

# THE Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

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PRICE TWOPENCE

*Certainly it is pleasant to dream of eternity. But for an honest man it is enough to have lived his life, doing his work.*—EMILE ZOLA.

## The Herbert Spencer Memorial.

THIS being the silly season, or at least the fag end of it, the *Daily Chronicle* is getting up a bother about a memorial to Herbert Spencer. It appears that after his death a number of distinguished men considered the desirability of raising some abiding monument in his honor, and they decided to seek permission to erect a memorial tablet in Westminster Abbey, but the Dean of Westminster "felt himself compelled to withhold his consent." This is regarded as perfectly shocking by the *Daily Chronicle*. Our contemporary was moved to send out a circular letter on the subject to various eminent persons, and it prints a selection of their replies under the heading of "Opinions of Scientists"—one of the said scientists being a novelist and another a Christian preacher. The first name on the list is that of Sir Michael Foster, who says:—

"I signed the petition for a memorial to Herbert Spencer in Westminster Abbey, and recent events have increased my wonder that it was rejected."

Several others refer to the burial of Sir Henry Irving in the Abbey, and express surprise that the actor should be admitted and the philosopher excluded. But all this appears to us a great absurdity.

Sir Henry Irving, we have heard, was not exactly orthodox, but he never made any public profession of unbelief, and it was possible to pass him into the Abbey as a decent Christian. For, after all, Westminster Abbey is not a public exhibition like Madame Tussaud's, but a Christian church regularly used for Christian worship. How different was the case of Herbert Spencer! He has been called the Apostle of Evolution. He was known to be a disbeliever in Christianity. He taught that Nature was a vast unbroken continuity, that there were no such things as miracles, that causation was universal both in time and in space. He declared that neither science nor religion could ever know anything about God. And, on the practical side, he maintained that morality sprang out of purely natural conditions, that it had no necessary relation to supernaturalism, that it was nothing more, and nothing less, than the permanent conditions of human welfare in the present world. Herbert Spencer was not a Christian. He was opposed to Christianity. And to admit him to a place of honor in a Christian church is a thing which no unbeliever should solicit and no believer should yield. Let us be sensible. Let us be honest. Let us not take weakness for generosity. Let us not take mental confusion for intellectual hospitality.

It is said that Darwin was buried in Westminster Abbey. True, but it was a mistake. It was a farce. It was a desecration. They buried the great Agnos-

tic, who did not believe in a future life, in the sure and certain hope of a glorious resurrection. It was a lie on both sides. And a sorry lie too. The Dean of Westminster of that day ought not to have played the part of a body-snatcher in order to provide his show with another celebrity. Nor should the representatives of Darwin have fancied that they could honor him in some way by such a proceeding. He needed no patronage of the Church. Neither did he need any patronage of the State. Nations cannot shed lustre on such men; they shed lustre on nations. Darwin had lived the life of a simple English gentleman in a quiet Kentish village, but the brainwork he did there had made his name famous to the ends of the earth. He had revolutionised human thought. To say "before Darwin" is like saying "before the Flood." Let his tomb bear the simple inscription, "Charles Darwin," and it would say more than pompous eulogy, and command more reverence than the costliest work of art in the mightiest cathedral.

Herbert Spencer's ashes—for his remains were cremated—may rest where they are; or be scattered to the winds and blown around the world. What does it matter? The world is not concerned with his ashes at all. It is concerned with his ideas. And those ideas are not the ideas which are represented by Westminster Abbey. To put up a memorial tablet to him there would be a mockery.

Do the eminent scientists and others who have responded to the *Daily Chronicle's* appeal imagine for a moment that what they suggest will be of any conceivable service to Herbert Spencer? Will it add any weight to the two words of his name? Will it add an hour to his life in the memory of mankind?

Milton, in his epitaph on Shakespeare asked what need there was of a pyramid to cover his honored bones.

"Thou, in our wonder and astonishment,  
Hast built thyself a livelong monument.

And, so sepulchred, in such pomp dost lie,  
That kings, for such a tomb, would wish to die."

And although Herbert Spencer is not the compeer of Shakespeare, the same sentiment holds good of him. His true monument is that of his intellectual fame.

We are positively glad that the Dean of Westminster will not allow a memorial tablet to Herbert Spencer in the Abbey. That sort of monument is not worth the respect of any true admirer of his genius. Shakespeare lives in his works; and so, in a humbler way, does Herbert Spencer. When they die, he dies; while they live, he lives. And it seems to us that the best way of doing him honor is to make his works more accessible. They are still scandalously inaccessible. They appear to be published for millionaires. No doubt the high price was inevitable at one time, but that time is past. We suggest that an effort should be made to publish Herbert Spencer's writings cheaply. That will be his best memorial.

G. W. FOOTE.

## Atheism on Trial.

ATHEISM is threatened by another enemy! On the other side of the Tweed the Rev. A. M. Brown, B.D. (the four initial letters are amusingly suggestive if one places the last in front of the first two, and then replaces the A by the third, at the same time transposing the two last), of the U. F. Church, Kirkintilloch, threatens the public with a course of lectures, the first of which, on "Why I Believe in God," a correspondent has been kind enough to send me. Mr. Brown's powers of observation are demonstrated at the outset by his noting that a great change has come over the world concerning the traditional view of the Bible. And his observation is deep enough to extract some comfort from the present condition of things. "It is a slight comfort to know that whilst there are many sceptics, and critics, and secularists, and freethinkers, and infidels, there are not many atheists, not many who deny the existence of God." The reason of this is that "it is a mental impossibility to be a permanent atheist." Well, if there are not many Atheists—and how can there be if it is impossible that there should be any?—Mr. Brown might really allow the few non-existent ones to die in peace, if one can speak of the non-existent as either living or dying.

This, however, is not Mr. Brown's method. Having discovered that there are not many Atheists, and that it is impossible that anyone should be one for any time, his next discovery is that "Atheism begins in conduct, not in thought.....Men try to square their creed with their conduct, and not their conduct with their creed." It is true that "some of the greatest philosophers of the age do not believe in the existence of God.....they are in a miserable minority," and although it is the fashion to call the Atheist a philosopher, "the Bible never makes mention of him without calling him a fool"—which at once disposes of *him*. "His infidelity has its origin in a closed heart, if not in a bad and wicked heart.....At any rate, the atheist is not infrequently a bad man." One feels depressed; but one breathes again on hearing that there are exceptions. There is John Stuart Mill, "the Saint of Rationalism"; there is Charles Bradlaugh, "whose moral character no one has ever dared to impugn" (Mr. Brown does scant justice to his fellow-preachers here); but "the influence of scepticism on character is, in the main, pernicious." So that the Atheism which begins in "a bad and wicked heart" does not prevent Atheists being of perfectly spotless character, any more than the goodness of heart that leads a man to embrace Christianity prevents his being at times a thorough-paced scoundrel. One can honestly sympathise with Mr. Brown in both circumstances, although it is probably the first that disturbs him the most.

At this point, however, Mr. Brown makes a really useful discovery. He discovers that "to many" all this may seem "a begging of the question"; and so he proceeds to show that Atheism is unreasonable. If anyone asks Mr. Brown why he believes in God, "I say it is because I cannot help it"—which is probably correct, and therefore I am dealing with the good man gently. Did not Coleridge say that not one man in a thousand had either the goodness of heart or the strength of mind to be an Atheist? and on the last count, certainly, no one would take Mr. Brown as a disproof of Coleridge's opinion. As he cannot help believing in God, the matter well might stop here; but Mr. Brown gives further reasons, none of which are quite original enough to justify the autobiographical style of his lecture. Everything must have a cause, he says. "I am not the cause of my own existence"; which, to paraphrase Johnson, removes a heavy responsibility from Mr. Brown's shoulders. I, he says, had parents; they, too, had parents; and so on in "an infinite series." Therefore "I cannot rid myself of the belief that I have a cause other than human parentage.....an Eternal Father of whom I am the child, made in his own image." So, because everything must have a cause,

Mr. Brown believes in one thing that was without a cause, and which, presumably, is *nothing*. And because he had a parent, and these again had parents, and so on to infinity, he believes that he could not have had parents at all. The reasoning is conclusive, the evidence overwhelming. Otherwise, Mr. Brown declares, "I am a mystery, not only unexplainable, but intolerable." Otherwise or no, one is inclined to welcome the last word as a not unhappy description of the Rev. A. M. Brown, B.D. And when, in the next breath, the audience is told "It is almost insulting your intelligence to dwell upon this," one wonders why "almost"?

To prove that he is not alone in these giddy heights of philosophical speculation, Mr. Brown next cites Lord Kelvin as saying "It is impossible to conceive either the beginning or the continuance of life without an over-ruling creative power," but omits to mention that Lord Kelvin was promptly told by leading biologists that he was speaking without his book. Darwin is also cited as confessing to a belief in a "creator"; but the trifling fact that Darwin expressed regret for ever having used the word, and declared himself an Agnostic, is likewise passed over in silence. Perhaps it would have been insulting the intelligence of the congregation to have mentioned these things. Or it might have made Mr. Brown more of a mystery, or more intolerable than he is at present. And for fear that his hearers may be in doubt as to his own position, Mr. Brown pauses in his exposition to declare "I believe in God.....and not merely in God, but God the Father Almighty; and not Almighty alone, but all-wise, all-holy, all-good. I believe in this God with my whole self, intellect, and heart and conscience." Brave Mr. Brown! There is no compromise here, no temporising with modern theories of divinity. He sticks to the God of the U. F. Church with his whole self, and, for fear some of himself has been overlooked in the whole of himself, he particularises the parts of himself. As Dominie Samson would say, "Prodigious!" Mr. Brown is a theological "whole-hogger."

It has been charged against philosophers that in meditating on the abstract they have overlooked the obvious. Mr. Brown's mind is of a different type. If he can soar beyond the beginning of things, he can also apply himself to the common affairs of life. He asks, "Try to think what the state of the world of men would be if it could be shown there is no God..... If God were banished property would not be safe. If you teach men there is no God, no Judge, no Heaven, no Hell, 10,000 godless hands would be stretched out to take what is not theirs." Presumably "10,000" is a mere rhetorical figure, used, as Poohbah would say, to give an air of verisimilitude to an otherwise bald and unconvincing narrative. Of course what Mr. Brown means is that *all* godless hands would be stretched out to take what was not theirs, and since all would then be godless, everyone would be living on what they stole from someone else; and as Mr. Brown is sure this would happen, but for the moral aspect of the matter, it might be advocated as a means of solving the problem of poverty. I have heard before of an island where people lived by taking in *each other's* washing, but the discovery that people could live by stealing each other's property ought to confer upon its author the title of a great social reformer.

It will be remembered that there are not, as Mr. Brown has shown, many Atheists in the world, and it is impossible for anyone to be such permanently. One may, therefore, regard the police force of the nation as being maintained merely in case the people should suddenly give up their belief in God, much as we maintain an army to be prepared for war. And the fact that there are quite 10,000 hands stretched out to take what is not theirs *now*, that goods are adulterated, bogus companies promoted, yea, that even church elders may be found bolting with church funds or other people's wives, are merely illustrations, practised by godly men and women, to show *others* what godless people would do if their type of mind ever became general. May Providence and Mr. Brown

protect us from such a catastrophe! Mr. Brown reflects on his own nature, looks over his congregation, and says plainly and boldly, "But for the belief in God, and heaven, and hell, you and I would be stretching out our hands to take what is not ours. Philosophers may say that morality is independent of religion, but we of the Kirkintilloch N. F. Church know better. We know it is nothing but the belief that God has his eye on us that keeps us from stealing, and we argue from ourselves to others." Well, I should be the last in the world to question Mr. Brown's testimony concerning himself, but it does sound a little hard on the congregation.

