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What is true in lamplight is not always true in daylight.—JOURBERT.

Sir Oliver Lodge's "Catechism."—II.

HAVING made his unnecessary protest against "a system of compulsory secularism" which has never been under discussion, and which nobody ever proposed, Sir Oliver Lodge proceeds to state his "hope and belief that the great bulk of the teachers of this country are eager and anxious to do their duty, and lead the children committed to their care along the ways of righteousness." This he assumes to be impossible without religious education. But no assumption could be more ridiculous or more arrogant. Humanity does not depend for righteousness upon the supernatural beliefs or metaphysical conjectures of the discordant and quarrelsome religionists of this world. Morality is a natural growth, right and wrong spring from the nature of things, and a science and art of living must have been spontaneously developed if the ideas (or dreams) of religion had never been known. Sir Oliver Lodge professes a great admiration for Ruskin; well, he might have learnt from Ruskin that there are many religions, but only one morality, and that the latter is always and everywhere capable of taking care of itself.

But if religious education is necessary, or very highly desirable, the question arises, What religious education shall it be? On this point there is no harmony, and no prospect of harmony. Catholics, Anglicans and Nonconformists are more at loggerheads than ever as to what religious teaching should be given to children in the nation's schools. And not only do they differ, quite irreconcilably, among themselves, but the fundamental doctrines of all of them are rejected or distrusted by the educated intelligence of the country. Sir Oliver Lodge himself admits that children taught in the old way will encounter the results of scientific inquiry." Nevertheless, on a later page, he writes as though this danger no longer existed. He allows that mistakes were made in the interpretation of Christian traditions and documents—as though there were no mistakes in the traditions and documents themselves! "At one time," he says, "not long ago, it was the duty of serious students of all kinds to point out some of these mistakes, whenever they ran counter to sense and knowledge." But he argues that "the cleaning and sweetening work has been done vigorously, and done well," so that "at the present time comparatively little sweeping remains to be done, save in holes and corners." This may be true enough, as far as the more thoughtful part of the public is concerned, but it is grotesquely untrue with respect to the bulk of professed Christians. Look at the average Catholic, look at the average Churchman, look at the average Dissenter, look at the average Salvationist; does Sir Oliver Lodge really believe that scientific and critical brooms have swept these people's minds clear of the "mistakes" of the ages of ignorance? If he does, he is past praying for; and, if he does not, he should speak more carefully.

We all know what the Christian Churches will teach children—directly or indirectly, through the preacher or through the schoolmaster—if they have the chance. They will teach the children their Creeds. Let there be no mistake about that. The point is vital—and disregard of it may be fatal.

Sir Oliver Lodge appears to think otherwise. "Ancient formularies," he says, "must be reconsidered and remodelled if they are to continue to express eternal verities in language corresponding to the enlarged acquaintance with natural knowledge now possessed by humanity." He admits that it is "not possible to satisfy both scientific and distinctively denominational requirements," yet he thinks that a statement of belief might be drawn up which might at least repose upon "a sound foundation such as can stand scientific scrutiny and reasonable rationalistic attack." But in the light of modern knowledge, he holds that this can only be done in one way; and that way, of course, in his own way. "I have attempted," he tells us, "the task of formulating the fundamentals, or substance, of religious faith in terms of Divine Immanence, in such a way as to assimilate sufficiently all the results of existing knowledge, and still to be in harmony with the teachings of the poets and inspired writers of all ages." On the next page, however, he slips in an important qualification. He there alludes to his Catechism as being "in harmony with all that bears upon the subject," but "not indeed deduced from present knowledge." Evidently, therefore, the word "Allied" in the title of his book is nothing but bluff. There is no *alliance* in the case. Sir Oliver Lodge simply states the old Christian doctrines in a new way, which withdraws them, as he thinks, from the direct and uncompromising challenge of science. Miracles, in the ordinary sense of the word, disappear. Nothing remains that is grossly and offensively unscientific. The Principal of Birmingham University has cleaned and repaired the old religion; he presents it to us as an up-to-date article, which should give us every reasonable satisfaction; and he smiles self-approvingly at his own handiwork as Jehovah smiled at his "good" Creation—which so soon went wrong.

Has the great Sir Oliver Lodge really done the trick? We think not. There is, indeed, a great run upon his Catechism. It has been well puffed, and published at the psychological moment. But we believe that the Churches, on the one side, will reject it as decisively as Unbelievers will reject it, on the other side; nor do we believe it will be patronised by the "parents and teachers" for whom it is expressly intended. It has one radical and intolerable fault. In the language of the man in the street, it gives the game away. At the end of this Catechism there is no real Christianity left. It is easy enough for a simple-minded Christian to see (or feel—for it comes to the same thing) that Sir Oliver Lodge is working in the interest of ulterior ideas. And what those ulterior ideas actually are will appear in the course of our examination.

Let us see, first of all, what this Divine Immanence is, in terms of which Sir Oliver Lodge has formulated the fundamentals of religious faith. It is referred to again, in the Introduction, as a "recognition of a Deity immanent in history and in all the processes of nature." Afterwards, in the eleventh clause of the Catechism, the subject of "Immanence" is specially dealt with.

"Question. What has caused and what maintains existence?"

Answer. Of our own knowledge we are unable to realise the meaning of origination or maintenance; all that we ourselves can accomplish in the physical world is to move things into desired positions, and leave them to act on each other. Nevertheless our effective movements are all inspired by thought, and so we conceive that there must be some Intelligence immanent in all the processes of nature, for they are not random or purposeless, but organised and beautiful."

Now we conceive that the first sentence of this Answer is Sir Oliver Lodge's science, and every man's science; and that the second sentence is merely Sir Oliver Lodge's personal opinion, which every man is free to accept or reject, or treat in any way he pleases. The Catechiser practically admits this in his explanations of Clause xi. :—

"There are those who think that in the last resort the ultimate reality will be found to be of the nature of Spirit, Consciousness, and Mind. It may be so—it probably is so—but that is a teaching of Philosophy, not at present of Science."

