

THE Freethinker

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PRICE TWOPENCE

Thought consoles for all, and remedies all. If sometimes it causes you evil, ask of it the remedy for the evil it has caused you, and it will give it you.—CHAMFORT.

Old Lamps.

BISHOP THORNTON, D.D., vicar of Blackburn, addressed the Men's Bible Class in his church on Sunday afternoon, January 13, and a long report of what he said appeared in the following Saturday's local *Gazette*. The announced title of his address was "Aladdin: or New Lamps for the Old One," and the preacher's object was to warn his congregation against new-fangled ideas. They should stand in the old paths, cling to the old Gospel, love the old Book, and, of course, support the old Church. The old lamp was not to be thrown away; it might want rubbing up a bit now and then—that was all; never let them think of taking a new one in its place. Three cheers for the good old lamp!

Suppose we look at this warning a little more closely. Here is a large and highly decorated old lamp. With one set of fittings you can burn Old Testament vegetable oil in it; with another set of fittings you can burn New Testament mineral oil in it. It had an honored place in the house of your ancestors; and if it was good enough for them it is good enough for you. Can't you see well enough by the light of colza or paraffin? Must you abandon the illumination of your forefathers, and go in for lead pipes and gas burners? Will you rashly indulge in the still newer electric lights? Perish the thought! Stick to the old oil lamp! By the help of God, stick to it; and it will befriend you when gas and electricity have lost their power to charm.

Put in that way, Bishop Thornton's appeal loses all its plausibility, and seems utterly devoid of common sense.

We will follow the Bishop through his remarkable discourse. He started with some rather questionable observations on the *Arabian Nights*. But one thing he said was unquestionable. That fascinating book "comes from the East; where our Bible came from." Now one of the characteristics of the East is the seclusion of women, and one result of this is that all literature is written by men for men. It is apt, therefore, to be rather smoke-roomy in some respects. Bishop Thornton remarks that parts of some stories in the *Arabian Nights* "are so gross that they have had to be bowdlerised, as it is called; that is, omissions or alterations made in them, in the translation, for respectable European readers." From which it is to be inferred that the readers of Captain Burton's or John Payne's translation are not "respectable"—and that Bishop Thornton is one of them—for how else could he give that spicy information to his Men's Bible Class?

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We will not quarrel with the word "gross" in the Bishop's description. We do not think it is quite the right word, but we will let it pass. What we want to point out is this. Bishop Thornton sees the grossness of the *Arabian Nights*; but he does not see the deadlier grossness of the Bible. The great Arabic book is not dirty; it is simply unreticent. The great Hebrew book is positively filthy. It goes out of the way to refer to bodily organs and bodily functions that are covered with clothes or silence in civilised countries. It is gratuitously offensive. And some of its bestial stories are absolutely without parallel in the bright and sparkling *commedia* of the *Thousand and One Tales*. There are things in the *Arabian Nights* to make a woman blush; there are things in the Bible to make her vomit. Some passages are of such a character that, if they were not bowdlerised in the translation, they would compel every decent father to keep the holy book under lock and key, to prevent its falling into the hands of his children. And even now it is a decidedly improper book to place unreservedly in the hands of boys and girls. If the Bishop denies this, we are ready to give him chapter and verse.

Referring to the English Bible as a lamp, the Bishop said that we had "done right in rubbing up its glass sides." That is how he speaks of a process which he admits was "revising a translation that was full of inaccuracies." But this is not cleaning the lamp; it is altering the light. Moreover, the Bishop might explain why the God who inspired the Bible allowed all the English-speaking people in the world, for nearly three hundred years, to have a translation of it which was "full of inaccuracies." If there had to be inaccuracies couldn't it be less than "full" of them? And will the Bishop kindly say whether there are not as many inaccuracies in the Hebrew and Greek originals? Half a loaf is better than no bread, but half the truth is sometimes a shocking falsehood.

Now that the Revised Version is before the public, although the Authorised Version is still used in nearly all the churches and chapels, Bishop Thornton says that "the old lamp shines forth with a new brightness and beauty." "We are not going to exchange it," he hopes, "for a new one." For it is still *inspired*. Oh, yes; it will be *that*, if it is revised a thousand times. They will never get the *inspiration* out of it. For *what is inspiration*? "We may differ about defining the term," the Bishop says, but it is *there*; not *in* the words, perhaps, but *under* them, or *over* them, or *somewhere*. Yes, that is the best locality. *Somewhere!* You will never knock inspiration out of *that*.

But when the Bishop describes inspiration as "an unearthly quality which no other book shares with the Bible," he must be aware that he is stating what is opposed by leading divines of his own Church, such as Bishop Gore, Dean Robinson, Professor

Sunday, and Canon Driver. One right reverend father-in-God says that the Bible is the only inspired book; another right reverend father-in-God says that other books are inspired in their various degrees. One says that the Bible differs in kind from other books, another says that it only differs from them in degree. Now we want to know which is right—for the difference between them is immense—and we suggest that the men of God should settle this question amongst themselves before they presume to dogmatise upon it to their fellow citizens.

Bishop Thornton warns people that if they give up revelation they will soon have no religion—which we believe is true. Then he draws what he evidently regards as a frightful picture of the consequences. Everything will be lost, from the Fall of Man to Heaven and Hell; for the beginning and the end of Christianity is this, that Man fell and God fell upon him. The Christian doctrine of marriage, even, will be regarded as a bondage that must be broken down. So says Bishop Thornton, but it is arrant nonsense. What body of unbelievers attacks the institution of marriage in itself? And what is the *Christian* doctrine of marriage? The Catholic Church teaches one thing, the Protestant Churches teach another. What is this Christian doctrine, and where are we to find it? Will the Bishop kindly explain?

Bishop Thornton ended by doing himself an honor—if he doesn't mind our saying so. He quoted from what he called "Foote's 'Gospel of Secularism,'" and this is what he read:—

"Whenever did prayer bring men aid? The miserable have cried for comfort, sufferers for some mitigation of their pain, captives for deliverance, the oppressed for freedom, and those who have fought the great fight of good against ill for some ray of hope to lighten despair: but what answer has ever been vouchsafed?"

This is a serious question, and we venture to say it is couched in dignified language. We add that it deserves an answer. Does the Bishop give it one? Not a bit. "Our reply," he says, "shall be couched in the courteous contempt with which Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego dealt with Nebuchadnezzar's question: 'We are not careful to answer thee in this matter.'"

Could anything be meaner? Bishop Thornton reads out our question; he cannot say it is illegitimate; he cannot say it is unmannerly; he simply says, I will not answer you. Then why did he bring the question before his congregation? Some of them may conclude that he did not answer because he could not. And how will that help the Christian cause?

"Courteous contempt." That is all Bishop Thornton has to give an honest enquirer. Such is Christian charity after nineteen hundred years of practice!

We beg to tell the Bishop that "courteous contempt" is an impossibility. It is a contradiction in terms. We do not feel contempt for the Bishop. We pity him. He is a Christian. He has been brought up on the Bible.

We would not exchange our poverty for Bishop Thornton's wealth. We would not pay the price. We have done something towards destroying his useless and dangerous profession. And he will not undo what we have done by begging people to "stand firm for the old Gospel." People will not stand firm for what they do not believe, and they are ceasing to believe Christianity. It is useless to *beg* them to believe it; you must prove it is *true*.

G. W. FOOTE.

The New Theology.

DURING the past fortnight, the papers have been busy with the Rev. R. J. Campbell and his "New Theology." Providence doubtless took care to muzzle Mr. Campbell until the newspaper slack season, and thus secure the best chance of publicity, for even Omnipotence is not, apparently, independent of the press. Several papers are running a correspondence on the subject, and may be trusted to continue doing so until something more exciting turns up. It is true, as one correspondent pointed out, Mr. Campbell's gospel is not new, and hardly deserves to be called theology—another suggested "theoliverlogy" as a better term—but then it takes very little indeed to acquire the character of a revolutionist among Christians. In the land of the blind the one-eyed man is king, and where stagnation is the rule it requires little to be labelled a progressive. Mr. Campbell is very advanced—for a clergyman; and while he deserves all credit for not being as fossilised as other members of his profession, some credit is due to them—from him—for their preparing the conditions of clerical greatness.

Mr. Campbell does not believe in the fall of man as a historical truth. Really, one would be surprised if he did, or that any man with even a moderate education should treat this ridiculous legend as a fact. He also cuts himself adrift from the orthodox meanings of sin, of the Christian doctrine of the Atonement, and finally believes that Jesus had a human father as well as a human mother. And, if I may add one other point, he believes that Holiness, Righteousness, Justice, and Love mean the same thing in both God and man. Now everyone outside the ranks of orthodox Christianity will be pleased to note these admissions of Mr. Campbell's, and to give him all credit for shaking himself so far free from his professional associations. But see the light it throws upon the mental condition of a class of men who set themselves up as the teachers of the nation. It is now going on for a century and a half since actual proofs began to accumulate concerning the antiquity of the human race and the nature of its earliest state. The moral objections are, of course, much older, and have only been reinforced by scientific discoveries. The moral objection to the doctrine of the Atonement is centuries old, while more recent research has shown it to be a survival of an almost world-wide system of human sacrifices—sacrifices performed for more than one reason. The doctrine of the only half-human parentage of Jesus has been traced to a similar origin, besides being quite repugnant to common sense. In the face of these facts, one may well ask what are we to think of men who not only accept these exploded ideas as almost unquestionable truths, and treat as a reckless revolutionist the man who has enough ordinary intelligence to doubt them.

Mr. Campbell's own mental limitation is indicated by his tacit assumption that he is providing a firm and lasting ground on which to establish a new form of faith. Well, let us suppose that Mr. Campbell succeeds in getting all his brother clergymen to agree with him concerning his new program. This in itself is a wild supposition; but we will assume it. The clergy will then have saved Christianity by throwing everything distinctively Christian overboard. They will continue to call themselves Christian—but without any justification for doing so—and will so far preserve a sort of intellectual continuity. All this accomplished, does anyone imagine that the matter will stop there? If he does, or if Mr. Campbell does, then both have but a very imperfect conception of the real nature of the conflict. For Christianity is in truth only an incident in the warfare. Of course, here in this country, where Christianity is by far the most dominant form of religious faith, the anti-religious fight necessarily takes very largely the form of an attack on Christianity. But the fight is about much more than this. Christianity is, after all, only one of the many forms religion takes, and the real

fight is concerned with the fundamentals of religion, not its accidental forms. Whether one form of religion is more admirable than another may be an important question for this or that sect, but to outsiders the matter is of small moment. They see that there is a far deeper question to be settled than any touched upon by Mr. Campbell, whose acceptance by Christians as a profound and daring thinker is only noticed as an amusing incident in a somewhat saddening position.

The great battle has to be fought about the question concerning the belief in a God and the belief in a soul and a future life. In one sense, this battle has been fought and won. There is no need for such as fully appreciate the results of anthropology to discuss the question of whether there is a God or no. They know the whole history of the God-idea, the conditions that gave it birth, and which favored its persistence. They know it as an inevitable product of the mind in its savage infantile state, and that had it been possible for man then to have known as much of nature as he now does, the idea of God—of some supernatural being creating and controlling nature—would never have existed. And just as whether this or that form of Christianity prevails is to them a matter of comparatively small interest, so the elaborate arguments for the existence of a God fall upon error-proof ears. They know that these arguments have nothing whatever to do with the existence of this belief. The belief is here as a heritage, not as a conviction. It is as much a survival from the times when savage man read his own feelings into the nature he was too ignorant to understand, as our rudimentary tail is a physical link between ourselves and the lower animal world. For them the facts have been stated, the arguments have been heard, judgment has been delivered, and the case is closed. For them the battle has been won, and in future their only fight is to awaken the same appreciation of the facts in other people.