I pass over Mr. Brown's question, "Did you ever hear of a poor dying sufferer sending for an Atheist?" because as there are not many of them, and as none are permanently so, they might become Theists before they reached their destination even if they were sent for, the query betrays a certain looseness of thought out of touch with the careful reasoning of the rest of the sermon. It is always advisable to take a man at his best. I will, therefore, only deal with Mr. Brown's closing argument. "What," he asks, "of the future? Well, I have nothing to lose. But suppose I am right and the Atheist is wrong? What shall his end be but the blackness of darkness for ever." And with this solemn exordium Mr. Brown closes his speech. He knows himself, he knows his audience, he knows his God. Some people might argue that this was taking a low view of the matter, that Mr. Brown in offering this to one chance was lacking in a sportsmanlike instinct, was afraid to "back his fancy," in other words was "hedging." Others might reason that if the Atheist is right the Theist has all the time been squandering time and energy that might have been better applied. Others might urge that a man's highest duty is to follow the truth as he sees it, and that even a decent God would pay more respect to one who reached Atheism by such means, than to one who professed a belief in a deity merely from a desire to be on the safe side. Mr. Brown rises superior to all such sophistries. He says, if I am right God will reward me for having professed a belief in his existence. It is true I cannot help believing in him, but that will make no difference. And even though I am wrong I am safe. For if the grave ends all and there is no God to punish or reward, I shall be unconscious of it, and although I may have been leading people astray all the time, yet I am on the safe side. One cannot but testify to the thoroughly religious character of this type of mind. Believing that it is only the fear of God that keeps Christians from picking their neighbors pockets, he protests against Atheism robbing people of this excellent means of keeping down the police rates. Believing Atheism to be a mental impossibility he fights with all his strength against the country becoming a nation of Atheists. Believing that Atheism has its origin in depravity of character he warns the public against being deluded by the fact that there are Atheists whose lives are blameless. Nothing escapes his observation, no argument is safe against his searching analysis. Against such a mind Atheism is powerless. Its most powerful arguments fail to make any impression. Kirkintilloch may well be proud of its preacher; for it is on the existence of such thinkers that religion must ultimately rely for security.

C. COHEN.

### "The Moral Value of Fear."

SUCH is the title of an article from the pen of the Rev. Henry W. Clark, which appears in the *Christian Commonwealth* for August 30. Mr. Clark laments the almost entire absence of fear from the religious life of to-day, and puts in a strongly worded plea for the stern necessity of "relearning the old lesson as to the fear of the Lord being the beginning of wisdom." From a religious point of view, both the lament and the plea are abundantly justified. Fear is the one root out of which all religion has sprung; and

ignorance, or the sense of mystery, is the starting point of all fear. The history of religions renders this statement insusceptible of contradiction, even of doubt. But there is another fact equally indisputable—namely, that the decay of fear is accompanied by a corresponding decay of religion. Mr. Clark is fully awake to both facts, as his article clearly shows. But the indispensableness of fear to religion is by no means a proof of its value to morality. As a matter of history, nothing is more incontrovertible than that during the periods when fear was the predominating factor in religion, morality was an inconspicuous factor in social life.

Mr. Clark employs the terms *fear*, *awe*, and *reverence* as if they were synonymous; but they are not synonymous. *Reverence*, for example, means a strong sentiment of respect and esteem, fear being a foreign element instilled into it by religion. In olden times, as in Chaucer, reverence denoted *respect*, *honor*, without awe or fear. We will, therefore, eliminate reverence from our discussion, confining our attention to fear and awe. Fear is a painful emotion or passion excited by the expectation of evil, and its synonyms are apprehension, anxiety, solicitude, alarm, dread. Awe, likewise, is an emotion caused by something dreadful, appalling. To stand in awe of an object is to fear it exceedingly. Now, originally the sentiment of reverence was not a characteristic of religion at all. The first object of religious fear was some unknown power believed to be hostile to man and capable of inflicting irreparable harm upon him. Out of that dread of the unknown and hostile power came the attempt to propitiate or conciliate it by loading it with presents, known theologically as offerings or sacrifices. Such was the origin of religious fear and of all religious rites and ceremonies. Does Mr. Clark believe that God is a power or a person that is hostile to man, and capable of deliberately injuring him, and that requires to be propitiated or bought over with costly sacrifices? We all know that the Jehovah of the Old Testament was a most cruelly destructive being, and that those who believed in him had good cause to fear him, and to heap upon his altars the most valuable sacrifices, in the hope of winning his favor; but the moral value of the fear of Jehovah was imperceptible. If such a being existed, the fear of him was both the beginning and the end of wisdom; but it was neither the beginning nor the end of morality. Among the Israelites, many of those who feared Jehovah most were the most grossly immoral, king David being a brilliant case in point.

Christianity, of course, addresses man as a sinner against the God of love, and consequently as the object of the punitive wrath of this God of love. As an impenitent, unregenerate sinner, man has good reason to fear God. But even after he has repented and been forgiven and born again, he is still exhorted to approach the Divine Presence with godly fear, and told that he cannot love his Heavenly Father aright without standing in constant awe of him. Does this really mean that we cannot develop the noblest type of character without having the fear of hell perpetually before our eyes? Does Mr. Clark endorse such a doctrine? If he does, then history gives him the lie. In the past, neither the hope of heaven nor the fear of hell, nor a combination of the two, has been a sufficient inducement to cultivate the highest morality. Mr. Clark says:—

"The fear which is the soul's homage to the Eternal—the soul growing silent as it looks the Eternal in the face—that fear alone can prepare the soul for whatever the Eternal may communicate and for whatever ministry the Eternal may will to perform. The soul is really magnetised when it fears. To recover the lost consciousness of awe is, then, one of the first duties of him who would grow morally and spiritually great."

But surely, homage to the Eternal, whatever the Eternal may connote, is not identical with fear of it. Awe and acquiescence are two different things. Fear and homage are not interchangeable terms. Fear, dread, and awe are *painful* emotions, and no happiness is possible to those who cherish them; nor are they emotions that are conducive to moral growth,

as the history of Christendom clearly testifies. Mr. Clark admits that the fear of God, for which he holds a brief, has practically vanished from the religious life; but there has not been a corresponding disappearance of morality. Indeed, it is an amply attested fact that, on the whole, mankind never stood ethically higher than they do to-day; and this fact lends some support and justification to the conviction that morality would be a gainer by the complete disappearance, not only of religious fear, but of religion itself as a supernatural concern.

Now, let us consider fear as an emotion confined to man only as a citizen of this world, and inquire what moral value, if any, it possesses. Mr. Clark is undoubtedly wrong when he asserts that "the sense of awe brings us near to and holds us under the spell of that whereby awe is inspired." An earthquake, such as visited Valparaiso recently, is a fearful, dreadful, awful occurrence—does it draw people near to itself and hold them under a spell? A volcanic eruption, such as destroyed Pompeii, is a fearful, awful event—does it draw the people immediately concerned and hold them under a spell, or does it simply terrify them and send them flying in all directions? It is a mistake to imagine that scenes in Nature which excite fear and dread seize upon and hold us. However majestic and beautiful they may be as natural phenomena, we require to be at a sufficiently safe distance to be able to admire them. However, the knowledge that they cruelly kill thousands upon thousands of our fellow beings, kindles within us such a sense of horror that all other emotions become impossible. Mr. Clark's observations here are completely irrelevant, and it is difficult to see why he makes them. His remarks on the magnetic influence of art and love, while perfectly true in themselves, are equally worthless for his purpose.

Mr. Clark winds up his irrelevancies with the false generalisation that "it is the thing of which the soul stands in awe that magnetises it most." In the social realm the falseness of that statement is self-evident. When a man is about to commit a crime, does the fear of punishment deter him? He *does* fear punishment; but it is the thought of revenge, or the hope of securing some valuable plunder that magnetises him, and forms his motive-power. The fear of punishment rarely prevents crime. Most of our criminals are old hands, who are no sooner out of prison than they are in again. No, it is not awe, it is not fear, it is love that magnetises men most. The fear of punishment deters from wrong only those who have learned to love right. We all follow our hearts, just as we do our noses.

How true this is in the training of children. In many homes punishment is the chief instrument of discipline. The Hebrew proverb, "He that spareth his rod hateth his son," as popularised into "Spare the rod and spoil the child," and literally interpreted, seems to be the sole guide of not a few parents and teachers even in our own day. The word *rod* may not be taken to mean "a literal whip, much less a club, a bludgeon," but it is understood to denote some form of punishment. As a rule, however, the children who fear their parents do not turn out well; and when they do it is in spite of the ministry of dread. More than twenty years ago a man resolved on becoming a father, that he would never have recourse to punishment as a factor in the training of his children. Six or seven lusty little rebels came to him in quick succession. They were so full of constructive vitality that it ran over in a stream of destructive energy. They deliberately broke the furniture, tore their clothes into shreds, and nearly pulled the house down about their ears; but they were never once punished. They were pleaded and reasoned with in love, they were judiciously told that it was wrong to tear and destroy precious articles, and that they would be much happier if they turned their surplus energy into other channels. They are all grown up now, and the parents rejoice at the complete triumph of their system. Whether or not it would be wise to give such a system universal application, I do not undertake to determine; but

there can be no doubt that it would be worth while to take it into serious consideration. In the meantime, let us bear in mind that the fear of punishment is practically not a strong incentive to right doing; that forbidden fruit is always the sweetest. Mark Twain tells us that one day his father warned him against doing what he had never even dreamed of doing, but that after the prohibition was issued he did it the very first opportunity he had.

Mr. Clark closes his paper by saying that "man's hope lies in the true fear," in the restoration of the sense of awe. We maintain, on the contrary, that man's hope lies in the true love, in the love that impels to the observing and doing of all that makes for the genuine progress and happiness of humanity. As an Apostle says, love is the greatest thing in the world, the strongest magnet, supreme motive-power. Mr. Clark quotes the proverb, "Familiarity breeds contempt"; but the familiarity of love breeds reverence, appreciation, a desire to possess and enjoy forever. There is a familiarity that breeds contempt, the familiarity of ignorance, the familiarity that merely brushes the surface of things; but the familiarity of knowledge and intelligent love breeds the fellowship which is sweetest life. Fear has had its innings, and it has miserably lost. Its moral value has been entirely disproved. It is love's innings now; and if it gets fairplay it will win the game. Love based on knowledge, or knowledge on wings of love—herein lies the hope of man.

The love of God has fared no better than his fear. Men feared God, and revelled in the works of darkness, gratifying all their selfish desires. Men loved God, and found their chief diversion in hating and persecuting heretics and Jews, and not seldom in devouring one another. Thus both the love and the fear of God have been discredited in practice. Religion has not benefited morality. The truth may be that morality has severely suffered at the hands of religion. Hence, in either case, let religion go out that morality may come in. Let both the love and the fear of God be uprooted that the love, without the fear, of Humanity may grow and flourish and win the world.

