

# THE Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

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*Reason thinks ; Religion dreams.*—VERGNIAUD.

## Christian Hooliganism.

THE *Freethinker* is generally boycotted. There is a common conspiracy of silence against it. Its very name is like that of the old God of the Jews, which was never to be spoken. The first syllable of its name is enough. If you say the "Free" in Christian ears they know perfectly well what is coming, for there is only one "Free" paper in Great Britain—as far as religion is concerned. And naturally that "Free" paper is the "*Freethinker*," since the only people who are *free* are those who *think*.

Now and then the conspiracy of silence is accidentally broken, and on these occasions the Christians display another aspect of their attitude towards "infidelity." When this journal *must* be talked about, they take the opportunity of reviling and slandering it. "Wicked," "indecent," "obscene," "filthy"—these are some of their flowers of description. They are well aware it is all nonsense; they know very well that they lie; but the lie is to the glory of God, and its practical object is to keep the *Freethinker* from being read.

Let there be no mistake on this point. The orthodox policy towards this journal is not entirely due to fanaticism. It is largely a matter of business. They pretend to believe that the *Freethinker* is weak, foolish, ignorant, and ill-conditioned; that it would never influence a sensible and decent person: or, if it did, that it would only confirm him in his Christianity, and sicken him with the very name of Free-thought. That is what they *pretend* to believe. But what they *really* believe is the reverse of all this. And the proof of it lies in their actions. If they really believed that this journal promoted Christianity and injured Free-thought, they would advise people to read it; but as they advise them *not* to read it, they obviously believe that it promotes Free-thought and injures Christianity. It is calculated to cause a slump in the orthodox soul saving business; and for this reason, no less than because of its "wicked opinions," the professional soul-saver dreads the advent of this journal amongst his congregation. Indeed, he doesn't feel safe while he knows there is a single copy of it in the neighborhood; and when he cannot ignore its existence, he warns everybody against it, without mentioning it, by means of the most fantastic circumlocutions.

A newspaper instance of the last ostrich trick occurred in connection with the Police-Court case which is reported in another column, and which will be dealt with later on in this article. The dear *Daily News*, which always suppresses our name when it can, extends the same generous hospitality to the name of our paper; so, instead of plainly saying "the *Freethinker*," it said "a journal devoted to

Freethinkers." Good old bird! It fancies that what it will not see does not exist. But occasionally it sends a reporter, say to the *Tribune* Rendezvous meeting on Secular Education, and finds the man, whom it requested to consider himself dead, talking and being applauded as though he were the most alive person in the assembly. Which must be very embarrassing—not to say painful, and even disgusting.

We shall deal with that Police-court case presently. Meanwhile, we wish to say a few words about the annual field-day at West Ham.

Many of our readers will remember that there was a battle-royal over the *Freethinker* at West Ham some years ago. The local Christian bigots wanted it thrown out of the Free Library, and the debate waxed so fast and furious that it nearly led to a poll of the ratepayers on the question. Finally, a compromise (dear to the English heart!) was arrived at; the *Freethinker* was not to be laid upon the reading-room tables with other papers, but was to be kept behind a screen and handed out when asked for.

This idiotic arrangement the West Ham Branch of the National Secular Society has just made another attempt to upset. It sent a request to the Committee "that the *Freethinker* be placed on the tables at the West Ham Public Libraries equally with the religious journals." The Committee reported against this reasonable request. Councillor Jones, however, moved in open Council meeting that the request be acceded to. He spoke well in support of his motion; so did Councillor Devenay, who seconded, and Councillor Davis, who took the same side; but the vote was a foregone conclusion. *Eleven* voted for religious journals being honored by the company of the *Freethinker*, and *thirty* voted in favor of their being protected against it by the screen. When the screen comes down, as in the *School for Scandal*, the play will be over.

Some fancied that there was going to be justice all round when everybody had a vote. We were never under that delusion. Pioneers have always to face and fight the mob. Down at Birmingham, it is the Lord Mayor who grants the Secularists the use of the Town Hall, and the public committees that deny them the use of a school-building or the right to sell or give away Free-thought literature even at the Town Hall meetings. The very Christians who read that the mob cried "Crucify him! Crucify him!" at their "Savior" howl in exactly the same way for the suppression of Freethinkers. They are just like the mob of nineteen hundred years ago—which shows what immense good their religion has done in the world.

And now for the Police-court case—the report of which was doctored for the London papers, and circulated in that condition all over the country. The word "filthy," as applied to the *Freethinker*, was put into the magistrate's mouth. It is simply

another orthodox fraud. But those who remember Dr. Torrey will not wonder at that.

Mr. Waldron's manners are notorious. We have no doubt whatever that he did assault the frail little man who was distributing copies of the *Freethinker*. The man went straight into the meeting and told our shop manager, who was there, that a man in clerical garb had gripped him by the throat and thrown him down in the roadway, and shouted that "he was Waldron"—while five or six other clericals destroyed his papers. And as the man did not know Mr. Waldron by sight, it is obvious that he must have been told his assailant's name. Moreover, the assault was not really denied by Mr. Waldron until he had to practise discretion in a court of law.

We might inform Mr. Waldron that if he wants further exercise in throat-gripping he could be obliged. There are Freethinkers of greater strength and tougher throats than the one he tackled at Wandsworth. But he is not our game at present. We have to deal just now with something more important. And that something is the magistrate's decision.

Now to understand that decision the reader must bear in mind that Wharmby was not in Mr. Waldron's meeting, nor on the pavement outside, but in the roadway. The magistrate's judgment, therefore, amounts to this—that distributors of literature, even in the roadway, must expect to have their papers taken from them by violence and destroyed, if there happens to be a meeting of people of different views in the vicinity. But this is not English law. Moreover, it is a distinct encouragement to a breach of the peace. If violence may be resorted to on one side, it may be resisted on the other, and the upshot of that may be something very serious. And does not the magistrate see that if Mr. Waldron may seize and destroy hostile literature outside his meeting-place, Freethinkers may do the same thing? Practically we are invited to do it. Christians frequently distribute leaflets outside our meetings. They have done it again and again at Queen's Hall. Are we to Waldronise them in future? That is what the magistrate's decision comes to.

The magistrate made another grave mistake. Occupants of the bench should never pass opinions on what is not before them. When the reverend gentleman (heaven save the mark!) resorted to the dirty trick of passing up an ancient copy of the *Freethinker*, as if it were the copy distributed at the time of the assault—a proceeding for which he was afterwards gravely reprimanded—the magistrate had no right whatever to say that it was "indecent." Our reputation is as valuable as his. The *Freethinker* was never indecent. That word is grossly misused by our Christian adversaries. Our old caricatures of Bible stories were called (by Christians) indecent attacks on Christianity. Having got the word "indecent" in, they proceeded to use it in quite a different sense, as a synonym for "obscene." Now the *Freethinker* was certainly prosecuted for "blasphemy." Why was it never prosecuted for "obscenity"? Because there was no obscenity in it. Obscenity is one of the last things to be expected of the writers in this journal. We have steadily refused even to print a "filthy" text from the Bible. It would be a pollution of our pages.

"Indecent" used to fly about at West Ham. But during the recent Town Council debate, all the "mud" that Councillor Knight could find in the *Freethinker* was in three sentences, which we have not even taken the trouble to verify:—

- (1) The Church is a conspiracy to corrupt men's morals.
- (2) It is said that the negro women of Africa preserve their chastity until they put on skirts and Christianity.
- (3) A full-bred St. Bernard is more moral than a clergyman.

Whether these sentences are accurate is not the point. Are they *indecent*? That is the point. They are *not*. And the Waldrons and others who say otherwise—LIE. We know it—and they know it.

G. W. FOOTE.

## Christianity and Sin.

THE excitement in the religious world over the "New Theology"—which, according to theologians, has the peculiarity of not being theology, and which is certainly not new—has had the effect of inducing a shoal of sermons on the Christian doctrine of sin. Mr. Campbell says that Christians are apt to lay too much emphasis on sin, as though it were the most important fact in the universe; and his opponents retort that the "New Theology" is un-Christian in slurring over the fact of sin, and ignoring Christian teaching on this head. In this controversy, an outsider may sympathise with Mr. Campbell while admitting that his opponents occupy the more logical position. His protest is a symptom of a healthy revolt against an essentially unhealthy doctrine; theirs is a protest based upon a logical adherence to one of the oldest and most authoritative of Christian teachings. It is the logic of facts against the logic of creeds, and in the end the former must win. Nay, the issue was decided before Mr. Campbell opened his mouth. Real teachers and thinkers have long since thrown the Christian doctrine of sin overboard. Mr. Campbell is only following some distance in their rear, although he may still be a deal in front of the body of Christians. Whether one is a revolutionist or a conservative depends upon the character of one's associates.

I am using the word "sin" in an ethical rather than a theological sense, and as covering all that is usually meant, or what ought to be meant, by immorality. I think in this way we may avoid confusion, and also that it will better bring out the unsound views Christianity has taken of the subject. Starting with its doctrine of human depravity, its influence on morals has been essentially unhealthy. Its dwelling upon the prevalence of "sin" has been as morbid as it is untrue. And in spite of all its efforts, normal human nature does not really believe in its teaching. The average man does not regard himself as a "miserable sinner," nor is he continually dwelling upon the sinfulness of his desires. Were even a Christian, once away from church or chapel, told that he was a miserable sinner, or that his appearance would encourage such a belief, there would at once be all the materials for a police-court case. These are phrases that he repeats in church and usually forgets—as he ought—directly afterwards. If he bears them in mind it is only so far as they concern someone else; he confesses them himself for the sake of example. Or if any are affected, they are sensitive characters, such as do not need the teaching. The bad are untouched, the good are made hyper-sensitive and, finally, unsound. Emerson saw this when he said: "Our young people are diseased with the theological problems of original sin, predestination and the like"; and wisely adds: "These never presented a practical difficulty to any man—never darkened across any man's road who did not go out of his way to seek them. These are the soul's mumps and measles and whooping-cough."

The historic Christian conception of human nature is at best a poor one; at worst, debasing. Its great ideal is suffering; its great emphasis on the fact and prevalence of sin. And from the figure of Jesus on the cross to the latest modern revival, we are moving in an unhealthy atmosphere. To take the emphasis on suffering first. It is simply untrue that suffering is useful as an ideal or helpful as an aid to development. All the emphasis placed upon its purifying character has been misplaced. For one that *may* have been made better by it, there are a hundred that have been crushed or made callous thereby. The common experience of life is that continued suffering makes people selfish and exacting, while socially they grow clod-like, apathetic and degraded. I know it is said that but for suffering we should not have the splendid examples of men and women who have given even their lives to benefit their fellows. But *their* character was not developed by suffering,

only excited into activity by contemplating it in others. Those who actually experienced the suffering were too deadened thereby to help themselves. A crisis does not create character; it only brings into expression what has been developed under other conditions.

