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A refined humanity constitutes the character of a gentleman.—HAZLITT.

An Aspect of the Dreyfus Affair.

THOSE who have read the *Freethinker* for many years will remember that I always took a great interest in the Dreyfus affair. The infamous martyrdom of an innocent man was enough in itself to arouse a passionate sympathy. But there was more than that in the case. It involved a struggle to the death between progress and reaction in France. On the one side were the Church and the Army—the organs of superstition and violence; on the other side were the true Republicans and the true Freethinkers. The question at issue was whether France should sink into slavery to the Jesuits or keep her place in the van of civilisation. Her freedom, her honor, her dignity were at stake; and it is these things that make the real greatness of nations. Fortunately the best and bravest of her sons saw the issue with perfect clearness, and accepted battle with apparently overwhelming forces. All the odds seemed against them. They were only a handful. But they had hearts and brains. Keen intellect and indomitable courage won ground for them little by little; gradually, as it widened, fresh recruits joined their little army, until at length the nation was fairly divided, and at last a splendid victory crowned the long fight against what looked at first like an invincible lie. It was a glorious commentary on the noble text of Emerson—"Never surrender to a fear."

Captain Dreyfus was liberated by the French government in a way which he was loth to accept. He did not wish for a pardon. He wanted to establish his innocence. But he bowed to the advice of his valiant and faithful defenders. In accepting his liberty, however, he told France that he should continue to demand the reparation of the frightful judicial error of which he was the victim. And he has kept his word. He has reached the end of the drama. The Court of Appeal has declared his innocence, the sentence upon him is quashed, he is restored to his proper position in the Army, and he is enrolled in the Legion of Honor. Nor is that all. Colonel Picquart, the Bayard of the Dreyfus battle, is made a Brigadier-General. Nor is even that all. The French Chamber has ordered the remains of Zola to be translated to the Pantheon.

This leads me to the aspect of the Dreyfus affair, which I wish to emphasise. It is one that is naturally passed over in silence by the ordinary newspapers. And it is this. The men who fought that forlorn hope, and won in the end, were all, or nearly all, Freethinkers. The leading men on the other side were all good Christians. The wretches who committed perjury and forgery were all good Christians. General Mercier, General Gonse, and the rest of the Jesuit-led gang of military scoundrels, were all good Christians. Those who tortured Dreyfus on the Devil's Island were all good Christians. Those who kept back his wife's letters for months at a time, those who at last would not let him have the originals but only copies, those who tried to make him believe

that she had abandoned him, those who even sought to drive him finally into suicide by hinting to him that she had given birth to a child by another man—those creatures were all good Christians.

Look at the Freethinkers in detail. Clémenceau, the greatest journalist of the Dreyfus movement, is now the most powerful statesman in France. Brisson is president of the Chamber of Deputies. Anatole France is perhaps the first of living French writers. Jaures is perhaps the first of French orators. Picquart himself is a Voltairian. It was he who first saw from the documents at the War Office that Dreyfus was not guilty. When he told his superiors so they advised him to hold his tongue. Many officers would have done so, but Picquart was not built that way. He spoke out. He let the light of day into the sinister mystery. For that he was turned out of the Army and ruined. But he never wavered for a moment. One may, indeed, read his noble nature in his fine handsome face. He was not born for crooked ways.

It was Zola who brought the Dreyfus agitation to its crisis. His famous letter was more than a literary performance. It was a great deed. A dramatic climax was necessary, and Zola rose to the occasion. The crowning moment of his own career had arrived. He took his hard-earned fortune, his liberty, and his very life in his hands, and offered them as a possible sacrifice on the altar of justice and humanity. And that voluntary heroism, more than any of his books, is the pledge of his immortality.

Zola was an Atheist. In a presidential speech at the banquet of the General Association of Students in Paris he laughed at those who talked about the bankruptcy of Science and prophesied the resurrection of Faith. "Faith," said Zola, "does not rise from the dead, and one can make nothing but mythologies out of dead religions." Zola wanted no God to inspire him to a great deed. He found the inspiration of Humanity sufficient.

Even in the case of Dreyfus himself I cannot find that religion helped him in any way to bear his unparalleled martyrdom. Once at least in his appalling diary on the Devil's Island he wrote:—

"How often there recurs to my mind that exclamation of Schopenhauer at the spectacle of human iniquity:

"If God created the world, I would not be God."

When he was moved to end his intolerable misery by rushing into the arms of death, he thought of his wounded honor; still more he thought of his wife and his children—and that spurred him on the thorny road to a more heroic deliverance.

"In the frequent moments when my disgust for all around me makes my senses reel, three names, which I murmur low, reawaken my energy and ever give me new strength—Lucie, Pierre, Jeanne!"

After an unbroken silence of three months, feeling crushed and overwhelmed in the awful solitude, he writes again: "I must murmur low those three words which are my talisman—Lucie, Pierre, Jeanne!"

Never can I turn over the pages of that terrible diary without shuddering; but I always feel that the human love which sustained Dreyfus in his worst extremity is the mightiest thing in the world. "We live by admiration, hope, and love," said Wordsworth—and the greatest of these is love.

G. W. FOOTE.

Simple Bible Teaching.

"SIMPLE Bible teaching" is one of the shibboleths that delights the Nonconformist mind. And, provided no disaster overtakes the Government Education Bill, it will next year be part of the law of England. Precisely what it means none of those who uphold it, in all probability, know. That they would agree as to its meaning is still less likely. Mankind delights in mysteries—the religious variety more than any other—and it is an added attractiveness that "simple Bible teaching" should mean anything, everything, or nothing, in accordance with the inclinations of those who use it as a party or sectarian cry. For the curious thing about the situation is that there is not even a workable agreement as to what the Bible is, or what it teaches, among the most fervid upholders of the formula. Put on one side all they disagree in, and there is left—the Bible. Not the collection of writings that pass under that name, but merely the word itself. They do not agree as to when its component parts were written, they do not agree as to its writers, still less do they agree as to its teaching; all they do agree in is in the use of the word, and it is this which they insist must be retained in the schools, and regarded as the chief agent in the development of character.

Of course the quarrel is for something more than the mere word. The word is there as cover for a design, as a means of getting what they have not the courage to honestly ask for. Upholders of "simple Bible teaching" know full well that it is an utter impossibility for any Christian teacher to give a lesson on the Bible without imparting into that lesson some of his own religious views; nor do they desire that he should. Their only concern is to see that, so far as is possible, the teacher shall be of the right kind. "Simple Bible teaching" is a device to get the Bible into the schools as a manual of Christian religious teaching, so that teachers may continue the catspaws of Church and Chapel in the work of developing clients for Christian organisations.

If "simple Bible teaching" was really what Christians desired, I daresay a number of Freethinkers might be found willing to support its introduction into schools. For it would be a valuable weapon for the dissemination of unbelief. It is certain, however, that present-day Christians would be the very last to support simple, unadulterated, Bible teaching in schools. What they desire is not a plain, honest rendering of Bible teaching, but the Bible with innumerable modifications, rejections, and additions, all calculated to make palatable an otherwise extremely unpalatable dish. For the teacher is not to be allowed to read the Bible to the children and explain it as he might explain the "sacred" writings of other peoples; he is to teach it according to a syllabus already prepared, and this in result is not Bible teaching at all, but a more or less dishonest rendering of what the Bible actually contains.

It is simple Bible teaching, for instance, that witchcraft is an actual fact, recognised by God and punished by his command. "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live" is as plain and as simple as anything in the Bible. The reality of witchcraft was accepted by Christians of all descriptions until very recent times, and honest John Wesley declared that one might as well give up the Bible altogether as to surrender it. But the teacher, in order to protect the children from too simple Bible teaching, would have to point out that witchcraft is a purely mythical offence. Commerce with the Devil or with evilspirits does not exist, and never did exist, and the Bible is teaching pure, unadulterated error. And the teacher would surely be justified in pointing out that while people did believe in witchcraft thousands of women and children were burned and drowned and tortured for an imaginary offence. He would have to point out that the Puritans in England and Scotland employed professional "witch-finders," in all essentials similar to the "witch-smellers" of

an African tribe, and that no less a man than Martin Luther advised that a certain child should be thrown into the river because its mother was a reputed witch. Simple Bible teaching would open the way for some very interesting lessons, if only it were properly practised.

Another interesting piece of simple Bible teaching would be that regulating the slave-trade—how slaves might be bought and sold, how the master might beat his slave as he pleased short of killing him on the spot, how Paul commands slaves to be obedient to their masters whether they be good or bad, and that the worse the master is the greater is the Christian merit of obedience to the powers that be. And the teacher might go on to explain how for centuries simple Bible teaching was the impregnable rock upon which slave-owners in both hemispheres justified the buying and selling of human flesh and blood. It was far from the American slave-owners' desire that any slave should be denied the benefit of the Bible. On the contrary, they made special arrangements for Bible teaching, appointed lectureships, and circulated the "Blessed Book" as the best defence of the institution they cherished. The religious fervor of the American slaves is in itself evidence of how liberally they were treated in this direction.

Simple Bible teaching is equally explicit on the question of faith and prayer in relation to disease. There is hardly an instance in the Old or New Testament where disease, bodily and mental, is not treated as supernaturally caused, and is, therefore, to be supernaturally cured. Leprosy, plagues, epilepsy, sunstroke, scrofula, insanity, are all brought about by the agency of either God or the Devil. Honest Bible teaching would lay stress on the promise that disease should be cured by faith—a promise so precise and definite that it has never lacked supporters in the Christian Church. And again might come the historical commentary pointing out how, for generations, the Church banned medical science in favor of the theory of disease laid down in the Bible, taught by Jesus, and endorsed by his disciples. He might go on to show how the neglect of sanitary and medical science paved the way for the plagues and pestilences of the Christian ages, how, for generations, lunatics were whipped and starved and tortured in the hopes of getting rid of the demons with which Jesus declared they were possessed. And, as a final commentary, he might instance how every now and again someone is imprisoned in a Christian country as a result of simple Bible teaching, without a single one of the half-hundred thousand of our Christian clergy being honest enough to raise a single word of protest.

Now, *this* simple Bible teaching might be given to elder pupils, by a capable teacher, with considerable advantage. It could be used to illustrate the gradual growth of man from savagery to civilisation; the struggle of science with primitive ideas; and how absurd ideas, without a single fact to support them, may persist when supported by interest and authority. In this way Bible teaching might be made an instrument of enlightenment; but Bible teaching by syllabus, by dishonest interpretation, by evasion, and by interested selection, becomes only a fresh instrument of retrogression or obstruction.