J. T. LLOYD.

### The Ingersoll Monument.

A SUFFICIENT SUM of money has come to the Ingersoll Memorial Committee of Peoria, Ill., of which Mr. Frank Cunningham is treasurer, to justify the members in ordering the monument, which they have done, and the work will be dedicated on August 12, 1907, the seventy-fourth anniversary of Ingersoll's birth. It will be a life-size statue, costing \$10,000, and will stand at the entrance to Glen Oak Park in Peoria. The contract is given to the New York sculptor, Fred E. Triebel, to whom it is said, the work will be a labor of love as well as of pride.

Ingersoll was not born in Peoria, being a native of Dresden, N. Y., but it was in the Illinois city that he achieved distinction, and in return he conferred distinction upon the town. The people there knew him best and loved him most, and to them belongs the privilege of rearing the first monument to his memory. He moved there from Shawneetown, Ill., in 1857, then a young lawyer of twenty-four years. At Peoria he received his commission as Colonel of the Eleventh Illinois Cavalry; he left there in February, 1862, with his regiment and returned there after his experience as a soldier and prisoner of war. He there arose to be one of the first lawyers in the state and nation; was elected attorney-general of Illinois in 1866, and might have been governor two years later if he would have consented to silence on the subject of religion. He married in Peoria; his daughters were both born there, and even after he removed to Washington, D. C., in 1877, his name and that of Peoria were still intimately associated. To the Peorians he was always and will always be "Our Bob," and while the monument is not needed to keep his memory green the sculptured marble will serve as a material expression of the affection and respect in which he was held by his townsmen. His thoughts, expressed in words so combined that they added beauty, grace and strength to our language, are imperishably impressed upon the human mind and the printed page; and it was never the privilege of art to preserve in stone a nobler form.

—Truthseeker (New York).

**A Hymn to Nature.**

By EDWIN EMERSON (Aged 83).

FAIR Nature, we, thy children, see  
 Thy matchless beauty everywhere;  
 Above, beneath, on land, at sea,  
 Thy works in thy perfection share.  
 The starry throng  
 Chants its sweet song;  
 Light lends its magic rays;  
 And all below  
 Join to bestow,  
 On thee undying praise!

Great glowing suns light up all space;  
 Their orbits far transcend our ken;  
 And minute forms replete with grace,  
 Fly swarming round the steps of men.  
 Oh glorious light!  
 How swift thy flight,  
 To our terrestrial sphere!  
 Thy complex beams,  
 In living streams,  
 All sentient beings cheer.

Prolific thou, from age to age,  
 In works immense and manifold;  
 All this is now our heritage;  
 But, what shall be, cannot be told.  
 High order reigns  
 In all domains,  
 Controlled by Nature's sway;  
 She has the norm,  
 And gives the form,  
 Mere matter must obey.

Abundance, plenitude and grace,  
 All wide-spread as the heavenly dews;  
 Throughout thy generous steps we trace,  
 By gifts most precious and profuse!  
 Live and let live;  
 Yea, freely give,  
 As Nature gave before;  
 She fills the earth  
 With joy and mirth,  
 From her o'erflowing store!

Advancing knowledge opens wide,  
 The radiant portals of the skies;  
 And aids on earth, by thee supplied,  
 Will make the thoughtful truly wise.  
 If we would learn,  
 We must discern,  
 What things to thee belong;  
 For thou canst show,  
 Where'er we go,  
 The right as well as wrong.

Yet, all is not so plain and clear,  
 That we may understand its scope,  
 Thy mysteries.....profound appear;  
 Deep darkness is no friend of hope.  
 Man runs his race;  
 But time and space  
 Continue though he dies;  
 Mid griefs and pains,  
 Stern silence reigns;  
 Full light would blind our eyes.

Brought forth by thee, our mother dear,  
 Our duty is to trust thy power,  
 Through each succeeding day and year,  
 Till the inevitable hour.  
 From age to age,  
 From sage to sage,  
 The torch of science passed;  
 In our own time,  
 Its rays sublime,  
 O'er Nature's works are cast.

Then at the end, we may rejoice,  
 To yield our breath at thy behest;  
 Lulled gently, by thy soothing voice,  
 To sleep in peace upon thy breast.  
 Go! meet alone  
 The change unknown;  
 To die,—to live on still!  
 While Nature's ways,  
 In each new phase,  
 Our minds with wonder fill!"

—The Open Court (Chicago).

**Acid Drops.**

Rev. Mr. Aked, of Pembroke Chapel, Liverpool, appears to be going to take an Atlantic trip for the benefit of his health. The official announcement is that he has accepted an invitation to preach during the whole of November in the Fifth-avenue Baptist Church, New York. This house of God is the well-known "church of the millionaires," and is attended by Mr. John D. Rockefeller, the Standard Oil King. It is suggested by the *Liverpool Daily Post* that an interesting time is coming for the wealthy members of "Fifth-avenue." Very likely. Mr. Aked's denunciation of millionaires and money-making will amuse that wealthy congregation, just as Father Vaughan's diatribes against the "smart set" draw crowds of fashionable people to hear him. And no doubt the "church of the millionaires" will pay Mr. Aked handsomely for the entertainment.

There was an odd announcement in the *Daily News* the other day of a "mass meeting" to be held in Hyde Park, at which representatives of the Church of England, Nonconformity, the Roman Catholic Church, and the Ethical Society were to give their views on the Education Bill. The name of the Roman Catholic speaker was Mr. G. Anstruther; the Church of England representative was that learned and distinguished divine, the Rev. A. J. Waldron; that modest infidel-slayer, the Rev. Z. B. Woffendale, was to represent Nonconformity; while Mr. Joseph McCabe would present the case for the Ethical Society. We are really sorry for Mr. McCabe. London could not have afforded him more farcical company for such an adventure.

We don't quite understand what the speciality of "the Ethical view" of the Education Bill is—or what it can be. The only alternative to religious education is secular education, and that was in the field long before the Ethical Society was born or thought of.

At St. Peter's, Shaldon, Devonshire, some people have made it a rule to leave the church before the sermon. Naturally this annoyed the vicar, who has had the following notice affixed to the pillars of his Bethel:—"All adults who are unbaptised or possessed by devils should leave the church before the sermon, otherwise they should remain till the conclusion of the Lord's service." We suppose the angry man of God thinks this is getting his own back. But what an exhibition it is of Christian "meekness"!

This most Christian nation of Great Britain and Ireland has just paid the top price of £1,600,000 for a new battleship. Of course it cannot afford to buy Lord Amherst of Hackney's famous library which has to go under the hammer. There are books in that collection of immortal interest—really beyond all value that could be expressed in terms of money. Fancy a nice copy of the first book ever printed in England! Why, it is a thing to be enshrined. And how the nation would rejoice in its possession in the better days to come when battleships will be forgotten!

There was once talk about Mr. Ben Tillett taking holy orders. The idea seems to be thoroughly "off" now, if we are to judge by his speech on Peace and Arbitration at the Trade Union Congress. "When we were fighting the Boers," he said, "the Bishops and clergy prayed that the Boers should be sent to heaven or the other place. I should like to see the Bishops in heaven, and the Czar an archangel."

It is amusing to read the cackle in papers like the *Daily News* over the quarrel between Church and State in France. Here in England they are the friends of religion—and lie for it, and boycott for it. Across the Channel they seem to regard priests as adventurers, and the Church as a swindle. That is because the Church in France is the Catholic Church—and English papers like the *Daily News* are rank (very rank) Protestant.

The Catholic Association's fifth annual pilgrimage to Lourdes started from London on Tuesday. Over a hundred afflicted persons are going to try to get relief from the Mother of God. If the pilgrimage to Lourdes is any good, processions of lunatics should be taken there with a view to their recovery. No doubt some will say that lunatics go there already.

The Rev. Dr. Reuben Thomas, of America, who is *locum tenens* at the City Temple, has the reputation of preaching remarkable sermons. Certainly, on Sunday evening, September 2, he *did* deliver a characteristic discourse, a discourse

characterised by wild assertions, glaring misrepresentations, and plausible fallacies. It was specially addressed as a solemn warning to young people. The gist of it was that Secularists, who claim to be superior persons and hurl the charge of narrow-mindedness at Christians, are themselves the most inferior and narrow-minded folks living. Yes, on a meltingly hot Sunday, Dr. Thomas had the coolness to exclaim, "Irreligiousness is a sign of inability to think deeply and seriously on any subject." And the bulk of the 1,500 people present were delighted to hear it. It was delicious food to their vanity.

Dr. Thomas assured his audience that Secularists are not educated; they are merely puffed up with pride. In their ignorance they imagine that to deny the historicity of Genesis is a sign of superior intelligence. Does not Dr. Thomas know that the minister of the City Temple is not a believer in the historicity of Genesis? The fact is that this American divine was throwing dust into the eyes of his hearers. He must have known that he was misleading them. Even within the Church itself, practically all the scholars are on the road to Secularism, while outside all learning is tinged with Scepticism. It is an inexcusable falsehood to assert that learning is on the side of faith, the very opposite being the truth.

In his prayer Dr. Thomas thanked God for the "redemption of the world through Jesus Christ our Lord"; but towards the close of the sermon, he was candid enough to concede that the "redemption of the world through Jesus Christ our Lord" is *not* an accomplished fact. "The day of Christianity," he said, "is in the future; it has never yet come, but it is coming. As yet, Christianity has not succeeded in creating a civilisation that could be said to be in complete harmony with the Sermon on the Mount; but even that feat it will perform in the future." In the same breath, Dr. Thomas gave expression to his deep grief on account of the deplorable fact that there seems to be taking place in Christendom a general falling away from Christ, that even Great Britain is losing its supreme reverences, such as its reverence for the Bible, for the Sabbath, for the means of grace, even for God. Surely the day of Christianity has a curious, startling way of coming—while in the very act of passing it is coming.

Is it not the height of injustice to denounce opponents in the absence of first-hand knowledge of their views? Dr. Thomas described *Secularists* as people who live alone for the present life, and who believe in nothing beyond what they can see with their eyes and handle with their hands. While the first part of that description is true, the second is a wicked lie. These people have no imagination, the preacher said; their vision is painfully circumscribed. Did Shakespeare, the prince of poets, lack imagination? Yet Shakespeare was a Freethinker. Had Marlowe no imagination? Yet he was a determined enemy of religion. Then what about Shelley, Landor, Keats, William Morris, James Thomson, Swinburne, all out-and-out Freethinkers—are their works devoid of imagination? Dr. Thomas's charge is a deliberate falsification of the facts.

The Rev. R. J. Campbell deliberately told his hearers, a few Thursdays ago, that the fourth Gospel is not a historical document. "This book, the fourth Gospel," he said, "was not written as a historical treatise, and the writer never meant us to understand that it was anything of the kind." Freethinkers heartily welcome such a testimony from such a source. It was for advocating the unhistoricity of Gospel narratives that they used to be so vehemently denounced by Christian ministers. But here is a Christian minister who admits, from a Christian pulpit, that the Freethinkers are so far right.

Mr. Campbell goes on to say that the fourth Gospel "belonged to an order of literature to which the people of the race and the time in which this man wrote were well-accustomed; that is, it was meant to teach a certain truth under the form of a story." We are not at one with the pastor of the City Temple as to the reality of the truth or doctrine which the writer wished to establish; but that does not lessen our appreciation of the dogmatic declaration that the fourth Gospel is a work of fiction.

