

# THE Freethinker

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*The love of others has the same necessary foundation in the human mind as the love of ourselves.*

—WILLIAM HAZLITT.

## A Silly Pamphlet.

WE have been favored with a copy of a pamphlet called *Facts for Busy Men*, written by the Rev. Frederick Smith, curate of St. Edmund's, Whalley Range, Manchester. We see it is praised by the Bishop of Carlisle as "eminently well worth printing" and "exceedingly useful"—and by the Bishop of Liverpool as "very useful" and "very suggestive." But for all that it is a very silly pamphlet.

Mr. Smith's "facts" must be meant for *very* "busy men"—too busy to look into them. What he really does is this. He mentions a number of eminent persons who have written more or less satisfactory testimonials to Christianity; and apparently he thinks this ought to satisfy everybody that Christianity is true. Just as if it were ever doubted that Christianity had a lot of distinguished friends—or that it would ever lose them while it was wealthy and respectable. Mr. Smith also misuses the names of eminent sceptics, and pretends that they were really supporters of the faith he preaches; whereas, if he is tolerably well-informed, he must know that they were not so.

Mr. Smith opens as blandly as the Heathen Chinese sat down to euchre. Just hear him:—

"Statements are made, and made so frequently, that many persons, especially young men, begin to believe that they are true. The statements are to this effect: that Christianity is played out; that Christ is a failure; that the Bible is an unreliable book, and that the cleverest men are unbelievers. But these things are not true."

Having written this, it was Mr. Smith's duty to show that Christianity is *not* played out, that Christ is *not* a failure, and that the Bible is *not* an unreliable book. But he never attempts to do anything of the kind. He gives all his time to proving that there are clever men who are professed Christians.

One of the distinguished and powerful friends of Christianity mentioned by Mr. Smith is Sir Oliver Lodge. But he has not the honesty to state in what way Sir Oliver Lodge is a Christian. He ought to have told his "busy" readers, who should be in search of real "facts," that Sir Oliver Lodge regards the story of the Creation and the Fall as legends, that he disbelieves all the miracles of the Bible, that he rejects both the Virgin Birth and the Resurrection of Christ, and that he repudiates the doctrine of the Trinity. Mr. Smith's readers, on hearing of these facts, might not think so highly as he does of Sir Oliver Lodge's adherence to Christianity.

We need not trouble, at this time of day, about Sir Isaac Newton; although we may remark, in passing, that it is very doubtful if he believed in the deity of Christ, without which there is no Christianity that is worthy of the name.

Faraday is cited next as "a devout Christian and an Elder of his Church." Yes, but *what* Church? Faraday belonged to the miserable little sect of Sandemanians. Moreover, he never discussed the

truth of Christianity even in his own mind. He refused to submit his inherited faith to any test of reason—as Mr. Smith may see in Dr. Bence Jones's biography of the great chemist. And what value can be placed upon his opinion in these circumstances?

The late Sir George Stokes was an eminent mathematician and a Christian. True. But the late Professor Clifford was one of the first mathematicians in Europe, and he was an Atheist. If the first fact proves that Christianity is true, the second fact proves that Atheism is true.

Lord Kelvin is a great physicist. Sir Oliver Lodge is another physicist. Both are claimed as believers in God. Each objects to Atheism on scientific grounds. Yes, but not on grounds of his own science. Lodge, the physicist, answers the arguments of Haeckel, the biologist. That is the way of these defenders of the faith. The farther abroad they are the better they like the excursion.

Darwin is the next name on the list, and in relation to this great man—by far the greatest in the whole list after Newton—Mr. Smith is either grossly dishonest or shockingly ignorant. Not a word is said as to Darwin's statements about himself in his Autobiography; how he grew out of and rejected Christianity, how he called himself an Agnostic, and how he gave up the belief in a future life. Mr. Smith quotes Darwin as writing:—

"The question, Is there a God? has been answered over and over again by the highest intellects, and the answer is, 'Most assuredly there is a God.'"

Now if Darwin did write that it would not make him a friend of Christianity; for all the great religions of the world believe in God, and the doctrine of Deity was white with old age before Christianity was born. But the truth is that Darwin *did not* write that. Mr. Smith is probably making a second hand allusion to a passage in the most magnificent chapter of the *Descent of Man*. Referring to the question "whether there exists a Creator and Ruler of the universe," Darwin said "this has been answered in the affirmative by the highest intellects that have ever existed." But this was silently altered in the second edition to "*some of the highest intellects*"—which is an extremely important difference. But then Darwin was a very accurate writer, while the Rev. Frederick Smith is only a loose-minded babbler.

Capital is made of the fact that Darwin, who had seen the degraded inhabitants of Terra del Fuego, subscribed £5 a year towards missionary work amongst them. At the very best this only proves one of two things; either that Darwin believed that men coming from civilised countries could do good amongst the lowest people on earth, or that Christianity might do some good amongst absolute savages. He never subscribed a farthing to its maintenance in civilised communities. And for nearly forty years of his life he never darkened the door of a Christian church.

"Professor Huxley," Mr. Smith states, "never said anything against Christianity." Will the reverend gentleman tell us, then, what Professor Huxley and the Rev. Dr. Wace debated upon? Does he really mean to suggest that Huxley was a Christian? Has he ever read Huxley?

Mr. Smith revels in misrepresentation of John Stuart Mill. He says that Mill spoke of Jesus as a

messenger from God, and called him "the ideal representative and guide of humanity." This is an absolute falsehood.

Renan is quoted as speaking of the Resurrection as "a fact." This is another absolute falsehood. Renan rejected *all* miracles.

Matthew Arnold is cited as one who regarded the Bible "with reverence and admiration." Well, *readers* of Arnold know what that means. Arnold held the Bible to be a human production, he declared that all its miracles were fairy-tales, he denied a personal God, and apparently did not believe in human immortality. Mr. Smith would have imparted some value to his pamphlet if he had stated these facts.

Finally we are regaled with some uncheckable statistics. "Of the 71 Fellows of the Royal Society known to me," said Doctor Gladstone, F.R.S., "66 are Christians, 6 Agnostics, and only 5 unbelievers." What a muddle this old gentleman must have been in! He treats the six Agnostics as "believers." And how can the Fellows known to him (a devout Christian) be considered as typical of the whole Society? "Birds of a feather"—but the proverb is somewhat musty.

Mr. Smith winds up with some words on the Trinity. He proves the Three-in-One by arguing that "trinity" is found everywhere. There is "solid, liquid, and gaseous"—especially *gaseous*. Man has "understanding, memory, and will." Yes, and he has two eyes and a nose, and a mouth and two ears; which is equally pertinent and convincing. We make a present of this to Mr. Smith for the next edition of his wonderful pamphlet.

G. W. FOOTE.

### In Defence of the Missionaries.

THERE are various reasons why people support Foreign Missions. Some do it because it is part of the work of the church to which they belong, others because they are commanded to go into all the world and preach the Gospel, etc. The most embracing reason is probably that they do not know any better. But to all of these Mr. W. Nelson Bitton—who belongs less to the bitten than to the biters—adds a further one, more honest even if less convincing. He asserts that they pave the way for trade, and also, for your British advocate of anything is sadly wanting unless he has a moral reason, they promote civilisation. Of course, there is nothing very new in the plea. Those big merchants who are such keen supporters of Foreign Missions have a shrewd method in their madness, and if their burning zeal for the spread of the Gospel goes hand in hand with an increased profit in their business, well, this is one more proof that the godly shall flourish at the expense of the unrighteous. And the soul of British religion is ever located in the neighborhood of the cash box.

Mr. Bitton wisely opens his article with a few profound (?) suggestions and a solemn warning. Trade, he says, flourishes best where good will prevails, and that neither Manchester nor Sheffield can do as well by forcing their goods on foreign countries at the point of the bayonet, as by encouraging a peaceful desire for their wares. And there is on hand the threat of a commercial boycott in Asia against Western goods. If Western merchants are to maintain their hold on the Eastern markets they must obtain the good will of the people. The peril we run as a mercantile people, says Mr. Bitton, cannot be too strongly emphasised. For "when you are dealing with a people having a developed moral instinct you cannot separate moral and commercial issues without suffering loss." Well, we do separate them in this country pretty easily, which proves—our fitness to be moral teachers to every other country.

Having thus pointed out to the commercial world the danger facing it, Mr. Bitton, like a vendor of

quack medicines dwelling on certain "horrible" diseases before exposing his cures, holds out the only promise of safety. If the merchant would be saved he must recognise that the missionary is his best friend, and support him accordingly. "Rightly understood, the work of the missionary is the voice of the merchant, speaking in terms of universal brotherhood and goodwill." It is a pity that the last half of the sentence makes an otherwise incontrovertible sentiment disputable.

Proceeding, Mr. Bitton catalogues the direct benefits conferred upon commerce by missionary work. First, there is the "actual contributions made by mission schools and colleges to the staff of every mercantile enterprise in heathen lands." Zealous supporters of missionary work will be delighted to hear this since it proves the spiritual aims of those who enter these schools and colleges, and how completely they absorb the true spirit of British Christianity. It also throws a little light on the stories told by missionaries of the craving for the Gospel that induces natives to enter these educational establishments. Next, we have the prevention of extravagance resulting from missionary work, since, as Mr. Bitton points out, when the native forms of extravagance are curtailed there is more money to spend in purchasing Western goods. In China one great form of waste is the prevalence of gambling. And as we are free from this evil we are naturally shocked at finding it prevalent elsewhere. Thus "the missionary directly aids the merchant," by "releasing a huge sum of money for commercial enterprise"—an argument which the spiritually minded readers of the *Christian World* will be certain to appreciate.

There is, again, a great waste in China by the burning of paper money and paper utensils in homes and temples. And, says Mr. Bitton, if this is abolished "it will be seen what a tremendous effect the success of missionary work in China has upon the purchasing power of the people." Of course, a Chinaman might retort that much money is wasted here on religious worship, and that the money spent in China is quite as productive as money spent elsewhere on the same object. Mr. Bitton would probably reply that there is a great difference in the two cases. In England it is spent on Christianity. In China it is spent on another religion. Besides, when the turkey suggested to the farmer who asked the best way to fatten it for Christmas killing that it had no desire to decorate a Christmas table, it was told it was running away from the real question. And it would be clearly beside the question for a Chinaman to argue in a similar manner. Moreover, Mr. Bitton's triumphant conclusion, "The superstition against which the missionary is fighting stands firm athwart the advance of the Western commercial world"—remains untouched.

The history of heathen lands, says Mr. Bitton, with profound sagacity, is a history of self-destruction. We have all heard of the famous island where people lived by taking in each other's washing, but a nation that preserves and perpetuates itself by self-destruction puts this classic example quite in the shade. However, Mr. Bitton goes on to explain that in heathen lands diseases born of filth claim myriads of victims, while "the heightened regard for the welfare of the body engendered by Christianity is an economical asset of the most decided kind, and it is unknown outside the influence of Christendom." Good! If ever a man showed himself qualified for writing Missionary Reports, Mr. Bitton has done so in this sentence. Anyone who has read these productions must have admired the imaginative qualities and the supreme disregard for facts they displayed. And if anyone was ever qualified to write a treatise on "Missionary Reports and How to Prepare Them," it is Mr. Bitton. For, if we leave the world of missionary romance and come to facts, then it is evident that while Christendom was Christendom no other quarter of the world has ever shown so complete a disregard for the welfare of the body. Mr. Bitton is either unac-

quainted with, or has forgotten, the historic teaching of the Church on this subject, with its abuse of the "vile body," and its mortification of the flesh as an indication of religious fervor. I have never heard of either China or Japan producing a counterpart of a Stylites, or experiencing anything like the ascetic epidemic that raged over Christendom for several centuries. And, for a writer on the East, Mr. Bitton shows a most extensive ignorance of Japanese customs and teaching in this respect—unless it is part of the make-up of a writer of Missionary Reports.