There is something touchingly naive about that "probably," and something quite pathetic about the last sigh over the dilatoriness of Science. Yet the truth is that Sir Oliver Lodge has answered himself by anticipation. His statement that we are unable, of our own knowledge, to realise the meaning of the *origination or maintenance* of the universe, cuts away all possibility of any Spiritual theory of Matter being taught or countenanced by Science. Science is of things we know, and we know nothing of the origination of matter, or of its maintenance by aught else than its own inherent energies. It may suit people, who call their fancies Philosophy, to speak of some "Power" behind the fire that roasts a joint of meat, or the wave that drowns a man; but the fire and the wave are enough for Science, which is bound, as far as it is concerned, to treat the "Power" as a figment of the imagination. Call it Theology, call it Metaphysics, call it by any other name you choose, but do not call it Science. The progress of Science has meant the expulsion of those metaphysical entities from every department of knowledge.

We grant Sir Oliver Lodge the right to believe in as much "Philosophy" as he pleases, as long as he does not place the label of "Science" upon it. We do not quarrel with him for believing that "there must be some Intelligence immanent in all the processes of nature." But we venture to ask him what that Intelligence, if it exists, is really worth. Certainly things are "organised," but how far are they "beautiful"? A doctor may be tending a "beautiful case" of cancer, but is it "beautiful" to the unfortunate patient? From the human point of view, which is the only one we can take, there is ugliness in nature as well as beauty. There are ugly scenes, ugly plants, ugly animals and ugly men. This ugliness extends into the moral world, and, indeed, becomes intensified there. A man jumps overboard to save another from drowning—that is a beautiful act; but he is eaten by a shark—and that is a shocking result; or he is drifted ashore and eaten by cannibals—which is positively disgusting. All the processes of nature include disease and misery as well as health and joy. And what shall we say of the great struggle for existence which has made this planet red with carnage, and which is responsible for the anti-social passions of the individual at war with the interests of the community? Sir Oliver Lodge blandly observes that this "struggle and survival" can be "superseded when it has done its necessary preliminary work." We suppose we are to "let the ape and tiger die," as the poet says. But what of the Immanent Intelligence which could find no way of producing a tolerable Humanity except through countless ages of bestial conflict? And what of the "Deity immanent in History"? Cardinal Newman said that when he looked into the world of men, and into human history, he saw no reflection of God there, and the impression made upon him was as though he looked into a mirror and saw no reflection of his face.

(To be concluded.) G. W. FOOTE.

Fads, Fanatics, and Facts.

DEATH—to paraphrase "Mr. Dooley on Opportunity"—knocks wanst at ev'ry man's door; but, unlike the other thing, it does its own grappling. It is the most unscrupulous tyrant of the powers that be, and makes no discrimination between faith-healers and fishmongers. And in running "Profit" Dowie's exaggerated ego to earth it is only paying tit for tat. Diamond cut diamond; every man for himself, and the Devil take the hindmost. Both played the game, each in a different sphere, yet with the same plaything, "Credulity." Now that they are both living in the same street—according to Christianity—they will probably go into partnership.

The commentator who is determined to say nothing but good of the dead would have no difficulty in selecting the quality of the "Profit" which may be held up to unstinted admiration. He was a first-rate business man. It will be sufficient to mention one deal only. He bought six thousand acres on the shore of Lake Michigan for £260,000, and sold the land to his followers for £3,000,000. He built up the community known as Zion City on this estate in Illinois, and persuaded his subjects—for he was never anything less than an absolute monarch—to pay him ten per cent. of their incomes. He established what appears to have been a very successful lace industry, an achievement much less difficult than the other two, but one calling for skill in organisation. Undoubtedly "Profit" Dowie was a business man—and an excellent one at that. But in making himself a millionaire, after beginning life as a store clerk, he did not play the game on level terms with the future Carnegies, and Rockefellers, and Armours of his adopted country. He set himself to work upon the credulity of the nation which produces the extreme types of 'cuteness and simplicity. He became "Elijah the Restorer," who cured sickness by the laying on of hands. It was in Chicago that his faith-healing stock first began to boom on the market where fancy religions are dealt in. Perseverance and a really admirable impudence collected an army of 50,000 believers. In Chicago, and latterly in Zion City, he claimed that he laid healing hands on 70,000 people every year. If a cure did not follow, he was not to blame. That was the patient's punishment for lack of faith. This highly convenient doctrine—to him—was easily imposed upon his followers, along with the ten per cent. income tax. He was the head of the International Divine Healing Association. He established Divine Healing Homes, the Zion Publishing House, Zion Tabernacles, and a Christian Catholic Church, of which he was General Overseer. Who will deny that these are but living monuments of credulity?—the same ever-present quality of man that engrossed the attentions of Christ, Buddha and their satellites and imitators. After all, it is only a matter of perspective. Dowie's case is intensified by its proximity. But in the years to come, when the mould has gathered o'er his tomb, and the mists of time have lent their beneficence alike to the "rubbers in" and the "rubbers out," it is quite probable that Dowie will be canonised by a future generation.

On the whole, the British Press disregarded the *nil nisi bonum* doctrine when dealing with the departed creature. Of course it found it convenient to do so, although, in the circumstances, it was quite an utterly illogical position for most of our daily papers to take up. It will be interesting to watch their attitude, when the time comes, of dealing with the "Profit's" prototype in this country. It is no use making fish of the one and fowl of the other.

But only an enlightened few of the London journals had the courage to point out that the man who was for ever calling on his dupes for self-denial was himself most luxurious. The others probably thought the same, but hesitated to say it. That the "livings" of thousands of well-paid bishops and ministers were jeopardised was a necessary corollary, so "mum" was the word.

