

# THE Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

VOL. XXVI.—No 30

SUNDAY, JULY 29, 1906

PRICE TWOPENCE

*Those who envy or calumniate great men hate God, for there is no other God.*—WILLIAM BLAKE.

## England and God.

HEINE says somewhere that when an Englishman talks politics he may utter good sense, but when he talks religion he is pretty certain to utter absurdity.

Bishop Wilkinson is evidently one of Heine's typical Englishmen. He had a long letter in Tuesday's *Daily Express* under the heading of "Are we becoming less religious?" This is one of the summer holiday discussions which newspapers get up as a matter of business. It will be dropped as soon as the *Express* has more important matter to fill its columns.

Jeremiahs have always been common in religious circles, and Bishop Wilkinson is one of them. He declares that England is going to the dogs. The reason is that she has forgotten God. And unless she returns to her old-fashioned worship of the Almighty her doom is sealed.

Most of our readers, we dare say, have heard that sort of thing frequently enough before. Certainly it is not new. Probably it is not true. But as prominence is given to Bishop Wilkinson's jeremiad we may as well give it a little of our attention. We are like a policeman who has to attend to drunk and disorderly persons. He doesn't particularly like the job, but he has got to do it in the interest of public decency. In the same way, we have no particular pleasure in attending to Bishop Wilkinson's nonsense; we merely undertake the job in the interest of intellectual sanity.

"Rejecting God's government and guidance" is England's principal sin. Her second sin is using "wealth and prosperity selfishly and badly." But as we read the worthy Bishop's jeremiad we find that England's second sin is only her first sin in disguise. We will, therefore, get on the Bishop's main track immediately. This is how he starts:—

"The latest development of the first of these—and by far the most fatal and far-reaching to us as a nation—is to be found in the present attempt to abolish religious teaching in the schools of this country—a step which, if taken, will prove as disastrous to our nation as it has proved in France, Australia, America, and elsewhere."

A paragraph like that shows what folly Bishop Wilkinson is capable of writing. What on earth does he mean by the present attempt to abolish religious teaching in the schools of this country? Does he refer to the Education Bill? Under this Bill religious teaching will go on in one-half the schools directly at the nation's expense, and it will go on in the other half of the schools indirectly at the nation's expense. Under Clause I. there will be "Simple Bible Teaching," and under Clause IV. there will be denominational teaching by Churchmen, Catholics, and Jews. To call this an attempt to abolish religious teaching is worthy of Colney Hatch.

Bishop Wilkinson is something worse than foolish in warning us against the disaster that has overtaken France, Australia, America, and that happy-go-lucky place called "elsewhere." What is the

disaster that has overtaken America? We should like to have it specified. What is the disaster that has overtaken France? We should like to have that specified too. It is very odd that Bishop Wilkinson finds the hand of God to be especially heavy on the very two nations with whom this country is cultivating the best understanding and the closest intimacy. According to this reverend gentleman—if he means what he says, or even understands what he says—England has fallen into very bad company. She has selected the wrong friends. With France on one side, and America on the other, she is dancing along the primrose path to the everlasting bonfire.

What the Bishop (of God knows where) is driving at is suggested by the word "Australia." He means, we take it, that Secular Education prevails over there, and has led to awful consequences. But it does not prevail over there. It only prevails in one colony—Victoria; and, curiously, there is less crime, and more rapidly diminishing crime, in Victoria than in any other colony in the Australian Commonwealth. And by far the larger number of criminals in Victoria are of foreign birth—most of them coming from Great Britain and Ireland, where religious education has always been the order of the day.

Secular Education has prevailed in Japan for forty years. But our episcopal Jeremiah was too shrewd to mention Japan. He must have felt that a lot of Englishmen would wish that their own country suffered from half her complaint. And quite obviously, as pious logic goes, the hand of God is not heavy on Japan; for in fair, stand-up fight—which seems to be the great test that Bishop Wilkinson recognises—she has crushingly defeated the biggest Christian nation in the world.

England is very wicked, according to Bishop Wilkinson, in telling God that she can get on very well without him. Well, Japan has got on very well without God; and the object-lesson is too fresh for this country to tremble at the Bishop's terrible warning.

Nations that tell God they can do without him decline and fall. In support of this statement, while saying not a word about Japan, the Bishop is garrulous about ancient Israel. "All the vast wealth and prosperity of the days of Solomon," he says, "declined and fell till a foreign power came and took away the remnant, and the people, too, who were once the possessors of it." Such is episcopal ancient history—and it is enough to make a well-educated person roar with laughter. The "wealth" of Solomon is a monstrously absurd fiction. And what was the "prosperity" of Israel? The simple truth is that the Jews were an insignificant people, who enjoyed a brief political independence by a kind of historical accident, and lost it directly one of the really great Powers chose to stretch out its paw over the land of Palestine.

Bishop Wilkinson shines still more as a philosopher—in the episcopal way—when he deals with England's immunity from foreign invasion. Listen to this:—

"No country in all the world has been so blessed by God in times past as England. We have not seen the disasters that other countries have seen—famines, pestilences, and the sword. We have never seen a victorious foreign army marching along our highways desolating our country, requisitioning the produce from our land to feed a foreign foe, as was seen just thirty-six years ago in unhappy France. From these and such horrors that



have fallen upon every other nation under Heaven, and more or less upon every European country also during the last century, God has mercifully preserved us."

How easy it is to speak and write without thinking! The clergy do this habitually. And the crowd think that because the words are fluent the sense is sound; whereas we have Shakespeare's word for it that a man may talk "an infinite deal of nothing."

The late Lord Salisbury used to advise people to "look at the map." We tender the same advice to Bishop Wilkinson. A glance at the map will show him that England's immunity from foreign invasion is simply a matter of geography. She is protected by the "ditch" which separates her from France. Without it she would be merely a small extension of the continent of Europe. It was that "ditch," and not the invincible valor of England's soldiers, that kept her from being submerged by Napoleon's great wave of conquest. He would have overrun England, as he overran Germany, Austria, Italy, and Spain, if it were not for the winds and waves from behind which she could bid him defiance.

The gap in the chalk is the secret of England's security. It has no more to do with God than it has to do with the Man in the Moon.

Bishop Wilkinson echoes Father Vaughan's denunciation of the vices of the "smart set." But the "smart set" are not England. They may be perfectly rotten and yet England may be sound enough. There were always froth at the top and dregs at the bottom; what does it really matter if there is plenty of good, honest liquor in between? "Betting and gambling and selfish luxury" may be bad enough, but they are not easily measurable. We can measure "intemperance," however, and in this respect England is not growing worse, but better. Wherever the Bishop's statements can be tested they are falsehoods. Our concluding advice to him, therefore, is to cultivate at least a nodding acquaintance with the truth.

G. W. FOOTE.

### Does Atheism Satisfy?

"DOES Atheism satisfy the cravings of human nature?" was a question asked me at the conclusion of one of my recent lectures. My reply was that it satisfied me; and, as I had no cause to suppose that I was a marked abnormality, there seemed no reason why it should not satisfy others. The answer did not appear to satisfy the questioner—a result not unusual in such cases—yet it seemed then, and seems now, as good an answer as I could give. For satisfaction must ultimately be a personal matter, although there is a wider aspect connected therewith. From one point of view the question of satisfaction is much a question of whether one likes tea or coffee, ginger-beer or whiskey, and the preference, one way or other, is simply an indication of taste. But, from another standpoint, there is involved large questions of philosophy, of the desirable and the undesirable, the essential and the transient in human nature.

A great deal obviously depends on what we are looking for, and, to a smaller extent, upon the kind of human nature we are dealing with. A human nature that is constitutionally unreflective and superstitious, that has been fed upon religious legends, and accustomed to the use of religious language, is, of course, not likely to be violently attracted to a view of life that puts superstition on one side and strives for exactitude of speech. But, then, neither does the confirmed inebriate show any marked partiality for tea, coffee, or ginger-beer, although it is not usual to cite his repugnance as proof of the undesirability of these articles. Also, if one comes to Atheism with the belief in a heaven and a hell, in gods, angels, and devils, with all that these involve, and demands objects for their expression, then, of necessity, failure is assured. For Atheism has none of these

things, although, as will be seen later, it does offer objects for a great many of the feelings hitherto largely associated with religion.

For, to Atheism, all these beliefs are artificial—not in the sense of not being perfectly natural once given the conditions of their origin and development, but in that of corresponding to no reality, in being engendered by ignorance and error, and kept alive by more or less interested instruction in the teeth of later and more accurate knowledge. Neither the belief in a god, nor a soul, nor in a hereafter, arise from present-day knowledge, nor do they spring from present-day needs. They are all heritages from a far-off past, and have long since ceased to bear any useful relation to contemporary life. Atheism does not, therefore, seek to satisfy every demand that may be put forward by an ill-regulated or badly-directed human nature, but only to disentangle the true from the false, the essential from the non-essential, and, if possible, guide life along more profitable lines than it has hitherto followed.

The notion that there are certain religious feelings which must be satisfied is part of a carefully-fostered delusion as widespread as it is false. The only element of reality about it is the feelings themselves, and these are exploited in the interest of religion. For the whole truth is that there are no such things as religious feelings, any more than there are astronomical feelings or geological feelings. There are religious *beliefs* only; and these must, like all other beliefs, look for justification elsewhere than to a vague appeal to equally vague feelings. There is not one of the feelings associated with religious beliefs that is not properly associated with non-religious objects. The desire for a future life is nothing more than an illegitimate extension of the will to live to a sphere in which it has no proper application. Fear and love, associated with the belief in God, are obviously not essentially religious. The desire for communion with God or Jesus is just as plainly an expression of the social or gregarious instincts of human nature again diverted from its legitimate sphere of operation. Nor is it without significance that these feelings are apt to be strongest with those whose circumstances do not admit of their complete expression in relation to their fellow human beings. The exaggerated affection for cats, dogs, or other animals, by childless and unmarried people, is so plainly the result of their feelings finding expression in the direction nearest to hand, as to need little or no proof. It is equally true in relation to religion—a truth that gives the reason for the tendency of all religious movements to favor celibacy rather than matrimony, and to encourage habits of solitary meditation. In all these cases religious beliefs are, so to speak, exploiting natural human feelings, which, if satisfied elsewhere, would leave nothing to which religious beliefs could appeal.

What, for instance, would be the attraction of a future life to a people who could be sure of a sufficiency of life here? What strength would there be in an appeal to "Divine Justice" in a world where justice was omnipresent and satisfying? What room would there be for any religious beliefs in a world where human nature was completely instructed and ideally perfect? Religions only maintain a place in human life by appealing to the partly-satisfied instincts and desires of humanity, and gives a transient satisfaction at the expense of a more complete realisation. Of course the process is not always conscious, even with religious leaders, still less so in the case of the rank-and-file. These, in transferring natural instincts to supernatural objects, are not lying, they simply misunderstand the nature of the feelings by which they are moved. And it is plainly not to the interest of religious leaders that their followers should be encouraged in more accurate habits of self-analysis.