One marvels still more at the statement concerning the comparative cleanliness of Eastern nations and Christian peoples. It may surprise Mr. Bitton to learn that for many centuries in Christian Europe public baths were denounced and suppressed as a heathen practice, and that their existence in Christian England dates back little more than sixty years. And what provision there was apart from public baths a very slight study of the social conditions of England before about 1880 will quickly prove. Let Mr. Bitton try and find out the reason for the frequency of plagues in Christendom for hundreds of years, and he will discover that most of these were the result of dirt—simple Christian dirt. The cleanliness of Christendom was so pronounced that people, in self-defence, were compelled to carry boxes of perfumes, to avoid the unpleasant emanations from unwashed bodies and filthy clothes. Centuries ago, in Pagan Rome, there existed 856 baths, using some two hundred millions of gallons of water annually. The first public bath in England was opened in 1842. All over the East, particularly in China and Japan—in the latter place almost everyone bathes at least once daily—provisions have always been made for baths for the people. The first grant of public money in England for this purpose was made in 1846. To-day Eastern Christians are far more dirty than their Mohammedan neighbors. And, as I do not like to see England put in a secondary position wrongfully, I might safely challenge Mr. Bitton to show that the Chinese or Japanese can offer more perfect specimens of filthy people than can be found in this country. True, we are now waking up to the importance of fresh air, pure water, and general cleanliness; but this is quite a modern discovery, and I really do not know what Christianity has had to do with the change.

But all this is more or less in the nature of an aside. Mr. Bitton may be quite correct in saying that if people like the Chinese can be induced to spend less on religion, and be weaned from their native customs, they will have more to spend on purchasing the Western goods they may be taught to hanker after. Of course, it may be difficult to induce Chinese and Japanese philosophers to realise that their salvation depends upon purchasing Manchester cottons and Birmingham shoddy goods. They may, in their dense heathen ignorance, fail to realise the absolute necessity of many other of our Western customs and inventions; but if anyone can cure them of this blindness, rest assured it is the missionaries. "The work of the Christian missionary is of signal importance to the man of commerce," as Mr. Bitton remarks. Without his assistance we should hardly have been able to extort from the Chinese, by way of compensation for attacks on missionaries, all the commercial concessions we have exacted. Moreover, the missionary provides us the moral reason for conquering African tribes and annexing their lands. Mr. Bitton makes his claim on behalf of the missionaries, and merchants will no doubt recognise the justice of the claim. Above all, if more trade is to be done, native customs must be broken down and native tastes must be destroyed. And "there is no force so entirely successful in the attainment of this as the Gospel of Jesus Christ, for which the Christian missionary stands." Mr. Bitton deserves our best thanks for the exceeding, but unusual, candor of his article.

C. COHEN.

## Modern Gallios.

IN the Acts of the Apostles Gallio, the proconsul of Achaia in the Apostle Paul's time, is referred to in such a slighting manner that throughout the Christian world his name has become "proverbial for indifference." We hear of his "characteristic indifference," or "disdainful justice," and people are warned against imitating his bad example. When we read, "And Gallio cared for none of these things" (Acts xviii. 17), we are told that he ought to have cared, and that his carelessness or indifference was his damnation. The fact, however, is that the proconsul's indifference, on the occasion in question, showed that he was a man of broad and generous sympathies. Undoubtedly, he shared his brother Seneca's conviction that all religions, whether old or new, should be quietly tolerated throughout the Roman provinces. This is frankly admitted by so orthodox a theologian as Professor Sir William Ramsay in his scholarly work, *The Church in the Roman Empire*, p. 259. It follows, therefore, that Gallio refused to accept a prosecution against Paul, not because he was indifferent, but because he looked upon the matter from a higher and more humane point of view. He "cared for none of these things" because he cared for things of a nobler and more permanent nature. Seneca describes his character as "genial and lovable and thoroughly upright." The Jews cared supremely for myths and legends and ecclesiastical hair-splittings; and in charging the Apostle they endeavored to mislead the proconsul by the phrase "contrary to the law." But Gallio was wide-awake, and made answer thus:—

"If indeed it were a matter of wrong or of wicked villany, O ye Jews, reason would that I should bear with you; but if they are questions about words and names and your own law, look to it yourselves; I am not minded to be a judge of these matters. And he drove them from the judgment seat."

That was the speech of a statesman, and ought to have appealed to the accusers' sense of justice. It proved conclusively that the judge knew fully what his duty in the case really was. He was there to administer Roman law, not to settle disputes between rival religionists. Of course, the Jews were bitterly disappointed in him. They vilified him because he would not condescend to pronounce their shibboleths. He drove them away from the judgment seat because he was careless about religion—their religion.

Now, Christian preachers are to-day accusing unbelievers of precisely the same fault. The contention of the pulpit is that the lack of religion indicates a lack of sanity. All men would accept Christ as Savior and Lord and live the Christian life if they were only mentally in earnest. Unbelief goes hand in hand with intellectual apathy. Atheists, Agnostics, Rationalists are the victims of their own indolence. Christianity does not commend itself to them because they refuse to think. The other Sunday evening, preaching at Whitefield's Tabernacle, the Rev. C. Silvester Horne, M.A., waxed dreadfully fierce while impeaching the sin of indifference. He found this monstrous sin even in the Churches. "What is the matter with Christianity to-day," he said, "is that Christianity is asleep." Christians are disciples of Jesus only in name. And yet we are assured that "the Christian attitude is fatal to indifference in regard to belief, to being, and to duty." If that is true, how does Mr. Horne account for Christian indifference? If Christianity is fatal to such a sin, how do the two manage to co-exist in the same individuals? The preacher declared that there is nothing to fear from Rationalism or honest Agnosticism: it is the apathy and indifference of Christians that threaten the life of Christianity. That may be quite true; but it is absolutely false to assert that unbelief is the offspring of thoughtlessness. Mr. Horne was honest enough to say: "There is the Agnosticism that I can even admire though I cannot understand it; there is also the Agnosticism that I hate. The

first is worthy to be called even a noble Agnosticism. It is an Agnosticism that is the result of deep thinking if of dark thinking. I cannot understand it in the presence of the manifested love of God in his Universe and concentrated in Jesus Christ. I can no more understand the Agnostic himself than I can understand the whole inner mystery of the Universe." Mr. Horne may console himself with the thought that a Christian believer is quite as incomprehensible to the Agnostic. The latter can see no manifestation of the love of God anywhere. To him the Universe bears no marks of having been planned and of being governed by a God of justice and love; and in his opinion no one can believe in the active existence of such a Being without either totally ignoring or deliberately misrepresenting the facts of animal and human life.

Mr. Horne proceeds thus: "But there is an Agnosticism that is far more common than that. For everyone who becomes an Agnostic by thinking, a hundred become so by not thinking at all; a shallow, unworthy Agnosticism that is simply the result of not taking pains; negligence, carelessness; the Agnosticism that simply shrugs the shoulders." On this point, however, Mr. Horne is grossly mistaken. The Agnostics whom he has in his mind's eye are not Agnostics at all, but languid, half-hearted, dull-headed believers, of whom Christendom is full. They are backsliders from the Churches, or lapsed masses, as they are sometimes called. They still believe, as is proved by their sending their children to the Sunday-school and to the public services. Genuine Agnostics are deep thinkers, who have looked the problems of existence fully in the face, but have found no satisfactory solutions of them. When questioned, they may simply shrug the shoulders; but shoulder-shrugging is not an infallible sign of thoughtlessness. Indeed a whole volume of deepest meaning may be expressed by a mere shrug, and much more eloquently expressed than it could be by the choicest language.

It may be perfectly true that Agnostics are utterly indifferent to the claims of religion. How can they be otherwise? Religion deals with matters which to them do not exist. Religion calls upon them to love and serve a Being in whose existence they do not believe, and to prepare for a world which they regard as an illusion. How can they be actively interested in things which exist only in imagination? To them believers are objects of pity, rather than of envy—the slaves of superstition. Their attitude of indifference to religion is, therefore, a thoroughly natural one. Their religious carelessness is a necessity, because their supreme care is bestowed upon the grim realities of the present life. They do not care about religion because they care so intensely about human welfare in this world.

The Jews of Gallio's day busied themselves about shadows, dreams, words, ceremonies, and ghostly rules, and were grievously disappointed when the pro-consul failed to sympathise with and support them in their bigotry and narrow-mindedness; and they said, "How thoughtless and shallow and reckless he must be to care for none of these things!" In reality, it was they who were shallow and thoughtless and reckless, of which their wish to have Paul punished for daring to differ from them was abundant proof. Gallio was much wiser than they, in that he cherished and practised the exalted grace of toleration. He occupied a higher, broader, and humaner platform, and was able to deliver a more righteous judgment. A similar contrast is to be seen to-day. Innumerable are the different sects of religion in our land, and each sect is perfect in its own esteem. All sects but one are more or less heretical, more or less impure; the sect to which the speaker belongs alone being orthodox and entirely well-pleasing to the Lord. How effectively they all go for one another, thereby exemplifying their loyalty to their Divine Head! Catholicism curses Protestantism, and Protestantism Catholicism. Church denounces Dissent, and Dissent the Church. The only thing on which all the sects are

in complete agreement is the attitude of hatred towards all forms of aggressive unbelief, which they consistently maintain. This is the only characteristic which they all have in common. "Blind unbelief is sure to err," they exclaim, "and when is unbelief anything but blind?" And yet, is it not an incontrovertible fact that, intellectually, Scepticism has much more to say for itself than Faith, and that even morally the former is not one whit inferior, to say the least, to the latter? Think of the endless diversities of belief. No two denominations have the same God, the same Christ, the same way of salvation, or the same heaven and hell; and in most extravagant language, each pronounces the God, the Christ, the scheme of salvation, and the heaven and hell of the other, both false and pernicious. Now Scepticism regards all Gods and Christs and schemes of salvation and heavens and hells as purely fictitious objects, the existence of which, except as creations of the imagination, can neither be proven nor yet disproven. Surely it would be the height of absurdity to expect people, who do not believe in religion, to be constantly thinking and talking about it as if it were true. Such people are profoundly convinced that they have been emancipated from a state of mental bondage, that they have succeeded in throwing off the yoke of a cramping and crippling tyranny, and that the eyes of their understanding have been opened; and harboring such a conviction, how can they be religiously concerned? When preachers pathetically describe the sufferings of Christ, and say to their hearers: "The consequences of your guilt, the curse of your sin, rested upon him, the innocent for the guilty, that he might wake your soul and bring you to God, and help you to save the world." Freethinkers naturally smile, not because they are callous and apathetic, but because they are alive to the comicality of the situation, or because they are aware "of the preaching-man's immense stupidity, as he pours his doctrine forth, full measure," and fancies that *he* is a duly-appointed representative and mouthpiece of an unknown and incomprehensible person called God! But while Secularists smile at the pulpit's vainglorious pretensions and egregious stupidities, they take life seriously, and avail themselves of every means to increase its effectiveness and its joyousness.