Shiloh House, Dowie's private residence in Zion, cost over £20,000. The furniture was sumptuous. Thousands of dollars were lavished over every apartment. In Michigan, he had a fine summer retreat, Ben MacDhui, with gardens, terraces, fountains, arbors, rustic bridges and drives. He loved purple raiment, magnificent furniture, the best suites at hotels, the choicest cooking, and he generally succeeded in getting them. Well, he has given that over now, but there are thousands willing to take up the thread where he broke off. Faith-healer though he pretended to be, it was quite evident that his faith in himself was severely shaken when he was treated in New York, and throughout the European tour, as the charlatan he was. His influence had declined so greatly of late, even among his own people, that it is *improbable* that he has now added to his long list of impostures by pretending to be dead, with a view to his own triumphant resurrection.

J. H.

Christianity and Woman.—II.

(Continued from p. 164.)

WHEN carefully examined, the favorite Christian thesis of the wholesale depravity of Roman women is seen to depend upon a delightful blend of religious prejudice, odds and ends of quotations from Latin writers, whose last idea would have been to have had their description applied on a general scale, and, as Principal Donaldson points out, "from what is said of the women connected with the Court of the Early Empire." But a description of the women of the Court at one period of Roman Imperial history no more applies to Roman life in general than would a description of the ladies of the Court of Charles II. apply to English life as a whole. It must be noted, too, that taken in their widest and most literal sense, the satirists are describing life in Rome itself. And this, again, is no more applicable to the whole of Roman life than a description of the fast life of London, Paris and New York would be properly descriptive of all English, French and American family life. Yet it is upon this scanty basis that Christian charges rest. One writer laments the growing frequency of re-marriages—itsself a proof of the somewhat high standard of the orthodox Roman ideal—and it is asserted that *all* Roman women married only to be divorced, and were divorced only to be re-married. Another writer (the Christian Tertullian) laments the growing fondness for dress, and that respectable matrons dress as gaily as women of doubtful reputation; and Christian prejudice twists this into the statement that *all* were upon the same level of moral depravity. The pictures of domestic life revealed in the writings of Pliny, the ideal held out by Juvenal and Tacitus, the many good women whom Seneca knew and admired—all these things are ignored, and a whole society slandered in the interests of a religion notorious for its historical unvaracity and crooked methods. A certain humorous aspect is introduced into the subject by the fact that it was precisely the better class of Roman women who remained staunch to the old Roman creed and ideals, while the less reputable ones, by their appetite for the various Eastern creeds, powerfully aided the growth of Christianity.

Principal Donaldson's repudiation of this species of religious slander is mildly expressed, but it is adequate. He says:—

"Examining history, then, I think we must come to the conclusion that the Roman ideas of marriage had not a bad effect either on the happiness or morals of the women. If we take the period of Roman history from 130 B.C. to 150 A.D., we shall be surprised at the number of women of whom it is recorded that they were loved ardently by their husbands, exercised a beneficial influence over them, and helped them in their political or literary work. Many of these women had received an excellent education, they were capable and thoughtful, and took an active interest in the welfare of the State.....It would be absurd to deny

that there were many bad women in Roman society, just as there have been bad men and women in all societies, but we are apt to form too gloomy a picture of the conduct of women, because it has been the delight of writers, who wish to demonstrate the superiority of Christianity to heathenism, to bring into special prominence the supposed vices and humiliations of Pagan women.....There may have been some foundation for the railing accusations which Juvenal brings against the sex, but I am confident that these accusations are exaggerated in a high degree."

The wholesale depravity of Roman family life and manners, upon which Christianity operated as a great redemptive force, is, then, pure myth. But, unfortunately, it is too familiar a dish, and the Christian palate has become too accustomed to this unwholesome diet for one to have very sanguine expectations of the average Christian preacher acquiring enough knowledge or decency to immediately draw up a fresh *menu*. While they show a constitutional disinclination to deal fairly with current events, it would be absurd to expect better behavior in relation to events of two thousand years ago.

Principal Donaldson's chapter on the early Christians deals with the first three centuries of the Christian era, and therefore it does not fall within the scope of his work to trace the influence of early Christian thought on later ages. No one has any right to find fault with a writer for limiting his survey to a definite epoch, but at the same time one may regret that his investigations were not continued to a later period. Even though nothing were said that was new to students, it would come with greater force—to Christians—from a clergyman of the standing of Professor Donaldson. As it is, an unprejudiced reader will finish the book feeling that more may be said of the period with which it deals, and very much more of after ages. With these after ages I purpose dealing before I conclude.

Additional emphasis is given to Principal Donaldson's statements concerning women among the early Christians, from the fact that he commenced his investigations with the traditional bias in favor of Christianity. "An examination of the facts" proved to him that, instead of Christianity creating a revolution in favor of women during the first three centuries—the period with which the book deals—"the position among Christians was lower, and the notions regarding them were more degraded than they were in the first." The statement is clear, the charge sweeping; and bearing in mind that religions are purest in their infancy, and disciples in the first flush of their enthusiasm less likely to compromise than at a later period, the more serious. Principal Donaldson gives some of the reasons for this retrogression, to which I will add others, without at all weakening the force of those advanced by him.