Now, among the fictitious sayings attributed to Jesus in John's Gospel is this question: "Which of you convicteth me of sin?" "To begin with," said Mr. Campbell, "I want you to agree with me that these words in all probability are not the words of Jesus at all." That is to say, Jesus did not claim personal sinlessness; it would have been unutterably foolish on his part to have done anything of the kind; there were plenty of people quite ready to lay many

grievous sins to his charge. "We have here," continued Mr. Campbell, "not so much the words of Jesus about himself, as the *expression of primitive Christian experience about him.*" In other words, we have here, under the form of a novel, a statement of what some of the founders of Christianity wanted men to think of Christ.

The only logical inference from such concessions is that the Jesus portrayed in the fourth Gospel never lived at all. This picture of him is wholly ideal. The Christ worshiped at the City Temple is not a historical person, but "Ideal Humanity," not "the earthly Jesus," but "the Christ of Christian experience"—an imagined, or invented Christ. Well, that is all right, and we do not wish to quarrel with it. So far as it goes, it is excellent Freethought teaching, and is bound, in the long run, to be of incalculable service to our cause.

Like Dr. Campbell Morgan, Dr. Len. G. Broughton, of Atlanta, prides himself on his orthodoxy, on his fidelity to the Bible. On his arrival in England the other day, he told an interviewer that he "stands square, flat-footed on the Bible." That is an untruth; some would call it a lie. Dr. Broughton is not a whole hogger in the matter of belief in the Bible. He neither believes nor acts up to James v. 14-16. He neither believes nor obeys Matthew v. 39, 42. There are whole passages in the Bible which he dares not read from his pulpit. It is all the Word of God, and yet some portions of the Word of God are too obscene for the man of God to read out to God's own people. No, Dr. Broughton does *not* "stand square, flat-footed on the Bible." In the name of the Lord he prevaricates—*lies*.

The Rev. Dr. Patten, an American professor, says that "men are not losing their interest in religion," but "in certain non-essentials and accidentals of religion." What these "certain non-essentials and accidentals of religion" are, Professor Patten does not tell us. He is broad-minded enough to grant that in order to be genuinely and acceptably religious one need not be a Christian. His conviction is that "in every nation he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is acceptable to him." But what about those who work righteousness without fearing God? Their number is greatly on the increase. Can there be religion without this fear of God? If not, then people are losing interest in religion, because they are losing belief in God. The thing men are not losing interest in is righteousness, morality, character; and it is accurate to say that their interest in this grows in proportion as their interest in religion decays.

According to Dr. Horton, every one who delights to perform kindly acts is a follower of Christ. While travelling in a cab this divine discovered that he had left his waterproof in the train by which he had just returned from Harrogate. He mentioned the fact to the cabman, who offered to go and get it for him. The next morning the waterproof was safely delivered, with a letter requesting that no remuneration, but only the actual expenses be remitted. Dr. Horton at once wrote and sent this reply: "My friend, I am persuaded you must be a true follower of Christ, for no man thinks in that way unless Christ be in him." Comment would be superfluous. Such a gem must be allowed to shine in its own glory.

London has always been a notorious sinner; but it has also been a *forgiven* sinner. So announced the Rev. Trevor Davies in his first performance as the new star on the stage of the Wesleyan West London Mission. "London is a forgiven London," exclaimed this young Sky Pilot, "only it has never realised that. When it realises it, when it allows the great truth of pardon to become operative in character, it will become penitent and enter into the reconciliation of God." Dear old London, how exquisitely happy thou wouldst be if thou didst but know what a rich inheritance is thine! Be not afraid, though thy sins be as scarlet, they are already as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, already they are as wool. Such is the message brought by Mr. Davies, and if London will but hear and believe it, London shall be ideally happy! Vain delusion! Such a lying gospel retards the moral progress of Christendom. What London needs is, not the realisation of Divine forgiveness, but an intelligent apprehension of its economic and moral shortcomings, and the bright light of natural knowledge to guide it out of them.

We sketched a fashionable marriage at a Melbourne church the other day. There are three of them devoted to Plutocracy. A roll of red cloth is kept, to be laid across the pavement when Goldbug's son comes along to be married to Giltgore's daughter. Such a lovely scyphantic crowd of women. Oh, how hungry they are! What luck it is for a

girl to snivel a rich man! She first takes care he has plenty of money, and then she falls in love with him. False!—she falls over head and ears in love with a fine house, a carriage and horses, a wardrobe from Joy and Fibson's. The church is all greened and flower-festooned up. Backsheesh oozes all over the place. Have you ever seen a parson higger-mugger over a wedding of poor people? Oh, but when the Goldbugs and Giltgores come! How heavenly, how seraphic, how sweetly leisurely is the man in white!—*The Socialist* (Melbourne).

Father Bernard Vaughan is laughed at by the Liberal papers for declaring, in relation to the Education Bill, that Christianity without dogma is Christianity without Christ. But that only shows their ignorance. The essence of Christianity is the deity of Christ; and if this is not a dogma, what is? Do the Liberal papers fancy that children could discover the doctrine of the Incarnation for themselves?

Greek and Bulgarian bands (Christians, all of them) continue to plague Macedonia. Murder, mutilation, and outrage are everyday occurrences there. How they love one another! And just think of all the pious denunciations that used to be launched at the unspeakable Turk!

Piety asserts itself even during strikes. A non-unionist miner at Maesteg, South Wales, was set upon by a mob of infuriated women, who tore off his waistcoat and his shirt, and dragged him out into the street, where they belabored him with brooms and drenched him with dirty water. At length he pleaded for mercy, and said that he would join the federation. He was then left in a forlorn, ragged, and dazed condition, and limped back to his house. A number of workmen demonstrated in front of other "blackleg" houses, *singing hymns all night*.

A Broadstairs tradesman, who was found dead in Gatton Park, Reigate, addressed the following letter to his wife before leaving home:—

"Own Darling,—How I have tried and fought against the awful feeling for months; and now when I think of you, my darling, the best little woman in the world, and my three darling children, of whom I have been so proud; when I think I shall be unable to do anything more for you all it makes my brain reel, and I feel I am going mad—as, indeed, I believe I am at times. May God be more merciful to you all than he has been to me is the prayer of your broken-hearted old George."

How full life is of pathos and tragedy! And perhaps the most pathetic spectacle of all is a man praying that the God who has not been merciful to him may be merciful to his wife and children. It is hoping against hope.

A prayer published in the *British Weekly* for September 6 begins thus: "O Lord, keep us alive to the gracious fact of thy sovereignty." What an extravagant request! It must be extremely difficult even for the Lord to keep anybody alive to a non-existing fact. Why should anybody wish to be kept alive to a palpable lie? "The Lord reigneth" is a pious expression in common use; but it means nothing. If there is a Lord on the throne of the Universe, the least we can say is that his reign, so far as this planet is concerned, is a gigantic and inexpressibly tragical failure.

The prayer proceeds to inform the Lord what will happen if the petitions are granted. There will be "a peculiar people separated and sanctified, crowned with an invisible judgment, yea, with the approval and benediction of God." "Men should then wonder, and ask whence.....this scorn of time and space and sense, and this yearning after that which cannot now be seized and enjoyed." Well, it is a good thing such prayers are not answered. "This scorn of time and space and sense" is immensely rich. Of course, this prayer is a literary production, intended, not for the ears of God, but for the eyes of *British Weekly* readers.

Preaching at Westminster Chapel on Sunday evening, September 2, Dr. Broughton spoke of a reclaimed drunkard, a member of his church in Atlanta City. The man was terribly afraid of meeting his old associates. "God wished to test him, however, and the man so far fell as to go with his old companions to one of their old haunts. The man even took the bottle, and lifted it to his lips, when suddenly his arm became paralysed and the bottle fell on the ground and was smashed into a thousand pieces." Then Dr. Broughton added: "I believe that at that moment God stepped in and stood between the sin and the man who had prayed for strength for so many weeks." God's interposition was highly dramatic. It must have made a profound impression. But if God *did* step in and stand between that

man and ruin, why does he not step in in all such cases, and stop drunkenness altogether? Is it not his bounden duty to do so whether asked or not? To say that God interferes in some cases, while he does absolutely nothing in thousands of others, is to give him the worst possible character and to make it impossible for rational people to believe in him at all.

A pietistic minister says, "The Spirit must not be crowded out of the Church, for he is the greatest of all revivalists. 'Without me ye can do a little.' No! 'Without me ye can do nothing' in saving the souls of men. He alone can convert our sheet-lightning into thunderbolts and hurl them with might at the stronghold of sin." Fancy a man sitting down and coolly writing such ridiculous trash as that. "Without me ye can do nothing," Jesus is reported to have said to his disciples. Well, they assert that he is *always* with them—how much are they able to accomplish in such companionship? And the echo resounds—*how much?*

Hurrah! Let the whole earth rejoice and be exceeding glad. Thomas Lake Harris, the great prophet, Christ's only authentic representative on earth, the so-called purloiner of people's consciences and fortunes, *has reappeared*. One who signs himself or herself "B. N. L., Royal Pavilion Hotel, Folkestone" says: "This is not a joke or a hoax, but a serious fact, which I advise you to bear in mind." Well, let Thomas Lake Harris *appear*, either with or without "the shell of his body"—let him *truly appear* to the Executive Committee of the National Secular Society on any given date and all the Secularists of Great Britain will forthwith embrace the Christian Faith, and fling their fortunes at the ghostly feet of Christ's Anointed. Will B. N. L. arrange?

It is highly significant that the late Dr. George Matheson, the distinguished Scottish divine, made vigorous attempts, in his earlier years, to prove that the discoveries and conclusions of modern Science and of the Higher Criticism were not antagonistic to or destructive of the orthodox dogmas of the Church. He wrote several most ingenious books with that object in view. Eventually, however, he realised that Christianity and Science are not in harmony; and in order to retain his faith he abandoned Science, and became an enemy of the Higher Criticism of the Bible. He took the only honest course. If Science is true Christianity is false.

And yet Dr. Gunsaulus, of Chicago, is reported to have given expression to a totally different opinion in New York recently. He said: "Darwin and Huxley and Tyndall were men of moral integrity and mental piety. The Science of to-day is saying to us, 'Let us pray.' Men like Ramsay and Crookes are on their knees." Evidently, either the man did not know what he was talking about, or he was bent on bamboozling his hearers. Then he added: "Radium is an almost spiritual reality. One-tenth of an ounce of radium will do more than 700,000 horses. It is always living by dying. It *will* give itself away." The merest tyro in Science knows that radium is nothing more nor less than a chemical *element*, a piece of matter, with not the faintest suggestion in it of anything immaterial or spiritual.

The Rev. John McNeill says that "death is not the terminus, but only the tunnel leading into the full blaze of everlasting day." Usually people can come and go through a tunnel. Through the death-tunnel no traveller has ever returned. How then does Mr. McNeill know that there is "the full blaze of everlasting day" at the other end? So far as anybody knows, death is the terminus of life's journey, and nothing whatever lies beyond it. Whether we shall live again or not is as absolutely unknowable as whether or not we have lived before. Nobody knows or can know, at present.