The history of the idea of God is, with a change of words only, true of the belief in a soul and a future life. There is no more room for doubt, to the properly informed mind in the one case, than in the other. There is only the added difficulty that in the case of a future life pure emotion has been made to enter more into the religious apology, and so makes it harder to get people to face the facts in an unprejudiced spirit. But that the belief in a soul, or double, began in man's misunderstandings of his own subjective experiences—experiences which we now know to be properly capable of an entirely different explanation, does not admit of question. And as in the case of the belief in God, all the semi-metaphysical arguments used in defence of this belief are wide of the mark. They do not state the grounds of the belief, but only shape excuses for its retention. One need only think of what these arguments are to realise how utterly impossible it is that they should occur to uncivilised or uneducated people. How then could they possibly form the grounds of a belief held more generally and tenaciously by the uncivilised and the uneducated than by others?

What possible influence, then, can Mr. Campbell's campaign have upon the real fight between religion and its enemies? It cannot convert a single unbeliever. These are not interested in which conception of God is the better; they know that all of them are illegitimate. It is interesting to them to see men like Mr. Campbell striving to adapt Christianity to modern thought by a tardy recognition of some very old truths, and a fanciful exposition of Christian teachings, because it shows them how Freethought is spreading within as well as without the Churches. But the utmost that Mr. Campbell can hope to achieve, is to still for awhile some of the more restless minds among Christians, without having any real effect on the ultimate result. Or if any effect, it is likely to be a hastening one. People who discover that the Churches have been mistaken in so much may well ask whether they have not been mistaken in more. The mere incentive to examination and criticism will count for something. And

the result of Mr. Campbell's campaign may well be that he will awaken far more scepticism than he can remove.

In this matter the Roman Catholic Church is playing the only sensible game. It is not one that will command the admiration of lovers of liberty, but it is the safest under the circumstance. Some there are who are born sceptics, and as these can no longer be forcibly suppressed, it is far wiser for the Church to let them go their own way than by seeking to retain them, give scepticism a semi-official sanction. In this way the Roman Church preserves itself as the safe resort of the purely religious mind, and even though it loses some by this policy, is in reality the stronger by its loss. But to seek to preserve religion by giving doses of scepticism, is to act in the way arsenic eaters are said to act. They can accustom themselves to eating as much per day as would kill several ordinary people. But the dose has to be gradually increased, and they cannot stop. If they do, the last dose kills them. So it is conceivable that some of the Churches may drag on by feeding their congregations with doses of diluted unbelief. But the congregations will demand more, and the preacher must stop somewhere. And when he does cut short the supply, the penalty that every organism pays for living on an unsuitable diet will have to be met.

Even if Mr. Campbell meets with the utmost measure of success among Nonconformists, he will only be staving off the day of reckoning. Sooner or later the real implications of modern research will have to be faced, and ministers of religion will be compelled to honestly face the issue. They will be compelled to either challenge the truth of statements well known to all students, or admit their validity, and so sign their own death warrant. People cannot be put off for ever with "advanced" thought that is not advanced, and "new" theology that is really old Freethought watered down. One day people will realise that there is only one road by which to advance, and that as they have let Freethinkers get ahead of them they must perforce travel in their footsteps. All that Freethinkers have to regret in the case of Mr. Campbell is that, seeing so much he has not been able to see more. Perhaps, however, this will come later. At least one hopes so. At any rate, he has cast aside the swaddling clothes of infancy. It remains to be seen whether he has the courage to assume the *Toga Virilis* of the man. C. COHEN.

The Crises of Modern Science.—I.

SLOWLY yet surely is science going forward. Within the last decade Nature has been robbed of so many of her mysteries that to-day she retains but a feeble hold upon two. Spontaneous generation, though an accomplished fact, has baffled the efforts of more than Mr. Butler Burke and still awaits demonstration by experiment. The other mystery, Death, is now nearer a solution owing principally to the efforts of Dr. Wolfgang Weichardt, a German physician, and it is with this phase of science that we propose to deal with in the present article. After all, there is no reason why a body in which the machinery has become perfectly well balanced, and decay and repair being equal, should not continue so indefinitely, seeing that it is self-repairing, instead of wasting away after a certain number of years. This statement is more than an hypothesis; it is fact, and when we produce such a condition in life we shall have realised the quest of the alchemists.

Some years ago, Professor Metchnikoff, of the Pasteur Institute, published the amazing results of his investigations on the body cells, and expressed the opinion that it was by no means impossible to arrest the progress of the harmful germs which attack the body in old age by inoculating it with a suitable anti-toxin. Since then other scientists and experimenters have probed the matter in the direction thrown out by Metchnikoff's suggestions, and the latest contribution to our knowledge is the series of

experiments made by Dr. Wolfgang Weichardt. These experiments—over 800 in number—were carried out during the year 1905, and are reviewed by Dr. Carl Snyder in an article in the *Monthly Review*.

Before the importance of Dr. Weichardt's researches can be adequately realised in their application to the prolongation of human life, it is necessary to explain the cause of senile decay, and to do this we must understand what life is. Life is a condition of incessant change, dependent on the ceaseless operation of the forces of destruction and repair. During the first twenty-five years of human life, repair exceeds destruction. From the years twenty-five to fifty a state of dynamic equilibrium is preserved. Thence onward destruction exceeds repair, which gradually becomes more and more feeble. When at last it finds itself unable to continue its good work, death ensues, leaving a free field for the ravages of destruction, or in other words, decay. In the first and second stages of life, destruction is decay purely and simply. The skin-cells lose their vitality, die, and are replaced by others; the cells of the bones and tissues are exchanged for new ones, the dead matter being carried from the body by the respiratory and excretory systems. In the third period of life we find destruction assuming a totally different aspect. It is then that the voracity of certain cells, technically called macrophagi, manifests itself producing the phenomenon known as atrophy or senility. Some of these cells set to work upon the coloring matter of the hair and make it white; others devour the contractile tissue of the muscles, while yet others seize upon the mineral substances of the bones, and reduce them to the brittle condition which makes falls and other injuries so often fatal to the old. In fact, all over the body these dreadful cells are at their death-dealing task. In the light of this knowledge the question naturally arises: Can nothing be done to arrest the progress of these murderous cells? Professor Metchnikoff is of the opinion that there can. His theory is that the macrophagi are stirred into baneful activity by the presence of some bacterial poison, and that, therefore, if you can keep the poison in check you cripple the attack of the cells. Hence he suggests the use of counter-poisons, either in the shape of attenuated cultures of the very bacilli in question, or by direct antidotes. So far as disease is concerned, we have the following knowledge of the leucocytes, or colorless corpuscles, which Metchnikoff regards as the enemies of bacteria. When a wound has been caused to the hand from, let us suppose, contact with an unclean instrument, what happens? The poisonous germs, or micro-organisms, which have thereby been introduced into the wound, finding themselves in a favorable soil, proceed to flourish and multiply. They multiply in no uncertain manner. Those who are curious in the matter of birth-rates may be interested to know that the progeny of one single cell may, at the end of twenty-four hours, be sixteen millions. The cells are not only prolific, they produce, also, a subtle poison called a toxin. The invasion, therefore, of the body by a poison-producing host, capable of multiplying by millions in a day, is a matter of some concern.

Now how is this germ invasion met? There is a rush of blood to the wounded part, and the vessels around the damaged area enlarge to their utmost capacity, in order that as much blood as possible may be brought to the invaded quarter. The limb in consequence becomes red and swollen, and of necessity painful, so that it is said to be inflamed. The pain causes the member to be kept at rest, a state conducive to recovery. Blood is hurried to the part for precisely the same reason that an army is hurried to the frontier when a country is attacked. At the seat of the wound an invading force has landed; their weapon is poison, they need neither transport, auxiliaries, nor stores, for they live on the body itself and can add to their numbers without extraneous aid. The blood, on the other hand, contains certain cells, or corpuscles, poor, pale, flabby-looking objects, called leucocytes, which are, however, born microbe killers, and have a passion for fighting which no racial hatred

among men could even faintly imitate. These leucocytes do not wait for the invading germs to enter the blood-vessels, but make their way out of those channels to meet the invaders in the open. They also have a power of multiplication and, in the field, are joined by comrades of the same kin.

There now takes place a battle, the like of which no pen has ever attempted to describe. Millions are opposed to millions, and the fighting is to the death. The hosts of Armageddon would be a mere handful to the uncountable hordes which fill the battle-field about the confines of a wound. The leucocytes destroy the germs by eating them—and thus it is they are sometimes called "phagocytes." They, also, by sacrificing their living bodies to the poisons of the enemy, save the country they defend. The mortality of this combat is beyond the limits of reasonable commutation. The arena is piled up with the dead, until at last the living, the dead, the poisoning, and the poisoned, are thrown out in the form of what is known as "matter" or pus, and the trouble probably ends.

As to how a toxin, which in sufficient quantity is destructive to the cells of the body, stimulates rather than kills the cells when administered in attenuated form, the following particular instance may suffice to show. It is known that one attack of diphtheria appears to protect the individual against further outbreaks. The history of this affection is as follows: The bacterium gains access to the throat of a susceptible child, and settling on the tonsils, finds a favorable soil for growth. In the growth it develops a poison, or toxin, which finds its way into the blood. The moment the bacillus affects a lodgment the cells of the body rise up against it, and, for a time at least, make a successful defence. An active inflammation is induced, one evidence of the energy of which is shown by the fibrinous exudation which forms over the invaded surface. This much-dreaded membrane is the outcome, not of a vicious and purposeless action, but of a process which has for its sole intent the arrest of the destroying host. At the same time there is developed in the blood a substance of indefinite nature, which is an antidote to the poison filtering in to the disturbed area. This substance is called an anti-toxin. It is not existent at the time of the infection. It is provided on the spur of the moment and with such good result that many patients recover from diphtheria. The child, in any case, becomes very ill, and it is said that its distressing symptoms are due to the disease and are therefore ill-meaning. The symptoms—notably the fever—are due to the excessive activity of the body in its attempt to ward off the bacterial invasion; to the inflammation; to the very elaborate blood changes concerned in the production of an anti-toxin. That some degree of the ill-condition is due to the poison which is entering the system is undoubted, but when the phenomena of poisoning are paramount the child is dying. Without what are called the symptoms of diphtheria no case could recover. The child would succumb at once to the poison, as do patients from the plague, who receive so large a dose of the virus that the body cannot cope with it. In such a calamity the man dies in a few hours, simply poisoned, before any characteristic evidences of the infection have appeared.

(To be concluded.)

J. H.

Freethought Triumphant.

THE Daily Press has just discovered that theological heresy is in the air, and that the fact may be exploited in the interest of journalism. At the psychological moment, the *Daily Mail* found out that Mr. R. J. Campbell is startling the religious world by preaching a "new theology" at the City Temple. Had the *Daily Mail* been religiously asleep during the previous three years? Ever since he began his ministry in London, Mr. Campbell's theological position has not undergone any substantial change. Even before he

left Brighton he had published a volume, *A Theology for To-Day*, which contained, in essence, all that he has since been teaching at the City Temple. And yet the *Daily Mail* and several other journals convey the impression that Mr. Campbell's departure from orthodoxy has been sudden, and that much alarm has been caused thereby at the City Temple and elsewhere. As a matter of fact, there has been no consternation at the City Temple, for the congregation has been familiar with its minister's point of view from the beginning. Then for years Mr. Campbell conducted a Correspondence Column in the *British Weekly*, from which he had to withdraw on account, most probably, of the advanced views he expressed in it. Afterwards, he had a similar Column in the *Young Man*; but it seems that even the *Young Man* was obliged to close its door against him. These facts show that Mr. Campbell's heterodoxy is not a thing of yesterday, and that in its persistent advocacy he has been eminently courageous and fearless.