Having thus cleared the ground, one need only ask again, Why should not Atheism satisfy the legitimate needs of human nature? "J. B." of the *Christian World* asserts that "Atheism is refuted by the con-



tents of the soul," which is just one of those full mouthed meaningless sentences so dear to the religious mind and therefore hailed as profound piety. Of course if one packs an inconceivable "soul" with impossible "contents" it may well be that this will not square with Atheism. But to say that Atheism will not square with essential facts is downright absurdity. For not only does Atheism ask to be judged by facts alone, but no one has yet succeeded in discovering a single fact with which it cannot be squared. The existence of the belief in a God is no proof to the contrary; for Atheism does not deny the fact of the belief, it explains its existence, and justifies itself by tracing the conditions of the origin and development of all forms of deistic belief. Feelings, instincts, and desires developed during the course of social evolution form the raw material upon which religions are built, and after the superstructure is cleared away, the foundations remain just as solid and far more serviceable than before.

One might even return the question and ask, What is it in human nature that Atheism will not satisfy? It does not deny the reality or the value of any of the virtues; on the contrary, it emphasises their importance and significance. It is true that the Atheist would arrange the virtues according to a somewhat different scale of value to that adopted by Christianity, but that is about all. He would place a deal less emphasis on self-sacrifice, and a deal more upon self-development. He would have less to say of the charity of mere almsgiving, and more about the charity of sympathetic help and intellectual hospitality. The group of instincts that cluster round the family, instead of being treated as a mark of our "fallen human nature" would be regarded as the soil from which nearly all the other virtues spring. Above all, instead of going through life constantly quaking over a supposed probable dissolution of morality, the larger knowledge that accompanies Atheism would make it plain that such a dissolution is a sheer impossibility. For morality is the condition of man's continued existence in an associated state, and can only disappear when society itself dissolves. The truth is then, that instead of Atheism belittling human nature it is enhanced and made supreme. It is surely one of the curiosities of controversy that a theory which proclaims that human nature is too weak to stand alone, and too poor to deserve respect if considered in itself, should charge those who traverse this position with belittling mankind and robbing it of its dignity.

What is true of morals holds true of all else. It is really too late in the day for Christian preachers and writers to talk as though goodness, beauty, and truth were in some special manner religious possessions. They are neither religious nor anti-religious, they are simply human, and human nature loses or benefits as they are ill or well appreciated. You cannot, it is often said, build life on mere Atheism. Neither can you build life on mere Theism. Neither the belief in a God, nor a reasoned disbelief in a God, are of great consequence in themselves. It is the implications therefrom that become of profound importance. The conclusions drawn from the belief in God have for hundreds of generations kept human nature in chains by forging useless and obstructive customs, and developing habits of mind more or less inimical to progress. From the belief in God was drawn the conclusion that it was wrong to enquire into the secrets of nature, unlawful to gratify legitimate desires, that happiness was a delusion, progress a snare, and that man's chief duty was to placate a supernatural power incensed with its own handiwork. The mere disbelief in a deity may not seem much in itself, but it certainly involves a rejection of all those delusions that have been like a cramp in the intellect and the heart for so long; while not the least valuable of the implications to be drawn from this position is that human development is due to human industry and co-operation, and that the forces that have carried us safely so far may reasonably be trusted to carry us still further.

C. J. COHEN.

## Has Christ Failed?

THERE are moments when the Rev. Frank Ballard is profoundly honest and straightforward. It will be remembered that in a much-quoted sermon, preached some time ago at Oxford, he frankly admitted, with deep sorrow, that up to the present time Christianity has been a practical failure in the world. One hearer confessed that he did not enjoy that sermon, but he was bound to add that it was terribly true. To outsiders, it seems impossible that anyone could face the facts of life in Christendom during the Christian centuries without being compelled to agree with Mr. Ballard. That Mr. Ballard seldom agrees with himself may be quite true; but with that aspect of the case we are not now concerned. The only relevant point just now is that few clergymen can be found who are prepared to give public expression to their agreement with Mr. Ballard, while the great majority of them are in the habit of publicly asserting, whether they privately believe it or not, that Christ has always been a stupendous success. Let us examine this assertion in order to ascertain whether or not there is any truth in it.

The Rev. T. Vincent Tymms, D.D., is a scholarly and temperate divine, who states his views calmly and methodically. In a recent sermon on "The Private Relationships of Christ," he discusses the subject under consideration. Now, even according to the Gospels, nothing is more evident than that, during his lifetime, the number of Christ's genuine disciples was never large. From first to last the bulk of the people remained unbelievers. This was a source of great grief to him, and sometimes it made him angry, and caused him to denounce his contemporaries in extremely scathing terms. In John vii. 5 we read that "even his brethren did not believe on him." On the assumption that he was God's Word become flesh, and that the Word was only another name for God, this failure of Christ to convince, not only his own nation, but his own family, that he was a Divine Being, seems wholly inexplicable. His brothers remonstrated with him, saying, "If you are what and whom you represent yourself to be, why do you not show yourself to the world?" His only answer was, "The time for that is not yet." The taunt of the brothers was perfectly justifiable, and the reply of Jesus is eminently true, even to this day. "My time is not yet come," he said to them; and if he came to Christendom in this twentieth century of his religion, he would have to repeat the saying with a still stronger emphasis. Looking this fact in the face, Dr. Tymms has the temerity to say of it that it is due to the *exceeding modesty of the Son of God*. What a strange apology! What a laughably lame explanation!

That I am not misrepresenting Dr. Tymms is proved by the following extract:—

"The spirit breathed by those brethren was essentially worldly, which, in this connection, is only another word for vulgar, and the method they favored was appropriate. Had they lived in these days they would have gone in for wholesale bill-sticking and newspaper puffs. The most unhealthy symptom of modern religious life is just the acting out of their advice, 'Show thyself.' Keep yourself before the public. Compel them to notice you, even if it be through a wise use of folly. Make them talk, even though you have to excite their anger, or their laughter, to keep your name on their tongues, and in press paragraphs. Do something, do anything, to make the people talk and gape, and by some means spread abroad the idea that you are a wonderful person."

According to Dr. Tymms, this is the kind of self-advertisement which the Devil recommended, which Mary waited for at Cana, which the Jewish nation expected their promised Messiah to adopt, and which, it is to be feared, "we too often clamor for in our prayers that Christ will take unto himself his great power and reign." But Christ is divinely modest and politely declines to show himself. He is far too modest to "take unto himself his great power



and reign." That man is running at full speed to perdition. Christ has the power to save him, but is too modest to exert it, unless the man himself turns round and implores him to do so. His Father said to him, "Ask of me, and I will give thee the nations for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession"; but either the Father has been unwilling or unable to fulfil his promise, or Christ has been too modest to make the request.

Dr. Tymms says: "We listen to the sneers of those who say that Christianity, or, in other words, that Christ has failed." Would he include Mr. Ballard among those who indulge in such sneers, or is his reference only to unbelievers? "We want the kingdom of heaven to come with observation," he adds, as if it could ever come without observation. Paul tells us that this kingdom means righteousness, peace, and joy; but in what portion of the globe do you find righteousness, peace, and joy, on the throne? "Oh," someone exclaims, "in no heathen country under heaven is human life safe"; but can you mention a single Christian country in which human life is safe? Is it safe in St. Petersburg, in Berlin, New York, or London? Why, the two most indispensable persons throughout Christendom are the soldier and the policeman. To protect the lives of the citizens of Christian London there are constantly employed some sixteen thousand constables, and in case of emergency, numerous troops are within call. And this state of things is due to the excessive modesty of him who is proudly called the Prince of Peace and Lord of all!

As the sermon proceeds the *modesty* of Christ mysteriously blossoms into *inability*. He would not suddenly develop into *He cannot*. Christ failed during his life because He was so inconceivably strong; but he was apparently defeated in order that he might become a universal Conquerer. "On that cross," says Dr. Tymms, "men have found their king" Yes, we are assured, "in thus lifting him up, as an accursed thing, as a spectacle of shame and impotence, they raised him to what has proved to be his throne of glory." But this is sheer nonsense, as all subsequent history abundantly shows. Whatever may be the case in heaven, Jesus has never reigned on earth. You sing in church on Sundays:—

"Jesus shall reign where'er the sun  
Doth his successive journeys run;  
His kingdom stretch from shore to shore,  
Till moons shall wax and wane no more;"

but two thousand years have rolled over our heads and there are no remotest signs of his reigning yet. And the simple truth is that he cannot so reign. He has no power whatever except over those who believe in and trust him. He cannot show himself to the world. Judas is reported to have asked him one day: "Lord, what is come to pass that thou wilt reveal thyself to us and not unto the world?" Dr. Tymms observes: "Even to Judas no complete explanation could be given. All that Christ could make clear at that time was this, that it was impossible to manifest himself except to those who loved and obeyed him, because they alone had capacity to see." Herein lies the complete explanation of the colossal failure of Christianity. *Christ appeals alone to believers, and it is to believers alone that He exists.* This is the key to the whole mystery. What is the Church? The manufacturer and preserver of believers. What are clergymen and ministers? Servants of the Church in that business. What are Sunday-schools and day-schools? Adjuncts of the Church in the manufacture of believers. No one was ever born a believer: believers are made, not born. How is it that theologians have never perceived the real inwardness of this momentous truth? Why do they everlastingly prate about innate religious ideas and instincts when it is already well known to observant thinkers that every child enters the world without any religious sense whatever? It is a fact completely verified in thousands of well established instances that those who are never *taught* religion go through the world, in these days of advanced knowledge, without religion. Paul discerned this truth

quite distinctly, though he was blind to its real bearings:—

"Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?"

It is the truth in that passage that forms the foundation upon which Secularism has been erected. A great preacher said the other day that God cannot find men except through men. *How then did he find the first man?* But the preacher was quite right, after all. God cannot find men except through men, *because he is a human creation.* God is a projectile shot into objective existence out of man's uninstructed fancy, and nothing but faith can keep him there.

The same thing exactly is true of the Christ of Dr. Tymms' sermon. *Apart from faith he is not and can do nothing.* Though a living personal Being, filling and transcending the Universe, he cannot reach the sinners for whose salvation he is supposed to have died except through other sinners already saved. He is said to be personally present everywhere, yearning to save and recreate society, not only willing and anxious but supremely able to redeem the whole world; and yet in spite of his alleged omnipotence and omnipresence, in spite of his alleged infinite love for and irresistible eagerness to do the glorious work, he can do really nothing of his own initiative, and is dependent upon ardent believers in him for all his alleged conquests. The explanation of this impotence of Christ is to be found in the statement that he is a product of theology, and consequently, that apart from theology and the Church he has no existence at all.