On the Pagan side—from the side of the influence of Greece and Rome—the tendency, as we have seen, was all in favor of emancipation. There was, indeed, more than a tendency—women having reached a position of "great freedom, power and influence in the Roman Empire." But, on the other side, there was the influence of Eastern religious ideas, particularly those derived from the Old Testament and the Jewish religion. Here the tendency was all on the side of restriction. Throughout the Bible, woman is treated as inferior to man, and in the Jewish ritual her functions are more or less of a negative character. In not a single case do the ideals of womanhood in the Bible approach in nobility those of Greek and Roman literature. Polygamy, which necessarily involves the subjection of woman, is general in the Bible—again in striking contrast to the Greeks and Romans. Here monogamy is the rule. Principal Donaldson notes that there is only one case on record of a Spartan having two wives. Polygamy is also absent from the society depicted by Homer, while to recall the national heroes of Greece and Rome is to recall the fact that all were monogamous. On the other hand, not only does the old Bible permit polygamy, but the New Testament fails to prohibit it. In addition, not only have various Christian leaders at

different times openly taught polygamy, but Luther said he could not assert that for a man to marry several wives was "repugnant to the Holy Scripture"; Milton held it to be "sufficiently established that polygamy is allowed by God's law"; while Bishop Burnet, dealing with the question in a special treatise, asserted that "a simple and express discharge of polygamy is nowhere to be found" in the New Testament, thus taking up the same position as Luther and Milton.

With the early Christians, the inferiority of woman was not only a natural inferiority; it was also, so to speak, religious. Woman was the origin of evil, as the early Christian writers are never tired of reminding her, and was the constant occasion of evil in others. Her very touch was more or less of a pollution. This idea found emphatic endorsement in the "Touch me not" of Jesus to Mary, after the resurrection; while Thomas, being a man, was allowed to feel the wounds in his side. The same belief was expressed in the Church regulation of after years prohibiting women touching the Eucharist with bare hands. At her best, according to St. Chrysostom, woman is "a necessary evil, a natural temptation, a desirable calamity, a domestic peril, a deadly fascination and a painted ill." Nor was Chrysostom alone in his denunciation. "You are the Devil's gateway," says Tertullian; "you are the unsealer of that forbidden tree; you are the first deserter of the divine law.....You destroyed so easily God's image, man." Gregory Thaumaturgus says: "Among all women I sought for chastity proper to them, and I found it among none. And verily a person may find one man chaste among a thousand, but a woman never." Clement of Alexandria's counsel is: "Above all it seems right that we turn away from the sight of women.....The affection which arises from the fire which we call love leads to the fire which will never cease in consequence of sin."

The effect of these teachings is well put by Principal Donaldson in the following passage:—

"I may define man to be a male human being, and woman to be a female human being.....As human beings they are on an equality as to their powers, the difference in individuals resulting from the surroundings and circumstances of spiritual growth. But man is a male and woman is a female, and this distinction exists in Nature for the continuance of the race. Now what the early Christians did was to strike the male out of the definition of man, and human being out of the definition of woman. Man was a human being made for the highest and noblest purposes; woman was a female made only to serve one. She was on the earth to inflame the heart of man with every evil passion. She was a fireship continually striving to get alongside the male man-o'-war to blow him to pieces."

Yet it is this religion which succeeded, as far as it was possible to succeed, in divesting woman of human nature, in degrading her to the level of an animal, or differing from an animal only in capacity for evil, that is commonly assumed to have rescued her from degradation and crowned her with dignity!

(To be continued.) C. COHEN.

Science and Faith.

IT is the persistent boast of the advanced theologians of to-day that the attitude of Science to Religion has radically changed during the last fifteen or twenty years. The Huxlean type of scientist, we are assured, is quite extinct. "We all still remember," it is said, "the sledge-hammer blows of Huxley, the great Agnostic's delight in battle against defenders of orthodoxy like Dr. Wace and Mr. Gladstone, his keen logic, and, to tell the truth, rather aggressive and defiant temper.....But in our own day there are increasing evidences of a very different temper—of a growing disposition among men of science to think it possible that

'There are more things in heaven and earth Than are dreamed of in our laboratories.'

The writer of that passage ignorantly misrepresents the facts. Professor Huxley, in particular, was always careful—perhaps over-careful—to concede the possibility of miraculous or supernatural manifestations. It was the convincing adequacy of the attestation of such events that he so vehemently denied. To assert that Science "has purged itself of its temporary intolerance and scornfulness, and is less inclined to assume that nothing exists but what its instruments can register, or its methods demonstrate," is to betray a lamentable lack of acquaintance with the history of scientific progress. The editor of the *Christian Commonwealth*, from the leading columns of which the above quotations are made, cannot have forgotten that some three years ago Dr. Russel Wallace declared, in an interview, that the bulk of present-day scientists are wholly Atheistical; in fact, that Sir Oliver Lodge, Sir William Crookes, Lord Kelvin and himself, stand practically alone in their somewhat friendly attitude to Faith. If that was true three years ago it is equally true to-day. It is noteworthy that whenever the assertion is made that Science has at last turned religious, the only authority referred to is Sir Oliver Lodge or Lord Kelvin. Not the least attempt is ever made to prove the assertion in any other way.

It is perfectly true that the conflict between Religion and Science is not nearly so keen and bitter as it was thirty and forty years ago. The antagonism between them is as pronounced as ever, only they now seldom face each other on the field of battle. The warfare is in a state of quiescence. The reasons for this condition are obvious. In the first place, Science has been victorious all along the line. Its findings have been accepted by the intelligence of the age, and scarcely one theologian has the courage openly to challenge them. Secondly, orthodoxy has lost touch with the masses of the people. Its anathemas and excommunications are no longer heeded. It proclaims its doctrines with as much vigor and cocksureness as formerly, but lacks the temerity to attack its enemy in the open field. Science, aware of this impotence of the Church, ignores it, and conscious of its own triumph, quietly pursues its mission. In the third place, the New Theology is a living witness to the conquering power of Science. "The Huxleys and the Tyndalls are dead and buried," we are told, "and a new generation of scientists that swears not by them has arisen." In reality, it is the Waces and the Gladstones that are dead and buried; and to these there are no successors. The views attacked by Huxley and Tyndall are no longer held by men who are prepared to defend them against all comers. The Fall, Original Sin, the Virgin Birth and Resurrection of Jesus Christ, in short, all miraculous or supernatural occurrences, are now repudiated by all the divines who are at all imbued with the modern spirit.

