a position will be supported, and he is discreetly silent. One need hardly ask which side he will be on; one need only inquire which is the larger side. Thus, in his notes on the Education debates, written for the *Christian World*, his opinions, wherever the balance of Liberal opinion is clear, are very definite. When, however, it comes to Clause VI.—which enacts that a parent need not send a child to school until 9.45, and on which it is not quite clear on which side the majority will rest—he refrains from expressing any opinion. Yet, as an ex-teacher, this is one of the points on which he must have a very definite opinion. But who can expect a politician of "Dr. Mac's" make-up to give an opinion before he knows on which side will be the biggest battalions? Certainly no one who knows the worthy member for Camberwell.

It is somewhat amusing to find Dr. Macnamara, in the same article, regretting the passing of a "contracting out" clause, and lamenting that "nothing I could say" would alter the decision of the Government. Well, why should it? Governments only listen to men who are strong enough to make themselves feared. Other people may be conveniently used as mouthpieces or fuglemen, but they cannot reasonably hope to command the situation.

Mr. Chamberlain got his own back before the closure guillotine fell upon Clause IV. of the Education Bill. It was in reference to Dr. Clifford's habit of calling him "Joey." He calls me by my Christian name, Mr. Chamberlain said, though I have not the pleasure of his acquaintance. It was a hit, a palpable hit. But the reverend gentleman is notoriously thick-skinned.

The Christian Powers of Europe (Turkey was not in the deal) mapped out the Congo State in Africa, and placed it under the sovereignty of King Leopold of Belgium. Under his rule the country has been turned into a hell—and the Christian Powers haven't the humanity to lift a finger in aid of the poor downtrodden, tortured, and murdered natives. Some of the horrible tales of cruelty that reach us from the Congo State make the flesh creep and are really unprintable. But here is one that was recently printed in the *Daily News* on the authority of the Rev. Dr. Nassau, an American missionary:—

"For some trivial fault a certain officer took a dislike to one of his wives, a mere girl, and proceeded to wreak his vengeance upon her in a particularly revolting manner.

He instructed his black soldiers to seize her and tie her to a stake. Then he advanced, bearing in his hand a stout whip of hippopotamus hide, similar to the ones I have brought home. Raising the whip, he brought the cruel lash down on her unprotected body, causing welts. The victim writhed with agony, but her suffering only added flame to the man's lust for torture. Again and again the heavy lash swirled through the air and fell across her flesh, until she was cut in a hundred places.

But even then she was not released. Night approached, and still the girl hung to the stake in a frightful condition. Death did not come then to ease her suffering, and so through the night she remained there in a torment words cannot describe.

In the morning the white officer surveyed his work, and finding that the vital spark still flickered faintly, he ordered honey to be smeared all over her wounds, and she was left in the fierce glare of the tropical sun.

Soon the scent of the honey attracted myriads of insects, which settled on her in droves. Ants swarmed over her, pestiferous insects fought for room on her body, while the sun streamed down and the young woman suffered worse than death.

When the second night fell the officer tired of prolonging the ordeal, and seizing a whip he beat her to death."

Suppose this story had been told of some brutal Pagan who lived two thousand years ago. How the Christians would have pointed to it as a sample of what Christianity came to abolish! But this story is told of a Christian officer under his most Christian Majesty the King of the Belgians, and

such things go on every day in Congoland now—in the nineteen hundred and sixth year of Christ.

Here is the latest (*Tribune*) report of the massacre of the Jews at Bielostok:—

"The cruel methods of murder employed surpass human imagination. A Jewish teacher named Einstein, with his wife, two grown sons, and a young daughter, were dragged out of their house into the courtyard, where iron nails were driven through their eyes and skulls. Six small children of Einstein remained in the house and are still alive, the youngest being ten months old. In one street two girls were dragged down from a garret, outraged, and disembowelled. A saw-mill belonging to a Jew, in which several Jewish families with children had sought refuge, was surrounded by soldiers and police and set on fire. Those who tried to escape were shot, and so all perished. One corpse was found impaled on a long stick passing through the throat. Another was crucified. A mother with a little baby at her breast was pierced by a knife, together with her child. Children had their limbs torn off; women their breasts cut off. Many corpses were horribly battered. Others bore as many as twenty bayonet wounds."

All this was the work of Christians.

"Doth Job fear God for nought?" Satan asked the Lord a long while ago. He may have asked the same question lately in reference to Old Dowie.

The financial inquiry at Zion City shows that Old Dowie has drawn some £16,000 a year for himself. Evidently the Prophet business pays well—while it lasts.

More poor Jesusites! Rev. Robert Elmhurst of Farnham Lodge, Knaresborough, Yorks, vicar of Brearton, left estate valued at £15,240. Rev. W. Wynne Wilson, of Oxford, late rector of Hanborough, left estate valued at £18,156. "Blessed be ye poor!"

A Catholic priest, who perhaps never washed himself, and did not know what he looked like naked, went into the Dresden Fine Art Gallery and mutilated a lot of statues on the ground of their nudity. He was ordered to pay a fine of 200 marks or to do 20 days' imprisonment. Henceforth he should wear a badge so that he might be kept on the outside of art institutions.

John Stanbridge, aged fifty-two, a clergyman, has been sentenced at the Leicestershire Assizes to two years' imprisonment with hard labor for acts of gross indecency with certain male persons. How is it that men of God so frequently get into this sort of trouble?

June ended with a heavy storm on the Continent as well as in England. Berlin was flooded, several persons were killed or injured by lightning, and many fires were caused. In Spain great damage was done, and many farmers and wine growers are ruined. Enormous destruction is reported throughout France, the grain crops being practically destroyed in some places. Good old "Providence." "He doeth all things well" and "His tender mercies are over all his works."