Of course, as is the lot of everyone who steps in advance of his contemporaries, Mr. Campbell has not escaped persecution. Dr. Campbell Morgan, the great champion of orthodoxy, has expressed his conviction that "those ministers who hold the views of the new theology" ought not to "remain in the Congregational ministry." That is a point in casuistry which it is not the purpose of this article to discuss; our point being that, whether they remain in the Congregational, or any other ministry or not, their Freethought brings them both notoriety and a certain amount of ostracism. As a Bibliolatrist, Dr. Campbell Morgan is amply justified in utterly condemning the City Temple oracle, the two being as far apart as the poles. To the former, the latter cannot even be a Christian. Dr. Campbell Morgan accepts the Bible as the inspired and infallible Word of God, while Mr. Campbell regards it as only a human document, full of mistakes and imperfections, and possessing no absolute authority.

Now the fact that such men as Mr. Campbell are permitted to be heard, is a convincing proof of the comparative triumph of Freethought. A hundred years ago they would have been cruelly crushed without a moment's hesitation; and that to-day the common people hear them gladly is an evidence that Voltaire and Paine and Collins and Hume did not live in vain. Freethought is at last a leaven working mightily within and slowly transmuting the meal of theology itself. Mr. Campbell has often made slighting references to Freethinkers; but it is to their labors and sufferings that he is indebted for his present liberty of speech in the City Temple and throughout the country. The people are sick and tired of the infallible old orthodoxy doled out to them from the conventional pulpits, their faith in it being already dead, and they eagerly listen to anyone who speaks to them even on semi-rational lines. They are not prepared to go clean over to Secularism at one bound; but they welcome any offer of rest at a sort of half-way house, such as that which Mr. Campbell has made his headquarters. It was such weary-minded people who gave him such a warm reception and cheered his tirade against orthodoxy at Brunswick Chapel, Newcastle-on-Tyne, the other evening; and he may rest assured that many of them will ere long be avowed Secularists, and will look back on his visit with gratitude, as marking the commencement of their emancipation.

The truth is, that Freethought is steadily permeating modern society. The difficulty now is to find a single spot where its influence is not felt. This is what the Rev. Frederick Lynch, of New York City, says:—

"If you have been in England lately you know how Mr. Haeckel's materialistic thought of a godless world and a soulless man has permeated every hamlet and working-man's home.....The new novels to-day are full of fatalism. About three out of every five are preaching that doctrine in every insidious form. Most of our congregations are reading them. They are deadening to faith. They leave two impressions, both of which are antagonistic to religion—one that human nature is unchangeable, the other that men are powerless against

circumstance, victims of fate. Our young people, especially the girls, grow up on these books—Thomas Hardy's, Henry Seton Merriman's, George Moore's, James Lane Allen, and now Bernard Shaw, with his practical Atheism."

Had a Freethinker made that assertion he would have been charged with culpable exaggeration. It is Mr. Lynch, a Christian minister, who says that England has been captured by Secularism. It is a humiliating confession for a clergyman to make. And Mr. Lynch makes another admission equally significant, namely, that England will never be recaptured for Christ by means of the orthodox Church. Many will smile as they read the following passage from Mr. Lynch's sermon:—

"The men who are doing most to save England to a belief in God to-day are the great teaching ministers—Horton, Fairbairn, Silvester Horne, Campbell, Clifford, Canon Henson, Sir Oliver Lodge (a lay preacher)—men who, instead of fearing truth, welcome it from every source, and meet false science with true science, and gladly welcome God's new truth as such scientists as Sir Oliver Lodge hear it, to meet the new arguments of the materialists."

There are two important facts, however, which Mr. Lynch and many others utterly ignore. The first is that several of the ministers just named are themselves the outcome of the very tendency so vigorously deplored. Is Mr. Lynch not aware that the new theology is nothing but an attempted compromise between theology and science, and that intellectual compromises never succeed? Between supernaturalism and science there is absolutely no affinity. Science is of necessity Secularistic. It deals exclusively with the material universe. Sir Oliver Lodge the "lay preacher," has no right whatever to speak in the name of Sir Oliver Lodge the brilliant scientist. His two characters represent two distinct departments which cannot meet. To say that science, in the twentieth century, has become intensely religious, is to grossly misrepresent the fact; and this is what Mr. Campbell, for one, is continually doing. As Professor Metchnikoff so clearly shows, between science and religion there is nothing in common; and an overwhelming majority of scientists are practical Secularists. A few of them may be orthodox Christians; one or two, like Sir Oliver Lodge, may sympathise with the new theology; but as scientists pure and simple, they do not touch religion at all. It follows, therefore, that the new theologians, who repudiate the authority of the Church and of the Bible, have not the shadow of a claim to the authority of science. In other words, *they have no authority whatsoever*. Science has made it quite impossible for thoughtful people to retain the old orthodoxy, and as certainly it does not justify the position now occupied by the Campbellites, because it is an unscientific position.

And this leads us to the other fact forgotten by Mr. Lynch, namely, that the people at large must rest on authority. On behalf of everything they accept as truth they will always insist on having recourse to some definite court of final appeal. Mr. Campbell and his fellow-workers have none to offer. It is true that they often pretend to speak in the name of humanity; but humanity, as such, gives them the lie. For example, they say that the human heart cries out for God; but it is only *some* hearts that do so, and these do it as the result of special training. Thousands of hearts are without any sense of God at all. They also aver that deep down in every human soul there is an instinctive longing for immortality. But such is not the case. There are multitudes of people who have no desire to live after death. Mr. Campbell assures us that he cannot conceive of an end to individual life; but there are others who are as incapable of conceiving of no end to it. The truth is, that for supernatural beliefs there is, apart from the Bible and the Church, absolutely no authority. Consequently, the clergymen who declare both the Bible and the Church to be fallible, will never "save England to a belief in God" and the spiritual world. To adopt the language of their orthodox opponents, they are

bound, in the long run, to "make many more Infidels than Christians."

Now since orthodox Christianity is an acknowledged failure throughout Christendom, and since the new theology has no court of final appeal to fall back upon, are we not fully justified in maintaining that Freethought is victorious all along the line? Freethought points to Secularism as the only wholly rational philosophy of human life. But has Secularism any authority to fall back upon? Yes, the authority of the moral nature of man, and this authority never breaks down. The authority of a Secularist teacher is his moral intensity; and his moral intensity arises from the consciousness that morality is an essential condition of human welfare, while immorality undermines the foundations of social life.

J. T. LLOYD.

The Secular Solution.

NONCONFORMISTS FINDING SALVATION.

THE only chief remaining question is whether Cowper-Templeism should any longer be paid for out of State funds—i.e., whether the teaching of simple, unsectarian Christianity under State auspices is any longer possible. We are bound to say that an increasing body of religious opinion says "No." In the first place, the High Churchman says it. He has ceased to believe in the Bible as a self-supporting witness of Christianity. As Canon Henson said the other day in the *Times*, he does not believe in England being a Christian country. He thinks it Pagan, with a Christian fold, barred in with the Sacraments of his Church. Outside are dogs, like Dr. Fairbairn. Cowper-Templeism is to Lord Hugh Cecil an accursed heresy, to be stamped out. And it can only be stamped out by the exclusion of the Bible from the schools. The Church decrees it, it has spoken the word—a very momentous word as it seems to us—with consequences of no small import to the religious life of England. But to be quite fair we must not say that the Anglican Church stands alone in its reaction from Cowper-Templeism. Nonconformity is being driven from the position which reluctantly, at the instance of moderate Churchmanship, it accepted in 1870. It is in no difficulty in this matter. It never did believe in the State organisation of religion, whether for children or for adults. It is perfectly satisfied as to its ability to look after the religious interests of its own children, through its Sunday-schools and homes. Having more faith than the clerical school, with its real scepticism and desperate alarm for the interests of religion when the secular arm fails it, the Free Churches will not be alarmed if the State yields up a function which it was never designed to carry out.

However, if "simple Bible teaching goes," the Anglican Church has banished it, and must take the consequences. The alternative, we suppose, is secularism in school hours and universal right of entry without. This will not come all at once. But the administrative difficulty is urgent. To-day thousands of public institutions are being fed by public money and supported by public bodies without public control either in school management or in the appointment of the teachers. In other words, both the religious and the public scandal created by the anarchic Act of 1902 remain. How can this go on? And what remedy exists? We can only recur to the Prime Minister's words, and say that a way must be found. The Commons cannot accept defeat at the hands of the Lords. That is the point at which the battle is joined. We cannot get away from it; it must be faced and settled. And that is why we must ask all sections of the Progressive Party to hold their hands before they make too confident plans as to the work of the coming Session.

—*Daily News*, Jan. 11, 1907.

Nothing should be taught in any school that the teacher does not know. Beliefs, superstitions, theories, should not be treated like demonstrated facts. The child should be taught to investigate, not to believe. Too much doubt is better than too much credulity. So, children should be taught that it is their duty to think for themselves, to understand, and if possible to know. Real education is the hope of the future. The development of the brain, the civilisation of the heart, will drive want and crime from the world. The schoolhouse is the real cathedral, and science the only possible savior of the human race.—*Ingersoll*.

An Easter Dream.

WITH a fat grimace on his shaven face,
The corpulent priest, fresh from the feast
And the fun and the frolic of Easter-tide,
Stood in his hypocrite coat of black,
From his pulpit to shout a fine sermon, no doubt,
Though I, from my pew, took a different view.
Yes! bless my soul and most of the rest of me,
For the moment, my laziness quite got the best of me.
The parson seemed, in his coat of black,
To pull the strings—now tight, now slack—
That worked an automaton Christ by his side.
With a most unseemly false grimace,
He worked that silly automaton
Till it jerked its wooden limbs as it hung
From the wooden crucifix, cheaply slung;
With blood-colored paint and a woe-begone
Misery carved on its doll-like face.
He juggled that stupid thing at his side
With a most self-satisfied air of grace.
But around him the unknown, unseen people,
Sweat and swear mid the dirt and the dung,
And die by the heap, as such vulgar folk may,
As such muck-worms will on an Easter Day.

So with band-box face, in his frippery lace,
Like a child with a monkey worked on a stick,
He jerks his puppet by some new trick,
Or gives it a tweak to make it squeak,
Ah! the humbug has fitted his toy with a bell
(Or was that a chime from the church's steeple?)
And the deeper the people are smothered in hell
The harder he jerks it to make it kick,
Till everyone knows.....that the bells on its toes.....
Ugh! Am I asleep through the sermon—to think all
The tink and the chinkle, the chink and the tinkle—
Whew! The sermon is over. The churchwarden
Go foraging round to grab the collection. [section
By my fate, here's the plate
Right under my nose!

G. GUARDIABOSCO.

EGYPT AND THE CROSS.

Lo, I look backward some few thousand years,
And see men hewing temples in my rocks
With seated forms gigantic fronting them,
And solemn labyrinthine catacombs.
With tombs all pictured with fair scenes of life
And scenes and symbols of mysterious death;
And planting avenues of sphinxes forth,
Sphinxes couched calm, whose passionless regard
Sets timeless riddles to bewildered time.
Forth from my sacred banks to other fanes
Islanded in the boundless sea of air,
Upon whose walls and colonnades are carved
Tremendous hieroglyphs of secret things;
I see embalming of the bodies dead,
And judging of the disembodied souls;
I see the sacred animals alive,
And statues of the various-headed gods,
Among them throned a woman and a babe,
The goddess crescent-horned, the babe divine.
Then I flow forward some few thousand years,
And see new temples shining with all grace,
Whose sculptured gods are beautiful human forms.
Then I flow forward not a thousand years,
And see again a woman and a babe,
The woman haloed and the babe divine;
And everywhere the symbol of the cross
I knew aforetime in the ancient days,
The emblem then of life, but now of death.
Then I flow forward some few hundred years,
And see again the crescent, now supreme
On lofty cupolas and minarets
Whence voices sweet and solemn call to prayer.
So the men change along my changless stream,
And change their faiths; but I yield all alike
Sweet water for their drinking, sweet as wine,
And pure sweet water for their lustral rites:
For thirty generations of my corn
Outlast a generation of my men,
And thirty generations of my men
Outlast a generation of their gods.