There are, of course, many parts of Bible teaching not touched on in what has been said above. The simple teaching of the Bible concerning a six days' creation, impossible miracles, barbarous ethics, brutal regulations, and obscene customs are all parts of simple Bible teaching not likely to figure in any syllabus. Some are omitted because of their sheer absurdity; others because Christians themselves admit them to be false; and others because no one would, for common decency's sake, dare to read them aloud before a public audience. They are all in the Bible, but they are kept discreetly in the background. In its way this is a good sign. It is good to see the professional Christian ashamed of his "sacred" writings; the pity is that the feeling of shame is not accompanied by a sufficiency of

straightforwardness to say openly what they know to be the truth concerning them.

"Simple Bible teaching" is as great a sham as "unsectarian Christianity." Neither of them exists save as a mere form of words, destitute of any honest meaning once it is examined. The only people who do believe in simple Bible teaching are those who, in a Christian sense, do not believe in the Bible at all. For they have nothing to hide, nothing for which to apologise, and nothing of which to be ashamed. The Bible is there, and as a book it has its place and its use. But its place is not, under present conditions, in the schoolroom, and its use not to that of providing material from which Church and Chapel may recruit its membership. What the upholder of simple Bible teaching in schools wants is the selection of passages favorable to the sectarian beliefs of this or that body of Christian believers, and imparted to children in a manner that will give them anything but a proper idea of the Bible, its contents, its history, or its influence. For the explanation teachers are permitted to give is not that endorsed by the best of even Christian scholarships. This is shelved on the plea that such questions are not suitable for the schoolroom, and would offend religious susceptibilities. And so children must be fed upon lies, and religious susceptibilities protected by an officially contrived scheme of imposture and hypocrisy.

Simple Bible teaching, forsooth! It was simple Bible teaching that for ages obstructed the thinker and the reformer. It was this that closed the schools of antiquity and placed the supreme power in the hands of ignorant priests and preachers. It sent Roger Bacon to prison, burned Bruno and Vanini, and condemned Galileo to years of captivity. It fought against the Copernican astronomy for more than two generations, and in some quarters for more than two centuries. It opposed the astronomy of Laplace, the geology of Lyell, and the biology of Darwin. It kept the flames of persecution alight for centuries, and keeps a contemptible persecution alive even to-day. It opposed the abolition of slavery, the destruction of the belief in witches, and has always been the ultimate resort of the obstructionist and the bigot. And it is truly fitting that to-day it should be the shibboleth of a scarcely concealed insincerity fighting its last fight on behalf of a discreditable and discredited superstition.

C. COHEN.

"The Reality of Grace."

UNDER the above title the Rev. P. T. Forsyth, M.A., D.D., Principal of Hackney College, has contributed a striking article to the current number of the *Hibbert Journal*. The article is striking for more reasons than one. Its style is uncommon—un-English, somewhat stilted, half-mystic, yet strong and independent. Its teaching also is remarkable, being original, unorthodox, and highly suggestive, as well as artistic. Principal Forsyth is an extremely clever man, though too academic a thinker ever to become a popular leader and reformer. "The Reality of Grace" is his favorite phrase and theme. He has frequently written and spoken upon it. He hugs and caresses it continually, as if it were a great discovery of his own. It is in the Reality of Grace that he finds the only conclusive argument for the truth of Christianity, as well as the sole and absolutely satisfactory seat of authority in religion; and it is alone in this Reality that he perceives "a rallying ground for the Free Churches."

By Grace Principal Forsyth understands "neither God's general favor, nor his mercy to our failure, nor his pity for our pain, but his pardon and redemption in face of our sin, under such moral conditions as are implied in atonement, however construed." Again he says: "I find also that it needs saying, that by the Gospel is not meant a statement, doctrine, offer, promise, or boon. It is a revelation, even, only because it is a redemption. It is an objective power

and historic act of God in Christ, decisive for humanity in time and in eternity, and altering forever the whole relation of the soul to God as it may be rejected or believed." Dr. Forsyth thus identifies Grace with the Gospel, and both with the process or experience of salvation through the sacrifice of Christ. Let us now inquire what the essential contents of Grace, as thus defined, really are. This is how Paul writes in Cor. xv. 1-8:—

"Now I make known unto you, brethren, the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye received, wherein also ye stand, by which also ye are saved; I make known, I say, in what words I preached it unto you, if ye hold it fast, except ye believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which also I received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried; and that he hath been raised on the third day according to the scriptures; and that he appeared to Cephas; then to the twelve; then he appeared to above five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain until now, but some are fallen asleep; then he appeared to James; then to all the apostles; and last of all, as unto one born out of due time, he appeared to me also."

This passage is of immense importance, because it regards the atoning Sacrifice and the Resurrection as essential contents of the Gospel; and these two doctrines imply several others in themselves equally wonderful and incredible, such as those of the existence of God and the Incarnation; as well as that of the Divinity of Christ. In short, the term Grace, as here defined, carries with it a whole Body of Theology, acceptance of which is the condition of the redemptive experience. According to Principal Forsyth, the Free Churches have lost sight of these vital truths of Grace, and this fact accounts for their comparative impotence. They are Churches of grace, but they have slackened their hold on Grace. They have gone astray and been robbed of their strength through lack of concentration on the saving contents of the Gospel. A great future awaits them, but only "when they rediscover their own treasure, and hear again, at its spring, their one call as the apostles of free and holy grace."

Dr. Forsyth is a severe critic of all existing Churches. "The Church of Rome leaves all other doctrines for the time in the rear, and concentrates on the doctrine of the divine society, the Church..... Anglicanism also concentrates on the acceptance of the Church, but as centred in the Episcopate; or it rallies upon the principle of an Establishment. An Established Church is but a tolerated anachronism at this stage of history." That is to say, both the Papacy and Episcopacy concentrate on the wrong principle, while the Free Churches are not yet able to rally "on the source of their own call as Protestant Churches in God's formative grace." In fact, Dr. Forsyth seems to be about the only one who has discovered the genuine dynamic of the Church of the living God, which is the reality of Grace. What all the Churches need, therefore, is "a revival, not of mere piety, but of faith, of the positive power, and insight of grace. Even the evangelists require to be re-evangelised by a new set of apostles of whom Dr. Forsyth appears to be the first."

Far be it from me to deny that such a revival of faith in the reality of Grace would be a splendid rallying ground for the Free Churches. What I am anxious to point out, however, is that Principal Forsyth's article is a virtual admission that the faith of the Churches in the doctrines of Grace is vapid, even moribund. Present-day Christians, with here and there an exception, are only nominal, not real, believers. They believe with the mouth, but not with the heart. But why is all this? What is the real cause? The charge is doubtless perfectly true; but what is the explanation? The Churches are losing ground everywhere because they have lost their grip of supernaturalism before learning the language of enlightened naturalism. Dr. Forsyth thinks that this loss of faith is due to a serious lack of concentration; but he is certainly mistaken. In many instances the decline of faith is the result of the profoundest concentration. It is simply not true

to say that generally "the tap-root of uncertainty is irresolution somewhere." The Principal seems to take for granted that "most doubt on religious matters is listless and not vigorous, discontented rather than negative, vague and not positive." That would be a much more accurate description of the faith of most Christians. As a rule, Agnosticism is a state of mind induced by the most strenuous thinking and the most uncompromising concentration. To think deeply is to doubt, and to think deeply for a long period is to land in Atheism. It is ordinary believers who "read everything in a vagrant, browsing fashion," and who "turn on the most serious subjects the holiday, seaside, newspaper habit of mind." When a man declares that he has adopted Agnosticism as his only possible mental attitude, you may take for granted that he has gained his present position as the reward of a stupendous and possibly long-continued conflict. And let it be observed, in this connection, that Agnosticism and Atheism are synonymous terms. An Atheist is a person without God, and an Agnostic a person without knowledge of God; but they are both equally without God—a fact which Dr. Forsyth has yet to discover.

The Principal admits that "the sense of sin has died down for the time"; but why has the sense of sin died down? Is it not because God has ceased to be a real Being to the bulk of the people? Sin is alone against God; and when God vanishes sin follows his example. The sense of sin is not a natural product, not a human instinct, but an artificial creation of the belief in God. And I maintain that this artificial sense of sin has been productive of more harm and mischief in the world than all other things put together. That it has died down is good news. Dr. Forsyth admits further that "the Gospel does not appeal to the instincts, in spite of the modern pulpit," and that "faith is not an instinct or a taste." "Christianity," he adds, "is not an instinct. The instinctive man is enmity against God, against the Gospel God with his rebuke, and demand, and absolute claim. To one who comes from a simple instinctive life Christianity is an act of hard faith." And this is the reason why Christianity has so signally failed. There is nothing in man's nature that spontaneously responds to its demands. As the Principal himself puts it, "it is hard to believe in the kingdom of God as the sure issue of history with recent Russia before our eyes, or war, pestilence, famine, earthquake, and volcanoes. And when we master these things, it is hard to live the life of the faith we have won." Yes, and the faith won is always in imminent danger of collapsing, and that because it is not native to us.

One other point. Dr. Forsyth lays great stress on the vital importance and value of morality in human society. "It is in the conscience," he says, "that we touch bottom and begin to rise." "Moral relations are every man's affair," he observes; and nothing can be done "with the man who denies moral obligations." With this we are in full agreement; and we are quite prepared to endorse the statement that "in the moral world alone do we find every soul's final self." But what has the grace of God to do with our moral sense and moral relations? The Gospel concerns itself primarily with the spiritual world and with our relations to a spiritual and supernatural Person. The first and chief object of Christianity is to set us right with God, to transfer our citizenship to heaven and to prepare us to take it up and enjoy it when we die. In the New Testament religion is an affair between man and God. Christianity appeals to man as a sinner against God, and offers him free pardon in exchange for faith and piety, and a rich reward beyond the tomb. And Dr. Forsyth is honest enough to confess that the moral progress of Europe has not kept pace with its Christian faith. Indeed, is it not undeniable that a deep sense of God's pardon in Christ is not necessarily accompanied by a highly developed moral sense? Neither the love nor the fear of God has ever succeeded in making Christendom the home of

brotherly love and sacrifice. Many of the most eminent Christians have been the most selfish people living, their moral sense being miles behind their religious sense.