Now, I ask, is it any wonder that Christ has failed to make the world what it ought to be? Is it any wonder that the Church has had to work so hard, and to invent and set in motion so much ingenious and intricate machinery, to keep the belief in him alive in the world? And is it any wonder that now at last the failure of the Church is becoming more and more patent to all? But something else as well is slowly looming up into full sight, namely, that faith in Christ has seriously retarded the world's ethical progress. Men have trusted in God, imploring him, for Christ's sake and through Christ's spirit, to do the work, when they ought to have been actually doing it themselves. If the work that requires to be done is not done by men it will never be done. Both God and Christ have failed, as Mr. Ballard sorrowfully admitted; it is now man's turn, *minus* the triune God of the schools.

J. T. LLOYD.

## Wathen Mark Wilks Call.—I.

### OUTLINE OF HIS LIFE.

IT is seventeen years since I was first introduced to the writings of W. M. W. Call. In 1889 a small volume of his poems, entitled *Reverberations*, containing a short but very interesting autobiography, was given to me by one who, like Call himself, had entered the Christian ministry but had resigned his position on finding that he could not conscientiously continue to preach the current theological doctrines. When in 1891 *Final Causes: a Refutation* appeared, I studied the book carefully, and, in fact, I was so much impressed by the author's scholarship and logic, that I determined to find out all I could about him, and to read all the magazine articles that I could identify as his. Moncure D. Conway, who knew Call personally, says that "there is enough thought and learning in his poems and anonymous articles to have earned fame for an ambitious and pushing author." The aim of this article is to introduce an able and uncompromising opponent of supernaturalism to a wider circle of readers.

Call was born in 1817. He tells us himself that a strong natural bias, if not to doctrinal religion, at



least to religious sentiment, not unaccompanied by a certain imaginative activity, was a leading characteristic of his early years. At this period, too, "the poetic and narrative portions of the Old Testament," as well as "the story of the New Testament," almost enchanted the impressionable youth. This natural leaning towards the imaginative would be looked for as a characteristic of one who was afterwards to write such poems as "Manoli," "Ariadne," and "Balder"; but "though the religious enthusiasm thus excited endured through many years, it was not destined to survive the development of the sceptical tendencies which had been dormant" in his mind. At an early age he came under the influence of Byron, and the Titanic force and defiant unconventionalism of the poet captivated him "with the spell of a congenial gloom," and that powerful and original production, *Cain: a Mystery*, proved especially "provocative of doubt." It was not Byron, however, but Shelley who was destined to exert the most definitive anti-theological influence over his mind. Shortly after confirmation he was presented by a school-friend, whose literary tastes were similar to his own, with the two volumes of Shelley published by Ascham. Those who, in their early years, have revelled in *Queen Mab*, *Prometheus Unbound*, *The Revolt of Islam*, etc., can easily imagine the effect which these poems would have on a youth naturally poetical, and, at the same time, of an inquiring turn of mind. Call himself says:—

"I was fascinated by the tumultuous splendor, the magical music, the ethical grandeur, the social enthusiasm of this imperial genius. His blazing protest against the errors of popular Christianity was in entire unison with any incipient heterodoxy; his deep sympathy with suffering mankind, his magnificent vision of human regeneration, the profoundly religious speculations scattered through his writings, captivated my heart and imagination."

By this period Call had completely rejected some of the dogmatic teachings of the Christian religion; but he nevertheless entered St. John's College, Cambridge, with a view of eventually becoming a clergyman of the Established Church. He graduated as B.A. in 1843, in which year he entered the ministry, and the M.A. degree was conferred on him three years later. Speaking of this period, Call says that he found the calm afforded by the Church delightful after the mental struggle he had passed through. Fortunately, this calm was not destined to be a permanent state of mind in his case; for, with all his poetry and imagination, Call had great powers of mental analysis, as will be clearly and unmistakably perceived by any person, no matter what his individual opinions, who reads his last essay, *Final Causes*. In this respect Call differed as widely as the poles from Newman, who preferred the internal calm to that painful conflict which must not be smothered by refuge in a cloister, or anywhere else, if truth is ultimately to be attained. It was another connected with the Oxford movement who resembled Call—one who had actually come under the influence of Newman, but was too loyal to his own sense of intellectual honesty to refuse to be "contention-tost," or to shrink from his own convictions. The study of Arthur Hugh Clough's life affords an interesting parallel to the phases of religious evolution passed through by Call. Both men were so constituted mentally that they could not be satisfied either by handing over their doubts to the keeping of Holy Church, or by any sort of trimming or half-hearted reconciliation of the irreconcilable; with them, any compromise in this respect was the deepest of all forms of dishonesty. Call's nature especially revolted against the doctrine of future punishments; and, with his doubts on this question, the old difficulties of plenary inspiration returned, the result being that the whole question of Biblical inspiration was subjected to a thorough and conscientious examination. In his investigations at this time, and until he finally severed his connection with the Church, Call read eagerly the orthodox apologies and defences. Maurice, Paley, Hennell, Frederick Robertson, Hengstenberg, and others were carefully

studied with a view of finding satisfactory answers to difficulties. But is it not a fact that many inquirers have been brought to a state of definite anti-Christian conviction by reading the numerous apologies and attempts at reconciliation put into their hands by Christian advocates? The following passage from the Autobiography is significant in this connection: "The learning, the eloquence, and the sweet and noble spirit of the late F. D. Maurice are admirably fitted to attract unsettled minds, but I fail to see in his mystical refinements any real logical cogency. Hengstenberg, one of the vaunted champions of the older theology, impresses me mainly with a sense of his feebleness; and Ebrard, whose *Life of Christ* I was induced to read by a eulogistic notice in one of the most intellectual of our weekly journals, serves only to demonstrate the hopelessness of the task which he has undertaken." After completely rejecting the supernatural element in Christianity and shortly before his leaving the Church, Call says: "I had succeeded in evolving a belief in a natural Christianity, which allowed me, though not without a powerful internal conflict, to retain the position which I occupied as a curate in the Church of England." Meantime his studies were continued diligently, though now directed to the problems of mental philosophy rather than to questions of mere critical theology. Kant, Fichte, Mill, and Comte provided him with theories enough and to spare, all of which were thoughtfully examined. The result of these inquiries was that the last shred of faith was sundered and the final breaking-away could not be long deferred. Friends tried to persuade him to retain his position, but without avail. In 1856 Call decided to no longer stretch forth his hands to save what Professor Clifford has called "the sifted dregs of the sediment of a residuum." The last stage of his struggle "through darkness into light—the sober light of sad reality," cannot be better described than in his own words:—

"A beneficed clergyman, advanced in years, whose studies had ended, like my own, in the abandonment of dogmatic Christianity, had drawn up a statement of the motives which, as he argued, justified him in the retention of his preferment. This statement was forwarded to me. A celebrated and venerable German professor had sent me a message deprecating the abandonment of a post which, he thought, I might continue to occupy without dishonor to myself and with profit to others. I had hitherto deferred to the judgment of persons whom I regarded as superior to myself in knowledge of life and in ability to determine questions of moral obligation; but the progress of unbelief and enlarged experience decided me, at last, on the adoption of an independent course of thought and action. Taking counsel of my own heart, I resolved to terminate a conflict which had become intolerable. Painful and singular complications preceded, accompanied, and followed my retirement from the English Church."

Reference is then made to one of these "painful complications"—one of those many cases so well known to Freethinkers in which the law has been invoked to supplement Christian charity. Mr. Moncreux D. Conway thus states the actual case as Call told it to him:—

"His sister, a widow, left him executor of her last will and testament, and the guardian of her children. He was tenderly attached to this sister and to her children. She knew his opinions and his doubts. When he went into the court for confirmation of his trust he was confronted by the postscript of a letter he had written to a supposed friend intimating his 'dissent from the creeds of the churches.' For this mild and vague heresy he was prevented from acting as the guardian of his sister's children, and fulfilling a sacred trust."

Is not the account given by Call of his thirteen years in the Christian ministry a most interesting study in casuistic subtlety? Not that there was anything "subtle" in this sense of the word in Call's natural disposition; but the study of his career certainly shows, firstly, the painful effect on a conscientious man of the preaching of dogmas now almost entirely rejected by educated clergymen, and



secondly, the fact that his clerical friends and others urged him to retain his position after they knew that he had ceased absolutely to accept the cardinal doctrines of Christianity. Mr. Moncre D. Conway says that here "we have the 'Robert Elsmere' of real life," and one could almost think that Mrs. Humphrey Ward had some knowledge of Call's life before she wrote her well-known novel. Few disinterested persons, however, will agree with Mr. Conway's contention that those clergymen whose Rationalism is such as that finally embraced by Call and "Robert Elsmere" are justified in continuing to preach Christian supernaturalism and to accept the emoluments of the Church.

The year after he left the Church Call married the widow of C. C. Hennell, the author of *An Inquiry into the Origin of Christianity*—a work which had great influence in English theological circles about sixty years ago. This lady was the daughter of Dr. Brabant, the friend of Strauss, and according to Mr. Moncre D. Conway she did "excellent work on the *Westminster Review*, assisted by her friend Marian Evans"—afterwards the famous "George Eliot."

In 1875 Call writes of the interval which had elapsed since he renounced orthodoxy:—

"I have carefully and frequently re-examined the religious question—the most momentous of all questions. The result has been a decided confirmation of the convictions which I then entertained. Within this period, too, scepticism has been vigorously advancing in the nation—I might say, in Europe. And not only has it extended its sphere, but it includes within that sphere some of the loftiest and profoundest intellects of the age."

From now till the end of his life Call continued to be a diligent student of advanced philosophical literature, and contributed regularly to the *Westminster Review* and the *Fortnightly*, and frequently to other periodicals. In 1885 consumption of one lung threatened his life, rendering a dangerous operation imperative. One of his physicians approached him on the subject of religion and the condition of his soul; but the conversation ended in the doctor's being "compelled to consider the condition of his own soul, and why he should be holding the religion of primitive man along with a science almost able to raise the dead." Having passed successfully through this trying ordeal, Call was able for five more years to continue his literary work. In 1887 he finished the rough draft of that masterly essay, *Final Causes*, which was copied and completed in 1889—one year before his death on August 20, 1890.

A. D. MCLAREN.

(To be concluded.)

### Acid Drops.

"May God help us," the Czar said in dissolving his first Parliament. He will probably want all the help that God can give him. His disappearance from the scene would probably facilitate the reorganisation of Russia. We wish him no harm, of course; but the life of a Czar is no more important in our eyes than the life of a peasant. Why doesn't he get on board his yacht and sail away to whatever port his "God" directs him?