—*James Thomson*, "A Voice from the Nile."

I am drawn by conviction like a Man, not by a halter like an Ass.—*Robert Burns*.

Acid Drops.

Mr. Hall Caine, addressing the audience at the Adelphi Theatre after the play, said he had received a reassuring telegram from the Colonial Office, and believed his brother was safe. This is a sample of the "swelled head" which such gentlemen are liable to. What does it matter to an Adelphi audience whether Mr. Hall Caine's brother or any other man's brother is amongst the lost during an earthquake? Of course it matters to Mr. Hall Caine, and he fancies it matters to everybody else, but it doesn't. Some day or other we shall find the author of the play coming before the footlights to inform us that his baby has just cut its first tooth, or the star actor assuring us that his mother-in-law has successfully weathered a storm of influenza. There is no end to the possible developments of this practice, especially in the hands of sentimental Christians like Mr. Hall Caine.

Professor Milne says that the world receives some 30,000 earthquake shocks a year. Most of them are small local disturbances. Japan gets 1,200 shocks yearly; London one in two hundred years. The shocks that can be felt or registered all over the world are from fifty to sixty annually. The fact is that this old planet, as we think it, is still in a youthful condition, and hasn't quite settled down to a sober and respectable state of existence. Of course the process is entirely natural, and "Providence" has nothing to do with it.

The steadying and helpful power of religion was demonstrated at Kingston during the recent earthquake. We take the following from the report of the special correspondent of the *Daily News* :—

"The large loss of life is accounted for by the fact that the poor negroes in the city, who number about 35,000, did absolutely nothing to save themselves. They were overcome by terror and gathered together in frightened groups, holding prayer meetings in the midst of falling buildings. They believed the end of the world had come; and their ministers, mostly Methodists and Baptists, were unable to induce them for some time to flee for their lives. The negroes sang hymns and called on the angel Gabriel to succor them. Finally they rushed in a wild panic from the city through Windsor Forest, taking refuge at the base of Long Mountain. They were quite beyond control, and several lives were lost through negroes being knocked down and trampled on by their fellows."

Oh the comfort of faith in the hour of trial!

Mr. Henniker Heaton, M.P., relates some similar experiences in his message to the *Times* :—

"The scene that followed baffles description. Women were embracing their little children. Others were on their knees praying loudly and with the most intense feeling to God with such words as 'Lord, have mercy on us,' 'God, have mercy on us,' 'Christ, have mercy on us and save us.'"

Of course, the prayers of these poor people brought them no assistance from "the one above."

The Government Treasury and the Post Office, in Harbor-street, Kingston, are comparatively safe, though there is scarcely another building left standing. Not one of the churches escaped. More Providence!

We quite agree with the exclusion of the "Holy See" from the coming Peace Conference at the Hague. The Conference is one of the representatives of political Powers, not of ecclesiastical Powers—States, not Churches. The Pope must give up his foolish pretensions to temporal sovereignty.

General Booth declared that no case is too bad for his soldiers to tackle. "Why," said he, "these Salvation captains would undertake the case of the devil himself." Would they? That would be undermining their own business. Man Friday asked Robinson Crusoe, "Why no God convert the debbil?" Robinson Crusoe evaded the question. The real answer is that God doesn't convert the Devil because the clergy can't afford to let him.

"Providence" did not look after the English Congregational Chapel, Bagillt, Flintshire, which has been considerably damaged by a fire caused by heat from a stove pipe passing through the roof. The consecrated building suffered just as a profane one would. "One thing befalleth them," as Scripture says.

Another place of worship destroyed by fire! The parish church of Kirby-in-Ashfield has been burnt to the ground.

Those responsible for the edifice did not trust "Providence" implicitly. The loss is covered by insurance.

The miner, Linday B. Hicks, who was entombed for nearly sixteen days in a shaft at the Edison power plant in the Sierra Nevada mountains, north-east of Bakersfield, Cal., said, when he was rescued, that he had a feeling that God was with him and would save him. On the top of that, speaking of some tobacco passed him through a pipe, he declared, "that tobacco saved my life. It is the greatest food-stuff on earth and but for it I would be in there a cold corpse right now." Was it God or was it tobacco that preserved in the life of Linday B. Hicks?—*Truthseeker* (New York).

The Ameer of Afghanistan visited the college at Aligarh, in India, and examined one class himself in religious subjects. At the end he declared his entire satisfaction at the manner in which the tenets of Mohammedanism were being inculcated. This is a policy that might be developed. King Edward, for instance, might pay a visit to the City Temple, and catechise the trustees, deacons, and other leading members; and perhaps, at the finish, give the Rev. R. J. Campbell an orthodox certificate.

Rev. C. F. Aked complains that his punishment has already begun for accepting that call to New York. People are writing to him as "My dear brother in Christ" begging him to get money for them from Mr. Rockefeller. Well, what of that? Mr. Aked has caught a millionaire and some of his Christian friends want to stand in with him. Natural, isn't it?

A correspondent of the *Glasgow Herald* sarcastically observes—at least he appears to be sarcastic—that the various Christian associations in the city should pledge themselves to cease using the cars on Sunday. "Some time ago," he says, "a prominent Christian worker was travelling on Sunday and giving out tracts. On giving one to an official he was promptly told that his encouragement of Sunday travel was the means of keeping the latter from worship. The official belonged to the same church."

When the idea of running cars in Glasgow on Sunday was first mooted it was strenuously opposed by the Sabbatarians. There was many a battle over the question, and finally the Sabbatarians saw that they were beaten. They then suggested a compromise. It was agreed that the cars should run at certain hours on Sunday, and they were nicely timed to take the Sabbatarians to and from the house of God. It would be difficult to beat that—even in Scotland.

The Liverpool Hairdressers' Association is agitating for the entire abolition of Sunday labor in barber's shops, and begging the assistance of the clergy. Why not ask the Almighty to stop hair from growing on Saturdays?

"A copy of the *Freethinker*" was the subject on which the Rev. J. J. Davies, rector of Morpeth, spoke at his meeting for men only in St. James's Church on Sunday, January 13. We suppose we ought to thank the reverend gentleman for the advertisement. But why does he discourse on this journal to "men only"? There is nothing in our pages that women may not read as well as men. If the reverend gentleman were speaking, honestly, on "A copy of the Bible" there might be reason for addressing the two sexes separately.

The *Pioneer*, adding an editorial paragraph to its fair report of Mr. Cohen's lecture at Ilkeston, while admitting that he is "a very capable lecturer," suggests that "if it pays General Booth to champion the 'Army' it probably pays Mr. Cohen to abuse it." But why call Mr. Cohen's criticism "abuse"? Why not answer it instead of calling it names? As for Mr. Cohen's profits on "abusing" the Salvation Army, we would not pay five shillings down for a liberal commission on them during a period of twelve months.

Mrs. Mary Melmore Moore, wife of the Rev. George John Moore, lately vicar of Amblecoats, Staffordshire, has obtained a restitution order against her husband in the Divorce Court. He left her without assigning any reason, and is now living in Calcutta. What a noise the press would make if he were a Freethought lecturer instead of a clergyman!

Rev. Arthur W. Davies, of Brymbo, calls upon Christian ministers to purify the football field. Hadn't he better call upon them to purify the Churches?

Mr. Ernest Young, B. Sc., head master of the Lower School at Harrow, lecturing at Liverpool on "The Home Life of the Siamese," paid a high tribute to the Heathen Chinese. "Most of the real, serious work in Siam," he said, "is done by Chinamen, and although it is the custom in some quarters to run down people of that race, I can say this much from my own personal experience, that I had Chinese servants for five or six years, and that I never met a more trustworthy, honest, faithful, and hard-working lot of men in my life."

Rev. John Warren Napier-Clavering, of Axwell Park, Blaydon-on-Tyne, left property of the gross value of £42,257. What a warm condition he must be in now! We mean if the Gospel he preached and lived by is true.

These are the words of the Master:—

"Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them.....when thou doest an alms do not sound a trumpet before thee.....But when thou doest an alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth."

This is the newspaper puff of a professional Disciple:—

"The Rev. Gerald Moor, Vicar of Preston, near Brighton, and Mrs. Moor have signified their intention to present to the parish church of St. John the Evangelist a new organ, at a cost of £1,000."

We need not indicate the point. Every reader can see it.

Mr. Keir Hardie was severely taken to task in last week's *John Bull* for some singularly pious drivel. The honorable gentleman is a bad sinner in this direction, but he has compensating moments of common sense, and it must have been in one of them that he wrote what he did against present-day Christianity in last week's *Labor Leader*. "Spirituality," he wrote, "is the one element in which modern Christianity is conspicuously wanting. Wealth and smug, complacent respectability are the elements which predominate in church and chapel. The ease and comfort, the vanities and frivolities of modern life, appeal quite as strongly to the average preacher and his good lady as they do to the member of the Stock Exchange." We take Mr. Keir Hardie's word for this. He may be allowed to know more of the average preacher than we do. But why does he put in a reservation? His use of the word "modern" might lead an ignorant person to imagine that things were once different, whereas the average man of God is the same sort of person in all ages.

"When we don't get what we want," Miss Pankhurst said at Hitchin Town Hall, "we are terrible, and it is best to knuckle down to us. When you do we are very charming." We dare say there is a good deal of truth in this, but was the lady well-advised in publishing it? Some have pictured the bad quarter of an hour that Adam must have spent when he had to make up his mind whether he would take a bite of that apple or let Eve go out of Eden without him. Very likely she was "terrible" till she got what she wanted, and we have Milton's word for it that she was "very charming" afterwards. We wonder if Miss Pankhurst has been reading *Genesis* and *Paradise Lost*—or is she only speaking from the depths of feminine instinct? Some day, perhaps, her husband will find out.

That prosy bigot, Henry Varley, writes to the press pointing out that the Rev. R. J. Campbell's preaching is not in harmony with the trust deed of the City Temple. According to that document, the minister must be a Calvinist and take his theology from the Westminster Confession of Faith. Henry Varley argues, therefore, that Mr. Campbell would be a more honest man (evidently there is only *one* honest man in England) if he threw up his job at the City Temple and went out "on his own" in the wilderness. Mr. Campbell, of course, is of a very different opinion; and, on the whole, we are inclined to agree with him. The difference between present ideas and old trust deeds is often very great, and it is difficult to see why the burden of squaring them together should fall exclusively upon Mr. Campbell's shoulders. The complaint made against him and the City Temple, would apply, in greater or less degree, to many ministers and many churches and chapels. We believe it applies to South Place Chapel (or Institute, as they call it now) itself, and that the religious views set forth in the trust deed are not only not preached there, but actually preached against.

One of the first theologians to reprove the Rev. R. J. Campbell was the Rev. Dr. Joseph Agar Beet. This is like the saucepan calling the kettle smutty. Dr. Beet was himself pulled up for heresy by the Wesleyan Conference, and ordered to withdraw his peccant book—which he did. We

hope Mr. Campbell will be less compliant. At any rate, it is amusing to see Dr. Beet posing as the champion of orthodoxy.