Dr. Forsyth has a burning zeal for ethics, and in this we are heart and soul with him; and he is sincerely anxious that Christianity should present itself to the world as the supreme moral force. But to regard morality as a duty we owe to God, who will amply reward us for doing it, and severely punish us for not doing it, is to be guilty of unduly depreciating our brother-man. God is far away, and faith in him is at best but a fitful and uncertain emotion. If we serve our neighbor because God requires it of us, or because that is the only way in which we can express our piety, then the service will wax and wane with our piety. Would it not be incomparably better to regard morality as a duty we owe to our brother-man, the discharge of which is its own reward? Would not morality itself be an immense gainer in consequence?

Dr. Forsyth hates dogmatism; and yet he is the greatest of all dogmatists. The existence of God is a dogma, the Incarnation is a dogma, the Infinite Sacrifice and the Resurrection are dogmas, the truth of not one of which can be verified to us. But society is an abundantly verified fact, and its needs are patent to all. Virtue is a relation between man and man and makes for the happiness of all concerned. Morality is the condition of social peace and prosperity, and the only healthy motive to it is a cultivated sense of its inestimable value.

J. T. LLOYD.

What Infidels Have Done.

By R. G. INGERSOLL.

ONE hundred years after Christ had died suppose some one had asked a Christian, what hospitals have you built? What asylums have you founded? They would have said "None." Suppose three hundred years after the death of Christ the same questions had been asked the Christian, he would have said "None, not one." Two hundred years more and the answer would have been the same. And at that time the Christian could have told the questioner that the Mohammedans had built asylums before the Christians. He could also have told him that there had been orphan asylums in China for hundreds and hundreds of years, hospitals in India, and hospitals for the sick at Athens.

Here it may be well enough to say that all hospitals and asylums are not built for charity. They are built because people do not want to be annoyed by the sick and the insane. If a sick man should come down the street and sit upon your doorstep, what would you do with him? You would have to take him into your house or leave him to suffer. Private families do not wish to take the burden of the sick. Consequently, in self-defence, hospitals are built so that any wanderer coming to a house, dying, or suffering from any disease, may immediately be packed off to a hospital and not become a burden upon private charity. The fact that many diseases are contagious rendered hospitals necessary for the preservation of the lives of the citizens. The same thing is true of the asylums. People do not, as a rule, generally want to take all the children into their families who happen to have no fathers and mothers. So they endow and build an asylum where those children can be sent—and where they can be whipped according to law. Nobody wants an insane stranger in his house. The consequence is, that the community, to get rid of these people, to get rid of the trouble, build public institutions and send them there.

Now, then, to come to the point, to answer the interrogatory often flung at us from the pulpit, What institutions have Infidels built? In the first place, there have not been many Infidels for many years and, as a rule, a known Infidel cannot get very rich, for the reason that the Christians are so forgiving and loving they boycott him. If the average Infidel, freely stating his opinion, could get through the world himself, for the last several hundred years, he has been in good luck. But as a matter of fact there have been some Infidels who have done some good, even from a Christian standpoint. The greatest charity ever established in the United States by a man—not by a community to get rid of a nuisance, but by a man who wished to do good and wished that good to last after his death—is the Girard College in the city of Philadelphia. Girard was an Infidel. He gained his first publicity by going like a common person

into the hospitals and taking care of those suffering from contagious diseases—from cholera and small-pox. So there is a man by the name of James Lick, an Infidel, who has given the finest observatory ever given to the world, and it is a good thing for an Infidel to increase the sight of men. The reason people are theologians is because they cannot see. Mr. Lick has increased human vision, and I can say right here that nothing has been seen through the telescope calculated to prove the astronomy of Joshua. Neither can you see with that telescope a star that bears a Christian name. The reason is that Christianity was opposed to astronomy. So astronomers took their revenge, and now there is not one star that glitters in all the vast firmament of the boundless heavens that has a Christian name. Mr. Carnegie has been what they call a public-spirited man. He has given millions of dollars for libraries and other institutions, and he certainly is not an orthodox Christian.

Infidels, however, have done much better even than that. They have increased the sum of human knowledge. John W. Draper, in his work on *The Intellectual Development of Europe*, has done more good to the American people and to the civilised world than all the priests in it. He was an Infidel. Buckle is another who has added to the sum of human knowledge. Thomas Paine, an Infidel, did more for this country than any other man who ever lived in it.

Most of the colleges in this country have, I admit, been founded by Christians, and the money for their support has been donated by Christians, but most of the colleges of this country have simply classified ignorance, and I think the United States would be more learned than it is to-day if there had never been a Christian college in it. But whether Christians gave or Infidels gave has nothing to do with the probability of the Jonah story or with the probability that the mark on the dial went back ten degrees to prove that a little Jewish king was not going to die of a boil. And if the Infidels are all stingy and the Christians are all generous it does not even tend to prove that three men were in a fiery furnace heated seven times hotter than was its wont without even scorching their clothes.

The best college in this country—or, at least, for a long time the best—was the institution founded by Ezra Cornell. That is a school where people try to teach what they know instead of what they guess. Yet Cornell University was attacked by every orthodox college in the United States at the time it was founded, because they said it was without religion.

Everybody knows that Christianity does not tend to generosity. Christianity says: "Save your own soul, whether anybody else saves his or not." Christianity says: "Let the great ship go down. You get into the little life-boat of the gospel and paddle ashore, no matter what becomes of the rest." Christianity says you must love God, or something in the sky, better than you love your wife and children. And the Christian, even when giving, expects to get a very large compound interest in another world. The Infidel who gives asks no return except the joy that comes from relieving the wants of another.

Again, the Christians, although they have built colleges, have built them for the purpose of spreading their superstitions, and have poisoned the minds of the world, while the Infidel teachers have filled the world with light. Darwin did more for mankind than if he had built a thousand hospitals. Voltaire did more than if he had built a thousand asylums for the insane. He will prevent thousands from going insane that otherwise might be driven into insanity by the "glad tidings of great joy." Haeckel is filling the world with light.

I am perfectly willing that the results of the labors of Christians and the labors of Infidels should be compared. Then let it be understood that Infidels have been in this world but a very short time. A few years ago there were hardly any. I can remember when I was the only Infidel in the town where I lived. Give us time and we will build colleges in which something will be taught that is of use. We hope to build temples that will be dedicated to reason and common sense, and where every effort will be made to reform mankind and make them better and better in this world.

I am saying nothing against the charity of Christians; nothing against any kindness or goodness. But I say the Christians, in my judgment, have done more harm than they have done good. They may talk of the asylums they have built, but they have not built asylums enough to hold the people who have been driven insane by their teachings. Orthodox religion has opposed liberty. It has opposed investigation and free thought. If all the churches in Europe had been observatories, if the cathedrals had been universities where facts were taught and where nature was studied, if all the priests had been real teachers, this world would have been far, far beyond what it is to-day.

There is an idea that Christianity is positive and Infidelity is negative. If this be so, then falsehood is positive and

truth is negative. What I contend is that Infidelity is a positive religion; that Christianity is a negative religion. Christianity denies and Infidelity admits. Infidelity stands by facts; it demonstrates by the conclusions of the reason. Infidelity does all it can to develop the brain and the heart of man. That is positive. Religion asks man to give up this world for one he knows nothing about. That is negative. I stand by the religion of reason. I stand by the dogmas of demonstration.

Acid Drops.

We understand that the King's speeches are all written for him. The allusions to "God" may therefore be taken as perfunctory. The "blessing of God" was well to the front in his Majesty's various speeches at Newcastle-on-Tyne. But what a pity it was that the "blessing of God" did not rest upon the weather! The rain came down in a perfect deluge while the people were waiting in myriads to see their sovereign, and most of them got wet through to the skin. In view of the compliments to "God" in the prepared speeches the Deity might have been a little more considerate.

Mr. Haldane's piety was not notorious, but he placed it in evidence during his speech at the Soldiers' and Sailors' Homes at Pimlico. After stating that he was "not connected with any particular denomination," but that his sense of religion was no less real, he said: "I have a profound conviction that, unless you devote yourselves to awakening in the men in your Army and Navy a sense of their infinite worth, a sense of the eternal that is in them, you will never succeed in your work. Ah! ladies and gentlemen, to awaken that sense in any man is worth something, for it makes him a new man, a different man." Perhaps it does. But are we to believe that the members of the House of Commons have all been made "new" in this sense? If not, it is *their* conversion that should be sought. If they are converted, how is it that they form so many parties in more or less vehement hostility to each other? Ought not their "sense of the eternal" to produce greater harmony? The truth is, we take it, that Mr. Haldane uses religious phraseology to express nothing more than the importance of seriousness of character. We all know the value of that, but even a large amount of it does not render the possessor of "infinite worth." This is the language of exaggeration.

Mr. Haldane would probably wish he had held his tongue if he found that the soldiers and sailors had accepted his advice and become (say) Tolstoyian Christians. They would refuse to fight then, and regiments would have to be disbanded and battleships paid off. From all this we dare say the right honorable gentleman is ready to pray "Good Lord deliver us."

Rev. F. B. Meyer is following the example of "General" Booth and is going round his diocese—we beg pardon, the Baptist Union churches in the Eastern and Midland Counties—on a motor-car. These Kingdom-Come gentry always know how to get hold of a good thing on earth. Just fancy the Lord Jesus Christ knocking about on a motor-car! They would not have caught him so easily at Jerusalem, and there might not have been any crucifixion, in which case there would have been no Rev. F. B. Meyer. What a shocking idea!

Mr. Hubert Bland, that remarkable Fabian, who, according to his writings, associates with few people below the peerage, contributes to the *Chronicle* a review of Mr. G. M. Trevelyan's book on George Meredith. Mr. Trevelyan points out that Browning was brave with his belief in God and a future life, and that Meredith is quite as brave without that belief. Meredith never talks about Father God; he talks about Mother Earth, and speaks of her as man's only visible friend—which is pure Secularism. Naturally, this view of things upsets Mr. Hubert Bland. "That a philosophy," he says, "so insufficient, so inadequate, should satisfy so vigorous and intellectual a soul as George Meredith's is one of life's puzzling things." We offer Mr. Hubert Bland our condolence.

Southport Free Churchmen wanted to hold open-air religious services on Sunday nights. With their usual modesty they applied for the use of the public square in the very heart of the town. Of course the Town Council had to refuse the application. But very likely the Free Churchmen feel that the godly were ever persecuted.

The awakening of China goes on apace. There are now 8,700 Chinese students, from seventeen provinces, all belonging to the educated and official classes, learning all they can at Tokio. That is the serious drama. And now comes the low comedy. The Y. M. C. A. of China has decided to make an effort to win those students for Christ. It is a million to one that nothing will be won but the salaries of the agents.