The British Empire is in a bad way. Mr. G. R. Sims says so—and, as Fitzgerald Omar-Khyyam says of the Deity, *he knows, he knows*. And as Mr. Sims says so in the oracular *Referee* we may take it that the matter is settled.

Mr. Sims aims at being a Savior of Society. He had better try to be amusing. He is really taking himself too seriously; indeed, he is becoming positively solemn. We shall have Sims amongst the prophets shortly. Perhaps he will end up as Saint Tatcho.

"This is no day," Mr. Sims says, "for Englishmen to dream. It is a day for every man who fears his God, who honors his King, who loves his land, and who would be faithful to the trust he holds for the ages unborn, to stand alert," etc., etc. Well, we hope Mr. Sims is alert. We hope his liver is alert too.

The Mother Church of the Christian Scientists at Boston appears, from a photogravure we have seen, to be a very fine building. It is the headquarters of the Christian Scientists in America. Thirty thousand of them went to Boston for the dedication. The Temple cost £400,000. No less than £8,000 was spent on the organ. Evidently there is plenty of money in Christian Science, whatever else is lacking. Mark Twain prophesies that Mother Eddy's new religion will swamp the old one in another century.

The Attorney General has ordered a *nolle prosequi* to be entered in the case of Dr. George Robert Adcock, the Christian Scientist, who was indicted for the manslaughter of Major J. N. Whyte. The prosecution seems to us to have been a ridiculous thing altogether. Grown up men and women are surely entitled to patronise whatever treatment they please for their ailments. If they act foolishly they pay the penalty themselves.

The English branch of the Church of Zion, which seems to be a very back-street affair, has had a curious amount of attention from the newspapers. The British public are now gravely informed that the English branch of the Church of Zion has renounced all allegiance to Old Dowie, and set up on its own. This, we imagine, will be the least of the Prophet's troubles.

An earthquake shock was experienced in South Wales lately. We always thought the Welsh revival would lead to something. Unfortunately, the earthquake has not promoted the release of the victims whom the Welsh revival has driven into the lunatic asylums.

We see in Mr. Stead's interesting and useful monthly a notice of the *Hindoo Spiritual Magazine*, which contains "a most readable account of Samadhi." Samadhi is "A state into which a man, who has been able to enter, can die at his sweet pleasure, derive all the advantages of a dead man for the time being, and yet can come back to life whenever he pleases." What an excellent recipe for hard times! When work is scarce, and the cupboard empty, how convenient it would be to die for a bit and return to life when times improve.

The Rev. L. D. Bass, an American Baptist minister, is an exceptionally brave man. He has actually put in a word for Jesus Christ. In his opinion, the time has fully come, especially among Baptists, when "we should cease to worship that Baptist gold brick, Rockefeller, and turn our attention more to the poor Carpenter of Nazareth." The truth is, that in practically all the churches that bear his name, the poor Carpenter has to be satisfied with a back seat, and the man who ventures to speak up for him, in terms whose meaning cannot be mistaken, is in imminent danger of crucifixion. It is only the name of Christ that is generally worshiped, not that for which the name stands in the Four Gospels. The churches cannot tolerate the man who really follows Christ, and they turn him out as a vulgar intruder.

"J. B." of the *Christian World*, is an exceedingly clever and often very suggestive writer, and his articles are always interesting. But on the subject of religion he is frequently confusing and misleading. In his last article on "The Mind's Adjustments," he takes too much for granted. He asserts that "Atheism is refuted by the contents of the soul." But God is not one of "the contents of the soul," nor is the belief in God among them. To say that the soul's "aspiration and ceaseless desire" prove the existence of God is to betray a state of mind to which no argument can appeal. To reason with such a man would be to waste one's time and energy.

A vein of serene sanity runs through the article under discussion. "J. B." is perfectly right in the statement that "purity, love, reverence, fidelity, are life's highest things, and that these, because they are highest, must be truest." But if these are the highest and truest things, then why, in the name of wonder, are we asked to believe in anything superhuman or supernatural? The virtues just named are the fruit of evolution. "Their existence in man in the germ" is no evidence of "their existence elsewhere in fullness," but rather signifies that, as yet, man has not succeeded in perfectly adjusting himself to his environment. "Our proof of God," says "J. B.," "is that the soul is what it is." It would be more accurate to say that man is what he is because of his strenuous past. His present soul or life is the result of a long and complicated process; and the process may be still going on. We know of nothing higher than man.



One other point. "J. B." depreciates argument because of the impossibility of constructing an effective argument against Atheism. He is aware, as Newman was, that logic inevitably leads to Atheism. Hence "J. B." does not argue, but simply dogmatizes. To him the head is a mean organ, the intellect a low faculty—it is the heart that counts; and he tells us that the heart knows God. But, as a matter of fact, the heart neither affirms nor knows anything; it simply feels, loves, hates. Now "J. B." must be perfectly well aware that no child *naturally* loves God. *Belief* precedes *feeling*. The child must, first of all, be taught to believe in God, and afterwards instructed to love him. Left to itself, the child would do neither. Therefore, to assert that the heart affirms God and the spiritual world, is to bear false witness against that priceless organ.

A tract "printed and published by C. Harmer, West Ham Lane, Stratford," has been circulated in Victoria Park. It is a very crude effort, pictorially and otherwise. One of the doubtful achievements of Secularism is "converting a Presbyterian minister." We suppose this is an allusion to Mr. J. T. Lloyd, whose accession to Secularism is suggested to be a "fake." "Where was he a recognised minister?" it is asked; and the answer is given "at the other end of the world." Well, never mind which end of the world it was; one end of the world is as good as another in a matter like this. We should have thought, however, that even a Christian tract writer had heard of South Africa; and Johannesburg happens to be one of the most famous places on earth of late. We may add that Mr. Lloyd had been an "acceptable" preacher in England and America before he became one of the most popular preachers in South Africa.

The baser sort of Christian Evidence people have boxed the compass of calumny in relation to Mr. Lloyd. For some time they went about suggesting the vilest charges against his moral character. Finding that this game did not pay, after all, they adopted other tactics; and now, instead of suggesting that he was deposed from his church for gross immorality, they suggest that he was never in a church at all. But enough of such vermin. Mr. Lloyd can easily afford to smile at their malicious antics. He knows the species they belong to by this time.

Rev. Stephen Swaby, aged forty-one, of Llanhill-road, Paddington, was charged at Marlborough-street Police Court on Saturday, July 21, with wilfully interfering with, and annoying, women in Hyde Park, and with being drunk at the time. He was fined 40s. and 18s. costs. Of course the matter is of no importance. So many men of God go wrong that one does not cause astonishment. We only wish to observe that far greater fuss would be made about such a case if the culprit happened to be a Secular lecturer. Which, after all, is a compliment to Secular lecturers. What is common with clergymen is so uncommon with "infidels."

Newspapers do much to debase the English language. Even the pious *Daily News* joins in the sport. "Young Girl's Pluck" was one of its headings the other day. We suppose our contemporary meant "courage." "Pluck" is a sheer vulgarity.

"Juventus," in the *Christian Commonwealth*, for July 19, tells young men that "it is hardly possible to think of anything producing something greater than itself"; but, surely, no one ever thought such a thing. Nature is not a maker or producer of things. To think of her as such is to misunderstand her altogether. All the things we know are parts or manifestations of Nature. What Nature in herself is no one knows. We only know that no manifestation of her is permanent. "Juventus" believes that personality "once attained, can never be lost, for its loss would mean a backward movement, retrogression, not progress." But Nature is not pledged to endless progress; personality is only a phase of her manifestation, and may cease to be forever. Why, solar systems come and go; and ours is already in the process of decay. Only Nature is infinite and eternal: all forms have their day and then dissolve; and man is only one among countless myriads of such forms. That which becomes, or manifests itself in these various forms, is absolutely beyond our ken.

The end of all things must be at hand. Christ—the Infallible Teacher, the Lord of Glory, the Sovereign of souls—is being subjected to severest criticism by the very people who profess to be his slaves. In the *British Weekly* even the Sermon on the Mount is being pulled to pieces. One correspondent avers that even Christians must use their common sense as to whether they are to obey the Master or not. Another maintains that Jesus and Paul do not always

agree, and that on the points of difference Paul is undoubtedly right. One pious scribbler explains the command "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth" by emphasising "for yourselves," as if the Infallible Guide meant, "You are at liberty to lay up treasures upon earth if you intend them for other people—for my Church, for example." It is really most amusing, and also very sad.

There is still hope for England. The Rev. F. B. Meyer, President of the Baptist Union, is now on tour in a motor-car. He is conducting a mission to the villagers and hamlets of the country. Special handbills and hymn-sheets have been issued and sent on ahead; and now special services are being held at the rate of fourteen and fifteen a day. What a miracle of a man Mr. Meyer is, and what countless newspaper puffs he secures. And yet, in spite of the herculean efforts of this extraordinary man of God, England is steadily deserting church and chapel, shuffling off its ancient religious beliefs and practices, and settling down to a quiet, comfortable, and mind-satisfying Secularism. After all said and done, miracles do still happen.

The religious press is rejoicing over the fact that the French Chamber has come to a practically unanimous vote to provide a weekly day of rest throughout France. But observe, it is a day of rest, not a day of divine worship, that France is going to get. The Christian Sunday is hopelessly doomed everywhere. Secularists are firm believers in a weekly rest-day; and in France Secularism has achieved a brilliant triumph. Is it at this triumph of Secularism that the religious newspapers are rejoicing? Surely not; and yet there is nothing else to be grateful for in the matter.

A writer in the *Hibbert Journal* says: "That Christ has *spiritually* risen, the continuing life of the Church is an abiding evidence." But if the Church's theory of Christ be correct, he never *spiritually* died, or was *spiritually* buried, and this would make a *spiritual* resurrection an impossibility. What never entered the grave could never come out of it; and thus the doctrine of a *spiritual* resurrection is a glaring absurdity.

Truth, like murder, will out—sometimes. The Rev. W. Hopkyn Rees is a missionary in China; and in an address, at a missionary meeting recently held in North Wales, he said: "The Chinese were better than they were painted. He had seen descendants of eminent Welsh divines drunk in the public streets in China, but had never seen a Chinaman in that condition." Would it not be wise, then, for British missionaries in China to leave the Chinese alone, and devote themselves to work of reclamation and prevention among their own people, who seem to stand in such need of it?

What ineffable nonsense ministers do talk! One of them said the other day that Christ has given us two great laws—the law of sleep and the law of the Sabbath. Why, the law of sleep is as old as life, while the Sabbath antedates Christ by many thousands of years. Neither directly nor indirectly has Christ had anything to do with either. The Sabbath is not a Christian institution at all, while even Sunday is one only by accident.