"Individual communion cups" is being discussed in the *Glasgow Herald*. The object of the communion cup is to fit the recipient (or should we say the *sipient*?) for the kingdom of heaven; but the use of a common cup is likely to send him there prematurely. Disease germs may be imbibed with the blood of Christ, and may quite neutralise it as far as this life is concerned. And, after all, it is this life that the Christian really cares about. He only slides into the next life when he must.

"Behold with how little wisdom the world is governed!" So said a famous Swedish chancellor to his son. And there was plenty of truth in the exclamation. Just look at the way our affairs are managed in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. When the Liberals came into power Mr. Augustine Birrell was appointed Minister of Education, and given charge of what was meant to be the most important Bill of the first session of the new parliament. Mr. Birrell's qualifications for the post and the job were very simple. He was a middling lawyer and a middling writer, with just a happy knack of giving a smart turn to commonplaces. But he was also Chairman of the National Liberal Federation, and he was a staunch Nonconformist—and the son of a Nonconformist minister. These latter qualifications were eminently satisfactory; so he went to work, drew up his Education Bill, in the interest of the religious people on his own side of the House of Commons, and piloted it successfully to the end of the third reading by means of the overwhelming mechanical majority at his back. But such a Bill was bound to be destroyed by the Church party in the House of Lords; and destroyed it was, and Mr. Birrell had to pronounce its funeral oration. The poor thing is dead and buried—and matters are just where they were before. And this is what passes nowadays for statesmanship.

Having achieved such a blazing success, Mr. Birrell is now to be entrusted with the next most difficult problem before the Government; namely, a tolerable settlement of the Irish difficulty. Of course the party organs are celebrating his astonishing virtues; but is there any sane man anywhere who, under the rose, would call Mr. Birrell a statesman? Even if he were so, what a pretty game it is to pass a man along in this motor-car fashion from one great department of State to another! Not a thought is given to specialism and efficiency. The Nonconformist minister's son is equal to anything in a Nonconformist government. He looks round at the various departments and says, "Let 'em all come!" In fact, the Liberal organs, which are nearly all owned and conducted by Nonconformists, pretend that his Nonconformity gives him a special qualification for the Irish Secretaryship. He is neither Catholic nor Protestant Episcopalian. True, but he may learn what it is to come between "the fell incensed points of mighty opposites."

The author of the unfortunate Education Bill is the Nonconformists' Napoleon. Not much of a Napoleon—especially when he has his spectacles on and is fluently birrelling—but still the best they have. And, after all, we wish him well; if only because he told the truth, for the first time in parliament, about the miserable old Conscience Clause which he tried to make an effective reality. That was the one good point in the whole of his Bill.

Religion covers a multitude of impostures. A female at Liverpool has been prosecuted, fined, and warned as to the future, for running a bogus "Breck Hall Mission"—collecting money for the Lord's poor and spending it on herself.

Maybe this Liverpool female would justify herself as the American male did. He started a Society for Converting the Heathen, got together an influential committee, and raked in a couple of hundred thousand dollars. Then he disappeared. Some weeks afterwards the Committee received a letter from him, written at a snug, safe place of retreat in South America, hoping that they would not take a prejudiced view of his action. He had collected the money for the conversion of the heathen, and he himself was the greatest heathen he knew; accordingly he was going to devote the rest of his life to spending the money on his own conversion.

KEPT HER WAITING.

In an Atlanta cemetery, one tomb bears at the top: "Helen Vance, wife of Harold Vance. 1854. I await you." Then beneath is carved: "Harold Vance. 1889. Here am I."

At the base of the inscription, someone has written: "He ook his time."

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, January 27, Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, Manchester ;
3, "Mr. Bernard Shaw and God"; 6.30, "Do the Dead Live?"

February 3, Glasgow.

To Correspondents.

C. COHEN'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—January 27, Romford-road, Forest Gate.

J. T. LLOYD'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—January 27, Glasgow. February 3 and 10, Forest Gate ; 24, Camberwell. March 10, Birmingham.

M. BARNARD.—Antony Collins's powerful little treatise on Free Will and Necessity, published at our office, price 1s., should help you.

W. GENNIF.—It would take columns to do all you desire. Take this in brief. Fulfilled prophecies were all written after the event. Voltaire did not die in terror—and he was not an Atheist. Müller's Orphanage has been widely advertised as a place that never advertises. We never heard before of that "converted infidel" called Parsons. Ask for a few particulars about him.

W. B.—The Julian (Julius Cæsar) calendar never was altered to a "Christian calendar." The only alteration made in it was the one you refer to, under Pope Gregory, in 1751—an alteration which the Protestant nations had the sense to accept, although the Greek Church part of Christendom still went on with the old reckoning. That alteration was one of eleven days, with a rectification to prevent the necessity of any such redress in the measurable future. The Christian era is another matter altogether. Christians went on, like other people in the Roman Empire, reckoning the years by the Augustan era; this they did without a murmur for eight hundred years; then it was suggested that the years should be reckoned from the birth of Jesus Christ, and this practice gradually spread until it was made legal in country after country. It does not appear to have been made legal in Spain till the fourteenth century.

L. HINSON, subscribing to the Symes Memorial Fund, says: "I also take this opportunity to express my appreciation of the *Freethinker*, of which I have been a reader for the last eighteen months. It has been a revelation to me, and, if I may be permitted to use a scriptural phrase, I have been 'born again.' This is no exaggeration, for the articles written by yourself and your other able contributors are always interesting and invariably afford food for thought, a characteristic which, in most other so-called 'advanced' journals, is conspicuous by its absence."

"JAN DE BOER."—Pleased to receive your interesting and encouraging letter. Our readers will like to read the following extract: "Let me say, here, how very much my friends and I enjoy reading your paper. It is, indeed, as everyone says, 'splendid.' I have, so far, persuaded one bookseller, in this manticionius city, to stock the *Freethinker*. As he sold all the copies he stocked by Saturday, the first week, and secured one regular customer, I expect he will continue the experiment."

J. R. WHITE.—We quite understand what a shock to all of you was the news of the death of Joseph Symes. We note that the West Stanley Branch tenders its deepest sympathy to Mrs. Symes and her daughter, and hopes the Freethought party will make a ready and generous response to our appeal.

BROTHERS GRIFFITHS.—Pleased you are "constant readers of the *Freethinker* and think it the best paper published." Mr. Foote hopes to visit your part of the country one of these days. No doubt the Welsh Revival has stirred up a good deal of dissatisfaction with Christianity.

T. DOBSON.—Pleased to hear from such an old reader.

T. WEBSTER, sending us some cuttings, says: "I have read your valuable paper for twelve months, and I have given up other papers so that I can get time to read it. I think it improves every week."

"A WOMAN FREETHINKER encloses 10s. 6d. for the Joseph Symes Fund, as a mark of deepest sympathy for the bereft widow and daughter." Thus runs a letter that reaches us without name or address.

A. ALDWINKLE.—Our best thanks to the thirty-one Bradford subscribers—all Socialists, and mostly belonging to the Social Democratic Federation—for contributing to the Symes Memorial Fund through you. With respect to your complaint, we are aware that Joseph Symes honestly said unpleasant things about Socialism in one or two of the articles he sent us from Australia, but he was really too far off for revision, and we supposed that allowance would be made for the fact. When he came to England and began writing on the spot we had a few sentences revised in his article on Keir Hardie; and we told him—and he cheerfully admitted the wisdom of it—that our policy was not to meddle with any political or social movement unless it was in the way of Freethought propaganda. This is the policy we try to pursue, without pretending to impeccability. But you must not, of course, expect us not to criticise Socialists when they deal with subjects that are peculiarly our own. If we think that Mr. Keir Hardie talks nonsense about religion, or that Mr. Robert Blatchford is mistaken on some points of the philosophy of Determinism, we shall certainly say so; and we

hold that this is no violation of our deliberately neutral policy; for, surely, it is not going to be contented (is it?) that a criticism of the religious or philosophic statements of a Socialist is an attack on Socialism? You ask why we have not "set about" Mr. J. M. Robertson (who, by the way, is a Socialist) for his support of the Liberal candidate against the Labor candidate at Huddersfield, although the former advocated religious teaching in the schools while the latter favored secular education. Our answer is that we were afraid of getting mixed up in a political controversy. The candidate in favor of secular education would have had our support, but Mr. Robertson must steer his own political course for himself; it is a matter in which we have no sort of interest—for we cannot worry ourselves about such unimportant things as the tactics of individual members of parliament, who all have to do a good many odd things to achieve what is called "success." The long and the short of it is that we endeavor to keep to our proper work in this journal, and our readers must also try not to be too exacting or hypercritical. Finally, we may express pleasure at hearing that you thought our Hardy article "magnificent." "Give us," you say, "any amount of this, for you have no equal at that sort of thing." But we can only deal with such subjects when they arise. You will be glad to hear that Thomas Hardy, in acknowledging a copy of our article, said that he had read it "with much interest."

THE JOSEPH SYMES FUND.—Previously acknowledged, £109 1s. 4d. Since received: John Bowing, 10s. 6d.; Five Social Democrats, 5s.; G. Etherton and Friend, 5s.; R. H. Rosetti, 2s.; G. Viggars, 2s.; L. Hinson, 2s. 6d.; Fraternally, 2s. 6d.; Mrs. Doles, 10s.; Boerin, 10s. 6d.; "Jan de Boer," £1 1s.; West Stanley Branch, £1; T. Aisbitt, 3s.; Brothers Griffiths, 2s.; J. Prunett, 5s.; W. Waymark, 2s. 6d.; John Roberts, 15s.; W. Brierley, 10s.; B. Hurford, 4s.; T. O'Neil, 2s. 6d.; An Old Farmer, 5s.; W. E. Snell, 10s.; Arthur Brooke, 10s.; Miss Hartley, 1s.; Miss Peacock, 6d.; Mrs. Smith, 6d.; A. Aldwinckle, 1s.; L. H., 6d.; H. Searle, 1s.; H. Smith, 6d.; A. Hibbert, 1s.; H. Beaumont, 1s.; H. Overton, 1s.; H. England, 6d.; G. Watson, 1s.; T. Dunn, 1s.; W. H. Hairsine, 1s.; E. Boardman, 6d.; N. Mitchell, 1s.; L. Thorpe, 1s.; A Friend, 6d.; J. Widdup, 6d.; H. Smith, 3d.; T. Holmes, 6d.; "Reks," 6d.; C. Ingram, 1s.; T. Lemon, 6d.; H. Jackson, 3d.; H. Clegg, 6d.; H. Murray, 6d.; T. Smith, 6d.; S. Smith, 1s.; F. Clegg, 3d.; F. Wilman, 3d.; J. Hogg, 2s. 6d.; A. Johnson, 2s. 6d.; Ferguson (Wigan), 10s.; Penk, 2s. 6d.; D. Reynolds, 1s.; Bill, 1s.; Miss Reynolds, 1s.; Miss Whalley, 1s.; Maloney, 1s. 6d.; Three Kilsyth Freethinkers, 5s.; Mrs. D. P. Sweetland, 2s. 6d.; G. Christian, 2s. 6d.; E. Small, 2s. 6d.; D. J. D., 10s.; W. Heaford, 10s.; George Brady, £1; J. Warwick, 5s.; R. Child, 10s. 6d.; R. O. Smith, £1; T. Dobson, 2s. 6d.; W. Robinson, 5s.; W. Glendinning, 10s.; A Woman Freethinker, 10s. 6d.; E. G., £2; L. Fisher, 2s.; Harry Allen, 2s. 6d.; T. W. Allison, 1s. 6d.; F. Dannatt, 1s.; R. Wallace, 1s.; M. Ball, 1s.; G. W. Roe, 1s.; J. H., 2s. 6d.; John Proctor, £1; J. G. Crozier, 2s. 6d.; Mrs. Crozier, 2s. 6d.; A. Kubn, 5s.; R. H. Side, £5; David Watt, 10s.; H. Silverstein, 5s.; J. S. Barlow, 2s. 6d.; R. Lewis, 2s. 6d.; A. Shiel, 5s.; John Grange, 10s. 6d.; Henry Smith, 5s.; Sydney A. Gimson, £3; J. L. Williams, 2s. 6d.; W. Potter, 1s.; F. Pollard, 2s.; F. Sands and Family, £1; H. E., 5s.; A. Webber, 2s. 6d.; F. Nuttall, 2s. 6d.; G. Barber, 2s. 6d.; C. A. S. (Salford), 5s.; F. Rich, 2s.; G. Scott, 2s. 6d.; C. F. Beesley, 5s.; Miss P. Ridgway, 2s. 6d.; Some Scotch Shoemakers, 3s. 6d.; T. J. Thurlow, 3s.; G. White, 5s.; J. Crompton, £5; A. E. H., 5s.; Daniel Gow, £25; Harry Walker, 10s.; James Fox, 2s. 6d.; J. Brierley, 10s.