The perfection of life by suffering is a biological impossibility. The only apparent justification for a belief to the contrary is the truth that sheer idleness is enervating. And all this really means is that development is dependent upon effort. Persistent effort, however, is not called forth by suffering, but by its reverse. One need only observe two animals, the one in pain, the other in possession of perfect health, to verify this. And the statement holds equally true of human beings. The effect of suffering is to benumb and depress. It robs the organism of spontaneity, and in time of even the desire for improvement. One might as reasonably hope to create good health by cultivating disease as to create a desirable character by suffering. Heine was right in calling the Christian era the "sickness period" of humanity. One day it will be recognised that Christianity, with its glorifying of pain and idealising of suffering, has been very largely responsible for the persistence of many of the evils that now afflict the race.

The attitude of historic Christianity towards suffering is paralleled by its attitude towards sin. It has long been a commonplace with Christian preachers that virtue springs from a consciousness of sin, and their whole efforts have been, as a consequence, to develop this feeling of personal sinfulness. But this is simply untrue, and its being untrue goes far to explain the Christian failure in the sphere of morals. For the principle ignores the exercise and influence of the social sentiment which is the really important factor in a developed morality. Good conduct and good character is created neither by ethical philosophy nor religious hopes and fears. The former may succeed in developing a prig; the latter is an appeal to crude selfishness, no matter how disguised. And by-and-bye, when the superstitious beliefs drop—as drop they must—all that is left in the character is the selfishness that has been so long appealed to. This simple consideration will amply explain the moral failure of Christianity. It ignored the fact that our morality is an outcome of our social existence, and that all healthy development must involve constant reference to the social medium—or fail.

A healthy mind no more possesses a "consciousness of sin" than a healthy organism has a consciousness of digestive organs. Ill-health, actual or imaginary, is the condition of a consciousness of either or both. Neither disease nor moral obliquity are the largest facts in life, although a disordered imagination may easily make them so. The hypochondriac sees disease everywhere, and the same thing is equally true of the moral hypochondriac. Of course, in the majority of cases the confession of a "consciousness of sin" is mere cant, while in others it is due to the effect of emotional preaching on a hysterical temperament. Dr. Starbuck, in his *Psychology of Religion*, has collected a number of cases of confessants of eleven, twelve and thirteen years of age, that clearly belong to the latter class. When one reads of the confessions of hardened iniquity by children of these ages, belonging to decent families, and who are brought up in a decent manner, there can be no hesitation in classing such cases as pathological. The organism is developed along a radically unhealthy line, and there results that jaundiced view of life that is so striking a feature of orthodox Christian morality.

A good illustration of this may be seen in the attitude of Christianity towards sex. Sexual morality must, of course, take up a large portion, directly and indirectly, of morality in general. But it is not by any means the whole of morality. Yet thanks to Christian emphasis on this one aspect of conduct, it has come to practically monopolise the whole field of ethics. Speak of anyone as being immoral, and

in an ordinary Christian assembly ninety-nine out of a hundred will understand by the expression sexual immorality. The Christian consciousness has become obsessed by the very thing it has been fighting against. Its crusade in favor of cleanliness has resulted in making it essentially unclean. An undraped statue, a painting of a nude figure, suggests little to it but indecency. And the more pronounced the puritanism, the greater the prurience. Sexual matters have been so rigorously tabooed, and the taboo so constantly kept before the people, that other things have been obscured. And the grand result of this is that other aspects of conduct, many of which legal enactments are powerless to effect, have been neglected. Tradesmen may adulterate their goods, debtors evade their responsibilities, friendship neglect its responsibilities, and truthfulness be more honored in the breach than the observance, without exciting the epithet immoral. This is reserved for the one offence that a prurient puritanism loves to dwell upon. It is due to this cause that we find so many petty vices and meannesses flourishing side by side with great emphasis on the religious value of morality and the confession of an awakened "consciousness of sin." In their way Christians have done their best to demonstrate their own doctrine of human depravity.

The meditation of a free man, says Spinoza, is not a meditation of death, but of life. One may paraphrase this and say that a healthy character is not engrossed by a consciousness of sin, but by a spontaneous feeling of goodness. One may depend upon it that when we come across people who are obsessed with the prevalence of vice—here one who is always dwelling upon the prevalence of sexual offences, there another gloating upon the vileness of human nature—in all such cases we are dealing with more or less unsound characters. Above all, one ought to distrust the "reformed" character who spends all his reformed life gloating over his past misdeeds. There is no real reformation here. He is simply living over again all his past misdeeds, and his avoidance of actual faults once committed will be most likely more than compensated by the expression of a deformed nature in other directions. "You will never," says Emerson, "see anything worse than yourselves"; and one may add you will never see anything better. What one gets out of life depends upon one's ability to appreciate what is in it. Historic Christianity has very largely taken man at his lowest, and he has consequently taken life at its worst. A declining faith in religion will doubtless enable him to shake off this "consciousness of sin" and develop an appreciation of virtue. And by that time he will probably have discovered that the exemplary effect of a frank enjoyment of the beauties of life is far more important than a morbid prurient dwelling upon its darker features.

C. COHEN.

### The Making of the Gospels.—I.

ACCORDING to the orthodox or traditional view of the Gospels, the Jesus portrayed in those books is a strictly historical personage, who said and did everything therein recorded of him, and much more which has not been recorded—an omission for which we ought to be truly thankful. The statements which we hear continually advanced in support of the authenticity and credibility of the Gospel narratives may be briefly summarised as follows:—

1. That the four Gospels are authentic apostolic writings composed by Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, two of whom (Matthew and John) were apostles and witnesses of all they record; while, of the other two, Mark was a companion of Peter, and Luke one of the fellow-laborers of Paul.

2. That in the four Gospels we have four independent accounts of the life and ministry of Jesus; the First Gospel recording the events and circumstances witnessed by the disciple Matthew, the Second and

Third Gospels representing respectively the substance of the preaching of Peter and Paul, and the Fourth Gospel being written by the disciple John to supplement the other three.

3. That these four Gospels were written under the supernatural influence of the Holy Ghost, which informed and directed the writers, and kept them free from error; so that the accounts contained in those books are perfectly trustworthy and true in every particular.

These extravagant views are still held and taught by a large number of Christian teachers and preachers, and are implicitly believed by the majority of church and chapel-goers. Only a small minority of Biblical scholars have completely given them up, and of these but a comparative few have the honesty or courage to admit that the old orthodox position is no longer tenable. The Christian advocates and apologists who still hold and believe the foregoing unwarrantable statements, when pressed for corroborative evidence, have nothing better to offer than the following so-called "testimonies": (1) The existence of ancient MSS. of the Gospels; (2) the internal evidence of authenticity and credibility contained in the narratives themselves; (3) the testimony of ancient Christian writers called "Fathers"; and (4) the evidence derived from recent discoveries. When, however, we come to examine these wonderful "testimonies" we find that they furnish no proofs whatever. There are no manuscripts extant of an earlier date than the fourth or fifth century; the Gospels contain no internal evidence of the truth of the narratives; we have not the testimony of a single ancient writer which proves the existence of the four canonical Gospels within a hundred years of the traditional date of the alleged Crucifixion; nothing recently discovered proves the Gospels to have originated in the first century. Furthermore, an examination of both the internal and the external or historical evidence relating to the Gospels yields abundant proof of the fictitious character of the narratives. From these sources we learn that the Gospels were not written in apostolic times; that the first three (the Synoptics) are not independent accounts, but are compilations made from more ancient Christian writings, whose authors (or collectors) are unknown. In short, we find that the events recorded in all four Gospels are nothing but baseless legends, collected and written during the first half of the second century.

The Rev. J. J. Scott, Canon of Manchester, whose arguments and admissions were dealt with in a former paper, tells us in the plainest language possible that "Scholars are now of opinion that the likeness between the Synoptic Gospels is due to the fact that St. Matthew and St. Luke wrote with St. Mark's Gospel before them, and embodied in their Gospels such portions of St. Mark's Gospel as they deemed suitable for the purpose." Also, that the portions of the First and Third Gospels which were not copied from Mark's Gospel were derived from some unknown pre-existing writings: "Generally it is believed that St. Matthew and St. Luke made use of a Gospel or fragment of a Gospel that is now lost." So much for the Gospels being independent histories or accounts written by eye-witnesses.

The traditional view is thus seen to be a mere theory which may, without the slightest hesitation, be set aside as erroneous, there being no evidence of any kind to support it, but a great deal that may be adduced to prove it both untenable and ridiculous. Anyone is therefore free to propound a new theory which may accord better with all the evidence we possess, and this I propose to do in the present series of papers. Of course, if any reader can show that my presentment of the Gospel "history" is at variance with proved facts, he is at liberty to do so. I am always glad to be set right upon matters I may have misconstrued or overlooked.

Before coming to the thesis to be propounded, it will be necessary first to consider what portions of the New Testament (if any) may reasonably be accepted as evidence relating to a historical Jesus or

the early Christian Church. Well, foremost among the writings mentioned are the Epistles ascribed to Paul, the authenticity of some of which—say, the first four—is admitted by nearly all critics. We may, I think, take those which Renan classifies as "Incontestable" and "Undoubted," as in all probability authentic, notwithstanding their rejection by Van Manen. Whether the writer's name was Paul or not, does not matter in the least; nor is it of much consequence whether the letters were addressed to the churches to whom they are attributed. It is sufficient that the Epistles referred to bear internal evidence of having been composed by a popular Christian teacher who lived and wrote before the Gospel stories and legends had come into circulation. It is, in fact, now admitted by all Biblical critics that the four canonical Gospels were not composed until after the time of the writer of the Pauline Epistles—a fact which enables us to see how much (or how little) of the Gospel "history" that writer was acquainted with. The authentic Epistles are: (Incontestable) Galatians, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, and Romans; (Undoubted) 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians, and Philippians. In receiving these (or some of them) as genuine, we have at the same time to reject all manifest interpolations, of which 2 Cor. xi. 32-33 may be cited as an example.

One other book in the New Testament may be accepted as probably authentic. This is the Book of Revelation or Apocalypse, which was composed in the last quarter of the first century—and before the appearance of the Gospels. We may, furthermore, obtain some kind of evidence from some of the other New Testament books, but not of a strictly historical character. Thus, though the "history" recorded in the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles is undoubtedly fictitious—that is, as regards the sayings and doings attributed to Jesus and the apostles—these books contain evidence of what was believed, at the time those books were written, of the supposed founder of the Christian religion and of the religious observances of the primitive Jewish Christians. This may not be apparent to many at first sight, but the fact is beyond all doubt. We have, then, to see what historical facts (if any) are derivable from the two sources named. This done, we shall have a clearer idea of the circumstances connected with the making of the Gospels.

ABRACADABRA.

(To be continued.)

## Sin and Death.

FOR a month or two both the Pulpit and the Press have been vigorously discussing the subject of sin and its penalty. The Old Theology charges the New with having repudiated the Christian doctrine of sin, and the charge is doubtless true. In the Bible, sin is represented as an inherited taint of soul and enslavement of will. We are all born sinful and we cannot help disobeying God. Mankind is in a fallen state, a state of chronic and inevitable enmity against the Almighty, and for this it is held responsible, though it cannot help itself. Jews and Greeks are "all under sin." "There is none righteous, no, not one; there is none that understandeth; there is none that seeketh after God; they have all turned aside, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not so much as one" (Rom. iii. 9-12). We are all "by nature children of wrath." That is to say, we have received from our first parents a sinful nature, and consequently it is quite impossible for us to obey the divine law, or to be delivered from our mortal infirmity, without a special act of divine interposition. The Church adopted this Biblical doctrine of sin and elaborated it into a rigid theological dogma. Now it is as a complete deliverance from this state of sheer helplessness through sin that the Christian scheme of salvation has always been presented by the orthodox Church. Without faith in Christ as a divine sacrifice

for sin, without trust in his finished work, we are doomed to everlasting death, and the wrath of God shall ever abide upon us.