Like their prototype, our modern Gallios are much better than they are painted. They have learned to think for themselves, and it is their manly independence that brings them into disrepute. They are living close to Nature's heart, and she whispers many of her secrets in their ears. They have no faith in the supernatural, but they have an ever-growing knowledge and appreciation of the natural; and this is an exceeding great reward.

J. T. LLOYD.

### They Are Coming Round!—III.

(Continued from p. 773.)

THE Egyptian priests developed out of the savage notions bequeathed to them by their predecessors a remarkably full and complete doctrine of man and his soul—for in those days, times and places, there was very much more in a man, or essentially connected with him than is dreamt of in the philosophy of the Christian priests, or in that of the Bible. The words, "body, soul and spirit," glibly rolled or rattled off by pulpit quacks now, represent but a small portion of the man Egyptian. He had a *ka* or double, also a *khu*, perhaps the intelligence or spirit, say some, while his "soul," when disembodied, was called his *ba*. His shadow was called his *khaybat*; his ruling force or power was named his *sekhem*; and his will and intentions his *ab*. Verily, man was richly endowed in those days. And the gods were not less so; nay, every object in nature also had its *ka*. This *ka* was no mere word, any more than God and the rest of the non-entities were; and to have

denied that *ka* would have seemed as monstrous to a pious Egyptian as it is to a Christian to deny the soul. If those who concocted Christianity out of the old superstitions they found in Egypt and elsewhere had taken over the *khu*, the *ba*, the *khaybat*, the *sekhem*, and the *ab* also, it would be as rank blasphemy to deny any one of them as it is to deny the "immortal soul."

It was the *ka* that gave life and form to God, to man, and to every object in nature; and without it (or him) nothing could exist. The *ka* did not exist before the man or beast or other object, yet the *ka* of each individual gave existence to that individual; and once existing, it was immortal. Dr. Sayce says "the *ka* was as much an individual entity as the angels of Christian belief." How very sceptical, how Sadducean, he must have been just when he wrote that brief sentence. Really, I shall grow sceptical myself if I continue to read this author! After the death of the body the *ka* continued to exist just as if nothing had happened to its (or his or her) old associates. Clever *ka*!

Still, that *ka* needed food and drink; and offerings were duly made to it, just as to the gods. At a later stage divine revelation made it perfectly clear to the Egyptians that they need not feed the *ka* upon viands that men might want, for the *kas* of the various kinds of foods and beverages would feed the human *kas* just as well as the substances themselves. This must have been an immense relief to the poor Egyptians, and what a saving it must have made! What must prove a source of pleasure to my readers is the fact that no disembodied human *ka* was ever known to grumble with the new arrangement. They were all as fully satisfied with a feast of *kas* or shadows as they could have been with the most substantial joints that could have been laid before them. And who shall say that the Egyptian religion was not a progressive one? It must be abundantly clear to all that nothing short of divine revelation could have worked this economical reform in Egypt.

Something exactly parallel was effected in Israel. In the olden times, God insisted on being stuffed with beef, mutton, poultry, meal, etc., and gorged with fat and blood. But at length he got a bad surfeit, poor fellow, and gave up meat, fat, and blood for the rest of his natural life. Since then God has been regularly fed on words, songs, chants, the personal feelings and intentions of the worshiper; and the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come, is, to my certain knowledge, as perfectly content with the Barmecide feasts the churches regularly lay before him as he ever was with the choicest viands from the shambles and the best pastry and soups the Jews could offer him. Halleluia! Who it was that first discovered this economic fact I am unable to say. Like so many other great inventors, discoverers, and benefactors, his name is lost to history. The art of feeding and satisfying infinite God with wind and wind only was a marvellous invention, my friends; and we cannot do less than adore the wisdom it displays.

All the Egyptian gods were not alike. God *Ra*, for example, had seven souls or spirits, and fourteen *kas*. The God of the New Testament also had seven spirits (Rev. v. 6), though orthodoxy has robbed him of six of them. So far as I remember, God's *kas* are not mentioned in the Bible, though he must have never do to allow *Ra* to have more *kas* than Jehovah. The clergy had better see to this, or they will have to dwell in a very tropical region in "the sweet by and bye."

The worship regularly offered to an Egyptian king was addressed to his *ka*; in worshipping the Apis Bull they addressed his *ka* also. The Papists have improved upon that by their worship of the "Sacred Heart of Jesus," a butcher's shop religion the Jesuits manufactured out of the mad dreams of that poor maniac, Marie Alacocque.

After referring to the mummies and the Egyptian expectation of a resurrection of the dead and the

eventual absorption of man into God; Professor Sayce says:—

"I need not point out how deeply this Hellenised [the Greeks had elaborated it] philosophy of Egypt has affected the religious thought of Alexandria, and through Alexandria of Christian Europe. *It may be that traces of it may be detected even in the New Testament.* At any rate, much of the psychology of Christian theologians is clearly derived from it. We are still under the influence of ideas whose first home was in Egypt and whose development has been the work of long ages of time. True or false, they are part of the heritage bequeathed to us by the past" (pp. 69-70).

He might and should have said, "bequeathed to us by the Pagan past."

The italics above are mine. It is a bit marvellous that a man of Dr. Sayce's learning and penetration can remain a Christian after so effectually exposing the religion in which he was reared, and after such an onslaught upon New Testament inspiration; for if that book has been influenced by Pagan superstitions, and received into itself ideas and sentiments from ancient Egypt, it is reduced to the level of other pious compilations; for surely the Holy Ghost would not be reduced to the necessity of borrowing materials from so foul a source as animal-worshipping Egypt!

Though I am compelled to omit the bulk of the Gifford Lectures, I must note that, about 1400 B.C., or a century earlier than the fabled Moses and the fabled exodus of "the chosen seed" from Egypt, an Egyptian king proclaimed his own God the God of all mankind. And Dr. Sayce says this was the first time in history that any God had been so proclaimed (p. 99). Not to the Old Testament, then, but to Pagan Egypt does Christianity owe the pretended universality of the sovereignty of its God. Whether the doctrine of one universal and exclusive God be an improvement or not upon Polytheism, does not very much concern me just here; but, as the clergy boast of it as a gift bestowed by the Bible, it is highly important for us to know that it first came from heathen Egypt, where for once, at least, a particular God was made, or declared to be, the one universal deity. Personally, I am very far from believing that one exclusive, sole-reigning God is an improvement upon the older superstition of "Gods many." Give us a multitude of gods, and we may play them off against each other; and, if any one of them misbehaves, or refuses to do what he is told, we can ignore him, forsake his temple, and bring him to reason by stopping his salary or cutting off all supplies—without which no God can endure—and we may "provoke him to love and good works" by worshipping his rivals and "exalting" and "magnifying" them. But with only one God, and that one all-powerful, what redress can we hope for, however badly he may behave? And who could behave worse than the God the Christians have left us?

That ancient king who devoted all his attentions to one God only, became a preacher of Monotheism, and delivered sermons on the subject in his palace. What he said is still echoed in Christian pulpits and Sunday-schools by men who never dreamt of being indebted to Paganism for what they regard as one of the very pillars of their superstition. This sole Egyptian God, like Jehovah at a much later period, was a "jealous God," and would permit of no worship being paid to a rival. Dr. Sayce does not think that there is any connection between Egyptian Monotheism and that of Moses, because, forsooth, "in Mosaicism," he says, "we look in vain for any traces of Pantheism." If he had studied the Hebrew Bible as carefully as the monuments of Egypt and Babylonia, he might have hesitated to say that, for the Jewish religion, like the Christian, is saturated with Polytheism; and the Bible contains several texts that look suspiciously like Pantheism, to say the least. The Mosaic God was a "consuming fire," a rock, a man, a sun, a child; he is identified with Heaven or Uranus or Varuna. And are not these fragments of Pantheism? And what is this? "Then shall the son also be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in

all" (1 Cor. xv. 26). Again, "It is the same God that worketh all in all" (1 Cor. xii. 6); "Christ is the fulness of him that filleth all in all" (Eph. i. 23); in Hebrews i. 10-12 the universe appears to be represented as Christ's garment or vesture; and what is that but Pantheism? That infinite God who is everywhere, who fills all space and all things, who is All and in All, must be Pan or nobody. And thus I show the Bible to be Pantheistic. Two distinct things cannot occupy all space; so the universe (universal stuff, pabulum, substance) and God must be identical—if God be infinite. And that is Pantheism, whether it be found in Mosaicism or not.

What the Egyptians originally meant by the word "God" (*neter*) Dr. Sayce does not think we know for certain. Well, what does he or any man mean by "God" now? Nothing in particular. The Christian "infinite and eternal being" is infinitely and eternally beyond the reach of knowledge or knowing; and he could never know himself, for it would require infinite labor for him to explore himself, and infinite time to do it in. "Ye worship ye know not what" is absolutely true of all Christians—except, of course, when they worship Mammon or some other heterodox deity. The Egyptian gods were solid substances; the Christian God is a vacuum, his name being the most substantial thing about him.

The creative Word was as well known in "Egypt, and still earlier in Babylonia, as he ever has been amongst Christians. The creator God of Egypt, Khnum, was a potter; the creator God of Babylonia, Ea, was a potter; and the creator God of the Bible seems also to have been a potter (see Romans ix. 19-21). That text *almost* makes God a potter.

As Osiris and his cult is better known to Freethinkers than most of what I am now fishing out for them, want of space bids me pass over that subject. I may say just here that I think it a great pity that the religion of ancient Egypt should have been degraded into that conglomeration of wickedness called Christianity before it spread over Europe, etc. It would have done infinitely less evil if it had permeated the Roman Empire as the Egyptian priests left it. But, alas! we cannot obliterate from history the countless evils the Galilean superstition has inflicted upon man. We may, however, do much to render it harmless for the future.

JOS. SYMES.

(To be continued.)

### Acid Drops.

Good old England! Church and Chapel are fighting like terriers over the religious education of children—and what is going on meanwhile? Forty years ago the agricultural population was two millions; to-day it is less than seven hundred thousand. Englishmen are cleared off the land, and Englishwomen are thrown into the labor market. Now a nation in which that sort of thing goes on without stopping is doomed; and the quarrel between Archbishop Davidson and Archbishop Clifford is like the fiddling of Nero over the burning of Rome.

In spite of all the radical changes in the Education Bill, made under the inspiration of Archbishop Davidson in the House of Lords, the Duke of Norfolk, on behalf of the Catholics, and Viscount Halifax, on behalf of the High Churchmen, voted against it on the third reading. "They had done what they could," the Duke said, "to put it in a shape which would be acceptable to the great body of Catholics; but it was still a Bill which they could not accept." "The Government," said the Viscount, "would make a very great mistake if they did not take account of the great consensus of opinion from all parties in the Church of England against the manifest injustice of the Bill." Nothing could be more explicit—and we are delighted. We hope the Churches will go on fighting over this question until the country, out of sheer weariness and disgust, adopts once for all "the only way," the policy of Secular Education.