Principal Edwards, in his presidential address before a crowded and influential assembly of the Welsh Baptist Union at Cardiff, asserted that "the upper classes as a body were strangers to true and spiritual religion, and the most difficult to be brought under its sway," and that "the working classes were in a great measure alienated from, if not hostile to, the Churches." Then where is true and spiritual religion to be found? Is it not infinitely foolish, while admitting such facts, to proclaim, with glowing delight, that Christ is gloriously marching on to final and complete victory?

The *Daily Record* (Glasgow) prints a long screed from the pen of "A. P. M." We don't know who he is. Perhaps it means A Postman—or even A Potman. Whoever he is, he deals with Hooliganism, which appears to be rampant in Glasgow; and he finds that the cause of Hooliganism is—

well, what do you think? You would never guess it—so you had better give it up. The cause of Hooliganism is the Higher Criticism. And after that amazing declaration there must be an interval for refreshments.

Are you recovered? Let us go on then. The Higher Criticism—which, by the way, is mostly the work of Church divines—has undermined the people's morality. They no longer believe everything they read in the Bible. So the man who doesn't believe that Adam was made out of dust, and Eve out of a spare rib, naturally takes to lying; and the man who doesn't believe in Lot's wife being turned into a pillar of rock salt, naturally takes to drinking; and the man who doesn't believe in the story of Balaam's talking ass, naturally takes to thieving; and the man who doesn't believe in the story of Jonah and the whale, naturally takes to floating bubble companies. The connection is so obvious that everybody can see it. And the only way to restore the people's morality is to get them to believe again in the good old yarns they learnt at their mothers' knees. Or as "A. P. M." puts it:—"A return to an intelligent but reverent faith in the Scriptures as divinely given authority."

But why say a return in godly Scotland? The children in the schools of Scotland are taught the Presbyterian creed, including the inspiration of the Bible. Does the *Daily Record* writer imagine that the Higher Criticism has penetrated into the Scotch day-schools? If he does, it is time that he went to school again, if only to learn what is going on there.

We are not surprised to find "A. P. M." denouncing the Humanitarian opposition to the use of the lash. He considers the cat-o-nine-tails as a divinely appointed instrument of human regeneration—only second, apparently, *if* second, to the Blood of Christ. Being a Bibliolator, he naturally believes in corporal punishment; for fathers are taught to beat their children in Holy Writ. But he was ill-advised in giving independent reasons, instead of relying upon the authority of the Scriptures. He asks why the hooligan should not be paid back in his own coin. But this is directly against the teaching of Jesus, who said, "Resist not evil" and "If one smite thee on the one cheek, turn unto him the other also." When it comes to practice Christians pick and choose from the Bible as much as Freethinkers do. And the upshot of the whole matter is that the Bible is a book from which you can prove anything you please—and anybody else the exact opposite.

"Providence" does not discriminate between sacred and profane edifices in a thunderstorm, neither does it protect the faithful, even when engaged in acts of religious devotion. Only the other day, the Bishop of Nancy, officiating in a church at Lourdes, was hurt in a very curious manner. After the sermon he passed amongst the crowd carrying the monstrance, the sacred vessel in which the Host is exposed. Placing it on the head of one of the invalids, and the man moving as if to rise to his feet, the Bishop was wounded by one of the sharp-pointed golden rays of the monstrance, which cut his face, causing considerable loss of blood, and necessitating medical attention.

Judge Snagge, of the Hitchin County Court, says that the custom of "kissing the book" is insanitary and repulsive. He has put up notices that the Scotch or any other form of oath may be used in his court. He has also ordered Testaments with washable covers for those who wish to keep to the old form of oath. But is it only the outside of the Book of God that wants washing? Some day or other the inside of it will have to be subjected to sanitary treatment.

Ireland is suffering from an attack of "Providence." In the West the potato crop is a miserable failure, and the hay crop is spoiled by the wet. People in Cavan and Leitrim are looking forward to the winter in dismay. They will be face to face with starvation. And as the peat harvest is ruined too, there will be a want of fuel as well as food.

The *Sun* must have been short of copy to print the long screed of that Walthamstow man who claims to be—"Minister of Spiritual Affairs to God's Kingdom on Earth. By Divine Appointment. Holy-Spirit Communicator." Our contemporary does not reflect that this description applies, not only to the Walthamstow man, but to all the gentlemen in the Kingdom-Come business. There is really nothing "extraordinary" about it, as the *Sun* suggests. Every clergyman claims to be divinely appointed, and every bishop or other ordainer, claims to be a Holy-Spirit communicator.

A copy of last week's *Freethinker* was posted to the editor of the *Sunderland Echo*, with the last paragraph in "Acid Drops" duly marked. Prior to that an advance proof of the paragraph had been forwarded through the correspondent who favored us with the copy of our contemporary containing the wonderful story of the Rev. Walter H. Armstrong's public debates with Mr. Foote and the late Mr. Watts. We understand that the editor of the *Sunderland Echo* is making inquiries as we suggested. We shall say no more on the subject, therefore, until we hear of the result. What we asked was when and where Mr. Armstrong ever debated with either Mr. Foote or Mr. Watts, and in what publications the debate was reported.

Since the above paragraph was in type we have received a cutting from the *Sunderland Echo*, which contains the following correction:—"We learn that our contributor wrongly thought that Mr. Armstrong's collection of reports of debates with Secularists included discussions between him and Messrs. Foote and Watts. Mr. Armstrong, however, has debated with many other Secularist lecturers and has been an active speaker for the Christian Evidence Society." That is all. Not a word of apology or regret from the "ministerial contributor" who worked off that apocryphal story upon the Sunderland public. Such is the morality of the champions of faith!

Having settled the story of Mr. Armstrong's carefully reported debates with Messrs. Foote and Watts, we venture to ask for the names of some of those "other Secularist lecturers" with whom it is now alleged that he really has debated.

Former Governor John D. Long, of Massachusetts, angered New England the other day when, in a speech at Plymouth, he said that "the saints among the Pilgrim fathers could be counted on the fingers," and that "all kinds of vice were rampant in the early days of the town." Later he added: "As a matter of fact, the Pilgrim colony's interests were more of this world than of the next. Its main concern was in beaver-skins and clap-boards, and in counteracting the impositions in trade of the partners of its business ventures. It's amusing to read of the loving and scriptural phraseology, under guise of which a Pilgrim father would thrust the knife of shrewd dicker under his neighbor's ribs." The truth of Mr. Long's assertions are found in the history of the times. Popular misconceptions regarding the saintliness of the Pilgrims arises from mistaken identification of sanctimoniousness with virtue and honesty. The great number of hypocrites and pious rascals now flourishing ought to teach us that similar characters must have been numerous among their ancestors.—*Truthseeker* (New York).

The *Methodist Times*, the late Hugh Price Hughes's old paper, gives prominence to some dreary nonsense about Agnosticism from the mouth of the Rev. F. H. Benson. Loss of faith, this gentleman said, meant loss of happiness. Well now, if he will get acquainted with half-a-dozen real unbelievers, and compare them with an average half-a-dozen Christians, he will find how much he is mistaken. Mr. Benson had the impudence to explain Mr. John Morley's honorable character by saying that he was "born in a manse, and had lived in a country which for 1,600 years had been Christian." Which means, if it means anything at all, that under other circumstances Mr. John Morley would have been a scoundrel. Mr. Benson is simply a hooligan of controversy.

The Kaiser speaks of God as "the ally" of his ancestor, Frederick the Great. William probably thinks that the alliance is as hereditary as the crown. But he would do well to reflect that "God" is always the ally of the winner. Who the winner will be is not so certain.

Rev. John M'Neill, Lord Overtoun's "kept" evangelist, was soul-saving in a large tent at Clydebank, when owing to heavy rain the tent collapsed, the falling canvas extinguishing all the lights, and leaving the congregation to struggle out in the darkness. Many women fainted, but no one was seriously injured. Still "Providence" ought to have known better.

The *Hospital* assigns many causes of the spread of insanity in England. Here they are:—"Ill-assorted marriages, hazardous and desperate speculations, the frequency of commercial crisis, the increasing fluctuations of political life, the laziness peculiar to the rich, the abuse of fermented liquors, and, lastly, the immense number of religious sects." The italics are ours.

Pastor George Wise, of Liverpool, has been speaking on "Can Conscience be Trusted?" Whose does he mean? His own?



**Mr. Foote's Engagements.**

September 23, Stratford Town Hall.  
 October 7, Glasgow; 14, Manchester; 28, Leicester.  
 November 18, Birmingham.

**To Correspondents.**

C. COHEN'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—September 16, Victoria Park; 23, m., Woolwich; 30, a., Victoria Park; e., Stratford Town Hall. October 7, Liverpool; 21, Tyneside Lecture Society. November 4, Birmingham. December 2, Forest Gate; 9, Glasgow; 16, Belfast.

MR. SYMES'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—October 14, Glasgow; 28, Manchester. November 4, Nelson; 11, Liverpool. December 9, Leicester; 16, Newcastle.

J. S. CLARKE.—Thanks for a sight of the Rev. W. H. Armstrong's letter to you, in which he disowns responsibility for the statement that he had debated with Messrs. Foote and Watts. His own statement—"I have never debated with either of the gentlemen named"—is sufficiently explicit. But how came the "ministerial contributor" to give currency to such a circumstantial falsehood in the *Sunderland Echo*? Glad to know you are so appreciative a reader of the *Freethinker*.

J. TULLIN.—We are obliged for the cuttings, and we agree with what you say in your letter.

E. MOORCROFT.—Useful cuttings are always welcome.

J. MACLEOD.—Glad you got such a good laugh out of our "Sermon on Summer" and hope you have, by this time, found the other contents of *Comic Sermons and Other Fantasias* no less exhilarating. The edition of Shelley you refer to could hardly be complete.

J. NUGENT.—One swallow does not make a summer. Why not read our pamphlet for yourself?

G. L. MACKENZIE.—Your press letters must do much good.

E. C. CORNETT.—(1) You should put your question to Mr. Robertson himself. (2) The oath that obstructed Bradlaugh's entrance to parliament was a Theistic one; the Christian oath having been abolished when Jews were omitted.

E. J. JONES.—We agree with you.

T. MILTON.—It was distinctly stated in the *Freethinker* that there would only be a very few "free" seats at the Queen's Hall meeting. We are sorry you could not get in, but some would have failed in any case. Queen's Hall meetings are expensive, and the cost must be found somehow. You will have other opportunities of hearing Mr. Symes.

YOUNG FREETHINKER.—There is no such text.

R. J. HENDERSON.—Freethought propaganda may be extended to Bristol and the West of England generally in the winter.

E. B. SPENCER.—Tastes differ, you know; and is the hot-house notion of "ladies" the highest one, after all?

ANONYMOUS CORRESPONDENTS are once more warned that their letters cannot be noticed.

K. M. SCHWEIZER (Liverpool).—Pleased to hear that Mr. J. M. Robertson's evening meeting was a great success, and that you have booked Messrs. Cohen, Symes, and Lloyd for lectures this side of Christmas.

A. D.—We hope you will continue to regard the *Freethinker* as one of your weekly treats.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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**Sugar Plums.**

Queen's (Minor) Hall was crowded on Sunday evening, and Mr. Symes had a great reception. Amongst those present, besides the speakers, we noted Mr. Touzeau Parris, Mr. A. B. Moss, Mr. W. Heaford, Mr. R. O. Smith, Mr. R. Side, Mr. H. Cowell, Mr. James Neate, Mr. Samuels, Mr. Pack, and others too numerous to mention. Miss Vance, of course, was working very hard at the practical side of the arrangements.