Nothing is more amazing than the supreme case with which preachers father their own peculiar views on the Bible. In 2 Kings vi. 1-7 we have an account of the miracle of the swimming iron performed by Elisha. Mr. R. J. Campbell calls it "an early Israelitish legend in a comparatively modern setting." Then he paraphrases the story, and asks, "Was this a miracle?" and answers, "It may have been." But, as if frightened at such an utterance, he hastens to observe: "The wonderful things are the ordinary things of life." This is a case of culpable trifling. If the story is a legend it is not honest to treat it as a historical incident. *Legend* is synonymous with *myth* and *fable*.

But why is this legend, myth, or fable in the Bible? It was put there for a symbolical purpose. Elisha brought the axe-head to the surface with a stick. Now, the iron signifies "the spiritual manhood" of the Jewish nation, which was often "submerged and lost in the waters of moral filth," and the stick symbolises the prophets of God by whose ministry that "spiritual manhood" was made to swim to the surface of life again. Mr. Campbell assures us that the writer of 2 Kings vi. 1-7 meant to teach that noble lesson. But nobody ever discerned that lesson there until Mr. Campbell came! There is something in this, after all, for, in the same connection, we are told that Mr. Bernard Shaw is, without knowing it, one of the sticks the Lord employs to make the iron of the British nation swim. Take heart, "G. B. S."; thou too art one of the elect of heaven!



The Bishop of Stepney has discoursed, with deep impressiveness, on "the poverty of the English clergy, which is a great and growing reproach to the English Church." According to him, "the wealthiest Church permits itself to use the ministrations of the poorest clergy." What a sorry spectacle! What right has the Church to be wealthy? What right have the clergy to complain of their poverty? The wealthy Church shall be everlastingly damned, while upon the poor clergy the Master's benediction rests. Let the Bishop of Stepney ponder the following infallible words: "It is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God"; "Blessed are ye poor, for yours is the kingdom of God." Will his lordship of Stepney tell us, with those two contrasted utterances of his King before him, what chance of heaven the Archbishop of Canterbury, with his £15,000 a year, can have, as compared with the poor widow, with her five children, who half starves both herself and them on 7s. a week? Let the Bishop be loyal to his Master, or throw up his job.

The Church Sunday-school at Clewer St. Stephen's is being closed for a bit in consequence of repairs; and the Vicar, the Rev. G. D. Nicholas, expresses in his parish magazine a hope that "when the Church Sunday-school is not held the parents will not send their children to Nonconformist schools." The reverend gentleman appears to recognise that most parents send their children to Sunday-school to get rid of them.

Under the heading of "Realms of Gold" the *Daily News* is in the habit of giving literary selections from day to day. Recently it gave in two instalments Charles Lamb's "Confessions of a Drunkard." And in a prefatory note our pious contemporary said that there were reasons for regarding the essay as personal. There were strong evidences against it, but also strong evidences for it. Which is a nonsensical statement on the face of it. But it is characteristic of the dear *Daily News*.

Charles Lamb was one of the best men who ever lived; he was a great writer, and he was a Freethinker. These are excellent reasons why we should correct our pious contemporary's nonsense.

It is absurd, to begin with, to suppose that Charles Lamb would write and print the "Confessions of a Drunkard" if he were revealing his own weaknesses. Nor was he the man to ask the British public to play the part of his father confessor. But all such arguments, powerful as they are, are superseded by his own explicit declaration; and the word of Charles Lamb is to be believed before even a Nonconformist writer's solemn affidavit.

In a letter to Southey, dated November 21, 1823, Charles Lamb thanks his old friend for stating that he was not responsible for the attack in the *Quarterly Review*. Here are the great essayist's very words:—

"The kindness of your note has melted away the mist which was upon me. I have been fighting against a shadow. That accursed *Q. R.* had vexed me by a gratuitous speaking of its own knowledge that the *Confessions of a Drunkard* was a genuine description of the state of the writer. Little things that are not ill-meant may produce much ill. *That* might have injured me, alive and dead. I am in a public office, and my life is insured. I was prepared for anger, and I thought I saw, in a few obnoxious words, a hard case of repetition directed against me."

Surely this is decisive. Lamb was very slow to anger, but his anger was roused by the suggestion that he was the drunkard of the *Confessions*.

Jabez Wolfe, who tried to swim the Channel, wore a charm round his neck, in a red morocco case. It is nearly two hundred years old, and bears a Hebrew mystic symbol, which is supposed to have brought good luck to all its possessors. But it did not bring any luck to Jabez Wolfe. Perhaps he ought to have worn it round his leg. For it was an accident to that member which compelled him to give in.

The coroner's inquest on the body of Ann Powell, aged sixty-nine, who was found dead in her cottage at Alford, Lincs., with terrible wounds in the head, apparently inflicted with an axe in the room, has ended in a most unexpected verdict. All the facts seemed to point to murder, but the jury returned a verdict of suicide during temporary insanity. Police-Superintendent Spofforth produced a book on the subject of dying Christian martyrs, and read the following extract from a page at which he found the book open:—

"For this cause I was sent that I should suffer this fire for Christ's sake. This grim fire I fear not. My soul shall sup with my Savior Christ this night."

The officer dissented from the medical evidence, which went to show that the woman's wounds could not have been self-inflicted. His opinion was that she gave herself a fatal blow with the axe, and then managed to struggle into a kneeling position, so as to represent a dying martyr. Another witness stated that Mrs. Powell had told her a week before that she thought she was going wild, and that she would prefer dying a martyr's death. The coroner and the jury accepted Superintendent Spofforth's view of the case. The poor woman was a victim of religious mania.

Rev. W. Bowell, a Passive Resister, addressing the Methodist Assembly at Bristol, advocated giving general support to the Education Bill. This gentleman had been to prison, and he naturally objected to Clause IV. which allowed Church and Catholic teaching to be given in public schools. For the rest, the Bill was right enough; it provided for such religious teaching as the Nonconformists approved; and what more could any decent and rational person desire? Mr. Bowell didn't put it exactly in that way; but the foregoing is the substance of what he said; all we have done is to give it a little more point.

Nothing has been done, after all, to the Rev. J. H. Champion McGill, vicar of Isleworth, who went into the local Free Library reading room and destroyed a paper because it was Unitarian. Some of the committee thought the matter was too trivial; others thought the reverend gentleman was the only lunatic of the kind in the district. At bottom, we dare say, they did not wish to give him the advertisement he was obviously seeking. It seems a pity, however, that such an impudent ruffian could not be taken down a bit. He wants a little lowering treatment badly.

Every now and then a fanatic or an impostor arises who declares that he has "put on immortality" and persuades a lot of people to believe it. Old Dowie worked this little trick, but he seems to be pegging out now. The founder of the Jezreelites declared that he would never die, but his followers had to bury him. His wife followed him in the immortality business, but they had to bury her too. Now we read that Thomas Lake Harris has joined the majority. He was never going to die either. We wonder who will be the next reaper of the next crop of fools.

Professor Carrally, speaking at King's College on miracles—but without working one—undertook to explain how the Israelites passed over the Red Sea. According to a cutting sent us from the *Bradford Daily Argus*, the Professor said that he had himself seen the waters of the Red Sea washed back by wind and tide sufficiently low to allow people to ride through; and with an exceptionally strong wind he thought it quite possible that people could pass over almost, if not quite, dryshod. All this is very interesting, in its way; but the learned Professor forgets that a miracle which is explained ceases to be a miracle, and becomes only a natural occurrence. Moreover, the Bible does not state that the Israelites passed over almost dryshod; it states that they passed over quite dryshod. Finally, the Bible story is absolutely incapable of a natural explanation. It is entirely miraculous—that is to say, supernatural. The Red Sea divides, leaving a pathway for the Israelites between up-standing water-ramparts on either side; and when Pharaoh and the Egyptians try to follow along the same pathway the water-ramparts fall in upon them, and the Red Sea waves roll over the spot precisely as they did before the miracle was wrought.

Miss Winifrid Graham, the writer of books for children, being interviewed and asked whether many women in society were Freethinkers, replied: "Of course, it is possible they may be as freethinking as the men. But certainly freethinking women are not as outspoken about their opinions as men are. Men have no compunction whatever in saying they do not believe; the women may really have the same sentiments, but they do not give expression to them." We fancy that this is more than truth of the men, and less than truth of the women. Miss Graham's own idea that missions to the upper classes are much needed may be sound enough from her own point of view. Why not try Torrey? Or even John McNeill—if Lord Overton, who keeps him, would let him agitate the "hupper suckles."

Rev. Dinsdale Young stirred up the Methodist Conference at Nottingham by declaring that Methodism was already groaning under the intolerable financial burden of missions, and that middle-class people were leaving it in consequence. He also declared that more modest evangelical methods would have to be adopted. There is plenty of room.



## Mr. Foote's Engagements.

(Lectures suspended during the Summer.)

### To Correspondents.

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

GEORGE PAYNE (Manchester) writes:—"The *Freethinker* under your editorship worthily upholds the flag of Freethought. Its articles are altogether admirable, and nothing that I read elsewhere excels, or even approaches them, in their expression of views which in my opinion cannot be too widely promulgated. I regret exceedingly to learn that your continuous efforts upon the paper now for twenty-five years do not even yield you the salary to which you are entitled. The more honor, therefore, is due to you for remaining at your post and persisting in your arduous labors."

J. D. STEPHENS.—You must have overlooked it. We had an "Acid Drop" on the Bishop's utterance at the time. After all, there is nothing new in God's being disappointed. He is frequently described as being so in the Bible.

W. GARRETT says:—"When I have well digested the *Freethinker*, I send it to all parts of the world, to a friend of mine, a captain of a vessel—a regular Ingersoll." This correspondent's wish has been attended to.

E. C. CORNETT.—Thanks for the cutting, but we don't see that the Mayor of Cincinnati's word is of any particular importance on such a matter. The question of whether William Booth derives any personal profit from the Salvation Army could be decided, if at all, much nearer home than that. We have no particular love for William Booth, but he is entitled to justice, and the Mayor of Cincinnati is entitled to no more. We take it that the real objection against William Booth's financial relation to the Salvation Army is that he is the actual owner of all its property. There is often said to be a trust deed to guard the subscribers, but the said trust deed is of no more value than waste paper, because the only person under it who can call William Booth to account is William Booth himself.