"After the Wreck" was the heading of Dr. Clifford's inevitable letter to the *Daily News* after the Peers had done

with Mr. Birrell's Education Bill. When he likes the reverend gentleman can see with tolerable clearness; when he doesn't like to see there is nobody blinder. He says that the Bill as it now stands is calculated for "the exclusive advantage of the Anglican and Roman Catholic Churches"—and that is true enough. What he won't see, or won't admit, is that the Bill, as it was introduced by Mr. Birrell, and practically as it left the House of Commons, was calculated for the advantage of the Nonconformist Churches. Originally it was a Chapel Bill; at present it is a Church Bill; and, as the Americans say, that is all there is in it. But the "Cromwell of the Passive Resistance movement" goes on talking as though his party were the nation, and his opponents either a faction or a lot of foreigners. One of his chief points in this letter is that there must be "no denominational tests for teachers." If he were an honest and a straightforward Nonconformist, believing in the principle of no connection between Religion and the State, he would cry "no religious tests for teachers." But he is quite willing to have religious tests. His objection is to denominational tests. In other words, the tests must be such as suit the Nonconformists, not such as suit Anglicans and Catholics. That is the whole case in a nutshell.

"We have the votes of the people behind us," says Dr. Clifford. But isn't he a little too sure of that? The last general election was not fought on the Nonconformist education ticket. The Huddersfield by-election is more to the point. The Government education policy only commanded a trifle over a third of the votes recorded. Very nearly as many voted for Secular Education; and the votes polled by the Unionist candidate were all *against* the Government policy. Dr. Clifford's cry that "the votes of the people are behind us" is simply a bit of bounce.

The leading members of the Liberal Cabinet are all, or nearly all, Nonconformists. That accounts for the Nonconformist Education Bill. Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman has sent £20 towards the £7,000 which is being raised for the Rev. Dr. Cromwell Clifford. When he gets that testimonial he will be more a Passive Resister than ever. Being heavier by £7,000, he will be much harder to shift.

The *Catholic Herald* is greatly indignant because the Italian government will not "put the law in force against obscene or infidel literature." The "or" is disjunctive, and makes a sharp separation between obscene and infidel literature. It therefore follows that our Catholic contemporary wishes to see radical opposition to the Christian faith suppressed by the strong arm of the law. This enables us to understand how much sincerity there is in the Catholic plea for liberty in England. What Catholicism really wants is freedom for itself, and despotism for everyone else.

We see that the *Catholic Herald* boasts of the death-bed repentance of Henri Beaugrand, founder of *La Patrie*, Montreal, Canada. It is said that he was widely known as a Freethinker, but his fame in that line never, as far as we know, reached England. Before he died "he recanted and sent for Archbishop Brachesi, who administered to him the last rites of the Church." We shall believe all this when we have something better to trust to than Catholic testimony.

Rev. Stewart D. Headlam, according to the editor of "The Churches" column in the daily organ of the Nonconformist Conscience, has hopes of "G. B. S." as a sort of brand plucked from the burning. "The welcome fact," he says, "is that 'G. B. S.' has broken away from the last century's materialism, that he is no longer an 'infidel.'" Ah, Mr. Shaw, the Philistines are upon thee—and thou hast invited them.

Professor York Powell, whose biography has just been prepared by Professor Oliver Elton, had a poor opinion of Tolstoy, and spoke of him as "a childish babler; a weak, narrow-brained person; humane enough, but no thought; he has gifts, sympathies, intuitions, but lacks brain; falls into sillinesses, futilities, patent absurdities; won't face facts; is conceited, preachy (that is why he is popular here), full of foolish religiosity." This may be an exaggeration of the truth, but one must think of it in reading Tolstoy's ineffable criticism of Shakespeare, which is little more than an expression of the pious Russian moujik's hatred of the bold and triumphant Elizabethan genius.

A witness with a Yiddish sort of a name kissed the New Testament in the Clerkenwell County Court. Being asked the question, he admitted he was a Jew. "Then why," counsel asked, "have you been sworn on the New Testa-

ment?" The witness explained that he was "a reformed Jew" and more a Unitarian than anything else. Both he and the counsel seem to have overlooked the fact that all Jews are Unitarians. But this fact does not explain why the witness kissed the Trinitarian New Testament instead of the Unitarian Old Testament.

Joseph Horton Kirby, of Bush Hill Park Dairy, Enfield, being examined in the Bankruptcy Court, stated that he had purchased a business of a Mr. Biscoe, but he soon lost most of the customers, who were of the same religion as Mr. Biscoe, while his own religion was different. Did they think his religion would get into his milk, sour his cream, and addle his eggs? Perhaps they had that common religion which makes men hate each other—especially those who differ from them?

Richard Buckham, aged twenty, was executed at Chelmsford Prison for the most miserably mean murder of Mr. and Mrs. Watson, at Basildon. He was confirmed in the condemned cell by the Bishop of Colchester, and the "holy communion" was administered to him the day before he was hung. He made a good breakfast, smoked a cigarette, and walked to the scaffold. His last words were, "Lord Jesus receive my spirit." He does not appear to have been in the least concerned about the spirits of the man and woman he killed. That is religion all over.

The Belfast "own correspondent" of the *Daily News* telegraphed a quarter column account of the "ghost" seen by some "bright and intelligent" hands at a coal pit at Coalisland. This ghost appeared one night like a human being without arms or legs; another night it was "in the shape of a four-footed animal, about the size of a sheep, and had a tail about two feet long, and ears about eighteen inches." Very interesting! But "our own correspondent" might have added what brand of whisky the "hands" had been drinking. The dimensions of the tail and ears suggest something raw with plenty of fusel oil.

The dear *Daily News*, reporting the serious illness of the Rev. F. E. Macdonald Docker, M.A., B.D., of West Hampstead, added the following pious story:—

"It may be remembered that not long ago a paragraph appeared in the *Daily News* giving an account of a scene in Hyde Park in which a young man tackled an infidel orator of the worst type, and so confused him by brilliant argument that the orator lost his temper, described Christ as an impostor, and was hissed and jeered out of the park by a crowd that had previously listened to him in silence. It afterwards transpired that the young man was Mr. Macdonald Docker."

The name of the Christian hero in these pious stories always does "transpire." What does not "transpire" is the name of the discomfited infidel. Of course there is a reason for this reticence. Names and addresses are apt to prove fatal. Dr. Torrey, in an unguarded moment, let the name of a "converted infidel" of his at Bristol "transpire," and the result was our exposure of a most ridiculous mare's-nest. The young man was not an infidel and Torrey did not convert him. Perhaps the *Daily News* story would share the same fate if we were given fuller particulars.

We don't rejoice at the suicide of Major-General Guise Tucker. We are sorry for it. A brave officer deserved a better fate. What we want to say is that his case does not show that intimate connection between suicide and atheism which the Rev. Dr. Torrey, in succession to the Rev. Dr. Talmage, tried to get the pious people of this country to believe. Several letters that General Tucker intended to post were found in his pockets. One was making an appointment for a religious work in the Army—a work in which, the newspapers say, the General, "being a devout man, was much interested."

"We have received (*John Bull* says) a copy of the *Christian*, containing an article on the late George Jacob Holyoake. In it the uprightness and unselfishness of the veteran reformer's life 'on the secular side,' and his genuine interest in the physical betterment of the people are admitted. But the article proceeds: 'As a boy, Mr. Holyoake attended the ministry of John Angell James, at Birmingham. Had he continued there, he would surely have come into the possession of knowledge concerning God that would for him have been eternal life. But the boy went off to the Unitarians, where the Deity of Christ is suppressed. The only way of knowing God is through our Lord Jesus Christ. That means destroyed, the result also is destroyed. And George Jacob Holyoake's negation of things Evangelical must be put to the account of those who offer men husks

instead of bread." In the same issue there is a column of fulsome adulation of Dr. Torrey—with no reference to the cowardly manner in which he foully slandered the memories of Paine and Ingersoll. No, no! It will not do, Mr. *Christian*. If the husks produce Holyoakes, we would ten thousand times rather feed on them than on the bread that developes Torreys. A man who is 'upright on the secular side' is good enough for us. The fault with so many upright people 'on the spiritual side' is that their mundane morals are so often rather weak."

Dr. Robertson Nicoll glories in his orthodoxy. He adheres, with heroic pertinacity, to the faith once delivered to the saints. In the *British Weekly* for December 6, he emphasises once more what he considers to be the message of Christmas. "The message of Christmas," he says, "is that Christ is the Eternal Refuge, the Heavenly Hiding-Place, the Almighty Helper of all who trust Him. He is the First and the Last." That would be a delightful message if it were but true. Alas, there is not a word of truth in it, in spite of the extravagant expenditure of capitals.

On the assumption that the message of Christmas is not true, Dr. Nicoll predicts the speedy dissolution of Christianity; and no doubt his prediction would be fulfilled. "If the Incarnation and the Resurrection are taken to be myths," Christianity will not survive. Well, what then? Dr. Nicoll admits that "the natural history of the soul would be the same if faith in the supernatural were to disappear," and that "the struggle in the soul between good and evil would go on." In reality, to make such an admission is to surrender the whole case for Christianity. The joy of life is alone in the struggle between good and evil. No keener, higher joy is known to us.

Dr. Nicoll proceeds to qualify, in fact to withdraw, his admission. Soon after the decease of Trinitarianism, "the Churches would begin to empty." No, they would not, for they are emptying already, and have been emptying for many a decade. Faith in the Incarnation and the Resurrection has signally failed to keep the Churches full. This fact ought to have been staring Dr. Nicoll in the face as he wrote. "The Almighty Helper of all who trust Him" cannot fill his own temples with trusting souls.

Nothing daunted, Dr. Nicoll plods on. Yes, he says, "in the inner fortress of the soul the struggle would proceed, but the good would be indefinitely weakened in its conflict with the evil. The fight would become blind and hopeless." This is a gratuitous prediction. The past furnishes no ground whatever for making it. Are Unitarians less moral than Trinitarians? Are Atheists ethically inferior to either? If not, then on what does Dr. Nicoll base his evil prophecy? The truth is that he is arguing simply from prejudice, from a bias that blinds his moral vision.

One is amazed beyond measure at Dr. Nicoll's arrogant presumption. No fact can be better attested than this, namely, that the moment faith in the supernatural dies God becomes utterly silent. But Dr. Nicoll, imagining himself and others unbelievers in the supernatural, says: "God would not cease to haunt us with a deep unrest, even if we ceased to believe Him." That flatly contradicts the experience of thousands of living Atheists in this country alone. There are people whom God does not haunt, does not even deign to address in any way whatsoever. If Dr. Nicoll wished it, nothing would be easier than to introduce him to hundreds of such people in his own city of London.

Mr. R. J. Campbell has just made a most important discovery. According to his latest published sermon, there are two Gods, the one conditioned by and within the universe, and the other unconditioned, residing somewhere or everywhere outside. The one God is limited in power and action by his instruments, while the other is infinite and almighty. How the two Gods are related to each other, or how they manage to get on together, Mr. Campbell does not inform us. It is marvellous how much this preacher knows, or—how little.

It has been left to the trustees of the public library of Worcester, Mass., to discover that the book, *Eve's Diary*, by Mark Twain, is obscene and unfit for general circulation. The board of trustees of the Worcester library is composed of the town clerk, an undertaker, and a Congregational minister.—*Truthseeker* (New York).

The *Dorset County Chronicle* announces the death of a young man named Christopher, who "died trusting in his

Savior after a long illness of 15 months from consumption." We knew that the Savior was in a consumption, but we thought it had lasted longer than 15 months.