Mr. Foote took the chair punctually at 7.30 and was supported by many members of the N. S. S. Executive. His introductory speech was brief but sufficient. Short speeches of welcome were then given by Mr. C. Cohen, Mr. Harry Snell, Mr. Victor Roger, and Mr. John T. Lloyd—all of which were happy and warmly applauded. When the guest of the evening rose to address the meeting there was a striking scene of enthusiasm. Mr. Symes spoke for over an hour on his "Twenty Years' Freethought Fight in Australia." He was in first-rate form, his voice was nearly as powerful as ever, his witty sallies provoked much laughter, and the story he told of his many battles at Melbourne was loudly cheered. Altogether it was a great evening. We are glad to be able to add that Mr. Symes has agreed to write some "running notes" on Australian Freethought for the *Freethinker*. This will be far better than a bald summary of his very interesting discourse on Sunday evening.

The new course of Freethought lectures at the Stratford Town Hall opens this evening (Sept. 16). Mr. John T. Lloyd will occupy the platform, and his subject will be "Does Secularism Safeguard Morality?" Mr. Foote follows on Sept. 23 with a lecture on "Did Jesus Christ Ever Live?" On the third and last Sunday evening Mr. Cohen will lecture on "The Fate of Religion." All seats are free, and we hope the local "saints" will give such publicity to the lectures as will crowd the big hall on each occasion.

Manchester friends will please note that Mr. Foote's visit to their city is postponed from September 30 to October 14.

The new North London N. S. S. Branch is organising a Freethought Demonstration for next Sunday afternoon (Sept. 23) at 3.15 at Parliament Hill Fields. The following speakers have agreed to attend:—Messrs. J. Symes, C. Cohen, J. T. Lloyd, W. Heaford, and F. A. Davies. Mr. Foote's engagements will not permit of his attending, but he will send a letter to be read at the meeting. North London "saints" should muster in strong force and bring as many of their less advanced friends as possible with them.

We wish all success to the Bazaar by which the Fails-worth Secular Schools are trying to clear off a debt of £400. The Bazaar will be held on October 27, 29, and 30. Gifts and donations should be sent to Mr. James Pollitt, Robert-street, Fails-worth, Lincs. This is a most deserving enterprise, and support may well be forthcoming from all parts of the country.

The *Humanitarian*, the monthly organ of the Humanitarian League, has some excellent matter in the September number; the principal article being a trenchant review of Mr. Kay Robinson's *Religion of Nature*, presumably from the able pen of Mr. H. S. Salt. This article alone is worth over so many times the modest penny which is the price of this admirable publication.

M. Clémenceau, being interviewed by the *Gaulois*, said he was "surprised at the large-minded way in which the Pope refused the 18,000,000 francs of ecclesiastical revenue which the Separation Bill assured to the Church." He also said that, while he would never hold any converse with Rome, he would never close a single church in France. "I go farther," he added; "as long as I am part of the Government they shall close not a church, not a door, not a window. I have other means of defence." We hail this as showing that M. Clémenceau is appreciating the gravity of the crisis, and we hope he will yet embrace the policy suggested in our recent leading article on "France and the Pope."

Sir Alfred Thomas, presiding at a public meeting in connection with the assembly of the Baptist Union of Wales at Cardiff, spoke very strongly in favor of secular education. We quote the following from a newspaper report:—

"As regards the Education Bill, however, they had little, if any, ground for gratitude or satisfaction. No Bill started out on its course bolder or better, but it soon lost its pristine simplicity. They did not so much wonder at the Conservatives who believed in the maintenance of a State Church meddling with things spiritual, but that Liberals who advocated religious equality and freedom of religion from State control should follow their example was beyond comprehension. It was a matter of profoundest regret to the many friends of Mr. Birrell that he, a statesman and brilliant man of letters, had not taken occasion by the hand and boldly settled the question of elementary education once and for all by adopting the only possible solution—that of secular education. That would have stopped passive and active resistance, and religion and education would both have benefited by being put in their proper spheres."

We hope this spirit will extend throughout the country.

## The Spanish Tyranny.

JUST as we were proceeding to make a translation of M. Furnémont's circular letter on the Modern School case at Barcelona, a translation reached us from the pen of Mr. G. H. B. Ward, of Sheffield, which we beg to thank him for, as it saved a busy editor a bit of extra work. Mr. Ward also encloses a circular letter of his own, from which we gather that the real name of Senor Ferrer, mentioned in M. Furnémont's circular, is Francisco Ferrer Guardia, that he resided for some time in Paris as secretary of a French Minister of State, and that he was enabled to carry out his project of Secular Schools in Spain by a wealthy lady, who was imbued with his ideas, and who left him a considerable part of her fortune for the purpose. We also gather from Mr. Ward's circular, which is far more precise than M. Furnémont's, that the only thing that in any way associates Senor Ferrer with the mad Anarchist who threw the fatal bomb in Madrid on the day of the royal wedding was a letter that Morral had once written asking for the post of librarian at the Modern School. Mr. Ward assures us that he has followed the case carefully for months, through the reports in the Barcelona papers, and that this is absolutely all that the "authorities" have as the basis of their action in arresting Senor Ferrer, endeavoring to try him by court-martial, closing all the Modern Schools throughout Spain, and robbing him of all the funds at his command.

We understand from Mr. Ward that Senor Ferrer has been rescued from the clutches of the court-martial, that his defence is entrusted to an eminent and devoted lawyer on behalf of the "League for the Defence of the Rights of Man," a body which includes men of all shades of political and social opinion and that a vigorous campaign on his behalf is being conducted by *El Progreso*, a Barcelona daily, with the assistance of other journals in various parts of the country.

We now submit M. Furnémont's circular to our readers' attention:—

### INTERNATIONAL FREETHOUGHT FEDERATION.

50 Rue du Ramblai,  
Brussels.  
1st. September, 1906.

#### TO THE SECULAR SOCIETIES.

DEAR CITIZENS AND COMRADES.—The General Council of the International Federation, expressing the unanimous feelings of the adherents to Freethought in every country, invite you to protest energetically with them against the arbitrary arrest and illegal sequestration of one of the first and most active members of our Rationalist cause, Senor Ferrer, Director of the Modern School (*Escuela Moderna*), at Barcelona.

The Spanish Government, to comply with the rancor of a fanatical and all-powerful clergy, have not hesitated to make a new attempt against the personal liberty of an honorable citizen, breaking once more the first duty of a civilised nation—the duty of encouraging the education of the people.

Under the odious and vain pretence of complicity in the Madrid criminal outrage, which was strongly disapproved by International Freethought, the Catholic clergy of Spain have carried out their double object, namely, to strike a blow at the very important work of a professor and pedagogue of the highest distinction, and, above all, to destroy at the same time a considerable number of Secular Schools.

The Modern School founded by Senor Ferrer in 1901, developed itself, as a matter of fact, so prosperously that the clerical power oppressing the beautiful but unfortunate Spanish country was alarmed. Its pedagogic methods, based on the last discoveries of modern science and freed from any dogmatic or supernatural conception, had successively been adopted by many Secular schools existing in the Peninsula.

This school is now closed. The libraries, museums, property, and money of the institution have been seized. The scholars have been sent back to their homes, and the corps of professors, consisting of some of the most distinguished scientific men in Spain, has been dispersed.

Fourteen Secular schools in Catalonia and twenty-four in the other provinces have been treated in the same way. And all that in a country where ignorance is so prevalent.

International Freethought considers it to be its duty to protest against such a monstrosity, and makes an appeal to the world's public opinion, demanding Senor Ferrer's immediate release together with the re-opening of the schools founded on the same lines as his own.

Let the Secular Societies everywhere hold special meetings, let them pass resolutions which the Liberal and Democratic press will be glad to publish, and we shall soon see the redress of an abominable injustice.

The General Council of the International Freethought Federation,

International Secretary, LEON FURNÉMONT, M.P.

We may remark, in passing, on the extraordinary fact that M. Furnémont should issue a circular like this without sending a copy to the *Freethinker* or to the National Secular Society, which took part in founding the International Freethought Federation, and has been affiliated to it ever since. Judging from what has occurred at recent International Freethought Congresses, and some other incidents, we conclude that M. Furnémont has been drawn in some way into displaying a want of consideration towards the National Secular Society. Indeed, the matter has become so serious that it is very doubtful if the N. S. S. Executive will take part in future International Congresses unless a very decided change is made in the Secretary's attitude. The Executive is holding aloof already from the Congress at Buenos Ayres—having neither time, energy, nor money to waste on fruitless adventures, while so much is needed for the work at home.

Of course we presume that M. Furnémont has made sure of his facts, and we accept his circular as authoritative. We have to believe that the Clerical power behind the throne has seized upon the opportunity which was presented by the Morral outrage to crush by brute force the movement towards Secular Education in Spain. It is no use arguing with the Clerical power; it would be as sensible to preach humanity to a shark or a tiger. All that can be done is to bring the pressure of civilised opinion upon the Spanish authorities. We hope, therefore, that Secular Societies throughout Great Britain will pass resolutions against the outrage on Senor Ferrer and the Modern Schools. Such resolutions should be published, if possible, in the local newspapers, and sent both to the Spanish Ambassador in London and to the Prime Minister at Madrid. The N. S. S. Executive meets again at the end of September, and will doubtless pass a strong resolution then, and see that it is forwarded to those it is intended to influence.

G. W. FOOTE.

## Lucretius.—I.

"IN energy, perspicuity, variety of illustration, knowledge of life and manners, talent for description, sense of the beauty of the external world, and elevation and dignity of moral feeling, Lucretius had hardly ever an equal." So says Lord Macaulay, who himself possessed an almost unequalled "knowledge of life and manners," ancient and modern. And whoever wishes to see the extraordinary influence which Lucretius' poem *On Nature* has had on subsequent thought and literature, should read Tyndall's famous Belfast address, delivered in 1874. Immanuel Kant was a close student of the Roman poet and was led to propound the nebular hypothesis from the latter's description of "atoms falling eternally through space," while Bruno is simply saturated with the astronomical and philosophical views of Lucretius. The fearless Italian, "taking Lucretius as his exemplar," "revived the notion of the infinity of worlds." A short account of this great poet and his work may be instructive.