Russian peasants in the province of Kursk are reported to be destroying the forests and stealing cattle on a large scale. Their watchword is "The Land is the Lord's." Of course they believe that they are the Lord's too. The Lord's land and the Lord's people are to settle down together. Which shows that the peasants can play the profitable game of piety as well as princes and peers.

Prince Frederick Bailey, a black man, and the Rev. Hugh Lloyd Jones, of Bootle, were charged at Liverpool, the former with begging and the latter with aiding and abetting. Funds were collected for the Bootle branch of the United Christians, which appears to have been a body of very questionable value. Bailey was discharged and the summons against Jones was withdrawn; but the Stipendiary remarked that "the great object was obtained by the publicity which would be given to the proceedings." This was sufficiently significant.

New York has been excited over the case of Harry Morton, a policeman, who belonged to what is called the "vice squad" and levied blackmail on disorderly women. Morton was sentenced to twelve months' imprisonment. He would have got more, but he had the gumption to let the prison missionary convert him while he was under arrest.

A truly pious defence of Sunday trading, as far as regards lollipops, was offered by Mr. James Kendall, of Manchester,

before the Parliamentary Committee. It had been suggested, he said, that the confectioners' shops were necessary in the interest of the churches, because people could not go to church without toffee to get through the sermon. There were even parsons who could not preach without it. Evidently a very profound religious interest is affected. Perhaps we shall yet see toffee-stalls in church porches.

Mr. Bernard Shaw is too good a man to be wasted. But is he not in danger of becoming an imitation of a well-known Hungarian publicist who lately lectured "swagger" ladies at Claridge's? Mr. Shaw recently lectured for the Research Committee of the Christian Social Union at Caxton Hall. The seats were 5s. and 2s. 6d., and the Hall was crowded with fashionably-dressed ladies, only a very few men being present. We suppose Mr. Shaw had hopes of turning these social parasites into social reformers—which shows how little he understands them. He flattered them by telling them that women had much more courage than men, and that men were all cowards—presumably including himself. It really seems that the "hupper suckles" are spoiling Mr. Shaw. They find him amusing—until they discover a new entertainer. Which is all a very great pity; for Mr. Shaw, although not Shakespeare's superior, is a man of intellect and wit, who has done good service to the cause of freedom and progress, and may do even more if he only avoids frittering away his time and powers in mistaken directions.

Dr. Horton has made the discovery that the congregation of Lyndhurst-road Chapel find his sermons too long, and stayed away as a result. So the other Sunday the preacher promised the congregation that his sermon should not exceed thirty minutes in length. He also explained that the preacher was but an imperfect instrument of the Lord, a fact that the congregation seems to have already realised.

Torrey and Alexander have been busy in Atlanta City, U.S.A. According to a religious paper they have converted a number of persons "holding high political stations"—names, as usual, not given. The black population of Atlanta numbers 50,000, but these were neither invited nor expected to attend. In fact, the Mission Committee declined to make any arrangement for their attendance; and it is, of course, well known that black Christians must not foregather at the same time as white believers. They are all children of the same Heavenly Father, but the white brother resents his colored relation pushing the connexion too closely.

"One thing befalleth them," as the Bible says. When it comes to accidents a church is no more sacred than a gambling hell or a brothel. On Sunday morning the ceiling of the Catholic church at Dungan, Roscommon, fell in during the celebration of Mass. Some forty persons had to be taken to the Infirmary, and some of them are in a precarious condition. In view of this disaster the Christians should explain where "Providence" comes in.

Rev. J. H. Champion, vicar of Isleworth, is in trouble. He went into the Free Library and picked up a magazine in which he was shocked to find an article that treated the Gospels as an allegory. In the name of the Lord he immediately ordered its removal, and, on the assistant librarian's refusing to comply, the indignant man of God threw it into the fire. Unfortunately the Library Committee did not recognise the reverend gentleman's right to destroy their property in this way. They have called upon him to apologise and make reparation, otherwise they will take proceedings against him. How the poor servants of the Lord are persecuted!

Outside a church door in a Surrey village it was announced that: "The Rev. E. T.— will preach his farowell sermon on Sunday next. The choir will render an anthem of joy and thanksgiving, specially composed for the occasion."

Dr. Hazel, M.P., has been talking in the Birmingham Town Hall on Agnosticism. He severely denounced those who would not believe what they could not understand. We dare say that Dr. Hazel, M.P., understands nothing that he believes—and we suppose that is why he believes it.

WHAT'S THE USE?

"Do you say your prayers in the morning or at night?" asked Ted.

"At night, of course," answered Bob. "Anybody can take care of themselves in the daytime."

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

(Lectures suspended during the Summer.)

To Correspondents.