What this penal death means no one can exactly tell us. Many theologians still hold that it signifies the death of the whole man, or annihilation. Had man never sinned he would never have known death. Death is the direct consequence of Adam's transgression. Concerning the forbidden fruit the Deity said to the first gardener, "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." The fruit was eaten, but the eater did not instantly die. "No," replies the dogmatic theologian, "he did not actually die, but he became a dying man the moment his teeth gripped the apple." But the majority of the orthodox divines, knowing that death was in the world thousands and millions of years prior to the appearance of man, allege that the word should be interpreted spiritually or morally. It was Adam's soul that died in the day he tasted of that forbidden fruit. Preaching in Wellington Church, Glasgow, the other Sunday evening, the Rev. G. H. Morrison, M.A., admitted that death is much older than sin and is universal. He said:—

"If man and man alone went to the grave, then death and sin might be indeed intertwined; but as a man dies, so does the sparrow die, so do the cattle upon a thousand hills, and so does the beast that hides in untrodden forests, so does the thing that creeps under unfathomed seas. Beast and bird, monster of the deep—not one of them has ever known what sin is, yet they are in the grip of death no less than man."

The first half of Mr. Morrison's sermon is eminently sensible and forcibly expressed; but in the second half he loses himself altogether. He maintains that Paul knew what he was about when he taught that human death is caused by sin. The great apostle never lost his head in an argument. The preacher goes further and asserts that Paul's idea pervades the whole New Testament. "I think I can show you," he says, that this idea "is a vital part of the method and of the message of the Gospel. I think I can show you that in the thought of Jesus there is something monstrous and unnatural in death, and that it is not less certainly the child of sin because the sister of sleep." As an example of what Jesus thought of death we are referred to the raising of Lazarus. But what there is in that alleged miracle to indicate that Jesus regarded death as monstrous and unnatural Mr. Robinson does not succeed in making clear. He says: "I do not think that that attitude of Jesus ["he groaned in the spirit and was troubled"] suggests that death was eminently natural. If it was natural and kindly, then to call back Lazarus was a most unnatural and unkindly thing." That may be ingenious, but it is not true. It is false exegesis. The object of the miracle was, not to show the monstrosity and unnaturalness of death, but to convince the people that Jesus was the Anointed of the Father and, as such, was stronger than the grave (John xi. 15, 40-42). Mr. Morrison is equally unfortunate in his allusion to the death of Jesus. Neither in the agony in the garden nor in the crucifixion is there anything even so much as to hint that death in itself is unnatural. The most prominent feature of the preacher's argument is its utter irrelevancy. The only question to be faced is this: Wherein does a man's death differ from a dog's? If there is no difference, Mr. Morrison admits that Christianity falls to the ground; and rather than that such a catastrophe should occur, he assumes an essential difference, but has no proof to offer. This is how he reasons:—

"The glory of Christ is that he looks on men as something greater and grander than beasts, something so much more great than what in a beast is natural may, in a Godhead-kindled humanity, be monstrous. You say death is universal, therefore man must die; do you not see that that 'therefore' absolutely depends on one thing, namely this, that in man there are no elements save the elements that you discover in the beasts? If there is more, if there is something higher, if there be that which makes man kith and kin with God, then the very fact makes death demand a different explanation."

Well, you may pile your *ifs* as high as the Himalayas; but the fact remains that, apparently, the same end overtakes all living things. So far as we know, man is the highest animal, and nothing more. We have no right to affirm that there are any elements in man other than those that we discover, at least germinally, in the beasts. Mr. Morrison asserts that "there are a thousand intimations that man is designed for immortality." "If death is natural," the preacher triumphantly exclaims, "what do you make of these?" Before answering this pertinent question, we demand the production of the "thousand intimations." Can Mr. Morrison name and describe ten of them, to start with? His friend who went to Canada, he tells us, had great boxes in the hold of the steamer, on each of which was written, "Not wanted for the voyage." Then he says: "Every one of these chests was an absurdity if everything was over after the ship reached Halifax." We agree; but when Mr. Morrison proceeds to observe that "man has a hundred things 'not wanted for the voyage,' and that are meaningless without life beyond," we insist on being told what they are, one by one. What does man possess for which there is no use or meaning in the present life? What organs of the body, what powers or faculties of the mind, can reasonably be labelled, "Not wanted for the voyage"? We challenge Mr. Morrison to specify a single one. We hold that the complete man is urgently wanted for the effective living of the present life.

But on the assumption that man is naturally immortal, in what sense can his death be the wages of sin? Mr. Morrison does not tell us. Now let us point out the absurdity of his teaching. If human death is unnatural and if its occurrence can only be accounted for by the fact of sin, how is it that it overtakes those who are alleged to have received the remission of sins through faith in Christ? Genuine Christians are spoken of as accepted and forgiven in the Beloved; and yet every one of them is paid the wages of sin. Not one of them has ever escaped the "last enemy." How does Mr. Morrison get over this anomaly? How does he explain the fact that saints and sinners alike are subject unto death?

But here is another difficulty. Not only have all men an equal share in death as a physical event, but in reality no man ever dies at all. Every man is immortal in body as well as in soul. After all, death is a make-believe, an illusion, a sham. "It is man that is immortal, soul and body one, each glorified to be the organ of the other; and if in the progress towards that immortality there comes a moment when they are rent asunder, a moment when soul and body, which make immortal man, are torn apart by a power we cannot stay, I say that demands an explanation different from that of the death of beast and bird." But what on earth is the preacher driving at? If man, soul and body, is immortal, and if all men have their souls and bodies rent asunder by what is called death, what purpose is served by this temporary separation, and if such a separation takes place, what guarantees the subsequent re-union? Does he intend to convey the idea that only the redeemed of the Lord are really immortal, or are we to understand that the wicked also shall live forever under the wrath of the Lamb? If he intends us to infer the latter, then the penalty of sin is not death, but immortality itself. In any case, Mr. Morrison is impaled on the horns of a dilemma of the worst type and he is half convinced that escape is impossible. "I am not here to force an explanation on you," he says, "I only say, here is the Gospel." Yes; here is the Gospel—tinkered out of all recognition by our modern preachers.

The New Theologians also delight in repairing or modernising the Gospel, but they have the honesty to acknowledge that on several points they are out of harmony with Paul and other Biblical writers. To no external authority whatever do they bow the knee. In their estimation, to sin is to disobey the God within or to act in opposition to the dictates of conscience. In other words, to be a sinner is to lead an anti-social life. Preaching at Bodmin the other

day, Mr. Campbell boldly declared that sin is only another word for selfishness, or for living for oneself at the expense of the public life. Strictly speaking, then, sin is not against God at all, whether within or without, but against the common good. The distinction between right and wrong is a product of the evolution of social life. Germinally this distinction exists and is enforced in a community of bees; and different stages of its development are to be observed in the human world of to-day. But this explanation of sin is at bottom Atheistic; and it must be admitted that the New Theology naturally leads to Atheism. It is the law of life that the sinner disregards, and it is this law that crushes him at the last. The law of life cannot be broken; but it can be insulted and ignored; yet the end of the sinner is death—the triumph of the law. This is practical Atheism. The New Theology pretends to believe in a God beyond the universe; but what is the use of having a God beyond when it is granted that he is completely powerless? And of what service is the God within, since he cannot rise above or in any way change the beings he is supposed to indwell? According to the New Theology, we have absolutely no knowledge of any being higher or more powerful than man; and as is well-known, man is exceedingly imperfect, blunderingly and often blindly feeling his way towards perfection; and his life is, therefore, a strenuous struggle, attended by many defeats, against opposing forces. And there are no intimations whatever that any Supreme or Almighty Power ever interposes either for good or for evil.

J. T. LLOYD.

### Acid Drops.

We know now who is the author of the New Theology. It is not the Rev. R. J. Campbell, but a much older and more important person. It is the Devil. We have the Rev. Dr. A. T. Pierson's word for it. He made the statement at the recent Canon-street Hotel protest meeting. He added that if the Higher Criticism had not been invented in hell, it ought to have been. After which, it is pleasant to recollect that lemonade and other cooling drinks were obtainable at the hotel bar.

Dr. Pierson had something more to say about the real author of the New Theology. He said that he had an intense hatred of the Devil, and prayed for his speedy destruction. But how is that to be brought about? The Devil has been in active opposition to the Lord for thousands of years—and successful opposition too; how on earth, then—or how in hell, if you prefer it—is his Black Majesty to be wiped out of existence so speedily? Who is to do it? God? There isn't the slightest evidence that he means to upset the old arrangement. Will the clergy do it? Not they. They can't afford to. Old Nick is their best friend. And if Robinson Crusoe had answered Man Friday's question honestly—"Why no God convert the Debbil?"—he would have said, "Because the clergy won't let him." As the old Scotch elder said, "A kirk wi'out a deil isna' worth a damn."

Glasgow Established Presbytery has resolved not to interfere with raffling at church bazaars. The common sense of the majority saw that money must be raised somehow, and that hindering the process was striking at the vitals of religion. Some pointed things, however, were said during the discussion. The Rev. Mr. Rankine said that five pound notes were raffled at bazaars, and the tickets went off like wildfire. In his opinion it was pure gambling. Some other speakers expressed similar sentiments. But they found that Scotsmen are not going to be dictated to when it comes to raising the wind.

What Christian education is doing in godly Scotland, where all the school-children have the Shorter Catechism drilled into them, may be seen from the confession of the Rev. R. S. Calderwood, of the Tolbooth Parish Church, Edinburgh, that in some streets in the centre of the city where "one may see exhibitions of rampant hooliganism which would disgrace an African village which had just imported a large supply of Hamburg gin."

St. Andrew's Church, Wakefield, was in want of a musical instrument to lead the praise in the parochial hall; and,

being unable to buy one, they referred the matter to the Lord. The result was that a Wakefield lady, who desired to be anonymous, made them a present of a new organ costing about £100. A nice answer to prayer! St. Andrew's Church need not trouble about collections while it can work that trick.

The proverb says that the better the day the better the deed, and perhaps as much may be said for the *place* as for the *day*. It may have been for this reason that an unknown woman, aged about forty-five, went into St. Luke's Church, Crosby, and swallowed two bottles of laudanum. She sat in a gallery pew in the attitude of prayer while doing the deed. We hardly fancy, therefore, that Dr. Torrey himself could call this a case of "atheist suicide."