J. C. DOBSON.—Thanks. See paragraph.

C. J.—Your letter, being unstamped, got delayed in the post. It has now arrived safely with enclosure. Thanks.

R. CHANNING.—No, it has not dropped through. Mr. F. Bonte's articles, "From Fiction to Fact," have been revised and considerably extended for publication in a separate form. The pamphlet of sixty-four pages will be published by the Pioneer Press very shortly. The final "revise" of the pages has just been passed, and the rest of the work is mechanical. Mr. Bonte has determined to put the low price of one penny upon the pamphlet, in order to promote its widest possible circulation. A number of copies are being printed on thin paper for circulation through the post. A mental history like Mr. Bonte's should be placed in the hands of many persons who are still included in the fold of faith.

J. L. ANDERSON.—Thanks for cuttings. We cannot advise the gentleman you refer to. Why not do so yourself?

W. P. BALL.—Many thanks for your valued cuttings.

A. C. BOARD.—A Branch cannot be kept going by mere words, from us or from anyone else. It is only work that avails in the long run. We have again and again offered to lecture at Cardiff if the local "saints" would only find a decent hall for the meetings, but no practical notice was ever taken of our communications. We suggest that the Branch should try some active propaganda during the winter. Pleased to hear you think the *Freethinker* is "turned out in grand style."

J. SANDERSON (Jarrow).—Thanks.

G. S. ROBINSON.—Pleased to read your letter. Paper shall be sent.

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

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

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

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

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## Sugar Plums.

"Infidel France" has passed a notable law. Henceforth a weekly day of rest will be obligatory throughout the nation. But it is not necessarily to be Sunday, or no day at all, as is the case in Christian England. Sunday will have the preference, but Sunday rest is not possible to all the people at once, and provision is therefore made for an alternative day. The great thing is that all working people in France will be secured one day's rest in seven. How much better is that than our Sabbatarian law, which makes the day of rest unlovely for the vast majority, and yet allows seven days' labor a week to be compulsory on myriads of citizens.

Will the French go to church any the more for this new law? Not a bit of it. The *Daily News* interviewed the Father Superior of Notre Dame de France, in Leicester-square, on this subject, and these were the concluding sentences: "And will the people attend church more? He smiled, shrugged his shoulders, and spread out his hands. They will take the train! It will be as in London! But—they can go to church in the country."

The League of the Rights of Man, on the conclusion of the Dreyfus affair, organised a great demonstration at the tomb of Zola in Montmartre Cemetery. Many wreaths were sent, including a superb one of roses and orchids from Dreyfus himself. Speeches were delivered by Pressensé and Anatole France. Specially printed copies of Zola's famous "J'accuse" letter were freely sold in the neighborhood. The League's wreath laid on the tomb bore the inscription, "Honor to the great citizen, Emile Zola." It was the very inscription that he would have desired. Just as when Voltaire went to Paris for the last time not long before his death, and was enthusiastically applauded by the people, and crowned in the theatre, the word that fell most gratefully upon his ears was "Calas"—the name of the hapless victim of injustice whose innocence he had vindicated.

Alfred Dreyfus was publicly created a Knight of the Legion of Honor on Sunday. The ceremony took place at the Ecole Militaire in the presence of two companies of cuirassiers and a detachment of artillery. These occupied three sides of a square, the fourth being left for the public. When the rosette was pinned on the breast of Alfred Dreyfus by General Gillian, and the troops marched back to barracks, there occurred a very dramatic incident.

"General Picquart then came forward, seized both hands of Dreyfus, and the two men looked in each other's face. The eyes of Dreyfus were suffused with tears."

There was matter for a great poet in that meeting.

Birmingham "saints" are notified that Mr. A. Barber will lecture for the N.S.S. Branch in the Bull Ring on Wednesday evenings at 8 o'clock, commencing on August 1.

The *Fish Trades' Gazette* advertises the sale by auction of the North Sea Church Mission vessel *Frances*, which can be "readily transformed into a trawler." The auctioneers are Messrs. De Caux and Sayers, Great Yarmouth. Our readers will enjoy the joke.

A noteworthy literary announcement has just been made. Principal Donaldson, of St. Andrews, the author of those remarkably outspoken articles in the *Contemporary Review* some years ago, on the relation of the early Christian Church to women, has written a work on "the position and influence of women in ancient Greece and Rome and among the early Christians." We presume that it will be published shortly, and we shall look forward to it with great interest. Principal Donaldson will no doubt prove in the book what he proved in the articles, but more elaborately, that Christianity, whatever it may have done in other directions, certainly did not assist in the elevation of woman, but rather tended to degrade her.

There is alms for a man's every joint, every day in which the sun riseth; doing justice between two people is alms; and assisting a man upon his beast, and his baggage, is alms; and pure words, for which are rewards; and answering a questioner with mildness is alms, and every step which is made towards prayer is alms, and removing that which is an inconvenience to man, such as stones and thorns, is alms—Mohammed.



## New Testament Transpositions.

CHRISTIANS—and there never were any but nominal ones, speaking of 99 $\frac{3}{4}$  percent. of them—are, or pretend to be, very sensitive when anything is said to place many of their absurd beliefs in what they consider a ridiculous light. Satire, wit, and the very powerful weapon of ridicule they resent, because they hold, or profess to hold, certain creeds and dogmas as sacred. I speak, of course, of the common or garden Christian, because a Christian in the New Testament sense has never existed; or if so, he or she was taken for a lunatic or a saint according to the point of view. But the inconsistent part (and Christians are nothing if not inconsistent) of this objection to ridicule is, that they delight in abusing and making fun of Secularism, Freethought, Agnosticism, and Atheism; but if one should expose the numerous contradictions, monstrosities, and absurdities of Christianity, they hold up their bigoted and ignorant countenances in holy horror. They tell people to read their Bibles, and when folk really do so intelligently, and speak out their honest convictions, they are offended and shocked. How many Christians are there who have honestly studied all sides of the question—which for them is most important—as to whether Christianity be true or not? To try and induce them to give a little consideration to the subject, the following sketch of some of the very great difficulties which beset their path, and which they should endeavor to solve, may act as an incentive.

Christians, of course, believe Jesus to be divine, in spite of the fact that the immense majority of New Testament texts are against this view, and also in spite of the fact that the earliest Christians denied this, and therefore were then, and subsequently, called heretics. Many denied that he was human; for instance, the Gnostics—*i.e.*, those who knew—denied that Christ had a human body, or that he really suffered (Dr. Mosheim, vol. i.); and Cotelarius (vol. ii., p. 24, of *Patres Apostol*) writes: "Apostolis adhuc in sæculo superstitionibus apud Judæam Christi sanguine recente, et phantasma corpus Domini asserebatur"—*i.e.*, "While the apostles were still on earth, and while the blood of Christ was still recent, the body of Christ was said to be a phantasm." Within the year of the supposed crucifixion, sooner, therefore, than any other account could have been known, it was publicly taught that, instead of being miraculously born, etc., he descended in perfect manhood on the banks of the Jordan, that his disciples and his enemies were deceived, and that the Sanhedrim and Pilate and his advisers had wasted their efforts on a mere phantom. Numerous were the sects which denied either the divinity, humanity, virgin birth—*i.e.*, the incarnation, the crucifixion, and the resurrection of Jesus; and, at the present day, the six hundred odd Christian sects hold very varying views on these and other matters.

These preliminaries may help to mitigate the shock that the reversal of the texts to be quoted may have on Christians who believe in the divinity of Christ as a mere question of faith, and without thinking the matter—which should be of the utmost importance to them—worthy of serious study. A little consideration should show them that if Jesus be the God that they claim him to be, the topsyturvydom of the texts, absurd as the change makes them to thinkers, can make no difference to their pachydermatous ignorance on these subjects. For, if Jesus be the "very God, one in essence, in mind, body, or being, and one in name" that most Christians assert and say they believe, then it matters not to them which way the texts appear. Moreover, they cannot complain in any way, for the mere change of name can in no way affect the sense nor the truth of the passages, supposing them to be true. Let us begin with Mark, the earliest writer. In viii. 32 we transpose thus: "God knows not the hour, but Jesus does." In xii. 18: "God is the servant of Jesus."

Matthew xiii. 28: "God cried, Jesus, why hast thou forsaken me?" In xx. 23: "The kingdom of heaven is not mine to give, but the Son's." In xxi. 39: "Last of all, the Son sent the Father." In xxviii. 18: "Jesus gave all power to God."

Luke ii. 19: "I must be about my Son's business." In vi. 12: "God abode all night in prayer to Jesus." In xxii. 69: "God sat down (in heaven) at the right hand of Jesus."

John v. 59: "God can do nothing of himself." In viii. 28: "My Son is greater than I." In v. 43: "I am come in my Son's name, and ye receive me not." In xx. 17: "Jesus is God of the Father." In vi. 38: "God came down from heaven to do the will of Jesus."

Now for some of the epistles. First of John i. 5: "No man hath seen Jesus at any time." In iv. 9: "Jesus gave his only begotten father." In ii. 1: "We have an advocate with Jesus, God the righteous."

Ephesians iii. 9: "Jesus created all things by his Son." In i. 3: "The head of God is Christ." Galatians iii. 20: "There is one Jesus, one mediator between Jesus and man."

Hebrews x. 24: "Jesus hath made the Father his High Priest." In ii. 9: "Jesus hath made God a little higher than the angels."

Philemon ii. 9: "Jesus hath exalted God, and given him a more excellent name."

Acts xvii. 31: "God is ordained by Jesus." Now, it should be obvious, even to the prejudiced mind of the ordinary Christian, that, if Christ be God, the mere turnabout of the names can make no difference to the sense, for they believe that there is only one God, though he, or she, or it be three in one, and also that Jesus is that "very God"; consequently, they cannot repudiate, with any justice, the meaning the alteration conveys, any more than they could complain of the accuracy of the following.

Suppose one were to say that Mr. Foote had ceased lecturing for the summer; that G. W. Foote was taking a rest; that the well-known Freethinker, Foote, will lecture again in the winter; that G. W. Foote, Esq., served twelve months for reputed blasphemy, etc., etc., the mere altering of the titles does not alter the identity of the individual. We all know that these various titles refer to one and the same Mr. Foote; and the Christians say they believe that Christ and God are one, so that the reversal of the texts, absurd as their connotation is to ordinary-thinking and common-sense people, can offer no possible difficulty to them. If this be not so, will they kindly explain, and show that if, as they assert, the Father and Son are one being, what is true of one cannot be true of the other? They may as well go further, and try their hands at substituting the Holy Ghost, as co-equal in the Trinity, for one or the other of the names quoted, and publish what they think of the result. Perhaps they will agree with one of their great Christian fathers, Tertullian, who wrote: "I believe, because it is absurd." The references are from an old Bible and may not tally in all cases with the Revised Version, but the passages are well known and many others might be given.

NEMO.

## The Agnostic View of Life.

BY A. M. LAFAYETTE, M.D.