- C. COHEN'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—July 8, a. and e., Victoria Park; 22, a. and e., Victoria Park; 29, a. and e., Brockwell Park.
- A. B. TAYLOR.—The Shakespeare passage you refer to occurs in the third scene of the fourth act of *Julius Caesar*, and is placed in the mouth of Brutus.
- “There is a tide in the affairs of men,
Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune;
Omitted, all the voyage of their life
Is bound in shallows and in miseries.”
- We do not know the source of the other quotation.
- GWYNEDD LE GALLIENNE.—Shall be sent as requested.
- C. E. GOUGH.—Bishop Watson's *Apology for the Bible* was one of the many contemporary replies to Paine's *Age of Reason*. It is of no value at all now, although copies are still to be met with on second-hand bookstalls. Your Christian friend, who speaks of it as unanswerable, has probably never read it. Ask him point-blank if he has? He is just as accurate in saying that “Charles Darwin was very sorry for what he had done.” Very sorry for what? The other point is too silly for attention. You appear to have got hold of a prize fool.
- R. Y. FRENCH.—George Meredith's last volume of verse, *A Reading of Life*, was published 1901. The edition of the collected “Poems” in two volumes is not complete, although it is well worth your money, as it contains the great bulk of his poetry. Why a really complete edition of George Meredith's poems is not obtainable passes our comprehension.
- W. P. MURRAY writes: “You must feel gratified at the way some of your supporters have replied. It was quite a treat for me to read some of the extracts from letters. The thoughts expressed therein correspond to mine, and no doubt represent the feelings of thousands of others.”
- Y. M. M.—May your good wishes be realised.
- REGRETFUL SOCIALIST.—An excellent letter, but it would be more appropriate in (say) the *Clarion* than in the *Freethinker*. We think you will understand this on second thoughts. We could not very well find space in a journal like ours for discussing the policy of Miss Billington and her Amazons.
- G. S. ROBINSON.—Pleased to receive your congratulations on our “turning out such a splendid weekly,” and glad to hear that the Welsh revival is turning many minds towards Freethought. Thanks for your good wishes.
- M. W. PARKIN.—We noticed the matter of the cutting you sent us a few weeks ago. The address of the secretary of the Hetton-le-Hole Branch is, A Notley, 1 Minor-street, Hetton Down.
- R. WALLIS.—Thanks.
- J. BLUNDELL.—Shall be sent as requested.
- RIDGWAY FUND.—George Jacob 5s.
- W. P. BALL.—Glad to have your useful cuttings.
- GEORGE JACOB, subscribing to the Ridgway Fund, says: “I think every reader of the *Freethinker* might spare a trifle for our aged friend.”
- T. WILLIAMS.—The “Protevangelion” is one of the books contained in Hone's *Apocryphal New Testament*, which can be obtained at our publishing office, as previously stated.
- J. O. BATES.—See “Sugar Plums.” Best thanks.
- J. P.—The order you mention in Deuteronomy about selling bad meat to the “alien” only applies to the Jews. The Chicago packers don't seem to belong to the “holy people.” Still, as you say, the text gives a certain ethical warrant to their bad practices.
- W. A. HOLROYD.—Pleased to hear that you regard as the best friend you ever had the veteran Freethinker, John Wildman, of Nelson, who introduced you to this journal fifteen years ago; also that you have never missed a copy since nor left an article unread. Few journals, we believe, have such a strongly attached body of readers as the *Freethinker* has.
- INDEPENDENT THINKER.—We inserted Mr. Pack's letter, and we think that was enough on the subject. Freethought has nothing to gain by the constant advertisement of the reverend lecturer you refer to. If his bigotry goes further than words, and leads to active persecution, we should, of course, be prepared to deal with the case immediately.
- E. J. S.—Thanks for good wishes. We haven't heard anything of the matter you refer to. Of course it must be public property before we could venture to deal with it. But let us know if you hear anything further.
- T. TBELOW.—That is the right way to look at it. Progress cannot be seen by constant watching, any more than the growth of a tree; it can only be seen by comparing the state of things before and after long intervals of time.
- ALCHEM.—Thanks for cuttings.
- BISHOP OF IPSWICH.—So your mind goes back to that breakfast at the Hall of Science on the morning of our release from Holloway Gaol, when we announced that we would go on doing the very thing we were imprisoned for; and you admit that we kept our promise—and more. Well, we meant it, anyhow.

J. CHEALE.—You haven't noticed how time flies. Judge North's sentence upon us was passed, not eighteen, but twenty-three years and four months ago.

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.

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Sugar Plums.

We forwarded Mr. J. W. de Caux advance proofs of our last week's article on “A Yarmouth Comedy” and he managed to get it inserted in full in both the local papers, the *Mercury* and the *Independent*. This shows that intellectual hospitality is spreading. We congratulate both the Yarmouth papers on their sense of fair play.

The *Mercury* refers to the bribery business again in its editorial notes. We do not wish, however, to continue the discussion. But we cannot help remarking that our contemporary bestows nearly all its indignation upon the poor voters who *take* bribes. The richer candidates for public places who *offer* the bribes are let off very lightly. It reminds us of Lear's exclamation:—

“Through tatter'd clothes small vices do appear;
Robes and furr'd gowns hid all. Plate sin with gold,
And the strong lance of justice hurtless breaks;
Arm it in rags, a pigmy's straw does pierce it.”

We ought to mention that the *Yarmouth Mercury* also inserts a capital letter, written in an effective satiric vein, by Mr. A. H. Smith, a member of the Committee of the East Anglian Agnostic Association that issued the “bribery” placard. Mr. Smith excels in this kind of composition. We only fear that his sarcasm is too fine for many of the natives; but that is not his fault, it is theirs—or perhaps we should say their misfortune.

Clause VI. of the Education Bill was carried on Monday night by the relatively small but practically sufficient majority of 47—the vote being 294 to 247. It was amusing to watch the bitter way in which it was opposed by Catholics and Churchmen—Messrs. Dillon, W. Redmond, Paul, etc.—who had been talking for weeks about the sacred right of the parents to control the religious education of the children. We are glad that Mr. J. M. Robertson found something to say at last, for we were wondering whether he would say anything at all in favor of Secular Education. The parliamentary reports give no idea of his speech on Monday night, but we extract the following from the descriptive sketch in the *Tribune*:—

“Mr. Robertson argued that if parents were so desirous of religious instruction for their children as the Opposition represented them to be, they would send their children to the lessons in religion, whether attendance was compulsory or voluntary. Strongly deprecating the confessions of faith which are constantly being made in the House of Commons in these days, Mr. Robertson remarked that, after all, if Lord Robert Cecil and Mr. Masterman had been born in a Mohammedan country they would have been devout Moslems. Even Mr. Murray Macdonald had been carried away by the prevailing emotionalism into giving himself ‘a certificate of spirituality.’ ‘Let us,’ appealed Mr. Robertson, ‘remember that we are here as politicians.’”

This is in the right vein, and we wish Mr. Robertson had read the House this lesson earlier. It was much needed.