Councillor James Sexton has been addressing a meeting in connection with the Gasworkers' Union at Liverpool on the Yellow Peril. We gather that there are Chinese laundrymen in Liverpool, and Mr. Sexton indignantly calls for the suppression of these "immoral" competitors. He believes in the brotherhood of man, but he draws the line at the Chinese—who are quite a quarter of the whole human race. We do not understand that Mr. Sexton applies this principle of exclusive brotherhood all round. There are many Englishmen in China. Does he propose to recall them all home? Perhaps the oracle of this new-fashioned brotherhood will explain himself.

General Booth bagged the Lord Mayor of Manchester just as he had bagged the Lord Mayor of Liverpool. Surely the chief citizen of an English town ought not to let his public function be used on bills to attract a crowd to a religious meeting. Charles Bradlaugh would never allow the letters "M.P." to figure on the bills announcing his Freethought lectures. But he was an Atheist. The Lord Mayor of Manchester, being a Christian, is less scrupulous.

The preacher last Sunday morning at Westminster Abbey was the Rev. Arthur Taylor. His theme was the Bible, and his sermon was on behalf of the British and Foreign Bible Society. In the course of it, according to the *Daily News* report, there was "a short passage in which the preacher showed that the elevation of womanhood in all lands was due to the teaching of the Bible." Now the preacher did not show anything of the kind, for he could not do so; instead of "showed" we should read "said." The preacher said so, and he told a falsehood. How false the statement is has been shown by a member of his own Church—the Rev. Principal Donaldson.

It appears that French twenty-franc pieces bear the motto, "Dieu protège la France." M. Breton has persuaded the Chamber of Deputies that France does not want to be protected by God; so the pious motto is no longer to appear on the coinage. We are glad to hear it. Religious people can hardly expect to dictate all the public inscriptions.

J. G. Rawlings, a negro preacher, at Valdosta, Georgia, understood himself better than his congregation did. He was convicted of the murder of his two children and sentenced to death, and his congregation tried to get his sentence commuted; but he refused to sign any appeal, and, as Carlyle would say, was accurately hanged. Nothing in his life so much became him as leaving it.

Old Dowie appears to have gone insane. He is said to believe himself to be a famous soldier. Is it a case of General-Booth on the brain?

Henry Varley, ex-butcher and revivalist, has been soul-saving for some time at Brighton. He is staying at the Belvidere Mansion Hotel on the front, where he and his wife do the thing in great style; from which we judge that the Lord's vineyard pays better than the meat-market. Henry Varley drives to chapel on Sundays, thus causing his cabman to break the blessed Sabbath. That is the only kind of Sabbath-breaking he doesn't denounce. The old game:—

"Compound for sins they are inclined to  
By damning those they have no mind to."

We hear that another soul-saver, Pastor Frank Cable, of Battersea, has been holding revival meetings on Brighton beach since August. As the weather gets colder his language gets hotter—especially against the Catholics, whom he loves with a truly Protestant affection.

There is a Free Methodist church at Hazlemere (Bucks), and the door of it refused to be unlocked the other day. On the lock being removed, it was found to contain half-a-sovereign and half-a-crown. Perhaps the joker thought the twelve-and-sixpence would pay the bill for his fun. Or perhaps some sober worshipers had taken the door for a slot-machine.

According to the *Bristol Evening News*, the Conservative candidate in the village of Fivehead, near Taunton, said to a local Baptist preacher, "You would not allow an Atheist to teach Christianity to the children, would you?"—and the Baptist preacher promptly replied, "I would." Our contemporary is properly horrified at this reply. But if a teacher happened to be an Atheist, without wearing a

public label to that effect, which is easily conceivable, how would our indignant contemporary manage to smell him out? And if it could not do that, how could it prevent him from teaching Christianity?

The Bristol paper declares that secular education would "bring up a generation of atheists" with "destructive tendencies." Yet in the very next leading article it sings the praises of the Japanese, who have had secular education in their schools long enough for the overwhelming majority of them to have been brought up under it.

Rev. Frank Ballard says that two-thirds of the people of this country do not pray at all. He might add that the other third get nothing by it.

Mr. Ballard suggested that men should pray more and smoke less. But how is one way of wasting time much better than another?

London had its "Jack the Ripper" and New York has its "Jack the Firebug." In one night recently he set fire to no less than nine tenement houses. His method is to pile paper and wood at the bottom of the stairs, and leave a fire there to burn the staircase down and catch the rest of the house. The police have no clue to his identity. If he is ever caught he will probably be found to be a religious maniac. Perhaps he believes so strongly in a hell hereafter that he thinks it ought to be imitated here.

Marie Corelli—novelist and hater of Atheism, without understanding it—says that she doesn't want a vote. She asks why she should. At present she says she can win forty or fifty votes—perhaps more—for any candidate in whom she happens to be interested. How much each would they cost her? If she lived in the pious town of Great Yarmouth she could get a large quantity at half-a-crown apiece.

Like all Christian countries, America has a big opinion of itself. How it must squirm, then, on reading the praise of Heathen Japan which was wrung from President Roosevelt in his recent Message to Congress:—

"The growth of Japan has been literally astounding. There is not only nothing to parallel it, but nothing to approach it in the history of civilised mankind. Japan has a glorious and ancient past. Her civilisation is older than that of the nations of northern Europe—the nations from whom the people of the United States have chiefly sprung. But fifty years ago Japan's development was still that of the Middle Ages. During that fifty years the progress of the country in every walk of life has been a marvel to mankind, and she now stands as one of the greatest of civilised nations; great in the arts of war and in the arts of peace; great in military, in industrial, in artistic development and achievement. Japanese soldiers and sailors have shown themselves equal in combat to any of whom history makes note. She has produced great generals and mighty admirals; her fighting men, afloat and ashore, show all the heroic courage, the unquestioning, unflinching loyalty, the splendid indifference to hardship and death, which marked the Loyal Ronins; and they show also that they possess the highest ideal of patriotism. Japanese artists of every kind see their products eagerly sought for in all lands. The industrial and commercial development of Japan has been phenomenal; greater than that of any other country during the same period. At the same time the advance in science and philosophy is no less marked. The admirable management of the Japanese Red Cross during the late war, the efficiency and humanity of the Japanese officials, nurses, and doctors, won the respectful admiration of all acquainted with the facts. Through the Red Cross the Japanese people sent over \$100,000 to the sufferers of San Francisco, and the gift was accepted with gratitude by our people. The courtesy of the Japanese, nationally and individually, has become proverbial. To no other country has there been such an increasing number of visitors from this land as to Japan. In return, Japanese have come here in great numbers. They are welcome, socially and intellectually, in all our colleges and institutions of higher learning, in all our professional and social bodies. The Japanese have won in a single generation the right to stand abreast of the foremost and most enlightened peoples of Europe and America; they have won on their own merits and by their own exertions the right to treatment on a basis of full and frank equality."

No Christian nation has made the same progress in the same time. President Roosevelt says so. Yet this is the man who told three lies about Thomas Paine in one sentence (calling him "a dirty little Atheist") for not being a Christian.

Miss Mary Davies, a very active worker in the revival movement at Llandilo, hanged herself after supper at Bargoed. There is no moral. There would have been if she had worked for Freethought.



## Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, December 16, Queen's (Minor Hall), Langham-place, London, W. : 7.30., "Christmas Questions for Candid Christians."

## To Correspondents.

C. COHEN'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—December 16, Belfast.

MR. SYMES'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—Address, 265 Romford-road, Forest-gate, E.—December 15, Bedlington; 16, Newcastle; 17, Hetton; 18, Spennymoor.

E. LECHMERE.—See paragraphs, and accept thanks.

R. IRVING.—We are obliged; see paragraph. What that member of the Church of Christ said about Mr. Symes was all baffle. Our old friend and colleague is a different man altogether. Pleased to hear you say: "I have been reading several of your books this week, and think them splendid." Your praise is far too generous; at the same time, we honestly think that it would be a good thing if our writings were more widely read. They at least contain candid thought and honest expression—a mixture which is none too common in pharisaic, puritanical England. Not that Scotland is any better—and Wales may be a bit worse.

F. C. BOND (Burton-on-Trent) writes that he has received several numbers of the *Freethinker* from someone in the neighborhood. This statement is followed by several folios on the Education Problem. What the gentleman says is not quite intelligible. But there is no mistaking his last sentence. "An Atheist," he says, "should not be admitted into a school, and tests could be imposed and precautions adopted to prevent his doing so." If this meets the gentleman's eye, we invite him to tell us, in terse plain language, why an Atheist should not be admitted into a school, and what tests and precautions should be adopted to keep him out.

R. DOUNIE.—Yes, Mr. Cohen's "Salvation Army" tract will do good.

A. KEELER.—Thanks. But we never heard of that "converted Atheist" called Beale, and he cannot be a person of much importance. People who make a lot of such little facts might be reminded that all the *Freethinker* men are "converts." Mr. Foote was once a Christian; it was in his youth, when he was not old enough to know better. Mr. Cohen was by birth and early training a Jew. Mr. Lloyd filled a Presbyterian pulpit for many years. Mr. Symes came over to Freethought from a Wesleyan pulpit. Are there any "converted infidels" about of anything like the same weight?

J. K.—Thanks for cutting and good wishes.

GEORGE JACOB.—(1) "Freethinker" originally meant one who rejects revelation. Nowadays it means one who is opposed to theology altogether. That is also what "Libre Penseur" means in France. (2) David Hume did not call himself an Atheist. Nobody did in those days. But he was well-known not to be a Christian, and nobody can read his *Dialogues* without seeing that he was not really a Theist either.

A. A.—The Virgin Birth of Christ is one dogma, the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin is quite another. The photo. is not forgotten. You say we might have made plenty of money by our pen if we had not elected to be an apostle of Freethought. Perhaps so. Anyhow, we give to the cause all the difference between what is and what might have been.

J. BROUEN.—Thanks for cuttings. We will look through the booklet. We hope you did not expect a reply from the Bishop. Men of that sort are worked to death already. See how young most of them die.

J. LISTEN, who know "Father Bonte" well in Liverpool, is "glad he has the courage of his convictions" and calls him "a broad-minded, earnest man."

A. F. PURDY (Australia).—Glad you "think very highly of" the *Freethinker*, and hope our publications will have a good circulation out there.

W. M. (Cambridge), sending a year's subscription to this journal, says: "I wish to thank you for sending me six consecutive weekly copies gratis."

THE COHEN "SALVATION ARMY" TRACT FUND.—Previously acknowledged, £7 14s. 6d. Since received: J. Woodhall, 5s.; Newcastle Branch, 10s.; Mr. Ainge, 1s. 6d.; Member Leicester Secular Society, 2s. 6d.; K. O. Z., 2s. 6d.; A. G., 6d.; J. K., 1s.; G. W., 1s.; G. Otley, 1s.; A. Lewis, 2s. 6d.; T. Lambert, 6d.; Walthamstow Branch S. D. F., 3s.

J. PARTRIDGE.—Your postcard (we know the handwriting) is perfectly blank on the communication side.

L. B. GALLAGHER.—The matter is having attention, and will be dealt with. Thanks.

WATCHFUL.—Always glad to receive cuttings.