PROFESSOR MCBRIDE, in a recent talk to the students of McGill University, makes the statement that "our God-given reason imposes on us the duty of taking nothing for granted," but he later confesses a belief in the resurrection of Christ. The rest of the miracles he places in a different class from the resurrection. But why? If Christ left the earth by a miracle, why did he not come by a miracle, as we are told? The miracles he performed while here are in accord, too, with his miraculous coming and going. The chain of miracles is complete, and their character harmonious with the resurrection. To admit one or deny it would in my mind be an admission of the truth or falsity of them all.



All miracles, because they manifest a power apart from matter, are errors. From a scientific standpoint everything in Nature is correct, and must necessarily be so, but we may not have an explanation; and as religion is the only teacher of miracles, so religion has been the influence that has bestowed the burden of error upon us.

He says: "How can any pain be reconciled with the belief in an all-merciful God?" and in contradiction: "We arrive at this conclusion [God is Love] because to think of anything else would seem to land us in an absurd position."

His attempts to conceive of God are as vain as all such attempts have always been.

To conceive of a billion, or the extent of our solar system, is absolutely beyond anyone (except in a relative sense). How then can we hope to form a conception of a system, a million times greater than our solar system, and a million times this multiplication, and still have only a fraction of infinity, in fact no fraction even as our denominator is without end? That is not all, as the power that produced must be vastly greater than the production.

Our conception of the unknown sinks to the level of the finite for its terms of description, which betrays its material architecture, our mental incapacity and the inconceivableness of the infinite. To try to escape this task by supposing a limitation somewhere to the universe would only increase our dilemma, as the conception of a limitation would fall even farther beyond our mental power than infinity itself.

The stand of the Agnostic is the only safe one when he says: "I do not know"—when he tells the truth.

Professor McBride says that he was enlightened by philosophy. We all have been, but philosophy amounts to nothing, unless its hypothesis is based on fact. What value is a philosophical deduction if based on an optical illusion? If we were without a fact, philosophy could not furnish one. We can depend on only one thing, and that is our experience correctly understood.

He charges Clifford with being unable to define his term "mindstuff," but the professor has not defined his term "soul." He claims to believe in the existence of a soul as something apart from matter and permanent, but I must confess that his arguments lead me to a different conclusion.

Regarding the Gospels, which he holds in a different light from the rest of the scriptures, he says: "Take the writings of any other sage and see whether they will produce the same result as Christ's sayings have done on millions of souls." Christ left no writings, neither did any one of the world's sixteen crucified saviors (a coincidence that is significant). Ideals cannot write, but they may become the personification of certain principles out of which they have been created. (I am speaking of the ideal Christ, not the man Christ.)

Some of the sayings attributed to Christ were in existence from 500 to 1,000 years before his birth. Not only the ones considered the best (as the Golden Rule), but many of the others, were not only in existence but in decidedly better form than Christ's alleged utterances.

As far as their effect upon the people is concerned from a devotional standpoint, sincerity is much stronger with the Buddhists than with the Christians, and Buddhism has been in existence more than twice as long as Christianity; and as regards numbers, the Buddhists are decidedly in the majority to-day. Buddhism was never a compulsory religion (not a drop of human blood ever being shed in its cause), while Christianity was developed by fire and sword, and the crime of unbelief was for centuries punished with death.

Sincerity, consistency, or devotion is not proof of truth. The success that is credited to Christianity is not found among the nations of greatest devotion. Humanitarianism has been developed in man, as his intelligence has developed; and institutions established under this head, which the Church has confiscated and placed to the credit of Christian influence,

upon analysis have actually been shown to have developed, not through, but in spite of Church influence.

I do not know why he considers the Gospels more nearly infallible than any of Paul's writings, for instance. We are as certain as is possible that Paul wrote at least the most of the writings attributed to him, but the Gospels are without known authors and very decided contradictions are found within them, showing considerable uncertainty regarding the information contained; and as nearly seventy-five years elapsed after the death of Christ before the Gospels were brought to light, there was plenty of time to allow for confusion and interpolations to creep into the oral declarations of those times. Moreover, Davidson says that not until the year 170 were the books of the New Testament considered inspired.

The professor speaks of Christianity bringing immortality to light. This is not true; Buddhism and even earlier religions offered that idea as a reward for faith, and it was a most important dogma in their belief. Their salvation was through faith in their saviors, of whom they had several. One of the most prominent was Kristna, 1200 B.C. His birth was prophesied, he was born of a virgin, conceived by their God, introduced new teachings, was crucified, rose again, etc.

So close a parallel to Christianity, still this religion, in the eyes of Christians, has not the saving power that Christianity alone embraces, and all of this and all other faiths must suffer eternal torture. Nevertheless, Buddhists make a counter threat to Christians, That is what is meant by religion—it stands or falls with faith. Morality has nothing to do with religion, except incidentally. All religions have moral instructions contained in their makeup, but religion proper pertains to a faith in the unknown.

You may have an immoral Christian, or a moral Atheist from a liberal's standpoint, but religion says the greatest sin is unbelief. How can you sin against God? You may sin against matter; against the universal laws, but you must pay for it by obeying the law of compensation as a consequence of sinning. Sin, in my idea, is only a waste, and waste, as it is a phenomenon of time and refers to time, must be paid ultimately in time. As there is no end to time, why should it be a sin to waste it, any more than for nature to waste time in destroying her work? She obliterates all sin by rearranging matter.

All organisms have evolved, evidently, from inorganic matter, through countless ages, and by surrounding conditions have developed their own adaptation to those conditions, *i.e.*, light has developed the sense of sight, sound the sense of hearing, difference in the character of objects the sense of touch. Nature, when she finds no need for a thing, destroys it. She will develop or destroy eyesight, for instance, according to the conditions present. Carnivorous animals were not given carnivorous teeth and expected to seek their food by instinct. Carnivorous teeth were developed by conditions present during all the ages of the development of organic life.

Nature is not hindered by lack of time; she has infinity at her disposal, and if ten thousand years were necessary to lengthen deer's legs an inch by running, she is not compelled to consider time in her processes of evolution.

If a man has an appendix that has lost its usefulness, nature will demand its removal, and seemingly cares nothing for the sufferings of man as a consequence. But nature is on the other hand careful of a species. She will allow the development of heavy coats by polar bears, large mouths by insect-catching birds, horns by fighting animals, and swift feet by timid ones that flee, but at the same time she will allow to be sacrificed the life of the timid for the maintenance of the savage ones; still, also, she allows the savage ones, as the tiger, only few offspring, while the timid ones, as the rabbit, she allows to multiply enormously to provide food for the carnivorous. The animals that are the nourishment for the carnivorous are nearly all herbivorous, having great



possibilities for their subsistence in the vegetable world. So you see she has allowed a provision for the species, but seemingly has neglected the individual. She treats man no differently from the rest of the animal kingdom.

In the organic world, she will spend millions of years laying many beautiful strata of rock, etc., and for no apparent purpose bursts them apart and destroys her work in venting pent-up force. Still I consider there is no waste in nature (not even in time as it has no end), as nature will rearrange. The arrangement of matter is mortal, but matter itself is immortal; and why then is not matter in man as in all else the only part immortal?

Professor McBride speaks of a future life for the purpose of developing the incompleteness of this life. What is complete in this world further than its present state? How can he speak of completeness of anything and evolution at the same time? Must young trees blown down or destroyed have a future life to allow them to complete their development?

A young tree is a perfect young tree at all ages, not an incomplete adult tree. A child is a perfect child, not an incomplete man. If he means by the term perfect, normal, the most normal piece of mankind is an infant.

But man, we are told, was perfect in the beginning. Why then can we not return to that state here without a future life?

In spite of this intelligence, I must take the stand that man from his earliest times has grown better continually, until to-day I believe we have in the people at large the highest attainment in moral principles the world has ever seen.

Returning to the subject of sin (in the abstract), from another point of view, man cannot sin. He is as he has to be, as all else in nature has to be. If a cyclone destroys a beautiful tree, has the cyclone sinned? Was it not a consequence of all time? If a man dissipates, does he sin (against God)? Is he the only piece of matter that is not the sum total of all of the influences that have gone before? If he sins, God is responsible.

If a man sins (against God) he must have a free will, and this is the hypothesis from which all religions figure. This has been the millstone that religion has hung about the neck of mankind. This is the idea I would will to destroy if I had that power.

Much has been said about the influences of heredity and environment and a great deal of confusion clouds the line of demarcation; but as we receive our heredity at the time of conception, we then start on our journey of existence between the tall hills of the vale of circumstances. At the time of our separate existence (at birth) we begin to exercise our gift of hereditary inclination, modifying it by the influences of our surrounding conditions.

This hereditary inclination is superficially interpreted as the "will," but a careful analysis of this idea will narrow its possibilities down to the mere exercise of our power of choice between alternatives, and this power of choice is seen to be at the mercy of our deductions, formed under the pressure of the sum total of all the influences that have preceded us.

This is not fatalism, as the influences of to-day may alter your destiny to-morrow. It is not "chance," as the influences are consequences which have had causes in the past, but it is the result of that harmony that is found in the fitness of things in nature.

We must live as close to nature as custom will allow, and so act that we may advance our happiness and peace of mind in this life; and if there be a future one, we must necessarily have qualified for it here by obeying the laws that govern matter.

—*Truthseeker* (New York).

The religion of one age is the literary entertainment of the next.—*Emerson*.

## Science and Sentiment.

By R. G. INGERSOLL.

It was thought at one time by many that science would do away with poetry—that it was the enemy of the imagination. We know now that is not true. We know that science goes hand in hand with imagination. We know that it is in the highest degree poetic and that the old ideas once considered so beautiful are flat and stale. Compare Kepler's laws with the old Greek idea that the planets were boosted or pushed by angels. The more we know, the more beauty, the more poetry we find. Ignorance is not the mother of the poetic or artistic.

So, some people imagine that science will do away with sentiment. In my judgment, science will not only increase sentiment but sense.

A person will be attracted to another for a thousand reasons, and why a person is attracted to another may, and in some degree will, depend upon the intellectual, artistic and ethical development of each.

The handsomest girl in Zululand might not be attractive to Herbert Spencer, and the fairest girl in England might not be able to hasten the pulse of a Choctaw brave. This does not prove that there is any lack of sentiment. Men are influenced according to their capacity, their temperament, their knowledge.

Some men fall in love with a small waist, an arched instep or curly hair, without the slightest regard to mind or muscle. This we call sentiment.

Now, educate such men, develop their brains, enlarge their intellectual horizon, teach them something of the laws of health, and then they may fall in love with women because they are developed grandly in body and mind. The sentiment is still there—still controls—but back of the sentiment is science.

Sentiment can never be destroyed, and love will forever rule the human race.

Thousands, millions of people fear that science will destroy not only poetry, not only sentiment, but religion. This fear is idiotic. Science will destroy superstition, but it will not injure true religion. Science is the foundation of real religion. Science teaches us the consequences of actions, the rights and duties of all. Without science there can be no real religion.