Parents will now be free to send their children to school when the religious lessons are over—say at 9.45 instead of 9 in the morning. Children will not be withdrawn from religious instruction and marked out at school for odium, insult, or even outrage. The arguments of the compulsory pietists against this act of justice need not be considered any further. But there is something very foolish in an objection that was raised on other grounds. It was argued that children would be put to do odd domestic jobs by their mothers. And why not? Is the right of a child to do absolutely nothing that is useful so very sacred? And are poor mothers never to have the slightest assistance from the children within their own homes? Such a notion seems to us simply monstrous, and a degradation of the idea of education. We rejoice for all reasons that Clause VI. is carried—

in spite of the Government's weakly giving way on the only Liberal clause in the Bill.

Mr. J. O. Bates, of the Health Stores, Saintbridge, Gloucester, assures us that he has just seen the *Freethinker* on Messrs. W. H. Smith & Son's list of Thursday publications, and adds that he has been offered the paper by local news-agents and also at the railway bookstall. We are glad to hear it, and we think it is high time that the ridiculous boycott of the *Freethinker* were dropped all round. Mr. Bates says that this journal is marked on Smith's list, with many more, as "not returnable," but this is a mistake, for the *Freethinker* has always been supplied to the trade on "sale or return."

Mrs. A. W. Hutton, of Newcastle-on-Tyne, the death of whose bright and promising young daughter we had the pain to record recently, writes us a very touching letter. "I am re-reading your letter," she says, "to try and gain fresh courage from it. If my little girl could read it she would bless you for those kind words to her broken-hearted mother." Then come some personal sentences that we ought not to print. "Will you," Mrs. Hutton concludes, "in your paper thank all Freethinkers for the great sympathy and respect they have shown me and my sons in this great trouble?"

The Women's National Liberal Association Conference considered the Education Bill amongst other matters. Mrs. Byles said that the question had not been approached in anything like the broad and temperate spirit it demanded, and what was needed was a calmer and nobler spirit under which the rights of other consciences would be recognised. Lord Stanley of Alderley dotted the *i*'s of Mrs. Byles's speech. He wound up by saying that "the only way to settle the education question was for the State to deal solely with Secular Education and a system of wholesome moral instruction, leaving it to the parents to teach the children the mysteries of the unseen."

That excellent quarterly, the *Humane Review*, has just issued its third (July) number for the present year, and it contains some very valuable articles. Sir James H. Thornton writes most instructively on "Pasteurism in India," and argues that all the scrums injected are of no value whatever except for the antiseptics they contain. A different article, but also a good one, is Carl Heath's on "Blake as Humanitarian." "Flogging in Gaol," by H. J. B. Montgomery, and "Imprisonment for Debt," by Joseph Collinson, deal with questions of quite urgent importance. "Some Thoughts on War," by an anonymous writer, is well written and suggestive, and Ernest Bell draws attention to the inhumanities of the "Jewish System of Slaughter." Amongst the reviews is a notice of Mr. H. B. Binns's new *Life of Walt Whitman*. Incidentally the reviewer—whom from the sane and satisfactory style we judge to be Mr. H. S. Salt—defends Colonel Ingersoll against the author's depreciation. Mr. Binns contrasts Ingersoll's "intellectual agnosticism" with Whitman's "transcendent knowledge," and says of the former that his mind was "limited by its own logic"—a statement which, as far as it is intelligible, may safely be made of everybody. Reference is made to a conversation between Ingersoll and Whitman on the design of creation, in which the former expressed strong sceptical views, such as our readers are familiar with. Mr. Salt (or the reviewer) defends Ingersoll's logical argument in that conversation as "perfectly proper and apposite." "But," he adds, "Ingersoll's mind was by no means limited by such logic; his human sympathies, for example, were of the widest and most far-reaching kind—far more sensitive and finely developed, in fact, than those of 'the good gray poet.'"

Why, all the Saints and Sages who discuss'd
Of the Two Worlds so wisely—they are thrust
Like foolish Prophets forth; their Words to Scorn
Are scatter'd, and their Mouths are stopt with Dust.
Myself when young did eagerly frequent
Doctor and Saint, and heard great argument
About it and about: but evermore
Came out by the same door where I went.
—Omar Khayyam (*Fitzgerald's*).

Whoever thinks that a story gains by the prodigious, by adding something out of nature, robs it more than he adds. It is no longer an example, a model; no longer a heart-stirring hero, but an exhibition, a wonder, an anomaly, removed out of the range of influence with thoughtful men.
—Emerson.

More Lines from Well-Wishers.

ACCORDING to promise, we give this week a few more extracts from interesting letters from old and new friends of the Editor of the *Freethinker*, written by subscribers who have responded to Mr. J. W. de Caux's appeal:—

T. Thelwall writes:—

"I hope you will realise a handsome sum, as I am sure you deserve, for your indomitable and self-denying efforts in the cause of Freethought."

"Two Admirers" write:—

"We are not old readers of your paper and works, but can safely say that since we started we find always a craving for them, and have always been able to get something out of their contents to strengthen our convictions in the right direction."

George Brady writes:—

"With best wishes and sincere appreciation of the great work you are spending your life's energy in."

J. W. Lawrence writes to Mr. de Caux:—

"Mr. Foote is a great and good man; but, like all men who are in advance of the age, he will not be estimated at his true value until he is dead."

This is an extract which we insert with a little misgiving, but we think it best, on the whole, to let our readers see what subscribers are saying.

John Tullock writes:—

"I take this opportunity of thanking you for many hours of pleasure and edification during the past three years."

A. Rowley writes to Mr. de Caux:—

"It is indeed a great pleasure to read after him, and I hope a substantial sum will be raised."

Major John C. Harris, R.E., writes:—

"I have had to sign many *business* cheques on returning home, and I wind up now with signing one, which it affords me considerable pleasure to send you."

John Sumner writes to Mr. de Caux:—

"It gives me great pleasure to enclose the accompanying cheque. I sincerely hope your appeal will be promptly and largely met. No one has earned a holiday better than Mr. Foote, and no one has stronger claims on the lines you suggest than he."