Per Miss Vance: H. Spence, £1; Freethought Friends, 10s.; Frank Reed, 5s.; W. Kensit, 5s.; W. J. Caisey, 5s.; W. Kay, 5s.; W. Lamb, 5s.; J. S. Norman, 5s.; A Friend, 5s.; Jas. Preston, 5s.; F. W. D., 5s.; E. Potter, 2s. 6d.; W. W., 2s. 6d.; W. Tipper, 2s. 6d.; J. Stitt, 2s. 6d.; J. Bland, 2s. 6d.; A. and L. B., 1s.; T. M. M., 4s.; W. Milroy, 2s. 6d.; Friends (Dundee), 10s.; W. Bradshaw, 6d.; G. Stock, 6d.; An Ethicist, 1s.; C. A. Watts, £1 1s.; S. H. Munns, £2 2s.; Ernest (Rotherhithe), 2s.; H. B. Samuels, 2s.; S. Samuels, 2s.; H. Hunt, 2s. 6d.; Mrs. Brown, 1s.; J. M., 1s.; J. Hockin, 2s.; S. G. Poole, 2s. 6d.; S. C. Shuffelbotham, 2s. 6d.; F. Garraway, 2s. 6d.; T. Gibbon, 2s.; J. Jones, 2s. 6d.; W. Broadbent, 2s. 6d.; J. Williams, 5s.; F. Schaller, 2s.

THE COHEN "SALVATION ARMY" TRACT FUND.—Previously acknowledged, £13 3s. 6d. Since received: Holders, 2s.; Lawrence, 1s.; D. J. D., 10s.; R. B. Fowler, 2s.

J. BROUGH.—Will be useful. Thanks.

E. MOORCROFT.—Towns like Southport are not very favorable for Freethought propaganda.

J. L. WILLIAMS.—Glad you find the *Freethinker* so helpful.

F. SANDS.—You were fortunate to hear Mr. Symes again, after all those years, during his recent visit to Manchester.

W. LEACH.—Most of our prose extracts from Robert Burns were taken from his private letters to intimate friends, and therefore speak his undoubted sentiments. With regard to the poems, you must remember that here and there he was the mouthpiece of inherited and conventional ideas. It is not difficult to tell when the real Robert Burns is singing.

SYDNEY A. GIMSON says of Joseph Symes—"He was a strong, straightforward fighter.....One always likes a straight man who devotes his powers honestly to an unpopular cause without any pandering to conventionalities or the powers that be—and that was what Symes undoubtedly did."

R. H. SIDE.—Glad you are "more than pleased at the way in which the party have responded" to our call. Your handsome donation is a pledge of your own respect for Joseph Symes.

- We were pleased to see you looking so well on Sunday evening, in spite of your great age and recent sickness.
- B. HURFORD writes:—"Every thanks for your paper. It is the best by far I read." This correspondent is informed that Ingersoll's *House of Death* is out of print, but may shortly be reprinted. The title is copyright, being one devised by ourselves for the collection of pieces.
- T. O'NEILL.—Pleased to hear that you are so vigorously pursuing the policy sketched in our "Underground Movement" article. Passing round twelve copies of one week's *Freethinker* was a very good beginning.
- AN OLD FARMER.—You trust we may live long to fight for Freethought. So do we.
- ARTHUR BROOKE.—Yes, Joseph Symes was "able and attractive" and "his loss to the Freethought party is a calamity."
- HOW MENAI.—An editor is the best judge of what space can be allowed to correspondents in his paper. We inserted a long communication of yours, and because we do not see our way to print a longer one, extending to more than two columns of small type, you talk about being boycotted. This is irrational. Correspondence should be definite and pointed, not a prolix disquisition.
- J. LAZARNICK.—Orders for literature should not be sent to the Editor of the *Freethinker*. Those who take that course must expect delay—and they give us unnecessary trouble, which is a pity, seeing how much we have to do.
- THREE KILSYTH FREETHINKERS.—Your letter says *seven* shillings, but your postal order says *five*. Pleased to have your thanks for "the delightful reading" you are "having in the *Freethinker*."
- HARRY HUNT.—Thanks for cuttings and good wishes.
- R. CHILD.—We note what you say about the gentleman—and it does not surprise us. Will try to find you the copy of the *Freethinker* you want.
- R. O. SMITH.—Your name should have been included amongst those present at Joseph Symes's funeral. We regret the inadvertent omission.
- T. D.—We read the book years ago, but are glad to have it on our shelves. Thanks.
- T. W. ALLISON.—Attended to. We appreciate the compliment though we had rather not print it just now.
- W. P. BALL.—Your cuttings are always very welcome.
- D. P. SWEETLAND.—"A sad loss to all Freethinkers," as you say. Mr. Foote is middling. He caught a cold during the "cold snap" that settled Joseph Symes, and has not quite thrown it off yet.
- G. CHRISTIAN.—No one can do impossibilities. There will be an ample subscription if every Freethinker does what he can. Glad that you, also "a convert from the Catholic Church," have "read with great interest" all we have written on "the trouble in France," and "thoroughly agree" with us in our "ideas and sentiments."
- E. A. SMALL.—You can hardly expect Catholic books to record the crimes of the Popes.
- W. HEAFORD subscribes to the Symes Memorial Fund as a "feeble expression of gratitude for the valiant work for Freethought so nobly done by one of nature's best creations."
- G. BRADY "hopes to see even a longer list of subscriptions in the next issue of the *Freethinker*" and "begs to offer" his "tribute of admiration for the sane attitude" we have adopted towards "the French clerical question."
- E. LECHMERE.—Pleased to receive the cuttings.
- M. E. PEGG.—Sorry your last week's lecture notice for Manchester was not inserted, but your postcard did not reach us until Wednesday. Of course the Post Office may be responsible for the delay.
- J. G. CROZIER.—We have only done our duty towards the widow of our old comrade in arms. There is no need for thanks. Mr. Foote is fairly well, but has been bothered with a cold, through the treacherous weather.
- DAVID WATT.—Thanks for your good letter and your efforts to promote our circulation.
- R. LEVIS.—The sale of a photograph would not add materially to the Fund; besides, that would be a work of time, and we want this effort to be short and sharp.
- JOHN GRANGE, whose valuable work on the Secular platform had to give way before business engagements, writes us: "I admired Joseph Symes's intellectual virility. He was truly one of the old brigade, whose eye was ever lit with the fire of battle, and whose face was ever turned towards the foe.....I wish to add that I hope you will look carefully after *your* health. Don't imperil it unnecessarily. Freethought has suffered sufficiently of late from the death of its advocates. The *Freethinker* too is quite an institution of a high order in many Freethought homes, and its cessation would be nothing short of a calamity to us all. Its pages are always so radiant with sound philosophy, crisply and lucidly expressed. May you live long to determine its destiny!"
- H. E.—You wish you could subscribe more. Well, the wish is a good deed.
- H. W. MATTHEW.—Glad you enjoyed the Annual Dinner so much. Our indictment was far too long for publication in the *Freethinker*. It charged us with having been "instigated by the Devil" to "bring the Holy Scripture and the Christian Religion into disbelief and contempt." We repeated that offence the moment we were released from prison, and we have been repeating it ever since.
- F. RICH.—We have found the late wretched weather rather trying, but we get through our work somehow, and look forward to summer and more cheerful days.
- HARRY ORGAN.—Men are mortal—the cause is immortal.
- T. J. THURLOW.—Your "mite" is welcome. No one will ever doubt your earnestness.
- MAJOR F. FINDON.—Pleased to hear from one who admires Ingersoll's lectures on Shakespeare, and to note the reference to the *Freethinker* as "your fine paper." Shakespeare wrote "the multitudinous seas" in a great passage of *Macbeth*, but "the multitudinous laughter of the sea" belongs to an old Greek poet.
- H. WALKER.—Thanks for your good wishes.
- P. W. MADDEN.—Much obliged; the cuttings will be very useful.
- DANIEL GOW, sending us the biggest subscription we have yet received for the Symes Memorial Fund, writes: "My sympathies go out to his poor widow and daughter. The last time I had the pleasure of seeing and hearing Mr. Symes was in the Hall of Science, London, at his send-off meeting previous to his going to Australia. You were not present at that meeting, Mr. Editor, for very obvious reasons." Joseph Symes had said good-bye to us then in Holloway Gaol—and we think we will say something presently about that interview. Symes wrote something about it in the *Freethinker* at the time.
- W. CARTER.—We intended to resume our old literary column with the new year, but the death of Joseph Symes caused us fresh labor and pre-occupation of mind. We hope, however, to resume it very shortly; indeed, it is our intention to do more justice to this side of the *Freethinker*. We have a number of books awaiting notice.
- DEVONIAN.—We have no special interest in popularising the purely scientific side of evolution. That is done by many men in many ways. What we are concerned with is the religious and philosophical bearings of evolution.
- 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.
- LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.
- LECTURE NOTICES must reach 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.
- FRIENDS who send us newspapers would enhance the favor by marking the passages to which they wish us to call attention.
- ORDERS for literature should be sent to the Freethought Publishing Company, Limited, 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., and not to the Editor.
- PERSONS remitting for literature by stamps are specially requested to send *halfpenny stamps*.
- THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months, 2s. 8d.
- SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS: Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

Sugar Plums.

Mr. Foote paid South London one of his rare visits last Sunday. A large and enthusiastic meeting assembled in the Camberwell Secular Hall to hear him. He was suffering from the effects of a nasty cold, which he was afraid would prevent him from fulfilling the engagement, but he warmed to the work as he went along, and the audience quite unmistakably enjoyed itself. Mr. Victor Roger presided, and his invitation brought some questions and a little discussion. Having an hour's journey in front of him before he could reach the house of his host in North London, Mr. Foote had to hurry off without hearing the new band which has been organised for the Camberwell Branch meetings. He hopes the members of the band will not think he meant to slight them. On the contrary, he would like to thank them for their efforts.

Mr. Foote opens the new lecture season at the Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, Manchester, to-day (Jan. 27), and South Lancashire friends will please note the fact. In the afternoon he is to speak on "Mr. Bernard Shaw and God," and in the evening on "Do the Dead Live?" Crowded audiences are expected, and all who wish to secure seats should be early.