"Socialism and Atheism" was the heading of a London County Council election half-column in the *Daily Express*. Of course the object of such a heading was simply to confuse and mislead the electors. It appears that four school-rooms, in various parts of London, are hired by Socialists for carrying on their Sunday Schools. This, of course, is shocking news to the *Express* and its friends; but our pious contemporary does not attempt to show why Socialists have not the same right as other citizens to hire public buildings, which are built and maintained by public money—or why they should not carry on Sunday Schools as well as Anglicans, Wesleyans, Baptists and Presbyterians. And now for the "Atheism." It appears that Mr. H. G. Chancellor, one of the Progressive candidates for North Islington, was asked after one of his speeches whether he would allow the Council's schools to be used for the propagation of Atheism by an Atheistic society; and his reply was: "Yes. I see no reason for refusing any one, subject to the condition as to damaging the school property." This was a wise, just, and brave answer, which does not in any way commit Mr. Chancellor to a friendship for Atheism, but only to the principle that Atheists, like other men, are entitled to the common rights of citizenship. Nor do we believe that this straightforward reply did the candidate any real injury. North Islington shared in the general Progressive rout—that is all; but in spite of it Mr. Chancellor polled more than the highest Progressive at the previous election.

Exeter Hall has been sold to a big catering firm for £30,000. It is to be devoted to profane uses—some say smoking concerts. A lot of such concerts will be necessary to disinfect the premises of cant and hypocrisy; for, after all those years, the place reeks with them. Seventy years have elapsed since Hood wrote his *Ode to Rae Wilson, Esquire*, in which he made the following reference to Exeter Hall:—

"That Hall where bigots rant, and cant, and pray,  
And laud each other face to face,  
Till ev'ry farthing-candle ray  
Conceives itself a great gas-light of grace."

How refreshing to read such writing nowadays! No wonder this powerful and biting Ode is omitted from some "respectable" editions of Hood.

Dr. Faber, formally known as the Court Chaplain to the Kaiser, declares that the voice of God was heard in the recent German elections, that God has taken Germany under his especial protection, and that the German people are destined to be the saving salt of the earth. Dr. Faber is evidently bent on earning the salary the Kaiser pays him; which is at least honest—and that is something in a preacher.

Mr. Foote's lectures at Queen's Hall are boycotted by the London press. He is followed by "Father" Ignatius, and the *Daily Chronicle* gives the preacher half a column of small type on Monday morning. Mr. Lync—that is the gentleman's name—said that the Devil was putting strange thoughts into people's heads. "We shall soon," he said, "be flying through the air quicker than the birds and going to France through a tunnel under the sea. Do you think God meant us to do these things?" Such is the Christian wisdom which the *Chronicle* prefers to Mr. Foote's freethought follies.

From a report in the local paper, we see that Mr. W. T. Lee has been delivering a course of anti-infidel lectures at Huddersfield. A gentleman in the audience asked if Mr. Lee would meet some Secularist leader in debate. Whereupon the lecturer said that he had already met Mr. Foote in debate "some eighteen times," and "was about tired of it." We are not much surprised at the latter portion of the statement, but the "eighteen" in the first portion warns one that, on questions of fact, Mr. Lee is not to be taken too seriously. His questioner then read some quotations from *Bible Romances*, and was met with the reply that he should

not trouble about the writings of a man "who wrote garbled rubbish and had no reputation to lose." Whether the author of *Bible Romances* has a reputation to lose or not we hardly care to discuss, as that question is best left to those who know what his work is. At any rate, no one will be in a hurry to take Mr. Lee as a decisive authority on whether a man has a reputation or not. On the statement of fact, we admit that much of what *Bible Romances* deals with is "rubbish," but must put that down as due to the source from which it is taken. For the rest, we should like Mr. Lee to point out just how much of it is "garbled." It would be at least an instructive occupation for him to be engaged in.

Whatever else may be said of the clergy it cannot be denied that they are good beggars—and often unblushing beggars. There is the Rev. D. J. Rounsefell, for instance, pastor of the Waterloo-road Mission, London, who carries on "Sundays for the People" in the Royal Victoria Hall, which was formerly the "Old Vic. Theatre." This gentleman appears to send out his begging letters by the aid of directories. A friend of ours, at a considerable distance from London, has received one of these missives, thanking him for his contribution last year and hoping he will repeat it. It is further stated, as a footnote, that his "kind gift" was "entered as from a friend." Of course our friend never gave anything last year; as a matter of fact, he never heard of Pastor Rounsefell or his Mission before. We suppose fish do get tickled into clerical hands in this way, but the manoeuvre fails when it is practised upon a Freethinker.

Mr. G. R. Sims has been expressing his opinions on the New Theology. He thinks the mischief caused by it will be "terrible," and proceeds, "It is the sad lot of most of us at various times in our lives to hear the beautiful Burial Service. Listen to the words that are spoken by the Christian Church at the bier of our holy dead. They are the expression of supreme faith, the faith that is a solace to myriads of mourning hearts in the last dread hour of parting. What has the New Theology to offer us in its place?" We have no doubt that the New Theology, if it has nothing more to face than Mr. Sims' slops, will pass through the ordeal of criticism easily enough. The expression of faith at the funeral of a Christian is as "supreme" as that at the funeral of a Jew or a Mohammedan—as much and no more. And in any case, the manner in which anyone meets death, and the way in which the survivors bear the pain of parting, is merely an indication of habit and education, never a proof of accuracy. Those who have lost faith in that for which the Burial Service stands do not feel the need of it, and bear their burden with at least as much courage as is shown by the average Christian. One wonders whether Mr. Sims really believes all he writes on this head. In any case, we would advise him to stick to his pet dogs and other animal friends. His readers must have got used to his meanderings on this subject; and it may be dangerous to test their patience with fresh absurdities on subjects with which he seems ill-equipped to deal.

Mr. R. J. Campbell has been lecturing at Cornwall, and the *Christian Commonwealth* supplies the news that his presence has created so great a sensation that a lady who saw him for the first time, exclaimed, "Oh! he is like an angel come down from Heaven." Shelley said that London resembled the other place.

The *Daily Mail*, which is so deeply concerned with the religious welfare of the country, and which has also gone to so much trouble to publish all the disgusting details of the Thaw case, regrets that Sir Oliver Lodge does not take enough note of Revelation—with a big R. It calls attention to the appalling fact that Sir Oliver quotes Scripture twice and modern poets over thirty times. The sapient *Chronicle* reviewer notes that the author challenges "the conclusion of Spencer that the world is a fortuitous concourse of atoms," and asks, "Is this catechism the knell of the Spencerian system?" This last is a gem of the rarest water. Spencer's teaching may live, or it may not; but the idea of its being killed by Sir Oliver Lodge's catechism is one that could only occur to a newspaper scribe whose deliverance rests upon an illimitable non-acquaintance with the subject upon which he is writing. And where on earth does Spencer teach that the world is a "fortuitous concourse of atoms?" Really, ignorance could hardly go further than this; and in this case, it must be noted, the form of the sentence is due to the reviewer, and not to Sir Oliver Lodge. If only these reviewers understood the subjects they write about, their reviews would be helpful instead of misleading. But then, perhaps, if they did, and expressed just what they thought, they would not be asked to write, and so there would be another difficulty to face.

"Merlin," of the *Referee*, who has written so much clotted bosh in defence of religious beliefs, has been lamenting that the present is "an age of lies," and that a considerable portion of the press is concerned with anything but stating sober facts. There is plenty of justification for both statements, and if "Merlin" will make an attempt to co-ordinate his ideas or his writings he will find this disregard of truth not altogether disconnected with the religious notions he has wasted so much sloppy sentiment on. For we live in a Christian country, among a people with whom the dominating religious influence for centuries has been Christianity, and it would indeed be strange if this had had no effect on their character. "The relation between organism and environment" is a sentence that is often used, but apparently seldom thought out, with the result that it ceases to play a dynamic part in one's mental make-up, but becomes a mere cover for ignorance or a substitute for a minute's serious thinking.

"Merlin" should reflect that in theory the duty of seeking truth and speaking truth has never been seriously insisted on by Christian leaders or by the Christian religion. And in practice it has always been considered more or less admissible to lie about one's religious opponents or in defence of one's religious opinions. Even in a notorious case like that of Dr. Torrey, when the lie has been nailed to the counter, Christian leaders unanimously agree to "wink the other eye." He was lying for God's sake, and so all was well. Of course, Christians have been told a deal about truth, but in the wrong way. They have been exhorted to follow, not truth, but *the truth*—that is, Christian teachings. And as Christianity was thus the only truth admissible, everything else became a lie, or, if it was not, it ought to have been; and its not being a lie made it all the more damnable. The result has been that the unprejudiced search for truth is a quality that Christians have been more deficient in than has any other people. The history of Christianity on the literary side has been a weary record of fraud and forgery. And on the personal side it has been a long tissue of shameless lies against opponents, and of an almost total disregard of the decencies of life where religious interests were concerned. Indeed, if "Merlin" can discover any other religion, even, that has laid less stress upon the right use of the intellect than has Christianity, or a religion with a greater record of lies, impostures and forgeries to its credit, then we solemnly promise to subscribe the sum of one shilling to the religious funds of the Salvation Army. Meanwhile, let "Merlin" reflect that a people are what their history and institutions make them; and if we are living in "an age of lies," Christianity cannot escape its share of responsibility for the result.

*Apropos* of the above, we may note a paragraph written by the editor of the *Sunday Circle* on Thomas Paine. The *Sunday Circle* is one of the group of religious journals owned by Harmsworths', who seem to have reduced the exploitation of the sillier section of the Christian public to a fine art. The editor, in answer to a correspondent, repeats the exploded lie of Paine calling on Jesus to save him while on his death-bed, and assures his readers of its truth. His authority—second-hand, of course—is the life by that notorious black-guard Cheetham; but he refers readers for confirmation to Sir Leslie Stephen's *English Thought in the Eighteenth Century*. Now, curiously enough, with a most uncritical acceptance of many of the legends concerning Paine, this is precisely the one that Stephen rejects, and asserts that Paine died "in a state of surly adherence to his principles." The editor had probably never read the work mentioned, and cared little whether what he said was true or not. He knows his readers and realises that ignorance is an easy prey for mendacity.

The *Christian Commonwealth*, which is "running" the Rev. R. J. Campbell, or trying to subsist on his sermons and the "New Theology" movement generally, also devotes a column to "Ethical Society Notes," in which we notice a good deal about that somewhat fantastic person, who should now be called the Rev. Dr. Coit. This gentleman appears to be full (just at present) of Christ and the New Christianity, but it is not easy to see what this has to do with the *Ethical* movement. Mr. J. M. Robertson is also spoken of very kindly, although he has written to prove that Christ was not a person at all, but a mythical and legendary character. Is he also going to be swept into the "New Christianity" enterprise?

Dr. Stanton Coit has passed through many strange vicissitudes since he came to England. One is always expecting to hear of his conversion to some new philosophy. At present he is an ardent admirer and advocate of Mr. Campbell and the New Theology. He has just been telling us of his

discovery of a brand new God, whose name is the Ethical Ideal. To this God he prays and sings hymns, and this God he enthusiastically worships. The Ethical Ideal! Where does he live? What does he do? Is he the God beyond, or the God within, or is he both combined? In consequence of this latest conversion, Dr. Coit figures in the religious journals as a preacher who hangs his sermons on Biblical texts and who claims to be a theologian. What next?