The world is moving on, and the millennium is at hand. Darwin's reign is already a thing of the past. "Darwinism has been weighed and found wanting. His pretensions in the *Origin of Species* are totally groundless as explanations of results." Yes. Darwin's "theory has come to the end of its tether." In 1859 it first saw the light of day, and the world had no welcome for it. Indeed, desperate efforts were made to strangle it in its infancy. But it lived and waxed strong. "In the 'seventies it began to gain ground rapidly, in all directions. In the 'eighties, Darwin's influence was supreme and dominant in technical research. In the 'nineties, a few hesitating expressions of doubt were heard; these gradually swelled to a chorus of voices, aiming at the overthrow of Darwinism." And now at last it is quite dead, the burial service has just been read, the grave is being filled up, and the tombstone, with a suitable inscription, stands ready to mark the spot. If anybody doubts this report, let him read two notable treatises, the one an article by Professor Zochler, of the University of Greiswald, in the *Beweis des Glaubens*, and the other a book by the veteran and world-renowned philosopher, Edward von Hartmann, which has just appeared under the title *Der Niedergang des Darwinismus*. This is the most momentous piece of news conceivable! Let Haeckel hide his diminished head, and mourn in the solitude of his shame!

By the way, Zochler's and Hartmann's testimony is confirmed by Professor Fleischmann, who has just published a book, the burden of which is that "the Darwinian theory has not a single fact in nature to confirm it, and that it is not the result of scientific research, but of imagination." Well, really, what next? Have these German philosophers no conscience, no sense of the dignity of truthfulness? As a matter of fact, Darwinism was never so much alive as it is at this moment. It is still but a theory, it is true; but it has been adopted by practically all living scientists as the only satisfactory working hypothesis. Even Sir Oliver Lodge, in these his theological days, builds upon it as a solid foundation.

An American divine, the Rev. Dr. McKim, has just written a volume entitled *The Problem of the Pentateuch*, in which he seeks to demolish the Graf-Wellhausen theory of composite authorship. But what would be the advantage if the contentions of the Higher Criticism were utterly discredited? To Bible worshipers there would be none, but Infidelity would reap a golden harvest of unanswerable arguments. If Moses wrote the Pentateuch we must pronounce him the most stupid author that ever lived. The Mosaic Economy is a confused mass of contradictions, anachronisms, absurdities, and falsehoods, and the only thing that makes it even intelligible is the supposition that it was elaborated slowly through many centuries by a priestly class, which was at enmity with the prophetic school.

To pick and choose among alleged miracles is the height of absurdity. To swallow the Resurrection whole, and then boggle at the Virgin Birth, is to be guilty of the worst type of inconsistency. This is vigorously emphasised by the Rev. Dr. Briggs, the quondam horetic kicked out by the Presbyterian Church of America, in the current number of the *North American Review*. Dr. Briggs has no difficulty in accepting the Virgin Birth, and no honest Christian should have. The argument is that "if angels exist, if there is a spiritual world, if there are spiritual relations between mankind and that spiritual world, if an incarnation of a pre-existing divine person were necessary to human salvation; even if unique and unexampled in history, the Virgin Birth may be beyond the domain of historical criticism, but it is not impossible in itself." Dr. Briggs is perfectly logical, but those tremendous *ifs* cannot so easily be disposed of. If you substitute an equal series of *if not's*, not only the Virgin Birth, but all miracles alike, must of necessity be given up.

The Children's Committee of the Metropolitan Asylums' Board report that the giving a penny a week pocket, or good conduct, money to the children in the homes for the feeble-minded, works out satisfactorily. The children are allowed to dispose of the money as they wish, and there seems to be a run amongst them on prayer-books and Bibles. Which is natural. For did not the late Bishop of Exeter, at the confirmation of thirty-eight lunatics in an asylum, say that he

found such persons peculiarly susceptible to religious influences?

The *Christian* complains of the action of the London County Council in providing military bands to play in the parks, and drawing tens of thousands of people from divine service. Thus bad begins, but worse remains behind. There is a still greater danger in "the obscene and blasphemous utterances of Secularists," who "attract crowds almost as large as does the band-stand." Evidently the danger is real. You may see that by the *Christian's* foamy language, "Obscene and blasphemous" only means that the godly are in a rage. Few people are good losers.

The forty-fourth annual meeting of the "Mission to French-speaking Foreigners in Great Britain" was held in London on Thursday last. We are not quite sure what the mission is supposed to do for these poor benighted French people—probably it is to impress Frenchwomen with the danger of walking alone in the streets of Christian London during the late evening. We have never heard of a mission in Paris for the purpose of looking after English visitors, but if one were established it might do something to check the escapades of those to whom the chief interest of a visit lies in its enabling them to behave in a way that would cause people at home to open their eyes in astonishment. But it is only in England, perhaps, that there exists enough bad taste for such societies to flourish. Or is it that only in England is there sufficient scope for needy religious adventurers to display their talent in the art of "spoofing" the credulous?

The Rev. E. H. Etheridge, in an article in *East and West*, points out that the natives in Mashonaland are very keen on education, and advises that the education given should be under the control of the Church and should be industrial in character. Which being interpreted means that if the Church is placed in control, it will see that the Mashona's desire for education is exploited so as to render him of economical advantage to his white masters. Whether the natives will benefit thereby is another question.

Another answer to prayer! Bishop Macsherry, of Cape Colony, writes in the *Church Times* that "for years past" special prayers have been offered in his diocese for the reunion of Christendom. He does not say what the effect has been in South Africa, but here in England it has produced—the Education Bill!

The Rev. T. Waugh, Wesleyan Methodist, is a go-ahead, devil-may-care, progressive kind of a thinker. He has just reached the conclusion that there are no children in hell. He says further: "If I thought that there were, I could not ever give God respect." Brave man! But only think of a religion which entitles a man to the title of advanced thinker because he does not believe in a God who will burn little children for ever and ever! Of course Mr. Waugh still believes in hell, only he reserves it for adults. Perhaps one day he will develop to the point of realising that hell for adults, provided by an omnipotent and all-loving Deity, is really as brutal as providing it for children. A little more imagination would prevent Mr. Waugh having respect for a God who provided hell for anybody. There is only one person deserving a place in the Christian hell, and that is the originator of the institution.

The Rev. J. Ossian Davies, in the *Examiner* for July 12, tells a story about Morrison, the first missionary to China. As he stood alone on the deck of the ship that conveyed him, someone asked: "Mr. Morrison, do you think that you will make an impression upon 400,000,000 Chinese?" "No, sir," was the reply; "but I believe that God will." Then why has God not done it? If God exists, and is in Christ, these Chinese ought to have been made Christians long, long ago. God must have sadly neglected his duty; and, in his absence, his professional representatives are notoriously impotent.

The Rev. C. L. Drawbridge, M.A., in his book, entitled *Is Religion Undermined?* assures us that Materialism is discredited. "In its last analysis," he says, "matter is found to be only a mode of force." Indeed! But who has made this final analysis of matter, and found it to be only a mode of force? The statement is unspeakably silly. No man living knows what matter is. Certainly no scientist has ever succeeded in analysing it. There are many theories as to what it is, but no theorist is so ineffably foolish as to say that in its last analysis matter is found to be immaterial, or, in other words, that matter is not matter.

But Mr. Drawbridge is incorrigible. He goes on to make this astounding statement: "Force, when analysed, is the expression of will; and will is the quality of a person." How beautifully simple it all is! But, pray, who has ever analysed force and found it to be the expression of will? Force is as great a mystery as matter. All we know is that matter is in a state of perpetual motion. That all chemical processes and physical phenomena are the expression of personal will is a wild assertion, unsupported by a single scrap of evidence.

That Freethought is spreading among the people is evident from the fact that, at a large gathering of lay preachers held recently, it was argued that "the methods of the Church must be reorganised to prevent young men from breaking away." Young men do break away, and they will continue to break away in ever-increasing numbers. And there is not the least chance of the process being stopped or prevented by such books as the one referred to by Mr. Drawbridge.

Rev. Vicars A. Boyle, of Portslade Vicarage, Brighton, in a letter to the *Westminster Gazette* makes the following complaint:—

"In America even the reading of the Bible, the recitation of the Lord's Prayer, and the singing of a hymn have, in places, been opposed, and the Supreme Court of Wisconsin has ruled that the Bible itself is a 'sectarian book.'"

Evidently the reverend gentleman regards this as terrible. We find it perfectly satisfactory. We believe there is much more wisdom in the Supreme Court of Wisconsin than there is in Portslade Vicarage, Brighton. Unquestionably the Bible is a sectarian book. It is a sectarian book to Buddhists, Brahmans, Mohammedans, and Freethinkers. That is a good beginning, for it includes three-fourths of the human race. But that is not all. There is not one Bible, there are several Bibles, and each one is sectarian to the readers of the others. The Jews have one Bible, the Protestants have another, and the Roman Catholics have another—to say nothing of Mormons, Jezreelites, and all the other Christian small fry. Take whichever Bible you please, and you will find it is a sectarian book to all the rest of the Bibliotators. So that what the Rev. Vicars A. Boyle regards with so much horror is simply a plain matter of fact.

Good old Cromwell-Clifford! He believes that the House of Lords will probably strike Clause VI. out of the Education Bill, and such an amendment must be resisted, but not so far as "to wrock a Bill which does so much for education." Now the Bill does *nothing* for education; there is not a word about education in it from beginning to end; what the reverend gentleman really means is that the Non-conformists have now got the best chance they ever had or ever will have—and they must make the most of it while it lasts.

Rev. John Wakeford, vicar of St. Margarets', Anfield, must be a comical character—though perhaps he doesn't know it. He has just been telling the world that the Church has always felt that ignorance was one of her deadliest foes, and that all through the ages the Churchmen had been the promoters of education. So the Church loves education, does she? Well, she hugs it—like a bear. Her affection is apt to be fatal.

Another remark of Mr. Wakeford's was that a large amount of foul literature had sprung up side by side with State education. If this were true, it would only be natural; for State education was based upon the Bible, and the Bible is, in some parts, one of the foulest books in the world. Children introduced to stories like that of Lot and his daughters might well develop a taste for "foul literature."

Among the advocates of Secular Education must be numbered the Rev. W. Manning, of Leytonstone. Mr. Manning does not advocate Secular Education on the grounds put forward in this journal, but because he believes that children are quite incapable of understanding the Bible, and if it is forced upon them are almost certain to misunderstand it. "The child," he says, "is better without the Bible until it can be taught it intelligently.....I do not suggest any age for the introduction of the child to the Bible. When he can take the Oxford or Cambridge Senior Local he is thought to be able to read *Julius Caesar*, then let him begin his Bible." A child's religion, says Mr. Manning, should be simple; "let him learn to love his mother and speak the truth, and he requires no other sanction than natural affection for such a religion." And when the child is old enough to have the Bible given to it, Mr. Manning advises "Tell him honestly what you believe about the Book."