The "saints" have taken our hint and sent in their subscriptions to the Symes Memorial Fund with great promptitude. We are not writing any more special appeals, but just letting the "Correspondents" columns tell their own tale. All we have to add is that we want the last subscription to be in, if possible, by Thursday, January 31. We shall then, we think, be able to make a statement on Mrs. Symes's behalf. Meanwhile the "saints" may rest assured that she is receiving every attention.

Mr. Cohen had a fine audience at the West Ham Branch's new meeting-place on Sunday evening. He occupies the Workman's Hall platform again this evening (Jan. 27), when there will doubtless be another excellent meeting.

We understand that Mr. Cohen's recent visit to Ilkeston was a successful one. A local paper noted that the Town Hall meeting was a large one, especially as everybody had paid for admission. A feature of promise at Ilkeston is the zeal of a number of young Freethinkers.

Mr. J. T. Lloyd lectures for the Glasgow Branch to-day (Jan. 27). Local "saints" will doubtless do their utmost to give publicity to the meetings and secure good audiences. Mr. Lloyd deserves them—from every point of view.

The January number of the *Humane Review* contains a very admirable article by Mr. H. S. Salt on "Thoreau and the Simple Life." Mr. Salt's humanitarianism is as fervid as anyone could desire, yet he is always perfectly sane; in other words, he has a head to match his heart; which is not true of all reformers. The other contents of this excellent quarterly maintain its usual high standard. They include a very outspoken article on the present state of the Howard Society, which is accused of taking the great Prison Reformer's name in vain.

Mr. W. T. Stead, in his editorial paragraphs on current affairs in the *January Review of Reviews*, has the following reference to ourselves, under the heading of "The Church in France":—

"The sympathy of most English folk is with the Republic because it is fighting the old enemy Giant Pope. But if our Nonconformists were to find themselves in the shoes of the Catholics of France, they would probably discover that the dominant party had the scantiest appreciation of what they regard as the fundamental principles of religious liberty. Note that the only English non-Catholic journal which has strongly opposed the anti-Catholic campaign in France is the *Freethinker*, edited by Mr. G. W. Foote. Whether he is right or wrong in his judgment of the merits of the case, he deserves great credit for his courage and his impartiality. For the men in power in France are his co-anti-religionists, whose antipathy is quite as intense as his own, not merely to the Catholic Church, but to Christianity itself."

Of course we are with the French Government as far as it is trying to secure complete Separation between Church and State; and we praised many features of the Separation Act as wise and just, and even generous. We have indeed opposed "the anti-Catholic campaign," as Mr. Stead calls it, and we shall continue to oppose it; for while we believe absolutely in Separation, we also believe that Governments have no moral right to wage war against any Church or any religion. Let them leave all opinions, and all organisation of opinions, severely alone. That is *real* Separation.

"On the question of the Church and State in France," Mr. J. T. Lloyd writes us, "I find myself in complete agreement with the views you have expressed in the *Freethinker*. Freedom is what we want all round, and freedom makes persecution of all kinds an absurdity. Freethought brings disgrace upon itself the moment it begins to restrict liberty of belief and expression. I greatly admired all your notes on the French Government and the Vatican. It seemed to me that Mr. Symes failed to grasp the *principle* involved, and so was misled by incidentals."

Mr. W. Heaford, in a postscript to another letter, replies to our last week's paragraph in which he was mentioned, but what he writes is evidently not meant for publication. We should be glad to insert a brief answer to our friendly criticism on a very interesting point, if he will take the trouble to send it to us.

Mr. E. W. Lowry, of the Fulham Ethical Society, accepting the challenge of the Rev. J. E. Ramsden, of the Christian Evidence Society, is delivering two lectures in the Fulham Town Hall on Friday and Saturday, February 1 and 2, at 8 p.m., on "Has Man a Free Will?" The chairman on the opening night is Mr. Joseph McCabe.

Scatter the seed of Freethought! Scatter it! Some of it will spring up. A few days ago we received a letter from a man in Scotland, who said: "I found in the woods an old *Freethinker* and I was greatly interested in its contents, although I consider myself a good Christian. I see by it you grant the paper a few weeks on trial, which I would only be too happy to receive."

The Psychology of Religious Emotion.

BY MEDICINAE DOCTOREM.

You who have read my "Religious History of a Hypocrite" as published in *The Searchlight* can realise that my conclusions are not simply theories nor impressions received by one on the outside, for I certainly have been in a position to know what I am talking about. I am not prejudiced, neither do I accept nor condemn a proposition because of popular belief or neighborhood opinion.

Because of early environment I was frequently brought in contact with two conditions that, as a child and young man, filled me with awe. One was epilepsy and the other was the religious phenomena known as "trance," "power," "ecstasy," etc., according to the localities in which such events occurred.

It was a common thing at the winter revivals to see several persons stretched out on the floor near the "altar" during the after-service while Christians, backsliders and sinners alike, were crowding the "mourner's bench." Some of these "favored" ones would be pale and apparently lifeless. Others had constricted features, a full bounding pulse and stertorous breathing, but all seemingly unconscious. At times they would perform unusual and extraordinary feats, frequently ridiculous, but taken by the awed witnesses as "workings" of the supernatural. They would come out of these trances sooner or later. Some would go home with a mysterious look, paying no attention to the anxious crowd awaiting for a "revelation." Others would immediately give glowing accounts of their "vision," claiming to be "absent in the spirit," to all of which we listened with bated breath and palpitating hearts. It was supposed that only "God's very elect" were allowed these great privileges, consequently after a person "got the power" he was an individual of more than ordinary importance. As I look back now I remember that it was not the truly pious and reliable members of the congregation that most frequently created these scenes, but the fluctuating, back sliding, impulsive element that got a new supply of religion each series of revival meetings, this lasting them till the next special effort. You who are familiar with religious revivals know exactly what I mean.

After one of these individuals had been "transported" several successive evenings (one *séance* always favoring a repetition) he or she was supposed to get, in addition to his view of heaven, a glimpse of the future and be able to "prophesy" and foretell future events. Of course that increased the awe and reverence. Time and again I have heard these enthusiasts (it is too early in my paper to call them by their right name) tell of their flight to the "Pearly Gates." Their description of the "Streets of Gold," "The Great White Throne" and their worship of the "Son." While the narrative was in progress and after finished, the "Hallelujahs," "Praise the Lord" and "Amen" were so long and loud as to almost deafen one, and a few anxious ones would long for such an experience.

I naturally grew up imbued with the current belief of the times regarding such religious phenomena and not till years later did I attempt to look into the different phases of the subject. My first investigations were made with fear and trembling, for I was not only alone and without the moral support of anyone, but I had years of prejudice behind me and was not sure but that I was treading on "holy ground."

For several years I made but little headway, although I had ample opportunity to witness various religious *séances*. I read everything I could get on the subject, but there was little to be learned from that source. The few who did have radical personal views which did not coincide with those of the masses evidently were afraid to publish them. One of the first things I learned was that the conditions were much more favorable at certain times than at others, and that while the initiative in the trance phenomena was always taken by one of neurotic temperament, the influence often spread, just as an epidemic of hysteria may prevail in a young ladies' seminary; that the sex element plays a very important factor, and that the more ignorant, illiterate and superstitious a community is, the more likely they are to have these phenomena.

When addressing a class of intelligent people who read medical journals it is not necessary to remind you of the association of and the relation between religion and sexual matters among all primitive peoples and in heathen lands. The subject has been ably presented and thoroughly discussed time and again. It needs no argument, no proof; it is simply history.

A short time after I began to practise medicine I had quite an intelligent family on my list by the name of Mills. The mother was exceedingly nervous, and she and the three daughters suffered greatly with dysmenorrhœa. At the time the youngest daughter was entering puberty a "revival"

was in progress at the church they usually attended. One evening while the pastor was in the midst of a heated discourse this girl fell forward in her seat. The zealous members of the audience shouted, "Praise the Lord," etc., and the girl was laid out on the front seat in a "trance." The mother sent one of the children for the father, who came and, against the wishes of the pastor and a few others, took the girl home. Two or three of the good sisters insisted on going also, because they thought the family were not religious enough to grapple with the situation alone. On the way home the girl had a slight spasm which alarmed the mother, and I was sent for. The good women kept saying all the while "That's all right, that is just the Devil coming out, and exhorted the parents to lift their hearts and voices in prayer and praise to God.

The girl had another spasm after I reached the house, and before morning began to menstruate for the first time. I was called "profane," "infidel," "scoffer" and many other similar terms for daring to assume that there was any physical cause in this instance, and I was seriously informed that I was in danger of "hell fire."

Some time later I was informed by a visiting friend that at a place five miles away they were having a "great time" at a religious revival. People were coming for miles around and each might many could not get into the church. They were having "trances" galore; the services often lasting till 2 a.m., and the community was being swept by a religious wave.

I determined I would visit this church and see what was going on. I arrived one night about 10 p.m. The sermon was over and the "after meeting" in full blast. There was mingled shouting, singing, preaching, praying, wailing, and yells of "sacred laughter." The pandemonium could be heard for half a mile. Two young women and one boy of about fifteen were lying side by side on a platform near the pulpit. I learned that these girls had gone into a "trance" regularly for several nights and would lie in that condition till early morning. Some of the congregation staying with them. One of these girls was the first to get the "power," then it extended to one of her chums who, after throwing up her hands and falling was laid beside the other. The third to succumb was the boy, a hard case, practically a degenerate. He noticed the effect these happenings had on the congregation and judging (correctly) that if he had an attack he would be placed on the platform beside the girls, proceeded the next night to follow their example. One of the girls always laid quietly where she was put. The other, a well developed and somewhat buxom lass, usually did some kicking and tossing, and as her skirts were short, there were times when more than her ankles were exposed.

I discovered that the congregation paid absolutely no attention to these, who were laid out (the boy had discovered it too), but devoted their time and energies to the "seekers."

I returned the two successive nights and watched the "trance" subjects without them being aware of it. The second night the boy was on the floor and by his side with their shoulders touching was the girl before mentioned, her skirts above her knees. Later in the evening he managed to wriggle around till he was nearly at a right angle to her body, and when I noticed him at frequent intervals his voluptuous gaze was fixed on her legs.

The idea of holding God or the Holy Ghost responsible for such a scandalous performance. Yet the fanatical dupes who had charge of the meeting boldly asserted that these frauds were "under the power."

I learned later that this boy told his chum of the "snap" he had struck, and that was why that on my third night there was another addition to the stiffs in the person of this young man.

At this time I was not sure about the girls, so determined to try an experiment. The fact that the staying in a lonely church till morning with a few in a "trance" was growing monotonous, helped me to carry out my plan.

I took a Mr. G., his wife and another woman, who viewed the matter somewhat as I did, into my confidence, and after the congregation was dismissed we agreed to stay as long as necessary, so all the others went away, leaving us with the quartet on the platform. After about half an hour I said, in a voice loud enough so all could hear, "There is no need of us staying here; these folks will sleep till morning, so we might as well turn out the lights and go home. We will make a good fire and they will keep warm." Mr. G. audibly agreed to this, so I went to the stove, made a little racket and called for him to put out the lights, which he proceeded to do, and we started for the outside. Just as I was closing the door leading into the vestibule one of the girls uttered a piercing shriek and called for a light. I struck a match and by the time I reached a gas fixture the pretenders were clamoring to get out.

In spite of this exposure there were many who claimed the "Lord's hand" was in the work and that I was wrong to meddle.

My next opportunity for investigation happened nearer home. A young minister was sent to a certain charge at the autumn conference. He was an excellent specimen of manhood; a good speaker, powerful singer and unmarried. As is usual, included in the membership was a "maiden lady," a very devout worker, but one who was always in doubt and in need of frequent assurances from her pastor regarding the condition of her soul. It was generally known that she had "set her cap" for the young minister.