Father Bernard Vaughan is still preaching against the sins of Society—with a big S. He is particularly strong just now on ladies who don't add to the population. He says nothing about men who don't add to the population—including priests. Some people believe they *do* add to the population. But how could they? They are full of the Holy Ghost.

Father Vaughan says that if you look round the world, and especially round English society, you will say: "Jesus Christ might as well have stopped in Heaven." So he might. We have said so all along. We never could make out what he came for.

Mr. Keir Hardie, addressing a meeting at Lancaster on Sunday, said that in a Yorkshire constituency the Liberal candidate went round Dissenting chapels and paid off their debts, and in a month he was elected member for the constituency. Well, what of that? Hadn't he bought the seat? Who had a better right to it? He was a good man of business. So were the Dissenters.

"Thieves," a newspaper paragraph says, "have entered churches at Milton and Collingtree, in Northamptonshire, and stolen valuable silver and pewter articles. At each church they drank the sacramental wine." Awful! Fancy those thieves going off "full up" with the blood of Christ! What sacred objects they must have been in that condition! To have arrested them would have been little short of blasphemy. It is lucky they escaped.

According to the *Daily Mirror*, which takes religion as well as other sensationalism under its patronage, the majority of mankind have no proof of the life to come, and don't want it; they rely upon the "assurance from within." In other words, the belief produces a certain state of feeling, and that state of feeling is in turn made the justification of the belief. "H. H. F." ought to have sense enough to see that this is arguing in a circle. Perhaps he does, but doesn't like to say so. As for the statement that "Faith is stronger than the strongest evidence," it is no doubt in many cases true. People cling to superstitions in the very teeth of adverse evidence. But that is not a compliment. It only shows how superstitious they are.

George Granger, who was electrocuted at New York recently for murdering his employer, was a Christian Scientist; but not an old believer, for he was converted to Mrs. Eddy's tenets during his imprisonment. The electric current does not appear to have been affected by his belief. It did the regulation trick.

The men of God seem to be on the rampage in Burton. The Rev. J. J. G. Stockley, vicar of St. Paul's, has been declaring that "the fear of God" has nearly died out of modern society—which must be an alarming phenomenon to gentlemen in his line of business; for, if the fear of God is not the beginning of wisdom, it is certainly the beginning—and the middle and the end—of the trade of soul-saving. Then there is the Rev. J. H. James, of the George-street United Free Methodist Chapel, who has been denouncing Sunday golf and football. Once upon a time, this reverend gentleman says, people would stand sermons of three hours' duration; now they will hardly go to church at all, and when they do they want short services and awfully abbreviated sermons. Desecration of the Sabbath was only too common; the people were growing less religious and forgetting God. "Religion in England," Mr. James said, "was going backward, not coming forward; and if England forgot her great destiny Ichabod might be written across the history of England, as it was with other great nations who forgot their religious life." We judge that these gentlemen find trade bad. And we hope they will find it worse.

The *Newsagent* reports the annual social gathering of the Dumferline postal officials, who appear to have been highly flattered by the editor of the *Dumferline Journal*, who seems to have been the great speaker of the occasion. This gentleman said that both postal officials and journalists had a common prototype in Mercury, the Messenger and Herald of the Gods. But he overlooked the fact that Mercury was,

amongst other things, an inveterate liar and thief. He also "claimed for the post office and journalism another attribute of Divinity," as they were "proclaimers of the gospel of good news, the heralds of the world's salvation." Well, we fancy there *must* be men of that sort in the Post Office, considering the number of *Freethinkers* they manage to destroy, or at least to divert from their destination.

The Bishop of London reports that an undergraduate of Oxford, who was looking forward to entering the priesthood, wrote him asking "How could he preach about the pure in heart if he married?" If the Bishop had had more sense he would have kept the letter to himself and recommended the enquirer to consult a doctor. Being Bishop Ingram, he accepts the enquiry as a perfectly natural one, and answers it with the mild response that there is no objection to the married man preaching on the purity of life. Now here is a glorious outcome of centuries of Christian morality. A man who looks forward to becoming a parson—and he really seems fit for little else—has no other conception of marriage than that of a relationship between man and woman so essentially unclean that it unfits one to talk of purity to one's fellows. Of course, the view is Christian enough, as anyone knows who is conversant with the history of Christianity and with the marriage service in the Prayer Book. But imagine a mentally half-hatched man like the Bishop's correspondent with the impudence to set himself up as a trainer and educator of his fellows. It is little things like this that help one to realise what an unclean thing unadulterated Christianity really is.

Professor J. Churton Collins, reviewing in the first number of the *Nation* Mr. J. A. Farrer's new book on *Literary Forgeries*, makes a striking admission. "Nowhere," he says, "has forgery been more active than in theology." Perhaps this is as much as he could be expected to say. But the actual truth is that theology has been the greatest seed-plot of forgery. Faith, which is usually another name for credulity, always lends itself to deception. Hence it is that three-fourths of the so-called "Evidences" of Christianity are rank forgeries; while the New Testament books themselves are demonstrated to be mostly, if not entirely, the work of other men than those whose names they bear.

Talking about credulity, it would be difficult to beat the following yarn lately printed, apparently with good faith, in the *Daily News*. Lecturing at Loughborough, the Rev. C. H. Grundy stated that a man who read the lessons in his church rendered the story of the Flood so vividly that an old lady seated in the centre pew (of course, she would be in the centre pew) put up her umbrella.

Mrs. Eddy's son by her first marriage, Mr. George Washington Glover, has taken action against the ring of Christian Scientists who, as he alleges, are running the show in her name and using and investing her immense fortune for themselves. He alleges that she is too feeble to look after her own affairs. There is great excitement among Christian Scientists all over America at the news. Of course! We hope Mr. Glover will persist with his action and let daylight into the "Mother Eddy" combination.

The last number of the *Voice of Labor* (weekly) contained an article on "The Dundee Jute Workers and the Curse of Christian Charity." The writer explains how the local clergy keep their holy business going, and winds up by saying that the Christian Churches do the workers "no good, but much evil, by their so-called charity."

Church and Free Church are agitating together at Fish-lake against a school-teacher, Miss Gould, who is alleged to have given "infidel teaching" to her pupils. As far as we can make out, the lady wrote something in favor of Darwinism on a blackboard, and some of the children took it home with them. Mr. J. J. Hudson, a Free Churchman, strongly supported the Vicar at a public meeting. He believed in the Bible, he objected to Darwinism, and he was "proud to say he did not belong to the monkey race." Perhaps not; but it is impossible to tell without a look at his photograph. Mr. Hudson should have it printed, with the announcement "Not a Monkey" underneath. We trust he will succeed in dissociating himself from his poor relations. Such people are generally inconvenient.

Rev. Canon William Haig-Brown, Master of the Charterhouse since 1897, left £19,241. If the weather were warmer here just now the reverend gentleman (or his ghost) would have our sympathy.



## Mr. Foote's Engagements.

May 6, Liverpool.

## To Correspondents.

- C. COHEN'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—March 10, Workman's Hall, Stratford; 17, Camberwell. April 14, Glasgow; 21, Workman's Hall, Stratford; 28, a. Victoria Park, e. Workman's Hall, Stratford.
- J. T. LLOYD'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—March 10, Birmingham; 24, West Stanley.
- THE JOSEPH SYMES FUND.—Previously acknowledged, £296 11s. 11d. Since received: T. J. Strong, 3s. 6d.; R. Viedge (S. Africa), £5; F. Newport, 2s. 6d.; A. H. Woodhouse, 2s.; F. Woodhouse, 2s.; E. J. Earthy, 2s.; J. Baker, 2s.; D. H. Priest, 1s.; A. Clarke, 5s.
- THE COHEN "SALVATION ARMY" TRACT FUND.—Previously acknowledged, £15 3s. Since received: B., 6d.; S. H. Payne, 5s.
- W. H. P.—Certainly no offence taken. See "Acid Drops." Thanks.
- R. CLARKE.—Thanks for your successful efforts to promote our circulation. If every present reader of the *Freethinker* succeeded in getting us two new ones, we should have a far brighter prospect, and be able to make this journal more than ever worthy of its name.
- S. B. COSHAM.—A new and cheaper edition of Mr. Foote's *Bible Heroes* is in active preparation and will be ready shortly. Pleased to hear you find the *Freethinker* such welcome reading in your orthodox town.
- "JAN DE BOER."—Some are rather too old, but thanks for the rest.
- J. JAMES.—Mr. Foote's lectures at Liverpool in May will be delivered in the Picton Hall. Thanks for cuttings. See "Acid Drops."
- J. K. SYKES.—Glad to hear the Peculiar People gave you such a hearty welcome at Southend. They may be wrong, but they are honest. Their fellow Christians, who send them to gaol, are wrong and dishonest.
- W. TYSON.—The copy of the *Freethinker* given you by the late G. Warner at Newcastle-on-Tyne was not wasted. It made you a regular reader—and the fact should encourage all who "push it round."
- A. BATES.—We had already written a paragraph on it; thanks, all the same. It is exquisitely funny.
- W. SANDERS.—Thanks for the suggestion.
- E. LECHMERE.—Much obliged. It is curious how ready newspapers are to mention the *Freethinker* when they think they can do it an injury—which, by the way, they cannot. Any other time "mum's the word."
- E. F. REMINGTON.—Glad you have "gained much useful knowledge" from this journal. Thanks for the cutting—from the silliest paper in England. What do you think?
- A. LEWIS.—The quotations in your letter may prove useful. We note your wish that "if Mr. Nash should intervene again he would please name the *Freethinkers* (Atheists) of America who were pro-slavery men."
- D. H. PRIEST.—Glad to hear of the "pleasure you get out of the *Freethinker* every week."
- J. BROUGH.—Pleased to receive your cuttings.
- J. MORTON.—It is amusing.
- L. MACARTNEY.—See paragraph. Thanks.
- W. HEAFORD.—Many thanks for the cuttings, etc. With respect to the Bruno celebrations, you appear to forget the nature of Englishmen. They never got enthusiastic about great men yet, and never troubled their heads about any martyrs but those of their own denominations. Of course the active *Freethinkers* are too much scattered yet to lighten the British lump. We deeply regret to hear that Ferrer's trial is postponed again till April. The whole affair is a mockery of justice. Perhaps the authorities hope that his death in prison may put an end to all their difficulties.
- R. VIEDGE (S. Africa) writes: "Joseph Symes has indeed 'fought the good fight.' It may soften the sorrow of the dear ones he left behind to know that his memory is cherished in distant lands."
- E. MOORCROFT.—Thanks for cuttings.
- W. P. BALL.—Your batches of cuttings are always welcome.
- W. P. ADAMSON.—Why not forward the names again? Thanks for your encouraging letter and good wishes. We are afraid, though, that our united efforts will not reform the Post Office.
- J. BAKER.—Pleased to hear the sale of the *Freethinker* is increasing with you. It would increase everywhere if newsagents give it the chance you do. What we want is to be known and obtainable. We should circulate widely then. With regard to a Queen's Hall lecture on Shakespeare, we will consider the suggestion. Our last three audiences suffered—in common with all Sunday enterprises in London lately, including the various concerts—in consequence of the weather; and while we cleared all the expenses, which were naturally heavy, there was nothing left for the lecturer. But we are used to working for nothing, though some people think we make an income like Carnegie's.
- R. W.—Owing to the Editor's indisposition, both Mr. Cohen and Mr. Lloyd have contributed towards this week's "Acid Drops."