The advice is good enough, if only people would act upon it. Nor would Freethinkers raise any serious objection to it in practice. No Freethinker has any desire to keep the Bible away from children, only to give it them at the proper time and under proper conditions. We agree with Mr. Manning that natural affection is the basis upon which to build child morality and that religion is quite out of place in this connection. And if only Christians would say honestly what they thought about the Bible—not only to children, but also to adults—what a revolution there would be!

"The genius of the Christian religion lies in self-sacrifice," says Dr. Gore. This may be true, but not in the sense Dr. Gore implies. For the sacrifice has been all one sided. The "genius" of Christianity has involved, and often demanded, the sacrifice of just those frames of mind and conditions of existence that go far towards making a healthy human life possible. Even the dwelling upon sacrifice is an unhealthy symptom. Sacrifice may be necessary at times, and when necessary is so far admirable. But it is a very poor foundation on which to build human society. A tithe of the energy spent on inculcating self-sacrifice as a means of alleviating wrong, if properly directed would sweep the wrong itself out of existence. The best teaching is not that which inculcates sacrifice, but that which destroys the necessity for its existence. And is not the mere need for pointing out this an evidence of what little good Christianity has been in the world?

Father Stanton is terribly wrath with the "Higher Critics." He says: "They have taken away the Old Testament, and they want to demolish the New. They tell us that the Gospel of John was never written by John; and as for the Synoptic Gospels, there is very little left of them. And if they are right, we are all lost, Protestants and Catholics; and the Catholic priest had better take down his altar, and put off his chasuble; and the Protestant minister had better take down his pulpit, and tear off his gown." It is sad, but it is true. Indeed, the situation is far more serious than Father Stanton depicts, for the Higher Criticism is, after all, only a symptomatic expression of a growing feeling of profound disgust with all supernaturalism—Christianity included.

Puritanism has been claiming a lot of things lately; it is left for Mr. Sylvester Horne to claim that a deal of modern humor is due to its influence. Among other names cited in support of this thesis is that of Mark Twain! We wonder where on earth Mr. Horne got his information from. Was it from *The Innocents Abroad*? or was it from Mark Twain himself? In either case, Mr. Horne is not a very brilliant demonstration of the truth of his statement, although the claim itself does illustrate a not very admirable trait of Christian professors from Ananias to Torrey.

"All true freedom depends on the Bible." So said the Rev. Mr. Aked, of Liverpool, when speaking in London lately. Perhaps he will tell us how the freedom of old Greece and Rome depended upon a book that the Greeks and Romans never heard of. Mr. Aked is as accurate as other preachers when the spirit of the Lord is upon him.

Jesus Christ brought "the religion of love" into the world some nineteen hundred years ago. His religion got established in Germany, as well as in other parts of Europe. We read that "Germany is now experimenting with a new automatic repeating rifle capable of firing five shots in ten seconds." There seems to be a mistake somewhere.

How these Christians love one another, and with what an exuberance of Christian charity the members of one sect speak of those of another. In the *Christian World* for June 12, appears a postcard which a London evangelist sent to one of the ministers of the Free Churches who was organising a bazaar in a town of some 50,000 inhabitants. The precious document reads thus:—

"DEAR SIR,—Had promised to attend bazaar, but on reading the circular respecting same find that you allow *Infidel Unitarians* (trebly underlined) to assist in the good work. This is both a sin and a snare according to God's own Word. I cannot help or approve of sin by believers.—
Respectfully yours —"

Comment would be superfluous.

The Rev. J. H. Jowett, M.A., Chairman of the Congregational Union of England and Wales, thus characterises the present condition of things in the Church:—

"What is the spectacle which the modern Church presents to the world? It presents the spectacle of manifold companies, assembling with 'all the exhilaration of fighting

Englishmen,' for the purpose of engaging in internecine strife. When the man of the world listens and he hears the loud clash of the Church's arms, he can be moderately sure that we are not engaged with a common foe, but that we are turning the weapons against ourselves."

And yet the various sects which thus assail one another, and injure one another, and vilify one another, and seek to put one another out, are said to compose the Church which is inhabited by the Holy Ghost and guided by the risen Lord! No wonder the world looks on with disgust and laughs the august claim to scorn!

The other day, the Rev. G. Johnston Ross, M.A., of Cambridge, preached in London, and among many "happy sentences" came this one: "Worship is not a monologue, but a responsive dialogue." Well, worship, in a fairly large church, is neither a monologue nor a dialogue, but a polylogue: in worship there are many talking, mainly through an official representative—talking into empty space. No response from empty space has ever been heard, only some people claim that they feel the response in their own hearts. They talk to an imaginary being, and imagine that they get replies from him.

We are told that God was lonely until man appeared, or that God created man solely in order to satisfy the insatiable craving in his own heart for intelligent and sympathetic society. He wanted a friend with whom he could enter into richest fellowship. If that is true, how can we explain man's belated appearance? Why was he created last of all?

Mr. R. J. Campbell says: "All the good in you, and all the good that will ever be yours, belongs to God." If that is true, the fact is a gross insult to mankind and a tremendous slur on the Creator. We are naturally evil, wicked, and yet God made us, and made us so badly that he must clothe us in his own goodness, or cast us into hell as hopelessly bad. The fact, however, is that goodness is a product of growth and development, or a thing learned or acquired in the school of experience. Every good and perfect gift is from below, and cometh up in the evolutionary process.

The Rev. David Smith has inaugurated his Correspondence Column in the *British Weekly*, and the first item of information he imparts to us is that God is "the chief sufferer in the Universe." No wonder heaven is such a dull place. Mr. Smith must be right, because the Rev. F. B. Meyer said the same thing a few Sundays ago. Well, being "the chief sufferer in the Universe," God naturally "inflicts suffering," and is not "outside of our suffering." Mr. Smith does not tell us whether or not he received this information in the form of a revelation from Jesus Christ. It is all fudge. Suffering is a thing to be got rid of as quickly as possible; not an infliction from a suffering deity, but the retribution that accompanies imperfection, ignorance, and indifference, or a concomitant of growth and development.

After all, Mr. Smith admits that the problem of suffering is insoluble; but if the problem is insoluble, how on earth can he affirm that God inflicts suffering and uses it for disciplinary purposes? Does he not thereby throw on God a stupendous burden of responsibility? If there be a deity, Oliver Wendell Holmes' question is natural: "How can he bear it, this ball of anguish for ever spinning around before him, and the great hum of its misery going up to his ears?" He could not, and would not, bear it if he existed. On the assumption that God exists the problem of suffering is wholly inexplicable; but in the absence of such an assumption we can understand, and are not in the least surprised at it.

Strenuous efforts are being made just now to revive the late Welsh revival, and to resurrect Mr. Evan Roberts the revivalist. But the glory has departed and cannot be recalled. Many of the churches have lost confidence in the movement, and in many quarters the revivalist is looked upon as to a great extent a humbug. Then the intellectual eyes of the people generally are being opened and already there are signs that the next great popular movement in Wales will be a revolution against the long and cruel tyranny of superstition, which will result in a general emancipation of the people and in the reign of knowledge and common sense.

The religious press is gloating just now over what it calls "remarkable discoveries in Bible lands." In one journal we read of "the romance of modern explorations," "light from the monuments," "discoveries in Babylonia, in Palestine, in Egypt, in Arabia, in other lands," and the descriptive language

employed is a miracle of exaggeration. And yet, when we come to examine these marvellous discoveries, we find there is nothing in them. Not one of them bears in the remotest degree upon the Problem of the Old Testament as treated by the Higher Critics. Not one of them verifies a single Biblical incident upon the historicity of which criticism has cast a doubt. But the religious newspapers are in the seventh heaven of delight over the alleged discomfiture of the enemies of the Word of God.

Nearly two thousand years ago Jesus Christ preached the Sermon on the Mount, and there has just been a discussion in the *British Weekly* on what he meant by it. After all, it doesn't matter very much—now.

Landlordism, and its vices, come as naturally to the Salvation Army as to other bodies. The path over Saddleback Hill from Leigh to Hadleigh Castle has been used by visitors for any number of years, but it was all of a sudden closed by the Salvation Army which has one of its "Colonies" near the spot. No harm was done by the visitors, for the beery trippers never got so far from Southend; yet, in the true spirit of landlordism, the Salvation Army had to go and close the pathway up. This was resented by the Hadleigh and Leigh people; and, headed by Mr. Hawkes, the chairman of the Hadleigh parish council, they pulled General Booth's obstruction down. We suppose there will be a lawsuit, but, however it is decided, the public will know what to think of these Salvationists. General Booth's kingdom, like Christ's, is not of this world; at the same time, he picks up all he can find here as he goes along.

Torrey and Alexander are taking a three-months' rest. Fancy the souls that will go to hell during that period! Let us hope the firm will start business promptly in the autumn. In the meanwhile, Old Nick must be delighted. For when Torrey is on the warpath the Father of Lies feels like taking a back seat.

The plot of land the Manchester unemployed have "taken possession" of belongs to the Church. There is a lot more land belonging to the same owner in all parts of the country, and it will be amusing to see the Manchester example widely copied. After all, what belongs to the Church is supposed to belong to the Lord; and, as the unemployed are the Lord's children, they would only be settling down on the family estate.

An expensive Congregational Institute has just got into the foundation-stone-laying stage at Barnet. We see that "ample provision is to be made for games, including billiards." Fancy! What a change since Christianity was first started! Can anybody imagine Jesus Christ playing "a hundred up" with Simon Peter?

Rev. T. W. M. Lund, addressing some Colonial troopers at Liverpool, wailed over the military and naval decadence of England. The reverend gentleman said he felt humiliated; our rulers "leave us naked to our foes and try to make us believe we are secure." Considering that this country spends far more than any other country in the world on its army and navy, Parson Lund's outbreak is peculiarly rich. Besides, he is an apostle of the meek and lowly Jesus, who taught "resist not evil" and "if one smite thee on the one cheek, turn unto him the other also." Mr. Lund appears to have got into the wrong army.

Calvinism was one and the same thing in Geneva, in Scotland, in Old and New England. If there was a wedding, they had a sermon; if a funeral, then a sermon; if a war, or small-pox, or a comet, or cankerworms, or a deacon died, —still a sermon: Nature was a pulpit; the churchwarden or tithing-man was a petty persecutor; the presbytery, a tyrant; and in many a house in country places the poor children found seven sabbaths in a week.—Emerson.