Of the life of Titus Lucretius Carus we have little trustworthy information, as being essentially a student and not a man of the world, he is scarcely mentioned by contemporary writers. Jerome (340—420 A.D.), purporting to translate from the

"Chronicle" of Eusebius (264—340 A.D.), gives the date of the poet's birth as 95 B.C., and adds that he "committed suicide in the forty-fourth year of his age, having been driven frantic by a love-potion; that he composed his works in his lucid intervals; and that these works were revised by Cicero." According to this his death took place in 51 B.C. But Donatus, referring to Lucretius in his "Life of Virgil," says nothing about the suicide or the love-potion, and affirms that he died on the very day on which Virgil assumed the garb of manhood. This would fix the death of Lucretius at 55 B.C. Both these writers are considered by some scholars to represent Suetonius; but there is no real evidence that this is the case. Stampini, the eminent Italian scholar, accepts the suicide story, which he says is confirmed by the pessimistic vein which pervades the poem *On Nature*. But it is very questionable whether this view would present itself without previous suggestion. Indeed, compared with most of the extant Greek tragedies and with much of Catullus and even Virgil, *On Nature* is singularly free from the burden of "all the weary weight of this unintelligible world," and if the few sombre passages in the poem are to be regarded as confirmatory of the suicide story, it would be difficult to characterise some of the poetry of De Musset, Baudelaire, Gautier, and Leconte de Lisle; not one of whom sought refuge by a voluntary and violent solution of the "great problem." The truth is probably this: as no record whatever of the life of Lucretius existed, his death had to be accounted for in some way, and orthodox belief could only attribute a gloomy end to an Epicurean and an "Atheist." Jerome frequently displays a partisan spirit, and besides this, the calmness with which the Christian faces death was a somewhat favorite theme with him. Even St. Augustine, who was much more self-restrained in his denunciations, speaks of the "maddening and deadly disease of infidelity (*impietas*)" with which the Epicurean materialists are afflicted. For another Epicurean heretic, Lucian, the witty author of "Dialogues of the Gods," a similarly untoward end was invented—he was said to have been torn to pieces by dogs. But it will be more profitable to pass on to the poem itself.

The best English edition of Lucretius is H. A. J. Munro's, which includes a close and vigorous translation and voluminous notes. His translation, however, can be better appreciated by Latin scholars than by ordinary English readers. A good free rendering from one language to another should read like an original work, and the greatest admirers of Munro—"the man who restored the Latin language to Britain," as Adolph Wagner, the eminent German Latinist, called him—could not say this of Munro's rendering. In this article I am responsible for all translations to which no name is appended, though I have been guided throughout by Munro's work. I wish also to express my indebtedness to J. D. Duff's edition of the fifth book and to John Masson's *Atomic Theory of Lucretius*, as well as to the latter's various articles in the *Classical Review*.

*On Nature* is written in six books and contains between seven and eight thousand lines. Lucretius is the interpreter of the Epicurean philosophy. All things consist, ultimately, of atoms and void. Nothing can come from nothing. Creation has never taken place and annihilation will never take place; what we call destruction is merely change from one form to another. Mind and soul are functions of the body, and when the latter perishes they cease absolutely to exist. Belief in the interference of gods in the destiny of the world and the fear of death keep men in a state of constant mental perturbation. Epicurus is the divine philosopher who first brought mankind freedom from all violent passions and superstitious fears.

"When humanity lay helpless on the ground, a foul object crushed by the oppressive weight of Religion, who showed her head from the heavenly regions threatening with hideous aspect us poor sons of a day, it was a Greek philosopher who first dared to raise his

eyes to her and to withstand her face to face. Him no rumors of gods, no thunderbolts, no sky with threatening murmurs checked; nay, all these urged him on and emboldened him the more in his desire to penetrate the firm-set barriers of nature" (i., 62-71).

A few lines further on he refers to the sacrifice of Iphigenia by her father, King Agamemnon, when about to sail against Troy—a subject which had been dealt with frequently by the Greek tragedians, and had evidently made a strong impression on Lucretius. The recorded sacrifice of Iphigenia is probably quite legendary; but such superstitious barbarities were certainly known to the Greeks at one period of their history. F. A. Paley says: "The Artemis of Tauri and Brauron, and the Diana of Aricia, required, like the Moloch of the Phœnicians, to be glutted with human sacrifices." The concluding line of the following passage is, in the original,

"Tantum religio potuit suadere malorum"—

a line which has perhaps been more quoted than any other in Latin poetry:—

"At the threshold of my inquiry let me dispel your fear that it is impious and unholy to take reason for guide in these matters. On the contrary, it is Religion that has ever been fruitful in foul and heinous deeds. You know how at the port of Aulis, the leaders of the Grecian host, the chosen heroes, defiled the altar with Iphigenia's virgin blood. As soon as the fillet binding her maiden tresses had been arranged in equal lengths down each cheek, and she beheld her father with down-cast eyes beside the altar, and the priests close by him hiding the sacrificial knife, and her countrymen weeping at the sight, in dumb terror she collapsed upon the ground. Nought did it avail her at this cruel crisis that she first gave the king the name of 'father,' for the Grecian leaders raised her trembling to the altar, not to the accompaniment of hymeneal song, as was meet for her just in early womanhood, but that she, pure amid the impure, might be the sorrowful victim of her own father's stroke, and that thus the fleet might sail with fair wind to Troy. Such are the infamies to which Religion prompts mankind" (i., 80-101).

Lucretius nowhere states that there are no gods, or that he does not believe in their existence; but he asserts again and again that the hypothesis of over-ruling deities is quite unnecessary to account for natural phenomena. How far either the Roman poet or his Greek master believed in the deities to which they refer is a moot point. Munro and Masson consider it as certain that both Lucretius and Epicurus believed in the actual existence of gods—mere ciphers though they were as far as the control of nature is concerned. Mr. Walter Scott (afterwards Professor of Classics in Sydney University, N.S.W.), in a brilliant article on "The Constitution of the Epicurean Gods" in the *Journal of Philology* (1888), says: "The question of the relation of the gods of Epicurus to his physical system has been discussed so often and with such unsatisfactory results, that it is now very generally given up as insoluble." But the three following passages seem to indicate Lucretius' complete rejection of the Theistic position:—

(1) "Since we are forced to the conclusion that nothing exists outside the sum of things, there is no limit to the totality of existence. In whatever part of the Universe you take your stand, in every case you leave the sum of things as illimitable as before in every direction" (i., 963-967).

(2) In ii., 652-657, he seems to assert that the gods are personifications of natural objects: "If anyone chooses to call the ocean Neptune and corn Ceres, and to make a wrong use of the word 'Bacchus' by calling wine by that name, we do not object to his also calling the earth the mother of the gods, provided he does not corrupt his mind by that foul thing, Religion."

(3) In v., 1161-1193, the origin of belief in the gods is ascribed to images seen in sleep. Men when awake see noble forms which appear to them again in dreams, but of wonderful size. Also, men see the heavenly bodies and observe the regular succession of the years, and not knowing by what causes these phenomena happen, they attribute them all to gods whom they believe to dwell in the heavens.

But book v., 195-227, is conclusive as to his view

on the question of the divine moral government of the world:—

"If I knew nothing of atoms or the origin of things, yet from the very arrangements of heaven and for many other reasons, I should not hesitate to affirm the impossibility of believing that the gods designed nature for us, so great are the defects observable everywhere. To begin with, what a vast space of the earth is covered with greedy mountains and forests of wild beasts, and rocks and dreary marshes! What a waste of waters separates shore from shore! Again, excessive heat or constant cold robs mankind of nearly two-thirds of the remainder. The arable land Nature would cover with brambles, did not mankind, for the sake of food, laboriously cleave it with the plough and cultivate it. Otherwise there could be no fertile glebe, for the waving corn would not appear of its own accord. As it is, when trees and crops are brought to blossom by much toil, they are often destroyed by heat or cold, or by rain and storm. Why, too, do savage animals and the monsters of the sea, hostile to mankind, find ample nourishment? Why is disease at work spring, summer, autumn, winter? Why does Death go to and fro cutting us down before our prime? Then the infant, like the shipwrecked mariner, lies in naked helplessness upon the ground the moment nature has brought him forth to the light of day. With his plaintive baby-cry he fills the room—and well he may whom the ills of life await in countless numbers."

For years I could never understand the terrible indictment of the heavenly-father theory by the late Robert Buchanan in his sonnet, "Could God be Judged?" except by surmising that he had, consciously or unconsciously, some passages of Lucretius in his mind when he wrote it. For Buchanan was never weary of opposing Atheism and Materialism. To my surprise, a few weeks ago I came across an article on Lucretius written by Buchanan in *The New Quarterly Magazine* for April, 1876, which contains a number of blank-verse translations of passages from *On Nature* which are at once close and poetical. The following is his rendering of book vi., 886-897:—

"If Jupiter and other gods above  
Can shake the glittering regions of the sky  
With awful sound, and wheresoe'er they will  
Hurl down avenging fires, why spare they those  
Who fear not to commit atrocious crimes?  
Why scorch them not with lightning thro' and thro',  
Making a sign to teach us mortal men?  
And why is he whose conscience knows no sin,  
Tho' he be stainless, wrapt about with flame,  
And caught into the fiery arms of heaven?  
Why aim the gods at solitary spots,  
Wasting their labors and their thunderbolts?  
Is it to exercise their arms and thews?"

It is interesting to read Buchanan's sonnet in conjunction with the last two passages:—

"Can I be calm beholding everywhere  
Disease and anguish busy, early and late,  
Can I be silent nor compassionate  
The evils that both soul and body bear?  
O what have sickly children done to share  
Thy cup of sorrows, yet their dull sad pain  
Makes the earth hideous. On the tomb's dark stair  
Moan idiots with no glimmer in the brain.  
No shrill priest with his hangman's whip can beat  
Thy mercy into these. Ah nay, ah nay,  
The angels Thou hast sent to haunt the street  
Are hunger and distortion and decay.  
Lord, that mad'st man and send'st him foes so fleet,  
Who shall judge Thee upon Thy judgment-day?"

Lucretius, like his master, is especially anxious to free men from the fear of death, which dogs their footsteps always and everywhere, so that the most distressful life seems preferable to the great Unknown which is in store for us. Indeed, this fear is a greater evil, a greater hindrance to mental tranquillity (the Epicurean *ataraxia*) than belief in the gods. There is no after-life to be dreaded, since body and soul perish together:—

"The mind is begotten along with the body and grows up together with it and becomes old along with it. For even as children go about with a tottering and weakly body, so slender sagacity of mind follows along with it; then when their life has reached the maturity of confirmed strength, the judgment too is greater and the power of the mind more developed. Afterwards when the body has been shattered by the mastering might of time and the frame has drooped with its forces dulled,

then the intellect halts, the tongue dotes, the mind gives way, all faculties fail and are wanting at the same time. It naturally follows then that the whole nature of the soul is dissolved, like smoke into the high air; since we see it is begotten along with the body and grows up along with it and, as I have shown, breaks down at the same time worn out with age" (iii., 445-458, Munro).

"Wherefore, again and again I say, we must believe souls to be neither without a birth nor exempted from the law of death; for we must not believe that they could have been so completely united with our bodies, if they found their way into them from without, nor, since they are so closely invoven with them, does it appear that they can get out unharmed and unloose themselves unscathed from all the sinews and bones and joints" (iii., 691-697, Munro).

"Wherefore the nature of the soul is seen to be neither without a birthday nor exempt from death." "Death therefore to us is nothing, concerns us not a jot, since the nature of the mind is proved to be mortal" (iii. 711, 712, and 830, 801, Munro).

A. D. MCLAREN.

(To be concluded.)

## Education Statistics.

THE return for 1904-5 relating to education in the United Kingdom has been issued.

The total number of public elementary schools in England and Wales in receipt of grants from the Imperial Exchequer is 20,656, as compared with 3,244 in Scotland and 8,574 in Ireland. There are 6,065,660 pupils on the rolls in England and Wales, 804,162 in Scotland, and 724,694 in Ireland, and the total numbers of pupils in average attendance are respectively 5,266,690, 696,381, and 475,900. The numbers of pupils in average attendance per principal teacher are: England and Wales, men, 181.8; women, 151. Scotland, 215 and 126; Ireland, 53.4 and 58.7. The average salary of the teachers works out thus: England and Wales, men, £160 15s. 9d.; women, £109 13s. 6d. Scotland, men, £179 6s.; women, £90 6s. Ireland, men, £102 19s. 6d.; women, £82 11s. 9d.