G. BATCHELOR.—We don't intend to take any notice of the paper you enclose. We draw the line at vermin.

INGERSOLLITE.—We believe we invented the phrase "Social Salvation." We devised it as a title for one of Ingersoll's discourses which we reprinted in pamphlet form. That was in the eighties. The phrase has been used a good deal since.

A. LEWIS.—Will see what can be done with it.

E. H.—Just like all the rest of Dr. Clifford's utterances. Thanks all the same.

T. LAMBERT.—Your twelve stamps were halfpenny ones. Thanks for cuttings.

R. H. SWEWELL.—William Cobbett was not an Atheist. He always regarded himself as a member of the Church of England, bitterly as he attacked the Establishment in his *Protestant Reformation*. Pleased to hear you value this journal so highly.

T. H. ELSTOB.—The 1,000 copies of Mr. Cohen's tract have been forwarded for distribution at Mr. Symes's lectures to-day in Newcastle; also the 200 copies of the *Freethinker* for sale. It was a pity the supply ran short at Mr. Foote's meetings—although, of course, it is easier to be wise after the event than before it.

H. HURCUM.—We have looked into the matter. It was a blunder, and will not be repeated. We are sorry you were caused annoyance.

J. WOODALL.—We don't like to deal too roughly with correspondents' letters that we insert. It is best to let them appear as written, when possible.

M. B.—Sorry we cannot find room at present.

J. S. LAWSON.—Glad you still "enjoy" the *Freethinker* and regard it as "the best and most instructive paper" you ever read.

E. MOORCROFT.—Not surprised at your opinion of Mr. Lloyd's lectures at Liverpool being "of sterling worth." We would gladly have given a "Sugar Plum" to Mrs. Bradlaugh-Bonner's lectures if anyone had taken the trouble to send us an intimation.

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

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

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

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

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## Sugar Plums.

Mr. Foote had a splendid audience at Queen's Hall on Sunday evening, when he lectured on "Mr. Bernard Shaw on Shakespeare, Darwin, and God." It was a live meeting from beginning to end, intensely interested, and freely appreciative. The jocular treatment of the more fantastic "Shawisms" created much laughter; so much so that one very solemn Shawite objected to his idol being ridiculed, which elicited the reply that Mr. Shaw had been ridiculing other people for twenty years and could hardly object to a little of his own sauce. Mr. Foote's lecture was, however, perfectly good-humored, and much of the lecture was entirely serious—especially the peroration, which was tremendously applauded. Many questions were asked, but there was no formal opposition, although it was strongly invited by the chairman, Mr. F. A. Davies.

Mr. Foote is taking a seasonable subject for his second Queen's Hall lecture this evening (Dec. 16)—"Christmas Questions for Candid Christians." This is eminently a lecture which Christians should hear; we trust our readers will give it all the publicity they can, and try to induce their more orthodox acquaintances to attend. Mr. Foote is anxious to preach to the unconverted.

The London Freethinkers' Annual Dinner, under the auspices of the N. S. S. Executive, takes place at the Holborn Restaurant on Tuesday evening, January 8. Provincial friends who happen to be in London then will be heartily welcomed if they will make themselves known when they are not so already. This they can do by introducing themselves to the President or to the Secretary, Miss E. M. Vance. Mr. Foote will preside at the dinner by virtue of his office, and will be supported by Messrs. C. Cohen, J. T. Lloyd, Joseph Symes, F. A. Davies, W. Heaford, Victor Roger, and other sterling "saints." After the dinner there will be some speech-making to toasts, and a good musical entertainment. "The price for the lot" is only 4s. Tickets can be obtained from Miss Vance at 2 Newcastle-street, London, E.C.

In addition to the report in the *Newcastle Chronicle* there was a report in the *Northern Echo* (Darlington) of Mr. Foote's recent lectures in the Co-operative Hall, Newcastle-on-Tyne. A curious misprint, however, made a strange alteration in the afternoon subject. "Mr. Blatchford's Crusade against Christianity" appeared as "Mr. Blatchford's Crusade against Socialism." For the rest, the report, though brief, was very well done.

Freethinkers scattered over the vast northern area of Northumberland and Durham are finally asked to note Mr. Joseph Symes's Anniversary Lecture in the Palace Theatre, Haymarket, Newcastle, on Sunday, December 16. This theatre is a very large one, and it will need a considerable audience even to make the building appear comfortably full. Admission is free—with, of course, a collection—so that a strong effort should be made by the local sympathisers to bring up their friends to help to swell the numbers and to give Mr. Symes the welcome he deserves. The lecture is entitled "My Thirty Years of Storm and Struggle for Freethought," and the Chair will be taken at 7 p.m. by Mr. Martin Weatherburn, himself a veteran Freethinker of proved courage and endurance. Friends are also asked not to forget the Reception commencing at 3 o'clock in the Cordwainers' Hall, Nelson-street. Tickets for the same can now be obtained at the bookstall of Mr. M. J. Charter, in the Grainger-street Market, or from other members of the Committee.

The following quite unsolicited paragraph appeared in the *Newcastle Daily Chronicle* of Wednesday, December 5:—

A SECULARIST'S GRIEVANCE.

"The Secularists in Newcastle have a grievance, and it is one in which, naturally, they feel somewhat sore. They complain that obstacles are placed in the way of their meeting. A lecture has been arranged to be given in the Palace Theatre, and the Secularists desired to make a charge for admission and devote the proceeds to some philanthropic object; but the Corporation committee that has charge of such matters declined to permit this to be done, although it had been allowed in similar circumstances to the Socialists, in aid of the Socialist Institute. The Secularists had been accustomed to hold their Sunday meetings in the hall of the Geographical Institute, but this, they complain, has now been refused to them, and they have been obliged to find a fresh meeting-place. The Secularists, whatever one may think of their views, are a strong body in this neighborhood. They are earnest in defence of public rights, and, in the universal recognition of free speech, no good purpose will be served by putting around them a fence of restriction. A charge for admission is made for Sunday lectures elsewhere. Then why not at the Palace Theatre?"

We thank the *Chronicle* for this generous protest. It has been a shock to us to learn that the "Corporation committee" referred to includes a Socialist councillor, who sat silent and acquiesced in this partial and unjust treatment of the Secularists. On the whole, we believe it may be our duty to go down to Newcastle and teach the bigots, and the Corporation too, a much-needed lesson. We are watching events very closely.

We are much pleased to see that our old friend and colleague, Mr. James Neate, one of the N. S. S. vice-presidents, has been appointed Chairman of the Finance Committee of the Bethnal Green Borough Council. Evidently his colleagues don't share Dr. Torrey's opinion of "unbelievers."

"It was a lucky post that brought me my first *Freethinker*, and the sender will always have my best wishes." This is an extract from a letter written by one of our readers to another, who introduced this journal to him some seven years ago. Of course it is grateful to the editorial heart to come across such unsolicited testimonials. But that is not why we mention this one. We do so in order to encourage our friends in placing the *Freethinker* into as many fresh hands as possible. We cannot spend a lot of money in advertising; we have not got it to spend; and, to tell the plain truth, we have been working on the paper without salary for a considerable time. But our friends can easily do a little advertising for us, and more effectively than we could do it for ourselves. They can pass on their *Freethinker* when they have done with it; or, if they prefer to keep it, take an extra copy and pass that along. Or they can forward us the names and addresses of persons who might become regular readers of this journal if they only knew of it. To all such addresses we will send a gratis copy post-free for six consecutive weeks.

The *Isle of Man Times*, published at Douglas, has recently reprinted some of our "Acid Drops," of course with proper acknowledgment.

It is an act of justice to Mr. Birrell to recognise the manly way in which he stuck to Clause VII. on Monday. This is the Clause, it will be recollected, that allows parents not to send their children to school while the religious instruction is being given. Mr. Birrell described it as his "own pet clause," and said he "believed it would have the effect of making the Conscience Clause, which hitherto has had a long but useless career, a genuine reality—a reality which it could never possibly enjoy so long as you transfer the whole brunt of it from the parent, who ought to bear it, to the tender shoulders of the child." Mr. Birrell added that the child was "exposed to the fiery shafts of a teacher's sarcasm or the ridicule of the playground, to say nothing of ostracism from school treats." He was afraid Clause VII. would "disappear"—but that remains to be seen.

There is just issued from our publishing office an important new pamphlet by Mr. Joseph Symes. This is a new edition, set up on our own premises, of a little work which Mr. Symes wrote some years ago in Australia. Readers will find it of great use and interest. We do not recollect seeing the facts of the case it deals with set forth with so much power and lucidity in such a brief compass. Where the Higher Critics beat about the bush Mr. Symes goes straight to the mark. He tells the truth, the whole truth (as far as his space permits), and nothing but the truth. In the *New Testament Manuscripts* he claims to have proved that "the Gospels are frauds and forgeries, the New Testament a book of most uncertain date; and that, instead of having been written by eye-witnesses of the things it relates, no proof exists that the book is yet so much as 1,000 years old." Mr. Symes increases the value of this forceful pamphlet by giving fac-similes from the Greek manuscripts. We are decidedly of opinion that the pamphlet ought to be widely circulated. It cannot help being instructive to Freethinkers who have not had a classical education, and it will be a veritable eye-opener to the average Christian. Our last word is—Push it round; that is to say, place it in as many hands as possible; for it will do good wherever it goes.

Byron prophesied that Shelley's day would come. "When they find Shelley out," he said to a friend, "where shall we be?" Byron is still a great force in modern literature, but he is not the unrivalled poet that he was eighty years ago. Shelley—the wicked, outcast Atheist—has come into his own since then. Nobody bought his books when he was living. Now fabulous prices are paid for first editions, and a scrap of Shelley's handwriting is of great value. At Sotheby's rooms last week a crowd of book lovers met to compete for the possession of three notebooks that Shelley's widow gave to Sir Percy Shelley, who gave them to the late Dr. Garnett. They contain autograph matter by the poet, and various persons meant to have them if they could. Mr. Quaritch went on bidding for them a long while against Messrs. B. F. Stevens and Brown, to whom they were eventually knocked down at the stupendous price of £3,000. It is understood that they are going to America—which is to be deplored; for all the relics of a great English poet should be in England.

The runaway slave came to my house and stopt outside,  
I heard his motions crackling the twigs of the woodpile,  
Through the swung half-door of the kitchen I saw him limpy  
and weak,  
And went where he sat on a log and led him in and assured  
him,  
And brought water and filled a tub for his sweated body and  
bruised feet,  
And gave him a room that entered from my own, and gave  
him some coarse clean clothes,  
And remember perfectly well his revolving eyes and his  
awkwardness,  
And remember putting plasters on the galls of his neck and  
ankles;  
He staid with me a week before he was recuperated and  
passed north,  
I had him sit next me at the table, my fire-lock leaned in the  
corner.  
—Walt Whitman.

We are not endeavoring to chain the future, but to free the present. We are not forging fetters for our children, but we are breaking those our fathers made for us. We are the advocates of inquiry, of investigation, and thought. This of itself is an admission that we are not perfectly satisfied with all our conclusions—philosophy has not the egotism of faith. While superstition builds walls and creates obstructions, science opens all the highways of thought.—Ingersoll.

## The Church and Gambling.

THERE is probably no subject handled by the various religious teachers which exhibits the superficiality of their knowledge and their incompetence to comprehend a problem in all its aspects, more than the subject of gambling. They constantly refer to it as "a gigantic evil," and as "a menace to our social and national life"; and frequently they make spasmodic efforts to combat this "miserable vice." But when they come to attempt a definition of what gambling is, the task is beyond them; and, although religious and evangelical exigencies compel them to show fight, yet the facts warrant us in saying that—they know not what they fight.