William Bailey writes to Mr. de Caux:—

"I have often thought of the suggestion I saw somewhere of an annuity for Mr. Foote, and it would pay the Freethought party over and over again to provide it.....How he has been able to apply his mind to literary pursuits is to me a mystery, and it only shows what we might expect if he were freed from worry. I should be most happy to subscribe."

J. Chick writes:—

"I think that everyone who reads the *Freethinker* must appreciate the talent and conduct of the paper, and recognise the immense effort and energy it must have required to run it so many years."

Adam Rushton writes to Mr. de Caux:—

"My attention was first directed to Mr. Foote by his heroic bearing during his trial and imprisonment, and I have read the *Freethinker* with great interest ever since. I am not a Secularist, but cannot help admiring the keen intellect displayed by the writers in the *Freethinker* in piercing the superficial theology and philosophy of the day, and so daringly and honestly attempting to search out and reveal the real nature of things."

W. E. Gibson writes:—

"I have been a reader of the *Freethinker* for the past twelve months and I think a great deal of it."

J. H. Gartrell writes:—

"I agree with Mr. de Caux that it is our duty to prevent a leader like yourself from being harassed about money matters; your energies are too valuable in other directions."

"Bishop of Ipswich" writes:—

"Before and ever since the breakfast at the Hall of Science, after you enjoyed twelve months' Christian charity, I have looked upon you as a *Man*. I admire your self-sacrifice for the cause, and thank you most fervently."

We have now done with this matter as far as the *Freethinker* is concerned. Subscriptions can still be sent, of course, to Mr. J. W. de Caux, 92 St. Peter's-road, Great Yarmouth, or to Mr. G. W. Foote himself, at 2 Newcastle-street, London, E.C., but no further reference to the subject will be made in these columns.

Free-Will.

"Our illusion of free-will is only ignorance of the motives which make us act."—*Spinoza*.

"The will so little resembles a faculty reigning as a mistress that it depends at each instant upon the most trivial and hidden causes; it is at their mercy."—*Ribot, Diseases of the Will*, p. 41.

"We speak of the will as something apart from the feeling or feelings which, for the moment, prevail over others.....Until there is a motive, there is no will. That is to say, will is no more an existence separate from the predominant feeling than a king is an existence separate from the man occupying the throne."—*HERRBERT SPENCER, Principles of Psychology*.

THE theological doctrine of free-will owes its existence to an attempt to save the moral character of the Creator—to shift the responsibility for all the wickedness and evil in the world from God and fix it upon man. For if God is omniscient he knew everything that was going to happen; and if he is all-powerful he could have prevented it from happening. But, says the theologian, God endowed man with a conscience which tells him right from wrong and a free-will by which he is at liberty to choose between right and wrong. The answer to this is: If God knew infallibly how a man would choose in a given instance, then the man has no option but to choose that way. For if God does not know how a man will choose between good and evil, then he does not know everything, and away goes his quality of omniscience, and he is the author of a vast scheme of things of which he cannot discern the end, and of which he can tell no more of the future than we can ourselves, but for which, nevertheless, he is as much responsible as a man would be who created a machine of which he could not tell whether it would produce good or evil.

Moreover, some of the greatest of the Christian theologians have rejected the freedom of the will as decisively as the leaders of Atheism and Agnosticism.—*Büchner, Haeckel, Spencer, Huxley, and Clifford*, to cite only a few famous names "foremost in the files of time."

St. Augustine, who did so much to lay the foundations of Christian theology, opposed it. Calvin, the founder of Calvinism, denied it. Luther, the founder of Protestantism, and Jonathan Edwards, the most subtle theologian America has produced, all denied that man possesses a free-will.

That king of letters, the cool and subtle Erasmus, in his book on *Free-Will*, placed his keen rapier with unerring skill in the joints of Luther's theological harness. He very pertinently asked Luther, "Why does not God remove the vice of our will, since our will is not in our power; or why does he make us responsible if the vice of the will is inherent in man? The vase says to the potter: Why did you make me for eternal flames?" Luther—who declared Erasmus "to be the worst enemy that Christ has had for a thousand years," and elegantly remarks that "to crush Erasmus is like crushing a bug"—replied with his famous work *On the Bondage of the Will*, in which he does not mince matters, but roundly declares: "The human will is like a beast of burden. If God mounts it, it wishes and goes as God wills; if Satan mounts it, it wishes and goes as Satan wills. Nor can it choose the rider it would prefer, or betake itself to him, but it is the riders who contend for its possession." To clinch the matter, Luther adds: "God foreknows nothing subject to contingencies, but he foresees, foreordains, and accomplishes all things by an unchanging, eternal, and efficacious will. By this thunderbolt free-will sinks shattered in the dust." So much for the theological ideas of free-will, which, it is needless to say, we reject for reasons quite other than those advanced by Luther.

A little reflection will serve to show that our will is not under our control. A disagreeable idea intrudes itself, in spite of our will to forget it. Perhaps it is the recollection of something we wish we had not said or done—remorse; or a foolish action—shame; or of something you fear will happen—*anxiety*. We cannot bar them out, these spectres of the mind; and sometimes they will not down. Many

years ago I saw a cat run over by a cartload of bricks, and the remembrance sometimes rises unbidden in my mind; if I had a free-will that memory would never rise again.

As the views in a magic lantern dissolve into one another, so an idea of the mind is eclipsed by a succeeding idea. To show the idleness of the idea of a free-will, let anyone try to dismiss an idea from his mind without another idea taking its place; he will find it impossible to do so. As Dr. Maudsley, the famous mind specialist, has pointed out, "to dismiss one idea, another idea must arise; the will cannot dismiss it."