And yet, face to face with this incontestable fact, the New Theology maintains that Science has become the friend and ally of Religion. This is a wilful perversion of the truth. Science no longer attacks because there is no enemy worthy of its steel. The Old Theology has fallen on evil days and is afraid to venture out of its hole, while the New Theology has divested itself of all assailable doctrines. It is theology that has changed, not Science; it is theology that has abandoned important positions, not Science. Indeed, the newer divines claim to be scientific and often speak in the name of Science. Well, some of them may be semi-scientific, although the majority must be characterised as pseudo-scientific. The truth is that they have retreated into an imaginary region to be out of reach of any scientific attack; but they are equally out of reach of any scientific support.

What is the difference, for instance, between immanence and incarnation? If God has always indwelt the universe, how could he also become incarnate in it? If he was always immanent in man, was he not always clothed with flesh? And if he was always incarnate, in what sense can he be said to have become specially incarnate in Jesus Christ?

Surely the immanence of God, if it means anything, must be synonymous with his incarnation: he could not be immanent in man without being clothed with man's flesh. The Old Theology is beautifully logical, entirely self-consistent, and if it were also true it would stand for ever; but the New is a confused mass of illogical, contradictory and mutually destructive dogmas, with no authority whatever to fall back upon save individual opinions, and must pass away. It will only serve as a temporary half-way house between orthodoxy and unbelief. It will never succeed in rehabilitating religion "among thoughtful people," which the movement aims at bringing about.

Science and Faith are absolutely irreconcilable. Science does not support a single one of the numerous claims put forth by Faith. Science confines itself to Nature and her manifestations, while Faith imagines a Supernature, and pretends to know it much more intimately than Science knows Nature. The Rev. Dr. Horton declares that "Nature does not produce the things that are on the earth to-day." "This great city, this church in which we are met, this electric light," he says, "is not natural." These things, he adds, are "the products of human intelligence and will," man being evidently a supernatural being. If this is what the *Divinity* of man implies, what is involved in the *humanity* of God? But Science knows man only as part and parcel of Nature, and regards all his actions as simply natural. It is therefore quite unscientific to put man in the category of supernatural beings. Nothing is more certain than that both his intelligence and will have been evolved through countless ages of storm and struggle. And than human intelligence and will Science discerns nothing higher. If this be so, how can Science be claimed as an ally of Religion? Is it not incontrovertible that natural knowledge in no way countenances supernatural belief? The latter may or may not be true, my only point being that the former furnishes no manner of proof either way. *God and the soul are unknown, and Science does not recognise them.* They do not come within its purview. It can neither affirm nor deny their existence. Two or three great scientists may be profoundly religious, but that does not alter the fact that, as scientists, even these two or three are *Atheists*; while in the majority of cases the study of Science, as Dr. Russel Wallace admitted, leads to *Atheism* and the abandonment of all forms of supernatural religion.

J. T. LLOYD.

The "Freethinker," A Weekly London Newspaper; Also on Belief and Unbelief.

By HUME NISBET,

Author of "A Colonial Tramp," etc., etc.

I SENT for the issue in question of this weekly paper and examined it carefully from beginning to end. I did not find a single word that could be considered, in the widest sense of our elastic language, "indecent" or "dirty"; therefore I consider it my duty, as a lover of justice and a British subject, to say so.

As a reader and lover of stern logic, I admire the *Freethinker* and the pamphlets and books of its Editor, G. W. Foote, exceedingly, without knowing the author. I also consider his imprisonment for "Blasphemy" to be an outrage on civilisation and the liberties of an Englishman for the following reasons:—

1. It is now generally admitted that there are no defensible data for our Religion any more than for other *Faiths* which have existed and died. The position is exactly as if legal experts sat and discussed a case of supposed inheritance, with no positive evidence that any property existed to inherit. Therefore, to condemn and imprison any ratepayer or non-ratepayer for denying, or insisting upon this supposed

property, is simply an outrage on personal liberty and common sense. Any person reminding a magistrate, for the purpose of prejudicing him in another case, of that outrageous, mediæval and barbarous impeachment and persecution, is playing exactly the same dirty trick as the Roman informer, who reminded Nero about St. Paul's previous imprisonments for his opinions.

[I write this impartially, and as one of the *believers* in a life beyond earth, from what I personally consider evidence satisfactory to my own hopes and faith; but I also consider that the non-believer has as much *legal* right, or ought to have, to express his opinion, as I have to hold mine.]

2. My objections to the *Freethinker* are, not for its opinions, but for its over-earnestness in expressing its sentiments and seriousness about what seems, to me, of small importance. Yet when I think upon the atrocities which our religionists have committed in the past, such as the destruction of the Alexandrian Library, the most horrible murder of Hypatia, and the more recent Christian diabolical crimes, I can excuse this *bigotry* as the natural outcome of humanitarian indignation.

3. I also object to its jocularity, which tends to aggravate thoughtful antagonists; yet, in view of the intolerance and absurdity of religionists, past and present, I can excuse this also.

Reasoning Englishmen support Churches and Churchmen as they support Theatres—for their delectation. The *mysteries* we regard, unless they can be proven, as we do other stage tricks. We may like to enjoy the performances without grudging the price. If the Stage was, as the Church is, State-endowed, and star-actors received princely emoluments, as Bishops do, we might have ratepaying protestors also against such more amusing national extravagance. But to persecute others who object to the entertainments, and to paying for them, is tyranny. To insist on students considering them as *facts* without giving proper data, is the action of monomaniacs.

This case of Justice-winking seems the more flagrant, the assaulter being a clergyman and the victim a poor newsvendor. Had plaintiff and defendant been of equal position and influence, it would have been wicked; in the present instance, it seems monstrous. No matter what may be the faith, non-faith, or other failings or infirmities of the men before Justice, she must only hold the scales properly blindfolded, be the accuser or accused mendicant or monarch; there must be no winking nor peeping. The dame must stand uprightly and balance fairly, or out of court she *ought* to be driven.