The paragraph on Mr. W. T. Lee (and a good one, too) is from Mr. Cohen's pen. We knew nothing about the matter till we saw the proof and read your letter. Mr. Lee degrades himself by talking in that way about Mr. Foote, for whom he has always professed friendship and a certain admiration. The last time he was in London he sought Mr. Foote out and spent an hour with him. Afterwards he forwarded one of his books with an inscription. It really looks as though even the best Christian Evidence speakers were hopelessly "subdued to what they work in."

W. H. HOWARD NASH.—Your letter does not carry the controversy forward. You repeat your statement that Atheism opposed the anti-slavery movement, without adducing a shred of evidence. You do not even show that there was any Atheism in America at all in the eighteenth century. Then with regard to Lincoln, Mr. Cohen never asserted that he was an Atheist, and why do you waste your time in asserting that he was *not* an Atheist? You admit that he was probably a Deist; well, so was Thomas Paine; and that is getting near enough to a *Freethinker*, isn't it?

J. O.—Civil marriage takes place at the Registrar's Office. Both parties have to give twenty-one days' notice to the Registrar of the respective parishes in which they have resided not less than fifteen days. On the day appointed for the marriage they attend the Registrar's Office, with their witnesses, and go through the marriage ceremony, which is purely civic and secular. The fees, including certificate, are 9s. 7d. There is a further charge if the marriage is performed outside the parish in which they reside.

H. R. CLIFTON.—You need not apprehend any departure from the policy of our lifetime. We shall go on fighting the greatest enemy of mankind. That we have done this, and are likely to do it, is sufficiently proved by the hatred that enemy bears us—a hatred which is a splendid compliment.

G. M. NICROLLS.—Lecture notices must be written separately. We cannot undertake to make them out from other communications.

C. W. STYRING.—Cuttings that reach us on Tuesday are, generally speaking, just a day too late for the coming number of the *Freethinker*.

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*.

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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.

This evening (March 10) Mr. Cohen lectures at the Workman's Hall, Romford-road, Stratford, on "The Salvation Army: a Study in Religious Failure and Social Imposition." Since writing his pamphlet on the "Army," Mr. Cohen has collected a quantity of fresh information bearing on General Booth's operations, and will deal with this in his lecture. The lecture commences at 7.30, and the hall can be easily reached by train or car from any part of London.

Midland "saints" will note that Mr. Lloyd lectures at Birmingham to-day (March 10), both afternoon and evening, in the Prince of Wales Assembly Room. There ought to be a strong rally of *Freethinkers* at both meetings, and they might try to bring some Christian friends along with them.

Mr. Hume Nisbet writes asking us to send him a copy of the *Freethinker* which figured in the Waldron case and was spoken of as "indecent and filthy." "It is new to me," he says, "to hear your paper guilty of such qualities. Blasphemy, of course—but not dirt—is what we expect from you." In a postscript Mr. Hume Nisbet shows that he has an inkling of the truth. "I wonder," he says, "when justice will be dealt out in England for its own sake—sans prejudice." Ay, when?

The *Journal de Charleroi* translates a considerable portion of our article on "Satan" which was written with reference to the death of the great Italian poet Carducci.

An important meeting of the members of the Kingsland Branch will be held at 44 Jenner-road, Stoke Newington, on Sunday evening, March 10, at 7 p.m. All local Freethinkers are earnestly invited to attend.

*Co-partnership*, a monthly publication, in a flattering notice of Mr. J. H. Greenhalgh, quotes as follows:—

“The world is my country;  
Every man is my brother;  
To do good is my religion.”

—and adds that “these words, expressing the noble sentiments of Paine, appear on an illuminated card which was placed on the walls of the Ealing Tenants’ Social Club, by the request of Mr. Greenhalgh.” It is added that “the whole realm of literature could hardly furnish a truer, clearer, or more concise description of Mr. Greenhalgh’s attitude to life.” We are glad to hear it.

We are glad to notice an excellent letter by “Free Enquirer” in the *Darwen News*, in answer to a Christian correspondent of the arrogant and disdainful order, who is nicely brought to book. Once more we impress upon the “saints” the importance of making use of any opportunity of free discussion in the local newspapers. By this means they often reach a public that would never hear of Free-thought otherwise.

A stalwart Freethinker, whom we have known for more years than we care to count, and who has always been a good friend to the Freethought movement, advised us some time ago to keep an advertisement of the Secular Society, Limited, constantly before the readers of the *Freethinker*, and we gladly acted upon his valuable suggestion. In a recent letter this gentleman informs us that, in the new will he has executed, he has made the Secular Society, Limited, a legatee for £500; and he is good enough to add that he has not forgotten us in the document. He does not wish to have his name published, nor his identity in any way disclosed, but he is willing to have the facts mentioned *pour encourager les autres*. “I take considerable interest,” he says, “in the inducing of Freethinkers to remember the Society when making their wills, and I think you ought to lose no opportunity of suitably drawing attention to it, and, as it were, ‘rubbing it in.’” Of course we have the greatest pleasure in announcing an action which we hope will be widely imitated.

### Personal.

I DO not like talking about myself in this way, but others will talk about me, and it is just as well that my friends should know the truth.

The fact is I took too sanguine a view of myself in a “Sugar Plum” in last week’s *Freethinker*. I looked forward to visiting Glasgow, and I worked very hard in clearing off writing that had to be done first—some of it not connected with the paper; and the result, I suppose, was a nasty relapse, which made the Friday night a terror, and left me quite unable to undertake the travelling and the lecturing. So I wired to my friend and colleague Mr. Lloyd to go to Glasgow for me, which he did, and I thank him for taking my place on the platform. He tells me that the “saints” were bitterly disappointed and grieved at the cause of my absence; but I am sure that they must have enjoyed Mr. Lloyd’s lectures, and been glad that I sent such an able and eloquent substitute.

My friends need not be alarmed. I have got over the relapse, and am gradually recovering my strength. But I feel that I must do now what I really ought to have done several weeks ago. I ought not to have lectured Sunday after Sunday with such a bad cold upon me and such a bad throat to talk through—and the insomnia wearing me down all the time. It will be prudent now to do no more platform work until I feel really better. The rest of my work cannot be escaped so easily.

Manchester friends will understand why I must, if possible, postpone the engagement for Sunday week. No doubt I shall be all right again in April. In the meanwhile I shall try a change of air and scene, and as much ease from literary work as I can get for a week or so. I believe I shall be myself again then.

G. W. FOOTE.

### Art and Pessimism.

“Optimists who undertake to soothe the soul by extracting its ills, resemble those charlatans who advertise ‘painless dentistry.’ But the wary are not deceived.”—BENJAMIN SWIFT.

IN the great Wagnerian strife, “Melody” was the cry of the Philistines. Whatever may be urged against them, they did at least take their stand upon Art. To-day the Philistines (or shall we say Pharisees?) appear not so much concerned about Art, as with health and morality. James Huneker, the American critic, used to jest about the “diseased chords of the twenty-sixth,” and his eloquent friend, W. J. Henderson, has occasionally indulged in such maunderings as modern music showing “the lurking-spot of disease.” But now our musical literature has become positively inoculated with this much-vaunted cry of “healthy optimism.” It leavens all the discourses of the Philistines. They would have the public believe that this “pestilent pessimism” in Art is “as deleterious as the opium habit, and more degrading than an excessive use of stimulants or narcotics.....an active corrosive of mankind.....leading us to physical destruction.....a strange commentary on a feverish desire for self-destruction.”

No wonder one of our foremost musical critics, Ernest Newman, has remarked that although we had reached some degree of civilisation in our literary criticisms, our opinions on music were those of “untutored barbarians.”

The American critic, Mr. Henderson, although apparently opposed to pessimism in Art (probably temperamentally), sees clearly that, to condemn such Art presentments, is to throw over the later works of Beethoven and the choicest products of Chopin and Schumann. But here in England, the land of that hardy perennial, the Nonconformist Conscience, there are no such scruples among the Philistines; at any rate, their Goliath, the immaculate Mr. A. E. Baughan, exhibits none. We may remark here, in passing, that we are truly thankful to this gentleman for his recent effusions in our index of purity, the *Daily News*, on the question of the attitude of virtuous New York in rejecting the Wilde-Strauss opera, *Salome*. It reminds us that the fight of Freethought is not yet won, and that this recent crusade of the puritanical Philistines is calculated by them to influence that archaic institution, known as the dramatic censor, in preventing a performance of *Salome* (considered “the greatest music-drama of the age”) in this country. However, we are not concerned just now with *Salome*. Another part of the conflict with the Philistines, the legion of “healthy optimists,” claims our attention.

We believe it was Mr. Samuel Weller who was so considerate as to “stretch” one opponent conveniently on the floor so that the next would have something to fall on. Mr. Baughan has adopted this method. In his recent book, *Music and Musicians*, he has some unpleasant things to say, so he prepares you for it some few pages earlier, although he goes perilously near downright inconsistency in so doing. Under the sweet heading of “Poisonous Appreciations,” he indulges in a sort of protest against those “who exaggerate.....the nervous and emotional effects of Wagner’s music,” and hold up “Wagner and Tchaikovsky as arch-destroyers of the human soul.” Furthermore, he is sure that “if Wagner, or Tchaikovsky, or Richard Strauss could have foreseen the pernicious nonsense which would be read into their music they would have burnt their scores.” Precisely so. But surely our author’s views must have undergone a considerable change for him to pen later in the book, such phrases, in relation to the music of Wagner, Tchaikovsky and Strauss, as “pessimistic whines,” “diseased idealism,” and “unhealthy insanity,” which are “surely strangling the growth of modern music.” He then asks:—

“What good does such wire drawn, grey, drab, bloodless music do for us? Does it help us to bear the

ills of life? Does it give us courage? If any sensitive amateur lets it into his soul, will he be the better able to take up his morning's fight?"

We recently read of a Dr. Meachen who lectured before the Guild of Church Musicians on "The Place of Music in the Healing Art." Why not Mr. Baughan give an oration before, say, the Liberal Club, on "The Place of Music in Social Reform." If our musical oracle has really any special kind of music that will "help us to bear the ills of life," let us have the prescription quickly, this world of ours needs it.

Let us see how literature would stand this fantastic criterion of Mr. Baughan's. *Hamlet*, we presume, would have to give place to *She Stoops to Conquer*, and Omar Khayyam to Tom Hood. Their moods are "healthier," and *ergo*, better works of Art. Of course the pessimist will argue that pessimism, as an Art presentment, was better than optimism, because it was better calculated to arouse an emotion which would lead to "a quickening of moral consciousness, and has the value of a constant stimulus to circumspection of life." Whether Tchaikovsky, or *Hamlet*, or Omar, help us to "bear the ills of life" and the "morning's fight" (strange phrases, by the way, for an optimist) or not, are purely *à priori* grounds, and have no logical bearing in a question of Art.