Here is another illustration which anyone can parallel from his daily or hourly existence. I have finished work for the day, and am sitting, resting and smoking. I am tired, and feel that it is pleasant to rest; still I have an uneasy feeling that I am wasting valuable time. I have an impulse to get down a book, but there is none that I am particularly interested in at the moment. I should like to see that article on Heine in the *Fortnightly*, but the Public Library is a mile away, and I am tired; I will go to-morrow evening. A girl goes by with a Marechal Neil rose at her throat. I think of that rose; it sets my thoughts vibrating; it changes the key and, as it were, sets another tune. I think of when I was a child, and how much larger the roses were then, and infinitely more fragrant; and how I used to fetch something to stand upon, so that I could smell the yellow roses against the wall. I think of the long interval that has elapsed since then, and the concluding lines of Marston's poem, "Deathward Ways," comes to mind:—

"I walk a straight and solitary path,
A way which no sweet scent or verdure hath,
And as I walk, like strong and rising seas,
I hear my whole past surging on my track,
And would return, yet never may go back."

The idea that I am wasting time returns with more persistence; but it is pleasant to rest. I begin thinking about my thoughts. Why did I begin to think about the dead past? Ah! it was that rose. How a trifle like that alters the whole current of the thoughts! And yet there are people who believe in free-will. I will write an article on Free-Will, and I rise to look for pens and paper. I did not will to think any of these things; they arose spontaneously, one idea following another in a continuous procession, each arising from and linked to the preceding one, until the continuity was broken by some external stimulus—in this case a rose. And yet, in the last analysis, the result was governed by a physical necessity. For when I had sufficiently rested—to have continued sitting still would soon have produced positive discomfort—and so I acted upon the impulse uppermost in my mind at the critical moment.

As Dr. Luys points out:—

"We generally imagine that we ordain the direction of our ideas into any desired channel, and that we can govern their evocation. We do not usually perceive that while we imagine we are leading our ideas in one direction we are unconsciously obeying the second phase of a movement of which the first has already taken place.

I imagine that I think of an object by a spontaneous effort of my mind; it is an illusion—it is because the cell-territory where that object resides has been previously set vibrating in my brain. I obey when I think I am commanding, merely turning in a direction towards which I am unconsciously drawn.

A phenomenon quite analogous to the conjuring trick of forcing a card takes place in this instance; the conjurer forcing us unconsciously to take a card, while letting us imagine we have a liberty of choice."

To show how incapable even educated men are of grasping the point is well illustrated by Mr. Melrose in his clever little book on *Free-Will and Determinism*, who tells us that he once attended a lecture by Canon Girdlestone, who incidentally introduced the subject of free-will, treating it as practically unassailable. To an opponent who offered objections, he proved it

by stating that he could exercise his free-will by walking home hatless. As if that would have proved free-will! He forgot that *the very desire of showing that he possessed a free-will would be the motive governing his action.*

Mr. Nisbet, in his able work *The Human Machine*, gives the following remarkable illustration of the automatic character of the will:—

"The best exemplification of the working of the human mind, in the circumstances imagined, is given by a wonderful machine which may be inspected in the Bank of England. It is a delicate balance for weighing sovereigns, and it works automatically, its special function being to throw the good coins into one receptacle and the light ones into another. The sovereigns are fed into a long sloping metal groove, down which they slide, like men walking in Indian file. If a given coin is decidedly of full weight it tilts it at once to the right; if decidedly light, it is thrown with equal promptitude to the left. The beautiful working of the machine is best shown when it comes upon a doubtful sovereign. It pauses. You can almost see it thinking. 'Shall I, or shall I not, give it the benefit of the doubt?' it seems to say. It quivers with indecision for a moment, and then throws the coin into its appropriate receptacle, right or left, as the case may be. A wonderful machine, truly! So very like a human being in its action. If it were possessed of consciousness, it would imagine each time it judged a sovereign that it was exercising its free-will. In point of fact, its action, intelligent as it looks, is merely a mechanical response to a mechanical stimulus.

Our brains are just such a mechanism, only infinitely more complex and more sensitive. Stimuli from the outer world act upon them through the organs of sense; recollections of past experience surge up; there is a struggle for the mastery between the different emotions or impulses excited. In the end, one set of feelings or another outweighs the rest, and we imagine that our minds are made up, that we have taken a decision. We then plume ourselves upon our exercise of free-will. In point of fact, the whole mental process is as much conditioned by circumstances as the action of the sovereign balance in the Bank of England."

The clergy to-day are making a desperate stand for free-will, as they have done against most scientific truths. They know that the character of their God is involved. They cannot afford to admit it, although their candid friend Mr. Mallock tells them plainly that the game is up. However, all their struggles will not alter the truth. The doctrine of Determinism has until lately been confined to the study of the philosopher and the psychologist; it is now becoming the property of the people; and when they have once grasped it, good-bye to the authority of the priest.

W. MANN.

MAN AND HIS HELL.

His commanding posture, his opposable thumb, his spacious convoluted brain, and his voice of terror and command have enabled man to invent, elaborate, and apply to man all the tortures of his imagined Hell. The cat plays with the mouse, but that is the feline culinary art; and the mouse is shortly killed. Nor is the mouse fastened; it has to the last a chance of escape; and often the mouse gets away after a rousing game in which the stake was its life. The spider weaves a web, and the insect is caught; here the prey is fastened, but it is for food, and often a stout fly will break the net, and at the worst he is soon despatched. It was man who conceived the exquisite idea of fastening people in order to hurt them at his will and pleasure. Not a mammoth cat, insane and hunger-clung, ties up men and flogs them underground to cook them quickly instead of employing the longer, less brutal, and customary method with the mouse; it is man who does this to man, and not for food, but upon principle. Not a Titanic spider, but man, rove the strappado and stretched the rack in order to hurt men in body, mind, and soul, in every organ, nerve and sinew, joint and muscle, repeatedly and for long periods without killing them: it was man who did this, and not because he was starving and this the only way to secure and prepare food, but in many cases only because there was between him and his victims a difference of opinion upon an entirely immaterial point. It was not a pack of wolves, having captured more game than they could dispose of, and being quite sated with flesh and wanton with blood, who chained up men and women and burned them alive: it was men who did this to men as a religious duty.—*John Davidson.*

The Lord J. C. and the Lord C. J.