In *The Citizen of To-Morrow*, to which we have referred on two previous occasions, there is an article by the Rev. J. Ash Parsons, of the Leysian Mission, London, entitled "Gambling: a Social Cancer." The article has many good points, especially the descriptive incidents connected with the racing world. But some of the statements of Mr. Parsons, following his sub-title of "a social cancer," are an interesting commentary on the contention that "Christianity is one of the greatest forces of our modern life." One would at least expect, from all that is claimed by the Christian apologists, that the Christian world would be alive to the dangers of such a serious evil as "a social cancer." But, says Mr. Parsons, "the popular view widely held, even among Christian people, and for which influential authority can be quoted, is, that there is no harm in gambling *per se*: it is only excessive gambling that is wrong." "In every phase of life," he says, "even religious, this evil is present." It follows, of course, from these statements, either that the practice of gambling does not answer to the description of a *social cancer*, or that the Christian public is morally dense and socially blind. The latter view would appear to be justified by the writer's avowal that "the Church must have a conscience in the matter." The Church conscience, it appears, has yet to be created; and, if history be a reliable guide, its formation will largely depend, like its conscience in the matter of slavery and temperance reform, upon outside influence. We pointed out, in a previous article, that the Christian conscience is always created by the growing moral consciousness of an age, and we are glad to find Mr. Parsons so far in agreement with us when he recognises that the Christian conscience is dependent upon the creation of a healthy public opinion. But, if this is so, what becomes of the inherent moral vitality of Christianity, and the claim that it alone will enable us to realise our social ideals? We commend this point to our friend's serious consideration.

We come now to the question of *definition*. "The Church," he says, "must recognise the immorality of the act of gambling." But what is an act of gambling? And wherein does the immorality of the act consist? This is the question calling for a satisfactory solution; but one looks in vain in Mr. Parsons' article for any enlightenment. The first necessity of clear thought is exact definition; and it is just here where the weakness of the article lies—a defect which makes his labor so much wasted effort. Indeed, the same weakness is characteristic of every other religious treatise on the subject we have seen. The writer gives two quotations which are probably intended to serve as definitions. Herbert Spencer, he says, defines gambling as "an act by which pleasure is obtained at the cost of pain to another." But if this is Herbert Spencer's definition, it is just as inadequate as those of his religious brethren. The exquisite pleasure, for instance, which the school-boy experiences when he sees an unsuspecting school-fellow sit down upon a seat upon which he has surreptitiously placed a bent pin, point upwards, is "a pleasure obtained at the cost of pain to another," but it is certainly not *gambling*. The difficulty of definition seems to be insurmountable.

Some time ago, in the *Methodist Times*, the Rev. J. E. Rattenbury defined gambling as "taking another person's gold without working for it"; and, when we wrote pointing out that this definition would include all landowners, landlords, money-lenders, and whoever lived on *interest*, Mr. Rattenbury replied that such an application of his definition was certainly outside his intention. It might reasonably be expected that the subtle intellect of an "Archdeacon" would be able to point out the *differentia* between an act of gambling and one of respectable speculation, and distinguish the common or garden gambler from the commercial speculator. But the mental powers of even such a learned dignitary are unequal to the task. Speaking at Newcastle, November 16, Archdeacon Henderson said that, while "gambling was a serious and deadly evil," yet "it was by no means easy to define what was gambling and what was legitimate speculation, for he supposed there must be legitimate speculation in all our businesses." He *supposed*! Now, the cause of all this mental confusion is in seeking to condemn one form of an act which has come to have a slight social stigma attached to it, and condoning other forms of the same act which are considered "respectable." And until our friends come to view these questions in the light of some definite ethical and economic principles, they will continue to flounder about upon a sea of uncertainty, and never arrive at the desired haven of intellectual consistency.

Mr. Parsons speaks of the "economic" aspect of gambling, and says that this aspect is one of "urgent importance." But from an economic standpoint, the difference between an act of gambling and an act of legitimate (?) speculation, is the difference between tweedledum and tweedledee. The *evil* of gambling, if we may presume to act as economic tutor to the rev. gent, is in seeking to obtain wealth without rendering a just equivalent in services to the community who produce that wealth. And looked at from this standpoint, between the ordinary gambler, the legitimate speculator, the highwayman, and the archbishop with £15,000 a year, there is no perceptible difference. They are, one and all, social robbers. The archbishop who mulcts the community to the tune of £15,000 annually (at fifteen *hundred* the community would still be fleeced to a considerable extent) is as great a sinner, morally and economically, as the common "bookie" who thrives on the foolishness of his fellow-men. There is something strangely inconsistent about this tirade against the small gambler, when the wealth of the large gambler, like the late Mr. George Herring, is cheerfully accepted by General Booth, and used for the religious purpose of saving souls!

The same confusion is apparent when these teachers of the people seek to discover the causes of this appalling vice. Archdeacon Henderson assigns "covetousness" as the cause of gambling. Mr. Parsons finds it, primarily, in "the weak moral character of the people," and further, in "the general conditions of modern life." It is probable that all these circumstances contribute to the prevalence of the practice. But what we wish to emphasise is this: that such covetousness is no more reprehensible in the bookmaker than it is in any other class which seeks to live at the expense of their fellows. The weakness of moral character is just as conspicuous in many of the social and commercial transactions of modern life as it is in that of the betting fraternity in the racing world. And it is certainly not morally just, although it may be theologically justifiable, to make the bookmaker the scapegoat of the sins of the legitimate (?) speculator, and other respectable grabbers of "something for nothing."

Mr. Parsons opines that "the pleasure of betting lies in the intensity of the emotions aroused." But this is a strange objection coming from the minister of a religion, the power and effectiveness of which, lie in the emotional excitement it is able to arouse. The "Evan Roberts's" are always hailed with joy, and the power of the Holy Ghost is always regarded

as commensurate with the intensity of the fervor of a religious gathering. So that, for our friends to object to gambling on the ground of emotional excitement, is really analogous to the case of the kettle calling the pan black. Quoting a famous statistician, Mr. Parsons says that five millions annually passes into the pockets of the bookmakers. That is the price that is paid for the gambling variety of emotional excitement. But when it is remembered that religion costs the country some *twenty millions* a year, it will be seen that the religious variety is the much more expensive of the two.

The remedy proposed by Mr. Parsons is, of course, the remedy that was to be expected—religion. As Mr. Punch said of the Chicago horrors described in *The Jungle*, so say our friends of every human vice: "There is just one remedy—only one." The transforming power of the Living Christ, we are told, can alone redeem the victim of this deadly vice! For its cause—the weakness of character—"there is but one sovereign remedy." One can only regard such an audacious claim as being on a level with the advertisements of the quack cure-alls for physical ailments. The futility of the remedy is apparent from the writer's own admission that the religious world is permeated by the gambling spirit. While many men of the very straightest moral characters—as Mr. Parsons well knows—have never partaken of this sovereign remedy, and whose moral integrity is sustained without its aid. We accept Mr. Parsons' testimony that the Christianity of to-day has not produced a goodly crop of strong moral characters; and if its adherents can live among "social cancers" without perceiving their existence or recognising their danger, the obliquity of their moral vision is a decisive argument against the utility of their religion. And we may supplement that testimony by the witness of history that religion has never laid stress upon the virtue of ideal moral rectitude; it has never sought to cultivate those qualities of intellectual independence and social obligation which are the foundation of moral strength. Religion has ever been a poor forcing-ground for the growth of moral virtues, and the decay of its influence has been marked by a distinct advance in our ethical and social ideals; and, with its approaching senility, we may hope to see those ideals moving on towards the goal of realisation.

JOSEPH BRYCE.

#### CURSE OF INSINCERITY.

This is the sad condition of the insincere man. He is doomed all his days to deal with insincerities; to live, move, and have his being in traditions and conventionalities. If the traditions have grown old, the conventionalities will be mostly false; true in no sense can they be for him; never shall he behold the truth of any matter; formulas, theologic, economic and other, certain superficial readings of truth, required in the market-place, these he will take with him, these he will apply dextrously, and with these he will have to satisfy himself. Sincerity shall not exist for him; he shall think that he has found it, while it is yet far away. The deep, awful and indeed divine quality of truth that lies in every object, and in virtue of which the object exists,—from his poor eyes this is for ever hidden. Not with austere divine realities which belong to the Universe and to Eternity, but with paltry ambiguous phantasms, comfortable and uncomfortable, which belong to his own parish, and to the current week, or generation shall he pass his days.—*Carlyle*, "Latter-Day Pamphlets."

And now, beloved Stowey! I behold  
Thy church-tower, and, methinks, the four huge elms  
Clustering, which mark the mansion of my friend;  
And close behind them, hidden from my view,  
Is my own lowly cottage, where my babe  
And my babe's mother dwell in peace! With light  
And quickened footsteps thitherward I tend,  
Remembering thee, O green and silent dell!  
And grateful, that by nature's quietness  
And solitary musings, all my heart  
Is softened, and made worthy to indulge  
Love, and the thoughts that yearn for human kind.

—Coleridge.

## Correspondence.

### WHAT IS ATHEISM?

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Theism means a "belief in God," or Gods, when the term is etymologically qualified—*e.g.*, Polytheism, or what Max Müller calls Henotheism. Atheism designates the antithesis by the inclusion of the prefix "A" (Gk., *A-theos*; derived from Zeus), strictly meaning "without a belief in God." You pointed out in your footnote observation to Mr. Leach's Letter in November 4 issue that the etymology of the word manifests its significance as negative, "and that Atheists are 'without God' simply because they have no knowledge of one. And how can they deny that of which they have no knowledge?"

By giving Atheism its appropriate definition, the stigma of a dogmatic denial of the God idea is abrogated. In common parlance the word "Atheism" symbolises "a positive denial of the existence of God"; and, egregiously enough, even scientists, philosophers, and metaphysicians have been guilty of giving the same interpretation. This stultification of the term by eristical sophists prompts me to suggest the qualification of the word; for instance, "Atheistic Nescience." This philosophy, in virtue of this adoption, would then assume a definite form, whereas to-day its mutilation is ubiquitous.

Now, Sir, my object in writing this letter is to know whether such a being as an Atheist exists? To be "without God," in my humble opinion, is more ludicrous than "to deny one." This last attitude of thought at least gives a positive moral satisfaction, whereas the other is a sort of half-way house, without sense or predicate. Of course, so-called Atheist will hesitate in repudiating the existence of an anthropomorphic, polyphyetically-evolved God. They will emphatically deny the Anthropistic Creationist of the Pentateuch. Consequently, may I at this juncture ask, What God is it that they are without? Is it the Absolute Will or Unconscious Absolute of Schopenhauer and Von Hartmann? or is it the Absolute and Unknowable Power behind phenomena which Spencer, in his *Synthetic Philosophy* says, "we are compelled to recognise as without limit in space and without beginning or end in time"? Or, further, is it the Only (Substance) Reality, which man and the non-ego are modifications of, as Spinoza teaches, whom Haeckel eulogises as the enunciator of the Monistic "doctrine" which he himself endeavors to build on an empirical basis?