To the average man, the pessimism of Tchaikovsky as an Art presentment, is just a mood picture and no more. We have met people who go into ecstasies over the great Russian's music, and will turn livid at the mere mention of Thomson, the author of *The City of Dreadful Night*. Why? With the one you simply have a mood, with the other a mood *plus* a philosophy. And it is precisely on this point that we wish to protest against the Philistines. Music, *quâ* music, unlike poetry, cannot be didactic. At the most it may be correlated with poetry as either lyric or dramatic. Thus it will appear that music, above all the other Arts, has a true claim to be judged by the ideal prerogative of all Art—the emotional basis. If that is sufficient, then let us see how the composer presents his Art. All else is immaterial.

Mr. Baughan protests that he does not wish to be misunderstood "as one who denies all sentiment, all pathos, all emotion in music." But we have no canon whereby we are enabled to discriminate between "pathos" and "pessimistic whines." If beauty is the end of all Art, and our author admits it "should mirror human life and thought," may we not have an Art view of the "night side of nature," as Thomson would say, as well as the "day side"? When Mr. Baughan compares the "pestilent pessimism" of Strauss and Tchaikovsky to the robust "All's well with the world" of Browning, and pronounces the latter one bad and the other good, simply because the latter appeals to his own particular Art views, he is permitting a personal bias to serve as an æsthetic judgment.

By the way, Mr. Baughan is rather unfortunate in quoting Browning. He makes him talk like a soldier. "All's well with the world" belongs to the barrack. What Browning did say was "All's right with the world." Strange to say, so careful a writer as Ernest Newman, in reviewing Mr. Baughan's book, quotes the well-known line in *Pippa Passes* as "All's well in the world."

But this aside. Lord Derby once received a sample of wine, "warranted to cure the gout." His Lordship tasted the vintage, and returned it with the words: "Thanks; I prefer the gout." So with Mr. Baughan. It may be that our æsthetic taste is unhealthy, but we prefer it to his nostrums.

Even so acute a critic as Dr. Markham Lee, M.A., in his recent analysis of Tchaikovsky's music, descants on "health." He enumerates the composer's "weak points," and among them he finds: "an unhealthy pessimism.....not tolerable to the sane and healthy mind.....a deadly draught if taken in unduly large quantities." Comment on this is needless. Such talk belongs to the pharmacy, and not to Art.

Now, what do all these pleasantries of Mr. Baughan and friends really mean? Is it mere antipathy to pessimism in Art, or does it proceed from what John Morley called the execrable emotion of complacent religiosity? We are urged to the latter view. Tchaikovsky, like most pessimists, was a Freethinker. So the Philistine not only reads Pessimism, but Atheism and Materialism into his music. Witness how Dr. Markham Lee can imagine Tchaikovsky saying in the *Pathetic*, "There is no God" (*Tchaikovsky's Life*, p. 61). Witness how Laurence Gilman sees Tchaikovsky in the same symphony as "the perfect materialist, the perfect spiritual craven" (*Phases of Modern Music*, p. 19). We see the cloven foot again in Mr. Baughan, when he talks of the "sensual materialist," the "sensual negationist," and the "sensual pessimist."

We understand these gentlemen now. The brilliant Hans Von Bülow has summed up their class in a very pregnant passage, which we will quote in full.

"The principle," says Von Bülow, "of the huge lazy mass is to let things go as God pleases. The mass sees a theophany in this world, and so its optimism accommodates itself willingly to the half-truth, which is the mother of all prejudice, the drag on the wheel of every undertaking, including, of course, art. Those trivial maxims—the good, the beautiful, the true—will somehow, sooner or later, make their own way; and 'the thing doomed to extinction is just what deserves extinction'—belong to the half-truth. When we employ the student's phrase 'philistinism' we mean such principles as these. At root, philistinism is just a synonym for a species of the genus optimism, and all the banalities in the world finally rest on an optimistic view of things" (*Ausgrabungen eines Clavierlehrers*, vol. iii).

"History," wrote Bacon, "makes man wise." If the modern Philistines would be wise, let them be warned by the fate of Wagner's contemporary critics—such men as Schlüter, Fétis and Hanslick—Titans all, compared with Mr. Baughan and company. They predicted a speedy extinction to Wagner and his music. Posterity has been charitable enough to think nothing harsher of them than of having added to the gaiety of nations. And so we can afford to smile at these puritans who offer to guide Art, to purge and purify her of her ills. Well, well; life is short, Art is long.

H. GEORGE FARMER.

### A Bishop in the Workhouse.

PERHAPS the title of this article will suggest a tragic story of a fall from a high place, wealth and dignity, into abjectness, poverty and misery. Such things do occur in the lottery of fortune. Sometimes a beggar gets seated on horseback, and sometimes a proud knight is thrown from the saddle and pitched in the mud. But it is scarcely conceivable that a bishop should become a pauper. Episcopal servants of Christ usually feather their nests snugly against the cold; and were adversity to overtake them, they generally have rich friends to save them from "the parish." No, it is not a tale of woe that we have to tell. We do not know of any bishop who is reduced to beggary. The time has not yet arrived for such an awful occurrence. Some day, perhaps, when priestcraft is exploded and churches are played out, an ex-bishop may find it hard to obtain a living in the open labor market; but meanwhile the lawn-sleeved gentry will continue to live on the fat of the land, and prove that godliness is great gain, having the promise of the life that now is, as well as of the life that is to come.

Well now, as Shakespeare says, let us leave off making faces and begin. Let us no longer keep the reader in suspense, but let out the secret at once.

The Bishop of Winchester went last Sunday to Farnham Workhouse. He did not go in disguise as a "casual," in order to see for himself how the pariahs of society are treated in this century of the Christian era. He went in "full fig," dressed in a style which, as Mill remarked, no man could assume without *feeling* himself a hypocrite, whether he was one or not. Nor did he go for the purpose of giving the old women an ounce of tea, or the old men an ounce of tobacco. His lordship's mind was above such low, contemptible carnalities. The object of his visit was spiritual. He went to preach to the paupers and give them a little medicine for their souls. They were in the union, the

"half-way house on the road to hell," and the bishop told them (we suppose) how they might still hope for a place in heaven, though it would have to be a back seat; for, as "order is heaven's first law," it would be a shocking violation of the divine economy to let paupers jostle big capitalists and landlords and bishops and princes of the blood who hold front-seat tickets, numbered and reserved.

"This is believed," says the newspaper report, "to be the first occasion on which a Prelate of the See of St. Swithin has taken part in divine service in such an institution." The first time in all those centuries! Truly the very paupers are looking up. Or is it that the bishop is looking down? In any case, what a change from the old days, when paupers were certain of Hades! Was it not a West of England workhouse in which an old pauper lay dying while the chaplain was in the hunting-field and the governor was obliged to officiate? "Tom," said the boss of this luckless establishment, "Tom, you've been a dreadful fellow; you're going to hell." "Oh, sir," replied Tom, "you don't say so." "Yes, Tom, I do say so," rejoined the governor, "and you ought to be thankful you've a hell to go to."

His lordship of Winchester doubtless talked to the Farnham paupers in a different strain. Christianity is now not only the friend of the poor, but the friend of the poorest; for even paupers have to be reckoned with, the revolutionary spirit having penetrated to the very lowest strata of our disaffected population. But the "friendship" must be understood in a Pickwickian sense. Indeed, the joke of a bishop with £6,500 a year, hobnobbing with the social wreckage of a system which supports his wicked luxury, is colossal and pungent enough to send the very Fat Boy into convulsions of laughter. We cannot help thinking that the Bishop of Winchester is a humorist. Perhaps if the Church is disestablished in his day and the worst comes to the worst, he will turn his attention to the Stage and take the shine out of Arthur Roberts.

On this supposition, our regret at being unable to find any report of "Winchester's" sermon to the Farnham paupers is too deep for expression. All we can do, in the circumstances, is to present our readers with a condensed report of what the Bishop *might* have said; and what, indeed, he *would* have said, if he had risen to the level of the situation.

#### THE BISHOP'S SERMON.

"Dearly beloved brethren,—You see before you a humble servant of the most high God, who has come out from his wretched palace to spend an hour with you in this cheerful workhouse, built and maintained by a charitable nation for her most privileged children. Here, for a brief space, I shake off the cares and burdens of my own sad lot, and bathe my wearied spirit in the delicious restfulness of this happy asylum. Like you, I feel a child of our common Father in heaven. And as you gaze upon me, I also gaze upon you. Blessed sight! Delightful vision! Before me sit a goodly number of God's elect, his chosen vessels of grace, the predestinated inheritors of his glory. Happy mortals! soon to put on glorious crowns of immortality. Others have wandered from the path of salvation, but ye have persevered to the end. Wealth and power, pride and ambition, have no charm for your righteous souls. Ye have chosen the better part. Day and night, drunk and sober—I mean waking and dreaming—ye have pondered the words of our holy Savior, 'Blessed be ye poor.' And as he who studies long and deeply enough learns the hardest lesson, ye have gained a vital conviction of the truth which is hidden from the worldlings. 'Blessed be ye poor,' said our Lord, and ye *are* poor, and therefore yours is the blessing, and yours (in due course) is the kingdom of heaven. Ye shall walk the golden streets of the New Jerusalem; ye shall gaze upon its jewelled walls; ye shall drink of the fresh, clear, untaxed, unmeasured water of the River of Life; ye shall bask in the light of the Lamb; ye shall look across the great gulf that separates the saved from the damned and behold those who have chosen riches instead of poverty in the torments of everlasting fire. Fortunate paupers! Envious prospect! How gladly would I stay with you and share your beatitude! But, alas, I am called away by the voice of my Master. I have taken up the cross of self-sacrifice; I have resolved to follow his example and perish if I must that sinners may be saved. My salary is already £6,500 a year, and should it be my fate to become Archbishop of Canterbury, I shall assume with resignation the more terrible burden of £15,000. I know its dangers; I know that wealth weighs us down to the nether pit; I know how hardly they that have riches shall enter the kingdom of heaven. But every pound I carry lightens the burden of a fellow-man, and gives him so much chance of mounting to heaven, instead of sinking to hell. Oh, I feel on fire with self-sacrifice. A love of mankind burns in my breast capable of consuming (or appropriating) all the wealth of this planet. I would bear the burden of the whole world. Yea, I *will* bear as much of it as I can. And now I go forth to my fate, be it life or death, glory or gehenna.

And you, beloved, who remain here, sheltered from the storm, think, oh think of your sad brother, staggering under the load of £6,500 a year. Pray that he may have the strength to bear whatever burden is laid upon him. And pray, oh pray that his wealth may be counted unto him as poverty, for his love to the brethren, and that he may attain unto everlasting life. Amen."

G. W. FOOTE.

—Comic Sermons and Other Fantasias.

#### The Pugilist Parson.

At the South Western Police Court on Tuesday, February 26, before the Hon. John de Grey, the Rev. A. J. Waldron, Vicar of St. Matthew's, Brixton, was summoned for assaulting Joseph Wharmby, of Bond-street, Vauxhall.