Acid Drops.

Mr. Arnold White rushed into print with a foolish letter on the explosion on board the French battleship, the *Jena*. He rashly attributed the loss of the vessel to the want of discipline in the French fleet, and this in turn to the want of religion. Modern battleships were called after the names of Danton, Condorcet, Voltaire, Renan, Gambetta, Victor Hugo, etc. "If our Admiralty," Mr. White said, "were to name our ships the Bradlaugh, the Tom Paine, the Richard Parker, after the ringleader of the mutiny at the Nore, we should not expect a high standard of discipline on board. More especially if the restraints of religion were entirely withdrawn from the fleet." We were glad to see a prompt reply to this in the *Daily Mirror* from Mr. F. R. Theakstone, who pointed out that Bradlaugh and Paine were "two of the strictest disciplinarians in English history."

The *Jewish World* mentions that one of the pioneers of the women's suffrage movement in America was a Jewess, Mrs. Ernestine L. Rose, who addressed meetings as early as 1836, and attended the famous convention at Syracuse in 1852. Mrs. Rose was a Jewess by race, but she was an *Atheist* by conviction. She spent her last years, and died, in England. We knew her very well and often visited her. She looked very venerable in her extreme age. Her *Atheistic* convictions never wavered. She was a grand old lady.

According to a special correspondent of the *Jewish Chronicle*, the outrages on the Jews in Holy Russia are

still continued. He says that in one district he has collected "personal information of 120 cases of outrage on Jewish girls and women, whose ages range from ten to sixty-five." "This is happening in South Russia," he adds, "without pogroms and in tranquil times." The beastliness of these Christian brutes is unspeakable. The strongest proof that Christ is a myth is that he does not prevent these wretches from perpetrating their wickedness in his name.

Stphan Memos, a young Greek lately arrived in London, tells (in writing) to the *Daily Chronicle* the story of how the village of Larincovo, in North Macedonia, in which he lived with his father, mother, brother and two little sisters, was wiped out of existence in a single night by an armed Bulgarian band. The villagers were at church when their fellow Christians descended upon them. A general massacre ensued. Stphan Memos was not killed like his father, mother and brother, but his tongue was cut out. This sort of thing has been going on in Macedonia for a long time. Christians murder Christians. And the Christian Powers keep on talking to the Turk about disorder in Macedonia. Really, it would be a joke if it were not so bloody.

Sir Robert Ball did an act of humanity by visiting Dartmoor Prison and giving a lecture to the convicts on astronomy. We read that the convicts were greatly interested and applauded him heartily at the close of the lecture. Some day or other, when Christian superstition is dethroned, and the old ideas of sin and punishment go with it, prisoners will be treated like human beings. Instructive and stimulating lectures will then take the place of clerical dronings from the pulpit.

We forwarded Mr. W. T. Lee a marked copy of the *Freethinker* of March 3 containing a reference to him in "Acid Drops" and in "Answers to Correspondents." Mr. Lee writes us from Cardiff, under date of March 15, with reference to the matter. He suggests that it would have been better—he will not say kinder—if we had verified the statement that he spoke of the author of *Bible Romances* as "a man who wrote garbled rubbish and had no reputation to lose." But the statement was not ours—nor Mr. Cohen's, who wrote the "Acid Drop." Mr. Lee was reported in the Huddersfield press as saying that of Mr. Foote; and we submit that his denial of the statement as "utterly untrue" might more properly have been made at the source of the falsehood. Mr. Lee sends us a long account of what he says happened, but we do not fully understand it; nor are the details of much importance in face of his unqualified contradiction. We are asked to "correct" Mr. Cohen. But we cannot do that, as he simply went by the Huddersfield newspaper. We cannot do more than give publicity to Mr. Lee's declaration that "the whole story is utterly untrue."

Mr. Lee admits that he did make the statement that he had met Mr. Foote eighteen times in debate, for he says that the number "was an error of mine." But he says nothing as to the reported statement that he was "about tired of it." If he retains that feeling, he must have carried it about a long time, for it is many years (some ten, we believe) since he last debated with Mr. Foote. Mr. Lee thinks he has debated with Mr. Foote "eleven or twelve times." Well, it all depends on his method of arithmetic. If he counts all the nights, he may be right; if he only counts the debates, he is certainly wrong. He first debated with Mr. Foote at Derby in 1895, and afterwards at Cardiff, Liverpool, Plymouth, Bristol and London. We do not recollect any other encounter. And, as we have said, the latest of them was long enough ago for Mr. Lee to have got rid of his weariness. Mr. Foote, for his part, says nothing about any of the debates he has engaged in. All he had to say he said in the debates. "The rest is silence."

Our sympathy goes out to the Rev. H. T. Devall, of St. Paul's, Ramsey—a place which is represented by the great and pious Mr. Hall Caine in the Manx Parliament. This gentleman—we mean Mr. Devall—preached a sermon lately in support of the National Sunday Observance Movement. Referring to Sunday closing, he said that they had swept away one devil in Manxland and opened the door to another. Sweetstuff-shops were open on Sunday, and children spent in them the money that should go to Church and Sunday-school collections. Shocking! It is a clear case for legal protection. A man of God ought not to have to preach the Gospel to a lot of children who sit sucking away the collection under his very eyes. No wonder Mr. Devall "hoped the time was not far distant when a Manx law would be passed to stop it." What a chance for Mr. Hall Caine! We trust he will rise to the height of the occasion.