SAID the Lord J. C. of Galilee:
"Judge not, that ye be not judged";
And a great deal more that his "friends" ignore,
'Ere back to his bunk he budged.

Says the Lord C. J. of England, "Nay,
Thou goest a bit too far;
If we followed thee, O Christ, 'twould be
All up with the 'Bench and Bar.'"

Said the Lord J. C. of Galilee:
"If somebody vents his spite
On your 'near side' cheek, be mild and meek
And turn unto him the right."

Says the Lord C. J. of England, "Nay,
The smitten should come to me,
And his chances seize of damages
For assault and batter-ee."

Said the Lord J. C., "If sued, agree
With the plaintiff—compromise,
Whiles in the way with him the day
That the Judge is at Assize."

Says the Lord C. J. of England, "Nay";
For the Alverstonian sort
Would be out-of-works and out-of-perks
If we settled "out of court."

Said the Lord J. C. of Galilee:
"With a thief in concord dwell;
If he steals your coat, don't act the goat,
But give him your cloak as well."

Says the Lord C. J. of England, "Nay;
Our property we must guard.
Bring a thief to me at the C. C. C.—
I'll give him a twelvemonth hard."

Said the Lord J. C. of Galilee:
"Swear not in the name of God.
Simply say 'Yea, yea,' or else 'Nay, nay,'
Or go to eternal quod."

Says the Lord C. J. of England, "Nay."
So a man gets in the box,
And he hears him swear, nor turns a hair;
An affirmer gives him shocks.

Said the Lord J. C., who cursed a tree,
"You're damned if you say 'Thou fool.'"
For the man of jaw laid down the law,
But he broke it as a rule.

Says the Lord C. J., "We folks to-day
Such 'vulgar abuse' despise;
'Tis by our law no crime, no cause,
Of an action even lies."

Said the Lord J. C. of Galilee:
"Thrice blest is the 'man of straw.'
But woe to the tribes of swindling scribes,
And woe to the men of law."

Says the Lord C. J., "Christ spoke that day
Of the wicked ones alone.
I'm a Christian Judge."—But that's all fudge;
He's one of the "Devil's Own!"

ESS JAY BEE.

Monastic Prisons in Russia.

MOST monks who have striven for religious freedom are thrown into monastery prisons; and these are even worse than the dungeon here, because every day they make the prisoners come into the chapel and there for hours go through what they call the worship of God. Thousands of monks are now in prisons, for thousands are beginning to strive for the freedom of conscience in Russia.

Twenty years ago I was a monk in a Baltic monastery. All around us the peasants had been for centuries Lutheran, and now we had been sent to force them to worship the Russian God.

In a log farmhouse near by there lived a young husband and wife, to whom a baby was born. They resolved that the child should be baptised in the Lutheran way.

So, only a few weeks after the little girl was born, late one night to their log house came a few of their friends—in secret. With them came the Lutheran school-teacher, who was also clergyman for peasants. This good old man had come at the risk of imprisonment, but he was used to taking such risks.

He blessed the child and baptised her, and then he began earnestly to pray, while the peasants knelt around him.

Suddenly the door was jerked open! And in strode the Russian priest in his long black gown. Like all Russian priests, he wore his hair in long locks. Five Russian policemen followed at his heels.

The young mother screamed and snatched her baby. One instant in terror she paused; then she sprang out of the rear door, and ran for the forest.

But she was still weak. Again and again she sank down. And the police, having beaten and bound all the men, followed her into the forest. They found her half-fainting there in the bushes. Roughly they seized her and brought her back. That night she and her husband were taken to gaol and beaten. And her child they took to the house of the priest.

But even this priest could not see a child starve to death. The next day he persuaded the police to take this "heretic" mother out of gaol. She was brought with her baby to our monastery prison, and there she was kept for a year. Every day with her child she was brought into the chapel and forced to remain on her knees—"worshiping."

So they forced her to learn the Russian religion. Thus they "saved" the soul of this child.

At the end of a year the mother pretended to be converted, and then she was freed.

Converted? Yes—to the Cause of Freedom! What zealous revolutionists she and her husband became!

—Ernest Poole, "Saturday Evening Post" (New York).

"G. B. S." as a Lecturer.

On Thursday afternoon, June 28, at the Caxton Hall, I enjoyed for the first time the great privilege and pleasure of hearing a lecture by Mr. Bernard Shaw. The sensational title, "Poisoning the Proletariat," in conjunction with the immense popularity of the lecturer, drew a crowded audience, composed almost entirely of fashionably-dressed ladies. Mr. Shaw is an extraordinary-looking man, and a more extraordinary lecturer. Though by no means an orator, he held the breathless attention of the audience from beginning to end. Technically speaking, his lecture was a colloquial talk, perfectly extemporaneous; and yet he got hold of the right word every time. It was a spontaneous speech by a highly-cultured man, who had struggled with the subject for thirty years. On the surface, he was playful, witty, sometimes humorous, but in the depths one could discern glowing passion and dead earnestness. He trifled with his audience in order to be able to drive a few vital truths straight home.

Throughout the whole deliverance there was an undertone of decided Atheism. It was Secularism, pure and simple, to which he gave utterance. Not one word was said against religion; it was simply ignored. The idle rich were denounced in most withering terms, not because they are irreligious and forsake the house of God, but because they are culpably ignorant of the Science of Life; and the oppressed poor were condemned, not because they drink and bet and gamble, thus wasting their scanty earnings, but because they are blind to the true nature and significance of their own manhood and the grand possibilities that lie latent within it. According to Mr. Shaw, it is the lack of a living sense of the essential solidarity of the race that is responsible for the present iniquities and corruptions prevalent in society. It was because of this lack that rich and poor came into existence; and this lack is a practically impassable gulf between the two classes. The Proletariat is being poisoned because the Proprietariat is determined to increase its wealth at any cost.