HARDLY WORTH WHILE.

"John," said a Scotch minister to one of his congregation "I hope you hold family worship regularly?"
 "Ay," said John, "in the time o' year o't."
 "But what do you mean, John?"
 "Ye ken, sir, we canna see in the winter nights."
 "But, John, can't you buy candles?"
 "Weel, I could," replied John, "but in that case I'm fearin' the cost would overgang the profit."

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

(Lectures suspended during the Summer.)

To Correspondents.

C. COHEN'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—July 22, a. and e., Victoria Park; 29, a. and e., Brockwell Park.

H. WEBBER writes: "I wish to thank you for sending me the *Freethinker* the past six weeks. It has indeed been a pleasant surprise to me. Being brought up in a Christian atmosphere, I held hazy and erroneous ideas of things, apart from religion. I therefore wish to thank you doubly for the benefit I have received. I intend taking your paper as long as I retain possession of my faculties." A letter like this should encourage our friends to go on supplying us with the addresses of persons who might become regular readers of the *Freethinker* if it were only introduced to them. We are ready to send a gratuitous copy of the paper post free to any such address for six consecutive weeks.

A. T. STEVENS.—Thanks. See paragraph.

C. F. G. BARKER.—See "Acid Drops." Thanks also for your good wishes. Let us know if your letter appears.

J. PRUETT.—Thanks.

W. JONES.—Our experiences with the chaplain during our imprisonment for Freethought in Holloway Gaol were related in the book entitled *Prisoner for Blasphemy*, a revised edition of which will be published before long, probably in the present year.

W. CROMACK.—Pleased to read your letter.

ALCHEN.—Thanks.

W. P. PEARSON.—All that was possible was done by Mr. Cohen.

R. L. M.—Your letter, etc., was forwarded to us. May there be better news in your next.

J. A. MORRIS.—Mr. Ramsey had already sent an obituary notice. Had he not done so yours would have been too late. We cannot guarantee the insertion of such things if they do not reach us till Tuesday morning.

E. P. BEER (Capetown) writes: "I am now reading with delight my weekly *Freethinker*, to which I am greatly attached."

G. ROLEFF.—Glad to hear that the Liverpool Branch picnic was a great success.

W. P. BALL.—Many thanks for cuttings.

W. LEACH writes: "I thank you very much for the copies of the *Freethinker* you have been kind enough to send me, every one of which I have read with a great amount of interest and pleasure, and I can only regret that your paper did not come under my notice many years ago."

THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED, office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

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

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

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

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

Sugar Plums.

Mr. Cohen and Mr. Lloyd have both helped considerably with this week's "Acid Drops," and one or the other, or both together, will continue this assistance until the end of August, in order that Mr. Foote may have at least some relief from his editorial duties.

During the dog-days Mr. Foote must beg the indulgence of his correspondents. It is impossible for him to write all the letters that are quite legitimately called for by "saints" in all parts of the country. Even when he is not trying to get a little holiday he finds it difficult to keep his correspondence up to date; and, of course, it is more than difficult now.

The holiday season is a good one for "saints" to be extra active in pushing the circulation of the *Freethinker*. In moving about many opportunities are found of placing a copy of this journal in fresh hands. We hope our friends will avail themselves of those opportunities. For there are very many people who would gladly take a journal like the *Freethinker* if they were only apprised of its existence.

We are still ready to send a gratuitous copy of this journal post-free for six consecutive weeks to any addresses our friends forward to us as that of persons likely to become subscribers if the paper were brought to their attention. Such addresses should be forwarded to our shop manager, Mr. W. A. Vaughan.

Last week's *Yarmouth Mercury* contained a long, able, and interesting letter on "Sunday Observance" from the pen of Mr. J. W. de Caux, in reply to a sermon by the vicar at the parish church. We should like to see the vicar drawn into a controversy with his chief heretical parishioner. It would be an entertaining spectacle. We think it would also be instructive.

The financial statement given at the Annual Meeting of the South Shields Branch showed a small balance in hand, and the General Report a satisfactory year's work. The lectures had not been so numerous as in previous years, but all were delivered in the Royal Assembly Hall. Hetton Branch had been assisted in various ways, and now an attempt was being made by Stanley to revive the Federation Scheme for the North of England Branches. A combined picnic gathering for the district is practically settled to take place at Marsden on Sunday, August 5. The election of officers for the ensuing year resulted as follows:—President, Mr. S. M. Peacock; Chairman, J. Hannan; Treasurer, J. Fothergill; Secretary, R. Chapman.

Some Presidential Notes.

BEING invited by the Trade Unionist and Socialist Committee to speak at their demonstration in Trafalgar-square last Sunday afternoon, I found myself in a position of some complexity. The resolution to be proposed dealt with several matters in which the National Secular Society is not, and cannot well be, officially concerned. But the demonstration was to be in relation to the Education Bill, and the resolution contained a clear declaration of the necessity of Secular Education. What was to be done? I could not support the whole of the resolution, yet I could support a very considerable part of it. On the whole, I thought it best to speak. But I thought I had better make my position plain beforehand. Accordingly I wrote explaining it to the Secretary, and stating that I would gladly attend the demonstration if it were clearly understood that I would speak in support of Secular Education, and Secular Education only. After some delay, which made it too late for a more definite announcement in last week's *Freethinker*, the Secretary informed me that the Committee welcomed my co-operation on the lines I suggested. So I went to Trafalgar-square on Sunday afternoon. To do this—as I am now living in pure air some forty miles from London—I had to undergo a good deal of inconvenience. Sunday travelling on the line I had to go by is anything but a luxury. I had to start at ten o'clock in the morning, and I got home again at half-past ten at night. And all that time had to be expended in order to speak for a few minutes at a public meeting in the afternoon.

When I walked into Trafalgar-square a little before 3.30—the advertised time for the meeting to begin—there was only a handful of people present. I should say there were about two demonstrators to every three policemen. I shook hands with Miss Vance, the N. S. S. secretary, and with Mr. J. T. Lloyd, neither of whom I had seen for ten days. I noticed a number of Secular "saints," and more came rolling in as I stood on the plinth of the Nelson column. Presently the procession of demonstrators came up from the Thames Embankment, with a capital band playing the *Marseillaise*, and Trade Union and Socialist banners, which gave a welcome touch of color to the drab surroundings. Higher up on the plinth a lot of Socialist Sunday-school children were massed with a liberal display of red flags about them; and in the course of the proceedings they sang a Socialist hymn about keeping the red flag flying.

The weather was not propitious. It had rained from one till two, and it was still threatening, although the sun gleamed out now and then quite cheerfully. At one time I thought we were in for a deluge, but the cloud-rack swept over us and only sprinkled us a little as it passed. There were to have been four platforms, but it was decided to have only one. The crowd growing larger, however, an overflow meeting was held on the east side of the column. Even then the crowd was not worthy of the occasion. In spite of the weather the Square might have been filled from the Nelson Column to the National Gallery if the business had been differently ordered. Had the demonstration been purely and simply in favor of Secular Education—which is the one point that arises in connection with the Education

Bill—I feel quite sure that a much larger number of people would have attended. The bigger a material platform is the more people can stand upon it; but the bigger an intellectual platform is the fewer people can stand upon it. A platform of that kind may be made so comprehensive as to accommodate only two persons; and the addition of another plank might easily leave the last man alone in his glory. Evidently, if a multitude are to act together, it must be upon the easiest lines of common agreement. And, after all, it was the attacks upon priestcraft, and the declarations that it must be cast right out of the nation's schools, that won the most applause from the meeting. Mr. Will Thorne, M.P., the chairman, saw this and struck the right note in a few manly opening words. Mr. Hyndman, too, who is a man of brains and a long-practised speaker, kept on the right track throughout. But one or two speakers forgot the object of the meeting altogether. One was eloquent about the wrongs of India and another about the iniquities of British rule in Egypt.

Another drawback was the want of adequate preparation. Nothing had been done, apparently, to counteract the press boycott. Even in *Reynolds'* I saw no announcement of the demonstration. Surely it would be better to have no demonstration at all than one that gives the enemy room to blasphemous.

Two clergymen were amongst the speakers—the Rev. S. D. Headlam, whom Secularists have good reason to like and respect, and the Rev. Conrad Noel. I did not hear of any Nonconformist minister being present.

Among the speakers I have already mentioned Mr. Will Thorne, M.P., and Mr. H. M. Hyndman. Mr. T. Richards, M.P., spoke well; a bright little speech was made by Mr. Bramley, of the *Clarion* Scouts; Mr. J. F. Green, of the International Arbitration and Peace Association, spoke after the fashion of his honest, intelligent face; and Mrs. Bridges-Adams spoke just as a woman should, letting her sex appear in the music of her voice, and not in an anti-masculine illogicality. My own speech was very brief. It was not a time for long speaking. Curiously enough, the pith of what I said was given in the *Daily News*, of all papers:—

“Mr. G. W. Foote, of the National Secular Society, spoke eulogistically of the anti-Clerical movement in France. What they had to do in England was to clear the priests and the parsons out of the schools—clear them all out, even ‘Archbishop Clifford.’ (Cheers and laughter.)

Really, that is what Secular Education means. It is the whole thing in a nutshell. I may add that I pointed out that the starvation of children was only a part of a great social question, that the key to all wise solution of it was education, and that true education was impossible while the schools were the battle-ground of the Churches. And the meeting agreed with me.

While I am writing in this way I may as well refer (once for all) to a matter in which Freethinkers are deeply interested. I mean the peaceful and orderly conduct of public meetings. Freedom of speech is above every party. It is like the sky which over-arches us all. Free discussion does not mean order at my meeting, and a row at somebody else's; it means order at *all* meetings; and whoever violates it is a traitor to the best interests of humanity. I deplore the hooliganism at the Woman Suffrage meeting at Manchester. But, at the same time, I venture to observe that not even ladies can expect to go about creating trouble without occasionally finding some. It is the nature of disorder to beget disorder. Suppose I were to ask Freethinkers to “go for” Dr. Clifford as the worst enemy of Secular Education; suppose I were to ask them to assemble outside his private residence, and let him know that they were about; would anybody believe that the right of public meeting was involved if the police told me to go elsewhere? I say nothing about dog-whips and slapping and kicking; I am only concerned with the more important question of the right of public meeting. If the ladies want to hold public meetings, I, for one, would defend their right against any attack; but rights involve duties—and there is a certain wise old proverb which says that you cannot eat your cake and have it too.