Bishop Gore (awful name!) chivvied a clergyman out of Birmingham not long ago for suggesting a doubt as to the accuracy of the story of the Virgin Birth of Christ. Now he welcomes the New Theology, which includes that and a good deal more. His reason is that it is, at least, a great breakdown of the old materialism. Heavens! What these Bishops will say! Mr. Campbell's congregation doesn't consist of materialists. They were formerly old-fashioned Christians, and now they are new-fashioned Christians. The materialists are precisely where they were—outside the new and the old theology both. The breakdown of materialism is only a pious dream.

Sir Oliver Lodge's "Catechism" is warmly welcomed by Bishop Gore. Here is a man of science, he says, who believes in God and Immortality; this ought to put fresh life into the old Christian faith. *Nil Desperandum*. Never say die. God Almighty established Christianity and Sir Oliver Lodge keeps it from falling.

"Elijah" Dowie was a powerful person even in death. Lame, blind and sick people crowded round his bier, seeking to touch the gorgeous ascension robes in which he was arrayed, in the belief that they would be miraculously cured. One paralysed woman thought she *was* cured, and tried to act accordingly, but she fell down stairs and suffered serious injury. Others were more cautious.

Dowie was buried in Zion City after all, and his grave may yet be a place of pilgrimage. There was a big crowd at the funeral, including sick people who hoped to be healed by getting near the corpse.

Many of Dowie's dupes believe that he will rise from the dead. If they believe it strongly enough he will. There is a Shakespearian proverb about the wish being father to the thought. Yes, and the thought, in turn, often becomes father to the fact.

Rev. J. Howard, during a discussion at the Ongar Board of Guardians, said that he remembered a clergyman who lived until he was ninety years of age, who never washed, and who yet remained a healthy man. But perhaps he was descended from one of the old saints who never touched water. Other people are not so fortunate in their antecedents.

That clergyman was a distinguished member of "the great unwashed." Considering the state he must have been in, it might be said of him, as Hamlet said to the searchers for the dead body of Polonius, "You shall nose him as you go." He could have led his flock any time without being visible. They could hardly lose his trail.

When our shop manager complained to the Post Office officials about the disappearance of so many *Freethinkers* and other things sent out from our publishing office, and suggested that some religious fanatics in the Post Office service might be the guilty parties, the higher officials laughed at the idea. Will they kindly tell us, then, what they make of the following paragraph in the *Daily Express* of March 13:—

"Mr. W. F. Brittain, postmaster of Sheridan, Wyoming, has been removed from his office because he had a habit of burning all mail matter which did not meet with his approval." If this sort of thing can happen elsewhere, why not in London or other parts of the kingdom?

Mr. Foote complained about his letters, when he left London for his present residence, until he was sick of complaining. His letters were delayed, and some of them lost altogether. Some irregularities were really curious. Here is one of them. Mr. Foote posted some copy to the foreman in the *Freethinker* composing room. When he arrived at the office himself the next day, about noon, it had not arrived. Presently the foreman came and said it had just been delivered. Wishing to see the postmarks, Mr. Foote told the foreman to bring him the envelope. To his surprise, the address was in a different handwriting, and certain marks made by him over and above the word "urgent" had been imitated. Obviously the communication had been opened and redirected, and the thing was done at the end where Mr. Foote lives. What had it been done for? The Post Office official, who interviewed Mr. Foote on the matter, smiled when the suggestion was made that some religious busybody might be spying into the editor of the *Freethinker's* correspondence. And that smile was all the satisfaction Mr. Foote ever had.

Now the oddest thing of all was that Mr. Foote indicated the time when the letter was posted, and the pillar-box at which it was posted; and it was on a Sunday evening, when the full staff is not in active employment. It ought not to have been difficult to trace the movements of that letter in the Post Office; certainly, the few men into whose hands it could have gone might have been questioned or watched. Mr. Foote had his own opinion on the matter, and he entertains it still. More than that it would be imprudent to say. For, although the Post Office is not to be taught anything, it is a powerful institution, and has a lot of money to spend—if it wants to.

Amongst the pieces reprinted in England for the first time in the new "Bohn" edition of Emerson is the Essay on "Character," originally published in the *North American Review* of April, 1866. In the course of it there is a very significant passage on the relation of official Christianity to Slavery in America. "It is only yesterday," Emerson said, "that our American churches, so long silent on Slavery, and notoriously hostile to the Abolitionist, wheeled into line for Emancipation." Emerson is a much higher authority on this subject than the Christian Evidence scribes of a later generation.

More "Providence." Great floods have occurred in West Virginia. The town of Majorsville has been washed away. Reports of trouble come from other parts of the United States. All the large manufacturing plants along the river front had to be closed, and a hundred thousand men were thrown out of work. Traffic on all the local railroads was brought to a standstill. Heavy losses and much suffering are reported from Ohio and Kentucky. "He doeth all things well."

Streams of clergymen went to the poll at Oxford and voted for Lord Curzon, as against Lord Rosebery, as Chancellor of the University. They felt safer with Lord Curzon. He was Conservative in every respect, and although "clever," was never troubled with ideas. Curzon carried it, therefore, by 1,101 votes to 440 for Rosebery; and Oxford can go on sleeping quietly.

Any rubbish is welcome to the newspapers as long as it lends itself to sensationalism. That is why they have been giving publicity to some pretended American experiments establishing the weight of "the soul" as something between half an ounce and an ounce. It is a pity that this wonderful discovery was published during March. It would have been more appropriate on the first of April.

Father Vaughan is still on the job. Many of his own countrymen, he says, think no more of Christianity than they do of a finnan haddock. Father Vaughan might go farther than that. When some of his countrymen are hungry they think far more of a finnan haddock than they do of Christianity. And if the fish is fresh and well cooked we don't blame them.