The grants received from the Imperial Exchequer amount in the case of England and Wales to £11,065,496 12s. 4d.; Scotland, £1,451,020; Ireland, £1,364,887. The eleven millions given in the return for England and Wales include grants amounting to £283,688 15s. for the training of teachers, £36,250 18s. for the education and training of pupil teachers, superannuation allowances £20,819 17s. 9d., and £31,408 1s. 8d. for pensions. The grants for the training of teachers in Scotland amounting to £64,920, and those to higher grade schools £54,444. In Ireland £31,114 2s. 6d. was expended upon national school buildings and their maintenance. The net expenditure on the seven training colleges in Ireland recognised by the Commissioners, including expenditure in respect of the buildings, was, from the ordinary votes, £59,296 17s. 3d., and from the Ireland Development Grant £10,410.

The total number of secondary schools in receipt of State grants is—for England and Wales, 679; for Scotland, 51; and 310 for Ireland. The total number of registered pupils under these three heads is 95,209, 16,300, and 14,879, and the number of pupils in proportion to population is 2.8 per 1,000 for England and Wales, 3.5 per 1,000 in the case of Scotland, and 3.6 per 1,000 for Ireland. The grants from the Imperial Exchequer for the purposes of secondary education in England and Wales were £223,059 12s. 6d., for Scotland £16,442, and for Ireland £20,960 7s. 2d.

Figures given under the head of technical education include those for the various classes and institutions working under the regulations of the Board for evening schools, technical institutions, schools of art, and art classes. They show that 6,095 schools and classes are receiving State aid in England and Wales, 768 in Scotland, and 234 in Ireland; that the numbers of registered pupils in the three cases are 769,997, 104,259, and 27,658 respectively, and that England and Wales received in grants from the Imperial Exchequer the sum of £382,248 9s. 1d., Scotland £97,470, and Ireland £10,563 10s. 2d.

The number of Universities in England and Wales is 9, Scotland 4, and Ireland 2, with 310, 127, and 117 professors respectively. There are in England and Wales 13,215 matriculated students, in Scotland 6,656, and in Ireland 1,978. The total grants from the Imperial Exchequer under this head amount to—England and Wales, £80,611; Scotland £43,000; and Ireland £25,560 3s. 8d.

The appended table shows at a glance the amounts of the total grants from the Imperial Exchequer for primary, secondary, technical, and University education, the sums

raised from local rates and local taxation accounts, the proportions of the cost per head of the population in each instance, and the amount expended by local authorities on the local administration of primary, secondary, and technical education:—

	England and Wales.	Scotland.	Ireland.
Grants from Imperial Exchequer.....	£11,751,415	£1,607,932	£1,421,971
Proportion per head...	6s. 11d.	6s. 11d.	6s. 5½d.
Raised from local rates	£9,233,130	£1,134,242	£26,001
Proportion per head...	5s. 5½d.	4s. 10½d.	1½d.
From local taxation...	£918,796	£247,005	£112,885
Proportion per head...	6½d.	1s. 0½d.	6½d.
Local administration..	£1,123,633	£108,400	£21,194

RELIGION AND SENSUALITY.

There is in fact, and all history attests it, a close connection between religion and sensuality. No student of human nature need be surprised at Louis XV. falling on his knees in prayer after debauching a young virgin in the *Parc aux Cerfs*. Nor is there anything abnormal in Count Cenci, in Shelley's play, soliciting God's aid in the pollution of his own daughter. It is said that American camp-meetings often wound up in a saturnalia. The Hallelujah lasses sing with especial fervor "Safe in the arms of Jesus." How many Christian maidens are moved by the promptings of their sexual nature when they adore the figure of their nearly naked Savior on a cross! The very nuns, who take vows of perpetual chastity, become spouses of Christ; and the hysterical fervor with which they frequently worship their divine bridegroom, shows that when Nature is thrust out of the door she comes in at the window.

Catholic books of devotion for the use of women and young people are also full of thinly-veiled sensuality, and there are indications that this abomination is spreading in the "higher" religious circles in Protestant England, where the loathsome confessional is being introduced in other than Catholic churches. Paul Bert, in his *Morale des Jesuites*, gave a choice specimen of this class of literature, or rather such extracts as he dared publish in a volume bearing his honored name. It is a prayer in rhyme extending to eleven pages, and occurs in a book by Father Huguet, designed for "the dear daughters of Holy Mary." As Paul Bert says, "every mother would fling it away with horror if Arthur were substituted for Jesus." *Vive Jesus* is the constant refrain of this pious song. We give a sample or two in French, with a literal English translation:—

- Vive Jesus, de qui l'amour  
Me va consumant nuit et jour.
- Vive Jesus, vive sa force,  
Vive son agréable amource.
- Vive Jesus, quand il m'enivre  
D'un douceur qui me fait vivre.
- Vive Jesus, lorsque sa bouche  
D'un baiser amoureux me touche.
- Vive Jesus, grand il m'appelle  
My sœur, ma colombe, ma belle.
- Vive Jesus, quand sa bonté,  
Me réduit dans la nudité;  
Vive Jesus, quand ses blandices  
Me comblent de chastes delices.

"Live Jesus, whose love consumes me night and night.—Live Jesus, live his force, live his agreeable attraction.—Live Jesus, when he intoxicates me with a sweetness that gives me life.—Live Jesus, when his mouth touches me with an amorous kiss.—Live Jesus, when he calls me my sister, my dove, my lovely one.—Live Jesus, when his good pleasure reduces me to nudity; live Jesus, when his blandishments fill me with chaste delight."  
—And this erotic stuff is for the use of girls!—G. W. Foote, "Flowers of Freethought."

TO THE AUTUMNAL MOON.

Mild Splendor of the various-vested Night!  
Mother of wildly-working visions! hail!  
I watch thy gliding, while with watery light  
Thy weak eye glimmers through a fleecy veil;  
And when thou lovest thy pale orb to shroud  
Behind the gathered blackness lost on high;  
And when thou dartest from the wind-rent cloud  
Thy placid lightning o'er the awakened sky.  
Ah such is Hope! as changeful and as fair!  
Now dimly peering on the wistful sight;  
Now hid behind the dragon-winged Despair:  
But soon emerging in her radiant might  
She o'er the sorrow-clouded breast of Care  
Sails, like a meteor kindling in its flight.

—Coleridge.

Correspondence.

ATHEISM.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—The contribution of Mr. Symes gives me an opportunity to make a few remarks in opposition to his conclusions. His vigorous English must gladden the heart of every reader of his own cult, for he does not mince words in expressing his meaning. Like Hercules wielding his club he comes forth big with the certainty that no God exists, and lamenting that there is no one of like prowess to meet him in combat. Alas! that he should be so misguided, for he is cute enough to perceive the hollowness and imposture of those around us professing allegiance to the Most High. In this he is right. We are surrounded on all sides by the most flagrant violation of the teaching and principles of true Christianity; the parsons dead and blind, the people their deluded willing dupes, and both alike wallowing in gross ignorance of godliness, in living and conduct, such as defined in the Scriptures. As for the knowledge of the true God they are perfect heathens and comport themselves as such. Your correspondent may be commended for this perspicacity of vision, but when he endeavors to demonstrate the non-existence of God he is utterly lost, and terribly on the wrong scent. "The fool hath said in his heart there is no God," and man who has no dealings with him, can easily be fooled in this matter I am well aware, but when God takes an individual in hand he quickly drops this unbelief without an exception. I say then, when Jehovah begins to operate upon a man or woman they are quickly convinced of His Divine Majesty, until then, their thoughts are liable to roam at their own sweet will and their actions belie Him. The proof of the pudding is in the eating. Mr. Symes evidently knows nothing of this mysterious working; the writer is no wiser in this respect, and from this standpoint we are on a level, consequently I am not the person to accept his offer of a debate much as I would like to do so; but here is the difference between us: that while I am solidly convinced of a Divine Being existing, and cling to the hope that I may yet be favored to personally realise his power, greatness, and glory, in the glorious scheme He has devised for man's redemption, Mr. Symes would repudiate such aspirations as hopelessly silly, in even the thought of them, could he conceive the same.

This three-one God is but one of the mysteries of revealed religion; the Devil, whom your pages jokingly refer to now and again is another; Heaven and Hell are others; all solemn truths, but hidden from the multitude, including Mr. Symes, hence he can glory in his ignorance as I look at his behavior. He knows what he knows; that is nothing of these things, and I am a superstitious fellow in his sight. Am I? Methinks I am far too widely read and knowing to attach that stigma to myself, if another would thus dub me. Ignoring the Bible for a moment, have we not read numbers of proofs positive that God—the one Divine God we mean—exists and works? Has He not miraculously interposed in all ages of the world for the benefit of His true worshipers, and will He not do so down to the end of time? On the contrary, has He not vented His heavy displeasure on their enemies in terrible judgments? Do we not know many modern instances of this interposition? We live in a strange world, for while we have the most unimpeachable evidences, and the most reliable witnesses that a God exists, you Sir, pose as the leader of a section of people who fail to find either in the world, so that there must be some blundering somewhere. Who is wrong, you or I? Who by searching can find out God? No man by an intellectual effort, but when He deigns to lead, feed, clothe, defend, commune—aye, commune—with a creature, is not that sufficient to ensure comprehension? There is still a God. But enough for once.  
Coventry. W. K. FULLEYLOVE.

There is now no pillar of cloud or of fire to guide mortals; the heavenly apparition does not appear even in extremities.  
—"Mark Rutherford."

Obituary.

WE have to record the death of Mr. Thomas Elwen, of Ivy House, Hurworth-on-Tees, in his eightieth year. A laudatory account of his business career appeared in the *Sunderland Echo*. "In politics," our contemporary added, "he was a staunch Liberal, and a member of the Liberal Club. He was an avowed Rationalist, with the courage of his convictions, and frequently took the chair for Mr. Charles Bradlaugh." The cremation took place at Darlington on September 8.

**SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, etc.**

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

**LONDON.**

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S. : 8, Business Meeting in Hall.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Town Hall, Stratford) : 7.30, J. T. Lloyd, "Does Secularism Safeguard Morality?"

**OUTDOOR.**

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Fountain) : 3.30, C. Cohen.

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S. : Brockwell Park, 11.30 and 6, F. A. Davies.

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (Ridley-road, Dalston) : 11.30, Mr. Ramsey, "The Atonement."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Parliament Hill, Hampstead) : 3.30, James Rowney, "Secularism v. Christianity."

WOOLWICH BRANCH N. S. S. (Beresford-square) : 11.30, Howell Smith.

**COUNTRY.**

GLASGOW RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION (319 Sauchiehall-street) : Wednesday, Sept. 19, at 8, George Barnett, "Is Spiritualism True? Some Experiences."

Huddersfield Branch N. S. S. (No. 9 Lodge Room, Trade and Friendly Hall) : Tuesday, at 8, Meeting.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N. S. S. (Milton Hall, Daulby-street) : 7, W. C. Schweizer, "My Reasons for Becoming a Socialist."

PERTH BRANCH N. S. S. (Secular Room, Town Hall) : 6.30, T. Holman, "Byron and his Cain."

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