The revival meetings were commenced early in the winter and were well attended. At the close of the sermons while extending the "invitation" this preacher was in the habit of stepping down from the pulpit and standing in the aisle by the front row of seats. After this had occurred two or three times this "maiden lady" took her position in the seat nearest to where he was likely to stand. One evening as he was giving a passionate appeal she started forward and was about to fall when he caught her in his arms; with her eyes closed she clung to his neck and shouted, "glory be to God." Some of the irreverent began to titter but he disengaged himself and the meeting progressed. After that, several young women toppled over, but it occurred when and where there happened to be some nice young man to catch them before they touched the floor. I saw one silly girl attempt this but she miscalculated her distance and bumped her forehead on the corner of the bench. This spoiled the trance for that night.

The next morning it was reported broadcast that one of the girls, while in a trance, removed her ring and when she attempted to lay it down it stuck to her fingers. She then tried to toss it to one side but it adhered to the palm of her hand. On the strength of this false rumor, that night another young woman tried the experiment but her ring slipped from her grasp, rolled across the platform behind a pile of old papers and defunct Sunday school supplies. The trance suddenly became a thing of the past. She jumped to her feet and began an anxious search for her vanished property.

Two persons who came the nearest to experiencing the real thing in the line of spiritual visitation, of any I ever investigated, ended their lives in an insane asylum after years of notorious actions. It seems strange that the good Lord would permit members of his "favored few" to meet such a fate, thereby bringing discredit to the whole phenomena.

Now, some of you may say, "There are real trances where the victim is dead to the world and is beyond the possibility of being influenced by external happenings. They can be pricked with pins, burned with matches and pistols may be fired close to their heads without causing them to flinch." Certainly, I admit all that. A woman in an ordinary faint answers that description. The common epileptic attack may produce that effect and more. There are many explanations that might be given, none of them having anything to do with the Holy Ghost directly. There may have been occasions when the "Power of God" has directly produced this phenomena, but I never knew of a single instance. Of course many remarkable stories are afloat but when traced to their source are usually found to be the products of a disordered imagination.

I can readily see how a fluent speaker thoroughly in earnest and fully warmed to his subject, especially if he has ample personal magnetism, can sway his audience and make them see what he sees, or pretends to see, and feel what he feels. Among the emotional class of his hearers, probably those who are inclined to take his Biblical quotations literally, may be some who are "carried away" and enraptured with the theme; but not necessarily any more so when the talk is on religious subjects than any other of interest.

There are multitudes who are practically insane on religion; their dreams and hallucinations are accepted by the credulous "believers" as visions of supernatural origin, and God is held responsible.

I have attended meetings in little, over-heated rooms, without the slightest ventilation, and crowded to the utmost capacity. When the excitement ran high, I have more than once seen women faint. It appears that during a service of this kind the audience has no common sense, for at no other time would they assert that a simple faint was a "manifestation of the glory of God." An individual subject to Petit Mal is just as liable to have an attack during a religious meeting as anywhere else, and the fact should be recognised.

Now, I do not say that each and every one who is apparently overwhelmed during a religious service is more or less an impostor, but I do believe such phenomena can be explained without bringing in the supernatural. I know a person can feel supremely happy and light-hearted when he knows his sins are "blotted out," and when he realises that the door of heaven is practically opened to him. I do not wonder that he should shout.

I have, however, investigated hundreds of "trance" subjects of both sexes, all ages and conditions, and my

experience shows that those who are not outright imposters, with an object in view, have some physiological or psychological reason; and the religious phase was, or is, simply an exciting cause and not a prime factor.

Any physician with a large general practice is frequently brought in contact with exhibitions of mental and physical phenomena that could be just as truthfully grouped with the supernatural as those occurring under the stress of religious excitement.

In conclusion, I wish to say that it is possible that normal and healthy religious experience is true to the average human constitution, and hence true to the God in whose image man is created. It is also true that the past gives overwhelming evidence of the degrading influence of the terror-inspiring illusions that have accompanied the abnormal in religion.

I believe our prevailing theologies are founded upon an utterly false view of the relation of man to his creator—in other words, to the God of the Universe.

Pathological varieties of religious experience can explain piety itself no more than the mental and physical freaks of hysteria, with their sometimes astounding performances, explain true womanhood.

—The Searchlight.

Correspondence.

GAMBLING.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I am obliged to Mr. Bryce for his endeavor to make his position clear. But why labor the point of definition? I fear that the exactness that Mr. Bryce asks for is altogether unattainable: it can only exist in degree. How many definitions are there in the world of thought that command universal acceptance? In taking measures for the suppression of, say, burglary or highway robbery, a community would be severely practical in its methods. It would hardly wait the framing of an exact definition of robbery, that would exclude much that passes for legitimate trading, before taking action. Yet this is Mr. Bryce's position *re* gambling, in relation to street betting: he would have the definition first, absolute and exact, at all costs.

Personally, I think that too much logic-chopping and word-juggling obtains in the ethical world. A given task or desire is not capable of accurate analysis and definition; though it may, in effect, be positively harmful to a community. An open, glaring evil is at once evident to all normal, right-thinking men: unanimity obtains. But once give rein to philosophical speculations concerning accuracy of definition, to say nothing of suppositions turning upon cause and effect, then trouble begins, and nothing is done. Philosophical speculations are not conducive to action. Philosophical exactitude is all very well in its place, but it has limitations. Here we have a large and growing evil, that of street betting, in which women and children are rapidly becoming involved: a state of affairs that calls for the strongest condemnation and for prompt and vigorous action. While respectable homes are being wrecked, and children are suffering irreparable injury, we philosophically wait for a definition and—a label.

ALFRED J. HOPKINS.

CHURCH AND STATE IN FRANCE.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I suppose there is room for difference of opinion as to the proper course for the French Government to pursue in its treatment of the Catholics. Huxley once remarked that he would stamp out superstition by force if necessary. Others would probably agree, assuming that this method would be effective instead of making cheap martyrs.

John Morley—whose contributions to Freethought literature are significantly reviewed in the January issue of the *Edinburgh Review*—in an article contributed to the *Fortnightly Review* in 1879, remarked:—

"We may understand the desire of a French liberal to be avenged on the party which for so many years has kept his country in an inextricable network of fiery perils. But this is a mere infirmity of the flesh. Hatred is not in the catalogue of a statesman's virtues. Party revenge is no fit passion for a man who loves his country. Let the clericals steal our maxims, but never let them tempt us into borrowing their methods."

Why cannot the French Government do what the British Government should do here: circulate primers on evolution in all schools?

J. A. REID.

[French official school-books are the most admirable in the world.—EDITOR.]

A VETERAN'S TESTIMONY.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—May I, as a Freethinker of many years' standing, be granted the privilege of saying a word in your valuable paper relative to myself in connection with Freethought?

I may say that I was born and brought up of religious parents so far back as the second decade of the last century, and I may here relate my experience relative to religion when quite a child eight or nine years old. Then, for the first time, I realised and felt my position as a responsible being who would be tried some day for all the sins of my life, with the fearful impending result that after this life terminated I should be transmitted to a region of eternal happiness or otherwise consigned to a place of eternal pain and anguish with devils and the damned for ever and ever. The realisation of this my position filled me with alarm and anguish. Oh how I wished I had never been born! Oh how I longed for some way to creep out of life! But this seemed impossible, and intensified my anguish.

I kept my trouble a profound secret, revealing it to no one; but I never forgot it.

Years passed, and association with kind religious friends that possessed more faith than reason, and who were also very sincere, induced me ultimately to become a member of a Christian Church (the Congregationalists). With the members and minister I was on the most intimate terms. Our minister and self were about the same age, and both socially disposed; indeed, I think that in this respect our minister overstepped the bounds of propriety, as he voluntarily revealed to me a hint of his private religious ideas, which were to this effect—"that God would not be seen in heaven." "Not be seen in heaven," I replied; "who would, if God would not, be seen there? Would Jesus Christ be seen there?" I inquired. "Yes," he replied, in quite a subdued manner, evidently quite confused. This, in addition to some doubts that already occupied my mind, prompted to more close thinking; and ultimately, in great pain of mind, I had to dissociate myself from friends I had much regard for. I was now sailing upon the Ocean of Doubt without a rudder, until I espied by accident G. J. Holyoake, who kindly volunteered to be my guide. He edited the *Reasoner*, which I read with much interest, and was strongly impressed with its moral force. Since then I have read the *Reformer*, under that notable character, C. Bradlaugh, whose death I consider a loss to humanity. I have now read the *Freethinker* with pleasure for many years, and look hopefully for it every week, without disappointment; and beg to congratulate the Editor, his staff, and the occasional contributors, upon their thorough efficiency in procuring and maintaining the leading and most progressive journal of the day.

A word more. I have now entered upon the third year in the tenth decade of my life, and have pleasure in stating that the principles maintained and enforced by the *Freethinker* yield me, as I descend the declivity of life, that peace and happiness and tranquility of mind which I think is rarely to be realised from any superstitious source.

J. J.

THE CHURCH AND RELIGION.

It is meet that men should sing hymns to their God. The departed hero deserves a requiem.

Rum and missionaries have done more than bullets to annihilate the American Indian.

The prevailing Christian precept: Make your neighbor turn the other cheek.

Heaven is so uninviting a place that a monstrous pack of priests is needed to drive us into it.

The church is a conspiracy to corrupt men's morals.

Great fear of Paradise will some day drive me to crime.

Heaven and Hell are man's hopes and his fears extended beyond the grave.

Many deeds are enacted in God's name which fill the Devil's heart with envy.

Conscience is extinct among us, but it is said to linger still among the more savage tribes of Africa: proof that there is a pressing need for more missionaries.

I like that pathetic statement of a certain Frenchman: The Americans are a Christian nation; that is, they go to church on Sundays.

On Fifth-avenue, during the warm months, God, like his neighbors, boards up his city abode and retires to his summer home.

Listening to sermons is a gentle self-torture which a heavy conscience enjoins upon us.

It is said that the negro women of Africa preserve their chastity until they put on skirts and Christianity.

Prayer is the stimulant of the feeble.

A full-bred St. Bernard is more moral than a Clergyman.

—Abraham Miller, "Unmoral Maxims."

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, etc.

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

LONDON.

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S. (North Camberwell Hall, New Church-road): 7.30, F. A. Davies, "Freethought in the Bible."

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Workman's Hall, 27 Romford-road, Stratford): 7.30, C. Cohen, "Christianity, Freethought, and Women's Rights."

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Prince of Wales Assembly Rooms, Broad-street): 7, Herbert Thompson, "Holiday in Belgium." With lantern views.

EDINBURGH BRANCH N. S. S. (Masonic Hall, 11 Melbourne-place): 6.30, Dr. T. R. Matthews, M.B.

FAIRFORTH SECULAR SUNDAY SCHOOL (Pole-lane): 6.30, Madame Ethel Roberts, Recital.

GLASGOW BRANCH N. S. S. (Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): J. T. Lloyd, 12 noon, "The Two-Edged Sword of Reason"; 6.30, "Secularism in Self-Defence."

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Secular Hall, Rusholme-road): G. W. Foote, 3, "Mr. Bernard Shaw and God"; 6.30, "Do the Dead Live?" Tea at 5.

NEWCASTLE RATIONALIST DEBATING SOCIETY (Lockhart's Cathedral Café): Thursday, Jan. 31, at 8, A. Tarn, "Can We Do Without Religion?"

PLYMOUTH RATIONALIST SOCIETY (Foresters' Hall, Octagon): 7, G. F. H. McCluskey, "The Religion of the Future."

WEST STANLEY BRANCH N. S. S. (8 Langley-terrace, Annfield Plain): 3.30, Andrew White, "Charles Bradlaugh."

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