Coming to a very different matter, I beg to remind Mr. Joseph Symes's old friends that he is on board the *Runic* bound for London from Melbourne, and that he is due here on August 5. Whether he will arrive on that day I cannot tell—for there is many a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip in these chronologies. But I shall do my best to welcome my old friend and colleague back to his native shores. We must welcome him afterwards in a more public fashion.

G. W. FOOTE.

The Ten Commandments.

[A new Chapter in the Fourth Edition (1906) of *A New Catechism*, by M. M. Mangasarian, of Chicago.]

1. Q. Tell me something about the Ten Commandments.
 - A. It is believed both by Christians and Jews that the deity with his own finger, on the top of Mount Sinai, about 5,000 years ago, inscribed the Ten Commandments on two tables of stone.
2. Q. Upon whose testimony is this interesting story credited?
 - A. Upon that of a man called Moses, who claims he was present at the time.
3. Q. Upon whose testimony is *his* word accepted?
 - A. Upon his own; that is, if he is the author of the first five books of the Bible. If he is not, and many Christian scholars have their doubts on the subject, then, we are deprived even of the testimony of Moses that God wrote the Ten Commandments as above described.
4. Q. If Moses did not compose the Pentateuch, who did?
 - A. No one seems to know definitely.
5. Q. Then there is only anonymous testimony about the Ten Commandments?
 - A. That is all; but it is enough for people who are educated to believe without questioning.
6. Q. Why do they refuse to question?
 - A. They have been told that to believe without questioning is to show great reverence for God and his word, and that to doubt is a great crime punishable with death.
7. Q. Tell me more about the Ten Commandments.
 - A. It is believed that Moses brought down from the mountain the two tables of stone upon which God had inscribed the Ten Commandments, and that in a moment of irritation he threw them down and broke them in pieces.
8. Q. Is it possible?
 - A. There is nothing impossible to the credulous, except when it is found in a religion or a sect not their own.
9. Q. Continue.
 - A. God asked for a new set of tables to write upon, and Moses hewed two tables of stone “like unto the first,” and carried them again to the top of the mountain. But on this as on the former occasion, he forbade, upon penalty of instant death, anyone to follow him, or to be present during his interview with God.
10. Q. What became of these two tables of stone containing the hand-writing of God?
 - A. They are lost.
11. Q. If the first set of tables were broken, and the second are lost, how do we know what they contained?
 - A. We have no way of knowing, but where knowledge fails there is faith.
12. Q. Does believing a thing make it true?
 - A. If it did, all religions, even the most superstitious, would be true.
13. Q. Is the authority of the Ten Commandments very high?
 - A. The Jews and the Christians believe that the Ten Commandments contain the oldest and the most perfect moral teaching known to history, and that before the Ten Commandments were given there was scarcely any morality in the world outside the Jewish people.
14. Q. What is the First Commandment?
 - A. “Thou shalt have no other Gods before me.”
15. Q. Comment upon it.
 - A. It is not reasonable to suppose that an Infinite and Absolute Being would find it necessary to caution people against other gods. Only a being afraid of rivals and not certain of

his own ability to stand his ground would resort to measures of self protection. It is a humiliating appeal to mortals not to desert him for other gods. It also suggests a vanity unbecoming to a Universal Being. It is, besides, an admission that there are other gods. Only a tribal, partisan god, and one in competition with other gods, would aspire to be the exclusive god of any one people. It is also a most unfair command, in that, it is not an argument to enlighten the mind or convince the reason, but a *mandate*.

16. Q. What does the Second Commandment enjoin?
 A. To abstain from making "any graven image or any likeness of anything which is in heaven above or in the earth below, etc." This Commandment, like many others in the Decalogue, has never been observed. Yet it has been quoted to discourage art and retard industrial progress. The Catholics use many graven images in their worship, and so did the Jews during their sojourn in the wilderness.
17. Q. Do you mean to say that the Jews, notwithstanding the Second Commandment, made graven images?
 A. Yes, the brazen serpent, for instance, which they were commanded to make and to use as a cure for diseases of the body.
18. Q. Are there any other Commandments in the Decalogue which were violated by divine order?
 A. The Commandments:
 Thou shalt not steal,
 Thou shalt not commit adultery,
 Thou shalt not bear false witness, were frequently made null and void by counter commandments from the same source, to "spoil" the peoples they came in contact with; to kill and exterminate the Canaanites, or one another, which they did immediately after Moses came down from the mountain with the Ten Commandments. In commanding the Jews to seize the wives and daughters of their enemies; and in constantly representing the Gentile races as abominably corrupt, when all history shows their superiority in civilisation to these desert tribes, the God of the Bible breaks also the commandments against adultery and against bearing false witness.
19. Q. Speak about the Fourth Commandment.
 A. This Commandment sets apart Saturday as holy, and forbids all work on that day, such as even gathering wood to kindle a fire. Only the orthodox Jews observe this day. The Christians observe Sunday.
20. Q. By what authority have the Christians changed Saturday to Sunday?
 A. They have not the shadow of an excuse for taking liberties with the Ten Commandments, said to have been written by God himself. It was not likely when the deity appointed Saturday that he meant to let the Christians change it to Sunday.
21. Q. But why do the Christians observe Sunday?
 A. Because they believe that on that day Jesus arose from the grave.
22. Q. Why did God set apart Saturday?
 A. Because on that day he rested.
23. Q. The Christian Sunday, then, cannot possibly be observed for the same reason that God set apart Saturday?
 A. No, the two days have two entirely different objects.
24. Q. What other Commandments are there?
 A. The Fifth which says: "Honor thy father and thy mother that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee." This is imperfect, because it leaves out the duties of parents to their children, and in the second place, by holding out material rewards it taints the obedience

which it commands. Filial and parental love transcend considerations of a recompense.

25. Q. What is the Third Commandment?
 A. "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain." It is very likely that the Jews did not wish other peoples to know the name of their God, fearing that they might alienate His affections from them or bribe Him to go over to their side. The Jew was educated not to pronounce or mention the name of his God.
26. Q. Is not this Commandment quoted against swearing?
 A. It is, but in the Bible both the prophets and the apostles often swear in God's name, and in all Christian countries to this day the oath requires people to call God to witness.
27. Q. What is the scientific explanation of the origin of the Ten Commandments?
 A. Historical and scientific research has traced the greater number of Old Testament laws, legends, and institutions, to Babylonian sources. The Jews invented little, but borrowed and appropriated a great deal from their conquerors, the Assyrians, Persians and Babylonians!
28. Q. What is the moral value of the Ten Commandments?
 A. Its influence for good has been greatly impaired, as stated above, by counter commandments. In the next place, its failure to touch upon other important duties detracts greatly from its value. There is nothing in the Ten Commandments about the duty of intellectual honesty, about love and justice toward all men whether they believe as we do or not—about peace, about equality, about free government, about children's rights, about humanity to animals, about the sick and insane, etc., etc. The abridgment of the Ten Commandments into "Love to God and love to man," is not quite honest for the reason that in the Ten Commandments "man" means the Jew only.

What is Matter? What am I?

DUE reflection will remind everybody, who is able to think effectually, that all words are material forms, physical things which are utilised as relative representatives of other formulations of matter.

There are no physical forms in existence which do not, in some sense, in some degree, condition, and therefore in diverse ways concern, the operations of a human brain. A human brain is wholly dependent upon material forms for the acquisition and rational digestion of every sort and kind of information with which, in the course of its existence, the events thereof may store its area. A human being knows nothing relative to anything which is either inside or outside his cerebral organ, otherwise than in the material shape with which that sole organ of his understanding makes him conscious. When we have, in every sense, carefully investigated the whole of the thoroughly digested cerebral stores that we possess, verifying, step by step, the full meaning of every notion which they may engender, we shall certainly discover that matter is nature, the "matrix" of every form of life that exists, whether we name that form organic, inorganic, or otherwise. That which is here named life is the universally invariable property of matter in all its diverse shapes, and, in every sense, this property is its *sine quâ non*, its *morale*, its meaning, that which is identically one and unalterably the same, in all unlike things, in every form of matter, however diverse it may be.

As life and matter constitute one wholly indissoluble entity, one indestructible and indivisible reality, so it is that every form of matter is a form of life. In reality life is the *sine quâ non* of matter.

Personally I am an organised form of matter, an organisation of life, which matter itself can transform into other diverse forms, organic and inorganic, of its own self. Life is wholly unalterable, whilst all its forms are ever undergoing the divers processes which the continuity of their transformation involves.

To be a form of matter is to be a form of motion. We owe our consciousness to the specific way in which our brains are organised.

But is not our consciousness itself dependent upon motion?

Are we ever really conscious of anything that does not, in some manner, manifest motion?

Is not our planet always in motion as it performs its diurnal revolutions upon its own axis, whilst making its annual tour around the sun?

If our blood does not circulate within the area of our brain can we ever enjoy consciousness? Can this blood maintain our consciousness if a sufficiency of oxygen is not represented among the other forms of matter of which it is constituted, when it is in a normally health-giving condition? Again, are we not deprived of consciousness if our lungs do not perform their essential functions, thus enabling us to inhale oxygen and to exhale carbon, and in this manner to obtain the reanimation of our blood? Carbon and oxygen are inorganic forms of matter upon which our animation and re-animation are wholly dependent.

Hydrogen, again, is another inorganic form of matter which is essential to the constitution of water. If our organisms are not adequately provided with water of a suitable character, can the blood which is needful for the reanimation of our brains possess that degree of fluidity which its circulation requires?

Are not the operations of our cerebral organ dependent upon chemical combinations as well as on those other combinations usually characterised as physiological?

Are not chemical and physiological combinations both essential to the evolution of those other phenomena of which our organisms are the constant scene, and which are, generally speaking, signified by means of the term "biological"? What is the aim of biology but the realisation of the whole meaning of that actuality of which the word "Life" is employed as a representative?

I understand, from the teaching of my own experience, that which others have been taught by the verified evidence of their own senses; and this is, that if representative organisations of oxygen, hydrogen, and carbon were not present within us, we would be practically as unconscious as a block of granite or a pig of iron.

If my information be correct, a native of Carthage, in Africa, who is historically known under the name of "St. Augustin," had a certain assortment of notions relative to universal matter and its creations had been, at some previous period, generalised under a distinctive name, for which the English term "Christianity" is commonly taken to be an equivalent. In the writings of "St. Augustin" the following passage is, I understand, to be found: "*Anima, quia spiritus est, in sicco habitare non potest.*" In our language these words signify: "Soul, which is spirit, cannot dwell in a dry place."