Mr. Shaw assured us that he is a Socialist. Whether he is or not I do not know; but I am quite sure that a scientific Individualist could have delivered the lecture with the utmost sincerity. I have often heard the same sentiments advocated by the editor of this journal. What Secularism teaches is that there should be no *privileged* classes, but that equal rights and opportunities should be granted to all alike. Whenever the kingly man appears he must of necessity rule all the rest; and if the kingly man has also an enlightened and sympathetic heart his reign will be equitable and make for the highest welfare of all. It is *sham* kings, *sham* rulers, and *sham* legislators who have wrought such colossal harm in the world.

Mr. Shaw called himself the greatest among a whole generation of cowards; but his lecture was a truly courageous utterance, although its courage was tempered with sagacity. He administered pills, but they were sugar-coated. He rebuked his hearers to their faces; but they thought he was only joking, and laughed under the lash. They were in doubt as to whether or not he was to be taken seriously. In reality he is infinitely more than a joker, a wit, or a

humorist—he is a prophet with a message of tremendous significance to his fellow-men. In matters of detail and nomenclature we may greatly differ from him and be angry with him; but as regards fundamental principles he is as sound as a bell.

His closing words were most impressive; and, as I listened to them, I was strongly reminded of similar ones to be found throughout the works of Colonel Ingersoll. "I am so constituted," said the lecturer, "that I cannot be happy while the majority of my fellows are miserable." You may say that this is largely a matter of temperament, and so it is; but it is much more a matter of education, and there is a deep sense in which temperament itself is a matter of education. The true reformer, when he comes, will be seen to be the schoolmaster.

CELTICUS.

IS THE RESURRECTION ATTESTED?

It has been said recently by "A Layman," in a letter to Mr. Maurice, that the resurrection of our Lord is as well authenticated as the death of Julius Cæsar. It is far better authenticated, unless we are mistaken in supposing the Bible inspired; or if we admit as evidence the inward assurance of the Christian, which would make him die rather than disbelieve a truth so dear to him. But if the layman meant that there was as much proof of it, in the sense in which proof is understood in a court of justice, he could scarcely have considered what he was saying. Julius Cæsar was killed in a public place, in the presence of friend and foe, in a remarkable but still perfectly natural manner. The circumstances were minutely known to all the world, and were never denied or doubted by any one. Our Lord, however, seems purposely to have withheld such public proof of his resurrection as would have left no room for unbelief. He showed himself, "not to all the people"—not to his enemies, whom his appearance would have overwhelmed—but "to witnesses chosen before;" to the circle of his own friends. There is no evidence which a jury would admit that he was ever actually dead. So unusual was it for persons crucified to die so soon, that Pilate, we are told, "marvelled." The subsequent appearances were strange, and scarcely intelligible. Those who saw him did not recognise him till he was made known to them in the breaking of bread. He was visible and invisible. He was mistaken by those who were most intimate with him for another person; nor do the accounts agree which are given by the different Evangelists. Of investigation in the modern sense (except in the one instance of St. Thomas, and St. Thomas was rather rebuked than praised,) there was none, and could be none. The evidence offered was different in kind, and the blessing was not to those who satisfied themselves of the truth of the fact by a searching inquiry, but who gave their assent with the unhesitating confidence of love.—J. A. Proude.

HOW HE KEPT HIS PROMISE.

The story goes that a certain Nonconformist divine noted for his smoking powers was sent for by the board of examiners just before his ordination.

"Mr. F." said one of the board, "your papers are excellent, but there is one thing we object to."

Mr. F. asked what it was.

"You are addicted to the evil habit of smoking."

Mr. F. explained that he saw no evil in it, but, taking a large plug from his pocket, said:

"In deference to your opinion, gentlemen, I promise you this: As soon as I have smoked the plug I hold in my hand I will cease smoking forever."

They were satisfied, and he was ordained the next day.

Now as he refills his pipe he chuckles and tells you:

"I've kept my word. I've got that very plug yet!"

CAUSE AND EFFECT.

A theological student was sent one Sunday to supply a vacant pulpit in a Connecticut valley town. A few days after, he received a copy of the weekly paper of that place with the following item marked: "Rev. —, of the senior class at Yale seminary, supplied the pulpit at the Congregational Church last Sunday, and the church will now be closed three weeks for repairs."—*Cleveland Leader*.

SUCH A GRANDFATHER.

A young man was being examined by a life-insurance official as to his family record. Among other questions the following was asked: "Of what did your grandfather die?"

The applicant hesitated a few moments and then stammered out: "I-I'm not sure, but I think he died in infancy."—*Lippincotts*.

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, C. Cohen.

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S.: Rushcroft-road, Brixton, 11.30, F. A. Davies; Brockwell Park, 3.15, F. A. Davies; 6, Ernest Edwin.

CLAPHAM COMMON: 3, A. D. Howell Smith, B.A., "The Book of Daniel."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Parliament Hill, Hampstead): 3.15, F. Schaller, "From Christianity to Atheism"; 6.30, J. Rowney, "Holy Moses and Company."

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

COUNTRY.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N. S. S. (Milton Hall, Daulby-street): 7, W. C. Schweizer, "The Jungle; or, The Unspeakable Corruption of Christian America."

PORTH BRANCH N. S. S. (Secular Room, Town Hall): 6.30, a Lecture.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, Market-place): 7.30, Important Business Meeting.

OUTDOOR.

WIGAN BRANCH N. S. S. (Market Square): Tuesday, July 10, at 7.45, H. Percy Ward, "The Flowers of Freethought and the Weeds of Christianity."

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