Only those who live on the labor of the ignorant are the enemies of science. Real love and real religion are in no danger from science. The more we know the safer all good things are.

Do I think that the marriage of the sickly and diseased ought to be prevented by law?

I have not much confidence in law—in law that I know cannot be carried out. The poor, the sickly, the diseased, as long as they are ignorant, will marry and help fill the world with wretchedness and want.

We must rely on education instead of legislation.

We must teach the consequences of actions. We must show the sickly and diseased what their children will be. We must preach the gospel of the body. I believe the time will come when the public thought will be so great and grand that it will be looked upon as infamous to perpetuate disease—to leave a legacy of agony.

I believe the time will come when men will refuse to fill the future with consumption and insanity. Yes, we shall study ourselves. We shall understand the conditions of health and then we shall say: We are under obligation to put the flags of health in the cheeks of our children.

Even if I should get to heaven and have a harp, I know that I could not bear to see my descendants still on the earth, diseased, deformed, crazed—all suffering the penalties of my ignorance. Let us have more science and more sentiment—more knowledge and more conscience—more liberty and more love.

## Modern Priestcraft.

Not long ago the following interesting conversation between a minister and a lukewarm member of his church was accidentally overheard:—

THE MINISTER: Mr. —, "I have not seen you at church lately. I hope you have not forgotten that it is a duty we owe to God to make full use of all the means of grace he has graciously provided for us, and that great is the sin of those who neglect them. My dear friend, he is displeased with your conduct, and you have no excuse to offer him."

MR. —: "Quite true, sir; but I thought I could worship God at home, in the fields, or anywhere. I have not given up reading the Bible and praying altogether, though I admit I have not been so regular in my attendance at church lately."



Don't you think God can hear and answer such prayer, and accept such worship?"

THE MINISTER: "Of course, my friend, all things are possible to the Almighty; but, you know, he has seen fit, in his infinite wisdom, to adopt certain ways, and to appoint certain means, by which the great salvation may be secured, and it is a sin to expect him to depart from them. It is in his House he meets his people and gives them peace and joy. It is in his House he pours out his Spirit and gladdens the hearts of his elect, and it is in his House he blesses the preaching of the Gospel to the salvation of immortal souls. We are but dust; we have no right to ask him the reason why; our one duty is to fall in with his ordained plan."

MR. — (somewhat crestfallen, but not altogether convinced): "You may be right, sir, but for the life of me I cannot find all that in the Bible. I do not doubt that God appointed the Church and its ordinances; but, surely, if he is our Heavenly Father, he will hear our humble cry wherever we may happen to be."

THE MINISTER (thoroughly roused, red in the face, and in a raised voice): "I am sorry for you. You have certainly fallen from grace, and the Devil has supplanted the Holy Ghost in your heart. Oh, as you love your soul, repent, go on your knees and make full confession of your sin to the dear Lord, and ask him, for Calvary's sake, to forgive you and take you back again. You are on dangerous ground, and if you were to die in your present state of mind, the door of heaven would be shut against you. God has promised to save us on certain conditions, and if we do not comply with them as made known to his Church, well, we must take the consequences. You are now outside the ring of the glorious Covenant of Grace; and as the blessed Word tells us, 'Without are the dogs, and the sorcerers, and the fornicators, and the murderers, and the idolators, and everyone that loveth and maketh a lie.' Beware!"

MR. — (in a subdued, penitent tone, really frightened at the minister's solemn warning): "Thank you sincerely, sir, for taking so much trouble on my behalf. I always believed you lived very near God; I am quite sure of it now. I will try and mend my ways. Pray for me, sir."

THE MINISTER (conscious of victory and smiling): "I always pray for you, and for all my people. I have only your own good at heart, you know. Now, be sure to be at church twice on Sunday, and don't forget it is the Sunday set apart from the quarterly collection towards the support of the ministry. God bless you."

MR. — (feeling as if he had successfully got through a serious operation, and obtained a fresh outlook upon life): "Again I thank you from my heart, and may God bless you more and more in your grand work. Good day, sir."

Who says that priestcraft is a thing of the past? Why, it is as operative to-day as ever, though in a somewhat altered form. It is the secret of the success of most of the Churches everywhere. And it will continue as long as people are ignorant and superstitious enough to submit to it. The only thing that can destroy it is education. It is the silly weakness which inevitably accompanies ignorance that makes priestcraft possible. As knowledge advances, the priest, all priests—Protestant, Episcopalian, and Nonconformist, as well as Catholic—must retire; and the downfall of the priest will involve the downfall of the Church, and of all forms of supernatural religion.

CELTICUS.

### "Leo Taxil."

This man, whose real name was Gabriel Jogand-Pagès was educated by the Jesuits. He became a journalist, and about 1879, made himself conspicuous by attacks on the clergy. He published an infamous book entitled *Les Amours Secrètes de Pie IX.*, and other works so abominable that all respectable people were disgusted. To acquire a new position he suddenly, in April 1885, announced his conversion. This was regarded in Ultramontane circles as a miracle of grace, and the Papal Nuncio himself relieved him of the excommunication *de lata sententia*. Taxil then proceeded in numerous writings to reveal the secrets of Freemasonry. These productions, full of the most indecent and unspeakably absurd stories, were widely read and implicitly believed by simple-minded people. The basis of his "Revelations" was that Freemasons worshiped the Devil. Others took up the tale, among them an Italian, Domenico Margiotta, who published at Grenoble a volume on the worship of Satana, prefaced by the apostolic benediction of Mgr. Fava, Bishop of the Diocese. Leo XIII. showed his approval of the work by conferring on its author the Order of the Holy Sepulchre. Mgr. Fava himself produced a book entitled *Le Secret de la Franc-Maçonnerie*, the appearance of which was greeted by the Pope with a Latin poem which appeared in the *Univers* of June 7, 1898. All ecclesiastical journals in France devoted

a portion of their space to "Revelations" and Leo XIII. appointed in 1896 a Commission to inquire into Freemasonry, which convened an International Congress at Trent. This Congress, at which thirty-six bishops were present, met at the end of September, and Leo Taxil was the hero of the hour. He professed to have received some of his "Revelations" from a young Englishwoman, Diana Vaughan. Among her marvellous stories was one of a *séance* at Malta during which Lucifer himself appeared and, at her request, conjured up one of her ancestors. She alleged that Admiral Markham, on receiving his command in the Mediterranean, was made *grand maître d'honneur* of the "Parfait triangle" at Malta which possessed a wonderful talisman, *la flèche de fer*. When he read her account of that *séance* he expressed his disbelief in it to Captain Hughes, whereupon *la flèche de fer* planted itself in his breast and carried him to Charleston, where becoming alive, it asked him: "Dost thou now believe?" On his replying in the affirmative, he was transported back to Malta and there relieved of the talisman in the presence of Captain Hughes. This preposterous story may be read in the *Mémoires d'une ex-Palladiste, parfaite initiée, indépendante*, by any one who has a reader's ticket for the British Museum. At the Congress of Trent four German priests had common sense enough to press for some definite information about Diana Vaughan, and ultimately Taxil was forced to announce that he would bring her to a meeting in Paris convened for April 19, 1897. He appeared there and told his audience that Diana Vaughan was a myth and that he had been trying for ten years to sound the unfathomable stupidity of Catholics. He then escaped and has never been heard of since.—*The Academy*.

### HELL.

Madame—you can have no idea of Hell! We have very few official returns from that place. Still it is rank calumny to say that down there all the poor souls are compelled to read all day long all the dull sermons which were ever printed on earth. Bad as hell is, it has not quite come to that,—Satan will never invent such refinement of torture. On the other hand, Dante's description is too mild—I may say, on the whole, too poetic. Hell appeared to me like a great town-kitchen, with an endlessly long stove, on which were placed three rows of iron pots, and in these sat the damned, and were cooked. In one row were placed Christian sinners, and, incredible as it may seem, their number was anything but small, and the devils poked the fire up under them with especial good will. In the next row were Jews, who continually screamed and cried, and were occasionally mocked by the fiends, which sometimes seemed odd enough—as, for instance, when a fat wheezy old pawnbroker complained of the heat, and a little devil poured several buckets of cold water on his head, that he might realise what a refreshing benefit baptism was. In the third row sat the heathen, who, like the Jews, could take no part in salvation, and must burn for ever. I heard one of the latter, as a square-built, burly devil put fresh coals under his kettle, cry out from his pot—"Spare me! I was once Socrates, the wisest of mortals—I taught Truth and Justice, and sacrificed my life for Virtue." But the clumsy, stupid devil went on with his work, and grumbled—"Oh, shut up, there! All heathens must burn, and we can't make an exception for the sake of a single man.—*Heine*."

The world and all things in it are valuable, but the most valuable thing in the world is a virtuous woman.—*Mohammed*.

### Obituary.

With regret I have to record yet another death from among the old stalwarts of Freethought and Secularism—Mr. Ulrich Studdard, at the age of eighty-four. A man of quiet disposition, upright and sterling in all his dealings with his fellows, ever ready to assist the needy, and always for the uplifting of the people, he was a man whom to know was to admire. He was one of the founders of the old Huddersfield Secular Society, and during what has come to be termed "the fierce Bradlaugh struggles" he rendered valuable aid both financially and personally. The same assistance he also cheerfully gave to our present President of the N. S. S. In fact, his admiration for both Mr. Bradlaugh and Mr. Foote during their continuous fights, was unbounded. He was a very old tradesman of this Borough, but had retired from active business a few years ago to live in comparative quiet, until the decease of his life-long and devoted wife some months ago, when he gradually began to give way in health until the end came. "He was a man."—W. H. SPIVEY.



**SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, etc.**

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

**LONDON.****OUTDOOR.**

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Fountain): 3.15 and 6.15, L. B. Gallagher.

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

CLAPHAM COMMON: 3, A. D. Howell Smith, B.A., "The Fourth Gospel."

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (Ridley-road, Dalston): 11.30, J. W. Marshall, "Christ and Christianity."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Parliament Hill, Hampstead): 3.15, F. A. Davies, "Miss Billington and the Bible"; 6.30, H. S. Wishart, "Morality Without God."

**COUNTRY.**

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

MOUNTAIN ASH BRANCH N. S. S. (Glyde's Restaurant, Commercial-street): 2, T. Bennett, "From Christian to Secular Platform."

PORTH BRANCH N. S. S. (Secular Room, Town Hall): 6.30, S. Holman, "God is Love."

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, Market-place): 7.30, Marsden Picnic, etc.

**OUTDOOR.**

GLASGOW RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION: Jail-square, 6.30, Ignatius McNulty, "Bible Profligates."

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