The plaintiff (who was represented by Mr. Hindle) said he was employed by the Freethought Publishing Company, Limited. On Thursday last, at about 8.30 p.m., he was outside the Assembly Rooms, Wandsworth, in the roadway distributing literature to the public. He gave defendant a copy of the *Freethinker*. Defendant tore it in several pieces and asked for a second copy, which was refused. He then seized a number of copies which plaintiff had under his arm, and proceeded to tear them up, four or five ministers who were in company with him assisting him. In the struggle for possession of the papers, witness stated he was seized by the throat and pulled about, and finally pushed down by the defendant. The plaintiff called "Police," when the defendant said, "If you want me, my name is Waldron." The Shop Manager of the Freethought Publishing Company was in the Assembly Hall at the time, and he (the plaintiff) went to him and complained that he had been attacked. The Shop Manager walked through the hall to the platform and said to Waldron: "I understand you took this man's papers from him and assaulted him."

Defendant replied: "Yes, I have taken papers from him, and will do it again"; adding that he intended speaking from the platform about the matter.

The defendant, addressing the Court, said that he and other clerical friends present were heading a torchlight procession of some two hundred persons to the Assembly Rooms, where a ten days' Mission was being conducted. Outside the hall he found the plaintiff distributing copies of the *Freethinker* to his "crowd"; this he considered insulting to the feelings of the Christian persons there; and he thereupon handed the magistrate a copy of the paper with the remark that the Editor had already suffered twelve months' imprisonment for publishing it, as being indecent and blasphemous literature.

THE MAGISTRATE: This paper is certainly indecent. Turning to the plaintiff, he inquired if this was the paper he was distributing.

The plaintiff replied that it was the same title, but not the same copy. A copy of the last issue of the *Freethinker* was then handed to the magistrate, who, after glancing at it, said: "I see nothing to complain of in this copy."

The magistrate then asked the defendant if the first copy handed to him was the particular number being distributed by the plaintiff, and remarked that, according to the date, it was eighteen years old.

MR. WALDRON: I did not say this was the actual number, but this is the actual paper for which the Editor—who is still Editor—underwent twelve months' imprisonment.

MR. DE GREY: I have only glanced at it, but by handing it to me you induced me to think it was the actual paper distributed to the people standing around. Why do you produce this?

MR. WALDRON: Because the Editor was imprisoned for selling this. It was an insult to the faith of those who were present at the meeting to distribute such a paper. This was his crowd, and he was trying to save people from drunkenness, and his friends were singing hymns.

The Rev. George Jephson was called and deposed that he was present. In reply to Mr. Hindle, he stated that he did not assist Mr. Waldron in assaulting the plaintiff, or tearing up the copies of the *Freethinker*, but that he would have done so.

Mr. W. A. Vaughan, Shop Manager of the Freethought Publishing Company, was then called to prove he was present at the meeting. He had engaged Wharmby to distribute specimen copies of the paper outside the hall, and corroborated his statement.

MR. WALDRON: Do you consider you were right in outraging the feelings of those present at a meeting held to preach the Word of God?

THE SHOP MANAGER: That is a matter of opinion; it may be wrong from your point of view.

The defendant was proceeding to cross-examine the witness with a view of showing that the publication was of an

improper character, when the magistrate intervened with the remark that that had nothing to do with the question before the Court, and that he could not allow Mr. Waldron to deliver a lecture there.

The defendant then denied the assault, but admitted talking about fifty copies of the *Freethinker* and destroying them.

Cross-examined by Mr. Hindle, he said he considered he was justified in his action in destroying the papers under the circumstances.

Mr. Hindle pointed out that the defendant had tried to mislead the Court by producing a paper which was not the paper distributed at the meeting.

DEFENDANT: I offered a copy of the paper, for selling which the Editor was imprisoned.

MR. HINDLE: I don't care twopence about the paper. The Shop Manager, recalled by the Court, said the papers were distributed for business purposes.

THE MAGISTRATE: If you attend a Blue meeting and distribute Red literature, you expect it to be torn up. It is not for me to judge the rights and wrongs of the paper referred to; I have only to deal with the evidence, which is of a conflicting character. I should be sorry to think Mr. Waldron went so far as to take the man by the throat. The assault has not been proved and the summons will be dismissed.

(Reported by) EDITH M. VANCE.

Correspondence.

A CORRECTION.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Your contributor, "J. H.," in his article in last week's *Freethinker*, entitled "An Indictment of the 'Fourth Estate,'" makes a slip when he says he believes C. Ranger Gull is the pen-name of Clement Shorter. This is not the case; they are very distinct personalities. Mr. C. Ranger Gull is the author of melodramatic fiction. He wrote *When it was Dark*, Guy Thorne being his pen-name. Mr. Clement Shorter is the editor of the *Sphere* and is an avowed Freethinker. The *Sphere*, by the way, is chiefly owned by the Spottiswoodes', who must have made a fortune by printing and publishing Bibles and Prayer-books and other devotional literature. Mr. Shorter, I have noticed, does not conceal his opinions in regard to religion in his weekly literary letter in the *Sphere*. But he is discreet in regard to the affairs of his publishers. An article on the "Ethics of Publishing" from his pen in the *Sphere* would be interesting reading.

J. A. REID.

National Secular Society.

REPORT OF MONTHLY EXECUTIVE MEETING, HELD ON THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 1907.

The President, Mr. G. W. Foote, in the chair. There were also present:—Messrs. J. Barry, C. Cohen, H. Cowell, F. A. Davies, W. Davey, W. Leat, Dr. R. T. Nichols, J. Neate, J. Marshall, C. Quinton, S. Samuels, F. Schindel, T. J. Thurlow, F. Wood, E. Woodward and the Secretary.

Minutes of previous meeting read and confirmed and Cash Statement adopted. New members were admitted to the Parent Society and for the Edinburgh Branch.

The Symes Fund was referred to and the President reported that Mrs. Symes had regained her health and intended to return to Australia. The President also reported the result of his attendances at the meetings of the national Secular Education committee.

The replies to the Secretary's circular, re the Annual Conference, not yet being to hand, the matter was left for the present in the hands of the President. It was decided that, owing to the Easter holidays, the next Executive meeting should be held on Thursday, March 21.

E. M. VANCE, General Secretary.

PANTHEISM — ATHEISM.

Pantheism is only a polite form of Atheism. The truth of Pantheism lies in its destruction of the dualistic antithesis of God and the world, in its recognition that the world exists in virtue of its own inherent forces. The maxim of the Pantheist, "God and the world are one," is merely a polite way of giving the Lord God his congé.—Schopenhauer.

How Sweet the Name of Jesus Sounds

(A Hymn "Ancient and Modern.")

How sweet the name of Jesus sounds  
In "Canterbury's" ear;  
The sum of fifteen thousand pounds  
It brings him every year.

Whilst some poor souls without a sole,  
In rags and tatters dressed,  
Are starving in a slummy hole,  
Well feathered is his nest.

"Dear" name! the rock on which men  
Church, chapel, meeting-place,  
That parsons' purses may be filled  
By our deluded race.

Jesus! Thou trusty, paying friend  
Of "Profit," Priest and King,  
Thy reign is drawing to an end.  
Too long Thou'st had Thy fling.

We scorn the knaves that take Thy part,  
By gold they have been bought.  
Men soon will see Thee as Thou art,  
The foeman of free thought.

Till then our scorn we will proclaim  
With every fleeting breath,  
Till all the nations loathe Thy name:  
We'll fight Thee to the death.

How sweet the name of Jesus sounds  
In "Canterbury's" ear;  
Once gone its power of gaining pounds,  
Its charm will disappear!

ESS JAY BEE.

"GOD."

The thoughts which the word "God" suggests to the human mind are susceptible of as many variations as human minds themselves. The Stoic, the Platonist and the Epicurean, the Polytheist, the Dualist and the Trinitarian, differ infinitely in their conceptions of its meaning. They agree only in considering it the most awful and most venerable of names, as a common term devised to express all of mystery, or majesty, or power, which the invisible world contains. And not only has every sect distinct conceptions of the application of this name, but scarcely two individuals of the same sect, who exercise in any degree the freedom of their judgment, or yield themselves with any candor of feeling to the influences of the visible world, find perfect coincidence of opinion to exist between them.—Shelley.

IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL.

When we come to analyse all the different proofs that have been urged for the immortality of the soul, we find that not a single one of them is of a scientific character; not a single one is consistent with the truths we have learned in the last few decades from physiological psychology and the theory of descent. The *theological* proof—that a personal creator has breathed an immortal soul (generally regarded as a portion of the divine soul) into man—is a pure myth. The *cosmological* proof—that the "moral order of the world" demands the eternal duration of the human soul—is a baseless dogma. The *teleological* proof—that the "higher destiny" of man involves the perfecting of his defective, earthly soul beyond the grave—rests on a false anthropomorphism. The *moral* proof—that the defects and unsatisfied desires of earthly existence must be fulfilled by "compensative justice" on the other side of eternity—is nothing more than a pious wish. The *ethnological* proof—that the belief in immortality, like the belief in God, is an innate truth, common to all humanity—is an error in fact. The *ontological* proof—that the soul, being a "simple, immaterial and indivisible entity," cannot be involved in the corruption of death—is based on an entirely erroneous view of the psychic phenomena; it is a spiritualistic fallacy. All these and similar "proofs of athanatism" are in a parlous condition; they are definitely annulled by the scientific criticism of the last few decades.—Haeckel.

Our creed is simple, All men are one man!  
One sole commandment, Do what good you can.

—James Thomson ("B. V.")

**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, E. Pack, "Christian Mythology."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S.: Social Gathering, Thursday, March 14, at 8.30, at the Branch Meeting Place.

WEST HAN BRANCH N. S. S. (Workman's Hall, 27 Romford-road, Stratford): 7.30, C. Cohen, a Lecture.

**COUNTRY.**

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Prince of Wales Assembly Rooms, Broad-street): J. T. Lloyd, 3.15, "Are Freethinkers Sane?"; 7, "Does Secularism Safeguard Morality?"

EDINBURGH BRANCH N. S. S. (Masonic Hall, 11 Melbourne-place): 6.30, A. Davis, "Religious Persecution in Spain."

FAILSWORTH SECULAR SUNDAY SCHOOL (Pole-lane): 6.30, J. Shufflebotham, "Votes for Women and What it Means."

GLASGOW BRANCH N. S. S. (Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 12 (noon), Discussion Class, Open Discussion; 6.30, Robert Park, M.D., "The New Religious Thinking; or, Secularism Justified."

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Dr. F. H. Hayward, "Fallacies of Present Education."

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Secular Hall, Rusholme-road): 6.30, Sheikh Abdullah Quilliam Bey, "Constantinople," with lime-light views.

NEWCASTLE RATIONALIST DEBATING SOCIETY (Lockhart's Cathedral Café): Thursday, March 14, at 8, J. S. Clarke, "The Seamy Side."

PLYMOUTH RATIONALIST SOCIETY (Foresters' Hall, Octagon): 7, W. Roskilly, "What is Truth?"

WEST STANLEY BRANCH N. S. S. (L. T. P. Institute): 3, arrangements for the Lloyd lectures, etc.

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