Now, unless the words above quoted are not words which were, as has been asserted, written by "St. Augustin," it must be manifest to any adequately informed and unbiassed thinker that "St. Augustin" was really *au fond*, either consciously, or more or less unconsciously, a firm believer in the essential power of matter, in that liquid form of which hydrogen is one of the essential constituents, in engendering certain phenomena which he attributed to those fallacious cerebral creations commonly associated with the words "soul" and "spirit."

It has been said that words are the counters of wise men and the money of fools. It is certainly wise to be alive to the fact that the value of words is really relative, inasmuch as they are in themselves simply material forms that serve us as counters,

which we can employ to represent other forms of matter—namely, the actual things in question, the veritable coins signified; those, in fact, at which it is our aim to point.

The sole aim of the words I am writing is to "hold *Nature's own mirror* up to Nature." Matter is a combination of unlike things, and all its offspring are inherent representatives of this inevitable diversity.

Nature creates "mirrors" that reflect its creations as they *are*, and also other "mirrors" which reflect its own offspring as they *are not*.

Does not Nature need contrasting forms of itself in order to make its one self apparent?

Have we not seen certain combinations of glass and quicksilver that are called "mirrors" which terribly distort and misrepresent all objects reflected in, and by, them? Again, on the other hand, have we not known other "mirrors" which are true reflectors of the objects that are duly presented to them?

Light and darkness are ever unlike, but ever in touch.

"*Les extrêmes se touchent.*" What retains the touch between all extremes? Is it not that which is their common medium, their one universally distributed and invariable middle term, their unique "*morale*"—the one reality of Nature which eternalises its inevitably unlike children?

If our fathers and our mothers had not been unlike representatives of their one common "matrix," could they have brought us into existence?

It is life, the common property of all things, that makes all things "*akin*," despite their unlike shapes.

F. K. KINGSTON.

The Crucial Test.

"Thus saith the Lord," the strutting preacher cries,
With outstretched hands and upward rolling eyes;
"His mandates you should heed lest hell befall,
Flee from his wrath, I urge you, great and small."
Then, as he notes the cowering crowd below,
And strides across the rostrum to and fro,
Expounds the creed his Alma Mater taught
As only creed with full salvation fraught;
Warms to his work, first whispers and then roars,
And forth his stream of eloquence he pours,
You note, at "thirdly," that his cheeks are flushed,
At "fifthly," as his theme is madly rushed,
You note the perspiration starting from his brow
And thus, forwarned, receive the explosive "How?"
"How shall we escape?" so loud and shrill
That e'en the very rafters seem to thrill.

Bill Brown, a cowboy of the golden West,
With pants a fringe and dingy buckskin vest,
His broad sombrero of the choicest felt,
And two six-shooters dangling at his belt,
Came strolling past the church's open door
In nick of time to hear the parson's roar.
Whether in Long Beach drug-store by the sea,
Or Pasadena's famous hostelry,
Or what device of Prohibition's skill
Had, on that morning, chanced to favor Bill
I never knew; but this was sure as death,
There was a taint suspicious, on his breath.

Well! As I said: there fell upon his ear
The sound of shouting from the portal near.
He turned his steps and sauntered in the church,
With spine full stiffened to prevent a lurch
To port, or starboard, as the case might be,
As the skilled helmsman guides the ship at sea.
As up the aisle the cowboy stiffly stalked,
His spurs' broad rowels jingling as he walked,
The people rubbered from the left and right,
Amused, if not inspired, at the sight.

More pleased than shamed the cowboy stood the brunt
And found a seat, 'twas quite well up in front.
The parson, who had used this little space
To wipe the perspiration from his face,
Renewed the thread of his discourse, and told
Of heaven with its shining streets of gold,
The waving palms, the loud hosannas sung
By the redeemed of every clime and tongue.

With eager fervor to his task he bent,
Swayed to and fro with energy intent
To win his congregation to his mood,
At last exhausted, panting, whispering, stood
With hands extended, and with pleading eyes
He urged, "Now! brothers, sisters, won't you all please rise
Who want to go to heaven?" All was still
As death a moment, all but Bill
Then rose as by a common impulse moved.
The preacher murmured "Thank God, my beloved"—
And then—"be seated." "Now!" he said, "my brother,
Won't you please kindly tell us why you'd rather
Not go to heaven?" Slowly uprose Bill
And thus made answer: "Bet your life I will.
Here I know what I'm up against, but there—
There, no one seems to know exactly where,
I just know nothing of the deal they make
A fellow, and I sort of hate to take
The word of those who hain't been there to see,
That may all do for these, but not for me;
It sounds all right to hear you people say,
You want to 'fly to realms of endless day,'
But do you? Do you really want to go?
For, if you do, we'll fix it up just so.
It sounds to me the veriest sort of stuff,
And so, to try you on, I call your bluff."

He stopped. They looked to see him stand
A six-inch loaded Colt's in either hand,
Breast level, ready for an instant play,
And, shrinking in their seats, they heard him say:
"For all who want to go, I turn the trick.
Stand up; I'll send you there damned quick."

He stood a moment with sardonic grin,
As waiting for his bidding to soak in;
Then, as he saw them short and shorter grow,
He dropped his hands and slowly turned to go;
And, as the guns in holsters were replaced,
He turned about and to the pulpit faced,
Noting that with a look, half smile, half frown,
The parson on the sofa'd settled down.
He turned again, and, striding through the door,
He left them to their worship as before.

—W. H. Eddy, "Truthseeker" (N. Y.).

FIGHT ON!

Say not the struggle nought availeth,
The labor and the wounds are vain,
The enemy faints not, nor faileth,
And as things have been they remain.

If hopes were dupes, fears may be liars;
It may be, in yon smoke concealed,
Your comrades chase e'en now the fliers,
And, but for you, possess the field.

For while the tired waves, vainly breaking,
Seem here no painful inch to gain,
Far back, through creeks and inlets making,
Comes silent, flooding in, the main.

And not by eastern windows only,
When daylight comes, comes in the light;
In front, the sun climbs slow, how slowly,
But westward, look, the land is bright.

—Arthur Hugh Clough.

DUTY.

Stern Lawgiver! yet thou dost wear
The Godhead's most benignant grace;
Nor know we anything so fair
As is the smile upon thy face:
Flowers laugh before thee on their beds
And fragrance in thy footing treads;
Thou dost preserve the stars from wrong;
And the most ancient heavens, through Thee
are fresh and strong.

To humbler functions, awful Power!
I call thee: I myself commend
Unto thy guidance from this hour;
Oh, let my weakness have an end!
Give unto me, made lowly wise,
The spirit of self-sacrifice;
The confidence of reason give;
And in the light of truth thy Bondman let me live.

—Wordsworth.

Some for the Glories of This World; and some
Sigh for the Prophet's Paradise to come;
Ah, take the Cash, and let the Credit go,
Nor heed the rumble of a distant Drum!

—Omar Khayyam (Fitzgerald's).

I that saw where ye trod
The dim paths of the night,
Set the shadow called God
In your skies to give light;
But the morning of manhood is risen, and the
shadowless soul is in sight.

—Swinburne "Hertha."

Religious people often pray very heartily for the forgiveness of a "multitude of trespasses and sins," as a mark of humility, but we never knew them admit any one fault in particular, or acknowledge themselves in the wrong in any instance whatever. The natural jealousy of self-love is in them heightened by the fear of damnation, and they plead *Not Guilty* to every charge brought against them with all the conscious terrors of a criminal at the bar. It is for this reason that the greatest hypocrites in the world are religious hypocrites.—Hazlitt.

Sir, in carrying on your government, why should you use killing at all? Let your evinced desires be for what is good, and the people will be good. The grass must bend, when the wind blows across it.—Confucius (to Emperor Ke Kang).

Over every hill
All is still;
In no leaf of any tree
Can you see
The motion of a breath.
Every bird has ceased its song.
Wait; and thou too, ere long,
Shall be quiet in death.

—Goethe.

Covet not overmuch. Let the strong desires come and go; refuse them not, disown them not; but think not that in them lurks finally the thing you want.

Presently they will fade away and into the intolerable light will dissolve like gossamers before the sun.

—Edward Carpenter.

QUEENS TALLER THAN KINGS.

There is hardly a king in Christendom to-day whose wife does not overtop him by a head.

King Edward is quite six inches shorter than Queen Alexandra.

The Czar is overtopped a full head by the Czarina.

Kaiser Wilhelm is of the medium height, but the German Empress is tall, and that is why the proud Kaiser will never consent to be photographed beside his wife, unless she sits while he stands.

The King of Italy, short and squat, hardly comes up to the shoulders of the tall, athletic Queen Helena.

The King of Portugal, though fatter, is less tall than his Queen.

Even the Prince of Wales is shorter a good four inches than the Princess.

The young King of Spain is several inches shorter than his new bride.

The Queen of Denmark towers above her royal spouse.

—New York Press.

Obituary.

LAST Saturday I attended at West Ham Cemetry to conduct a Secular service at the grave of Mrs. Barincott who died at the early age of twenty-nine after a lingering and painful illness. She was the daughter of Mr. Richard High, one of the veterans in the Freethought ranks, with whom Mr. T. Dooley, Mr. T. Lubbock, myself and some others worked hard at spreading the gospel of Freethought in and about Stratford thirty-five years ago, and he still lives to help keep the old flag flying. A number of the West Ham friends were present at the graveside, and several also to whom a Freethought funeral was a new spectacle. W. J. RAMSEY.

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 6.30, C. Cohen.

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

CLAPHAM COMMON: 3, A. D. Howell Smith, B.A., "The Synoptic Gospels."

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (Ridley-road, Dalston): 11.30, Mr. Fletcher, "The Growth of Rationalism."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Parliament Hill, Hampstead): 3.15, J. W. Ramsey, a Lecture.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (The Grove, Stratford): 7, Louis B. Gallagher, a Lecture.

WOOLWICH BRANCH N. S. S. (Beresford-square): 11.30, F. A. Davies, "Miss Billington and the Bible."

COUNTRY.

HUDDERSFIELD BRANCH N. S. S. (No. 9 Lodge Room, Trade and Friendly Hall): Tuesday, July 24, at 8, all Freethinkers requested to attend.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N. S. S. (Milton Hall, Daulby-street): 7, H. E. Sheikh Abdullah Quilliam Boy, "England in Egypt."

PORTH BRANCH N. S. S. (Secular Room, Town Hall): 6.30, A. C. Hill, "Christ as a Reformer."

OUTDOOR.

WIGAN BRANCH N. S. S. (Market Square): Tuesday July 24, at 7.45, H. Percy Ward, a Lecture.

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