Strauss personified the Universe as his God; Comte did likewise with Humanity. Kant, Plato, Aristotle, Hegel, Descartes, and nearly all the greatest thinkers this planet ever produced were Theists. Locke believed in God; Hume had faith in the Deity. And we must remember, with Campbell Fraser, that "boasted inductive verification in Natural Science is finally an act of *faith*, not of *reasoning*"; for we cannot prove by abstract argument that what has happened even a million times *must* therefore happen again. To say that I am "without God" because I have no knowledge of one is, to my view, a very grotesque criterion of thought. It is quite as logical to say that I am without myself, as, with Herbert Spencer, that knowledge is relative by hypothesis; accordingly the subject cannot become an object to itself. For example: Suppose I am thinking about myself. Which is the real "I"—the one that is being thought of or the one that is thinking? There is a law of thought, says Spencer, which prevents us from knowing ourselves. How does the Atheistic supposition fare in the light of this? Knowledge of God is always subjective, if we think with Spinoza, and the only real knowledge at that, because other knowledge—supposed like—is simply "sensual imagination." God can never enter into relations. Virtually it would mean annihilation, and would be no God whatsoever. The three postulates—myself, the outer world, and Pan constitute everything. Even Pan-Materialism and Pan-Egoism inevitably culminate in Pantheism.

The cosmological perspective (sanctioned by the physical and chemical laws of the Conservation of Energy and the "Persistence of Matter") that the universe is infinite, illimitable, and unbounded, man being merely a mote in the sunbeam, a transitory, ephemeral speck of protoplasm, phylogenetically evolved, granted; but the universe was not an universe until he interpreted it so. It is he that gave matter its properties; it is he that says this has extension, color, form, etc. The universe would be analogous to a dark room with beautiful pictures and furniture which are rendered intelligible by the light unless man existed to appreciate its myriad glories. Natural laws are in the mind of man, not otherwise; and reflection will prove the profound saying of Dr. Watts:—

"Were I as tall to reach the Pole  
Or grasp the ocean in my span,  
I must be measured by my soul,  
The mind's the standard of the man."

My mind came from something that had it to give; it could not come otherwise. And Tyndall's eloquent musings on the Matterhorn, when he said, "Had we not better recast our definition of matter and force?" because his reason would not stop where our telescopes and microscopes cease to be of any use. We are bound to recognise that the fiery primeval nebulae contained the homogeneous germ of everything that exists now. And, as the author of the Belfast Address soliloquised on that white summit, "did that nebulous haze, which philosophers rightly say is the source of all material things, contain potentially the sadness with which I regarded the Matterhorn?" and he advises us to recast our definition of matter and force, and include life. Ah, yes! Life, by which we construe everything.

Whether we give a mechanical or teleological interpretation to the universe, we must of necessity recognise that our limited consciousness and percipient ego implies the existence of a consciousness that is unlimited. Thought can only grasp what is the outcome of thought, or can we go along with Dr. Momerie and say that "reason can only comprehend what is reasonable"? You can only say that the conduct of a fool is inexplicable, and admit yourself baffled—otherwise, with rational things.

If you will let me utilise the medium of your paper, it would be a source of pleasure for me to elaborate this thesis.

Further, Mr. Editor, if my memory serves me right, you remarked somewhere that there is no real difference between Atheism and Agnosticism, only that the latter is a more polite symbol. Very good! Let us see.

The word "Agnostic" was excogitated by Professor Huxley, which, according to him, "simply means that a man shall not say he knows or believes what he has no scientific grounds for professing to know or believe." Dr. Momerie, with his characteristic adroitness, regards this definition as "an honest one," and says that "in this sense we should all be Agnostics." Huxley tells us "that he began to ask himself whether he was an Atheist, Theist, or Pantheist"; and, after reflecting, he tells us that he had no part with any of these denominations except the last one; and, with Hume and Kant to back him up, he invented the word "Agnostic," as suggestively antithetic to the *Gnostic* of Church history. Huxley thought that the problem of existence was insoluble, and on his tomb are engraved the words: "God giveth his beloved sleep; and if an endless sleep He wills—'tis best." It can be seen here that Huxley was not "without God." Now, Sir, Agnosticism means Universal Nescience; an entirely different thing is signified by Atheism. Agnosticism deals, not only with God, but with the soul, will, and various other aspects of phenomena; Atheism restricts its dealing to *God* alone, as the very term implies—a very different thing to Agnosticism. How you find a connection between the two I am unable to determine. A friend of mine who is a militant Atheist—he thinks he is one—tells me that the meaning of both terms are synonymous. I trust I have proved the untenability of this contention by making excerpts from the man who coined the last term, and who had more authority to speak as to its meaning than any other individual.

A word of explanation from you would oblige yours truly, who is not an Atheist, but A Theist.

HUW MENAI.

[We cannot undertake to answer everybody who chooses to write to us in this way. We have dealt with the subject generally in our pamphlet, *What Is Agnosticism?*—to which we refer our correspondent. All we wish to add is that we don't think we have ever given anyone reason to believe us so simple as to take the inscription on Huxley's tomb as part of his published writings. Those who placed that inscription there were those who gave him a burial that was an outrage on his convictions.—EDITOR.]

### Christmas Cruelties.

The Humanitarian League earnestly appeals to all humane persons at this Christmas season to do their utmost toward lessening the many sufferings needlessly inflicted on the lower animals under the plea of ministering to human fellowship and enjoyment.

Some of the commonest barbarisms of this great annual British religious festival are too familiar to us all to need more than a bare mention.

First among these is the Cattle Show, held conveniently at Christmas-time to fall in with the abnormal demand for meat—the Cattle Show, where royalty and the aristocracy unite in contesting with the farmer the glory of producing the pig or ox which can carry the greatest amount of unwholesome fat. Next, the overladen shops of the butcher and poulterer, piled up with the mangled bodies of slaughtered creatures, and festooned overhead with strings of singing-birds; the prize ox driven through the streets, decorated for sacrifice

with ribbons and colored flowers, or exhibited at the local butcher's for the delectation of his lady customers, who go to gaze and select the particular part they would like to bespeak for their own tables.

The story of the vaunted roast beef so much in evidence at this season, is indeed barrowing. If any evidence is required of the carelessness and cruelty of the manner in which our slaughter-houses are conducted, it can be found in the report of the Admiralty Committee published last year. From this we learn that the slaughtermen are "made up of all kinds of people," that they have no proper training, that they are often "full of beer" when at their work, that the appliances are inefficient, and there is no proper supervision. It reveals, in short, a perfectly disgraceful condition of things. In the hurry of the specially "beefy" season all the horrors are naturally accentuated.

The process of flaying alive, and even of dismembering animals before the breath has left their bodies, is far from uncommon in private slaughter-houses. A horrible case of cruelty to a bullock was investigated by the magistrates at Newcastle-on-Tyne, an inspector of the R.S.P.C.A. having caught a slaughterman in the act of skinning the animal before it was dead. The man did not deny this charge, but merely said that it was done to save time, and jauntily offered to pay any fine imposed.

If you make inquiries you will find that a large proportion of the flesh, palmed off on the poor as "English killed" meat, is foreign. As a proof of this, one of the principal butchers in a cattle port lately confessed that not ten English beasts had been killed there in one week to supply its flesh-eating population of 250,000. Yet the beasts that supply the shops are mostly killed on English soil, after the protracted miseries of a sea passage more or less long and torturing.

It is not till the transit of live cattle by sea is altogether stopped that horrors will cease. If a poor bullock gets seasick he frequently dies; if he is even weaker than his unhappy comrades, and lies down after two days and nights of balancing on sloppy boards and tossing about, he is trampled under the others' hoofs, and squeezed by their huge bodies or suffocated by the pressure and foulness. The law forbids that cattle should be carried otherwise than in pens, of a fixed size and strong make, with proper footholds to avert slipping, if possible; while not more than four animals are allowed for each pen, or five if they are small. But what are such precautions to meet the pitching of a vessel in a storm at sea?—and they even are frequently disregarded. Through the livelong night, in one part of the world or another, scenes such as these described are enacted for the supposed profit of mankind.

The one fact that stands out clearly at this season is the strange incongruity of the whole proceeding. Were our object to celebrate the birth of the Prince of Darkness, we know no way more appropriate than by that great wail of anguish beginning weeks beforehand on the plains of America and other far-distant lands, gathering in its progress fresh increments from all sides, and converging to these cities of England, which we call centres of civilisation.

Those who are willing to read and distribute literature on the subject are requested to write to the Secretary of the Humanitarian League, 53 Chancery-lane, London, for free copies of a pamphlet on "Christmas Cruelties."

[CONTRIBUTED].

### BIBLICAL INSTRUCTION.

Mrs. Tompkins went to visit her mother for a few days, leaving hubby to get his own meals. Entering the kitchen, he found she had left a little note.

"2 Kings xxi. 13."

This is what he read:

"I will wipe Jerusalem as a man wipeth a dish, wiping it and turning it upside down." Tompkins took the hint.

### THE LIMITATIONS OF THE NOAHS.

Dick (looking at picture-book)—"I wonder what the Noahs did with themselves all day long in the ark?"

Mabel—"Fished, I should think."

Bobbie—"They didn't fish for long."

Dick and Mabel—"Why not?"

Bobbie—"Well, you see, there were only two worms!"

### A POINT OF VIEW.

"There is only one ordained missionary in the world for 900,000 heathen, your excellency," said the missionary.

"Well, I got mine," said the cannibal chief, rubbing his lips.—*Yonkers Statesman.*

**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.**

QUEEN'S (MINOR) HALL (Langham-place, W.): 7.30, G. W. Foote, "Christmas Questions for Candid Christians."

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S. (North Camberwell Hall, New Church-road): 7.30, Conversazione for Members and Friends.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Liberal Hall, Broadway, Forest Gate): 7.30, Valedictory Social Evening.

**COUNTRY.**

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Prince of Wales Assembly Rooms Broad-street): 7, H. Lennard, "Our Loving Heavenly Father."

EDINBURGH BRANCH N. S. S. (Masonic Hall, 11 Melbourne-road): 6.30, T. Pryde, "Atheism and Morality."

FAILSWORTH SECULAR SUNDAY SCHOOL (Pole-lane): 6.30, Ernest Evans, "What Science has Done for Civilisation."

GLASGOW BRANCH N. S. S. (Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): H. P. Ward, 12 noon, "Can a Socialist be a Christian?" 6.30, "Eminent Infidels." With lantern illustrations.

GLASGOW RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION (319 Sauchiehall-street): Wednesday, Dec. 19, at 8, Mrs. B. Ward, "Tolstoy and E. Carpenter on Art."

HETTON-LE-HOLE BRANCH N. S. S. (Miners' Hall): Monday, Dec. 17, at 7, Jos. Symes, "How Science Exposes the Bible."

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

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Secular Hall, Rusholme-road): 6.30, W. A. Rogerson, "Our Debt to Freethought."

NEWCASTLE BRANCH N. S. S. (Palace Theatre, Haymarket): 7, Joseph Symes, "My Thirty Years of Storm and Struggle for Freethought: With Tyneside and Australian Reminiscences."

NEWCASTLE RATIONALIST DEBATING SOCIETY (Lockhart's Cathedral Café): Thursday, Dec. 20, at 8, J. N. Bell, "Some Notes on Burns."

PLYMOUTH RATIONALIST SOCIETY (Foresters' Hall, Octagon): 7, G. F. H. McCluskey, "Is Life Worth Living?"

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