"The Centenary of Garibaldi, Patriot and Hero—Was He an Atheist?" was the title of a lecture by the Rev. J. H. Dickie at Springbarn Parish Church, which is reported in the *St. Rollox and Springbarn Express*. Towards the end of his lecture—the only part of it with which we are concerned—Mr. Dickie denounced the slander that Garibaldi was "an Atheist and a blasphemer." The reverend gentleman quotes Garibaldi as saying: "It is in vain that my enemies try to make me out an Atheist and a blasphemer. I believe in God. I am of the religion of Jesus Christ, not of the religion of the Popes. I do not admit any intermediary between God and man." And again: "I am a Christian as you are. Yes! I am of that religion which has broken the bonds of slavery and has proclaimed the freedom of man." Yes, that is what Garibaldi said and meant at the time. Yet it was in the early days of the Defence of Rome and the Dictatorship. Mr. Dickie forgets the importance of chronology. He is like one who should represent Paul as a persecutor of the Christians, overlooking the fact that he subsequently became a Christian himself.

Garibaldi's biographer, Theodore Bent, states that in his old age the great hero grew more and more sceptical. "One of his laconic letters of 1880," Mr. Bent says, "illustrates this. It was as follows: 'Dear Friends,—Man has created God, not God man. Yours ever, Garibaldi.'"

George Jacob Holyoake, in *Bygones Worth Remembering*, relates a scene which took place one night at a crowded party at Fulham, at the time when Mazzini and Garibaldi were both in England together. "Mazzini was contending,"

Holyoake says, "as was his wont, that an Atheist could not have a sense of duty. Garibaldi, who was present, at once asked, 'What do you say to me? I am an Atheist. Do I lack a sense of duty?' 'Ah,' said Mazzini, playfully, 'you imbibed duty with your mother's milk'—which was not an answer, but a good-natured evasion."

The Rev. J. H. Dickie ought to make himself better acquainted with the facts before he speaks on any subject in public. Ignorance is not always safe—even in a pulpit.

The dear *Daily News* considers the *Freethinker* a very wicked paper, because we criticise Christian ideas a little too freely for our contemporary's liking. We do not, for instance, endorse its exaggerated claims on behalf of Jesus Christ. We do not believe that character to be really historical, or that it is perfect even as it is depicted in the Gospels. But we have never said, directly or indirectly, that Jesus Christ was a scoundrel or a blackguard. But the daily organ of the Nonconformist Conscience is apparently ready to go to that length with respect to a personage, in our opinion, of far greater importance. It permitted one of its reviewers, the other morning, to pen a monstrous libel on the greatest of poets and therefore the greatest of men. "Shakespeare," the writer said, "fawned upon any hand that had money in it." We will not waste our time in refuting this vulgar accusation. We will not even ask the writer for his evidences. The thing is beneath contempt. Those who worship a dead Jew may well have no reverence for the greatest of Englishmen.

It is an old joke that, whenever there is a "risky" piece on at any place of amusement, the men of God go to see it in the interest of public morality—to ascertain whether it is a thing they ought to warn their congregations against. But nature is more subtle, pregnant and varied, than all the jocularities of mankind. Nothing can be imagined that does not happen. On March 13, the New York correspondent of the *Daily News* telegraphed that religious circles were agitated by the arrest and prosecution of the Rev. Howard Mears, an assistant to the rector of St. Matthew's Episcopal Church. The reverend gentleman was found, in company with two negroes, at a gambling house that was raided the night before. In his defence, he pleaded that he went to the place as a student of sociology, and was seeking material for a sermon on evil conditions in the life of New York. The magistrates discharged him (lucky man!), but inflicted a fine on the two negroes. They weren't getting up a sermon, anyhow. Still, it is easy to guess who paid their fine.

Rev. R. J. Campbell has discovered that all sin is selfishness, and we have said again and again—and we repeat it—that this was the teaching of Ingersoll before Mr. Campbell mounted a pulpit. What the reverend gentleman says is right enough. We are not denying that. We are only denying his originality.

At the City Temple, on Thursday, March 14, Mr. Campbell carried the question a little farther. We make the following extract from the report of his sermon in the *Daily Chronicle*:—

"Mr. Campbell negated the idea of Divine punishment for sin which begins in the hereafter. The punishment for sin is in this world, he said; every foul and selfish deed has its harvest of pain in this world or the next, and this pain is inflicted by ourselves, or rather, the Eternal God in us.

"I daresay," he said, "that many of you have been brought up to fear that punishment for sin which will begin in the other world, and that if a man repents in time, he will escape this terrible, unrelenting consequence." Mr. Campbell pointed out the injustice of this doctrine, which, he declared, is not the Gospel of Jesus, though it is preached in His name in high places.

The incongruity of a man who was a thorough-paced scoundrel all his life, and then repented and avoided the punishment, was obvious. It offended the moral sense and could not be true.

Mr. Campbell related a story which Mark Twain wrote of the death of a criminal. The man said he was going straight to Heaven, because he trusted in his Redeemer. 'That's all very well,' Mark Twain replied, 'but what about the murdered man who had no opportunity of repenting before he died?'

Readers of the *Freethinker* are perfectly familiar with all this. We have said it scores, perhaps hundreds, of times. It attracts attention now because a Christian preacher says it. But it was just as true before.

A number of Passive Resisters appeared before the Salford stipendiary, Mr. Makinson; and one of them, the Rev. Samuel Pearson, spoke on behalf of his fellows. The magi-

strate told him to "Go to God's country; get away from us; go to Canada or anywhere." A few days afterwards the reverend gentleman went to God's country. He died.

John William Betts, a Sheffield postman, is doing two months' imprisonment for stealing a letter containing twenty-three postcards. The cards were discovered stuck in several parts of his Bible. Suppose he had stuck them in a Paine's *Age of Reason*! Wouldn't the religious papers have been full of it!

Alexander Baker was pastor of the Salem-street Baptist Chapel at Braintree, but the congregation couldn't stand him, and he was "chucked." Since then he has been a source of trouble. On the first Sunday in March he went to the Chapel and announced his intention to "break bread and drink wine" with the rest of the worshippers. Isaac Pamplin called upon him to stop, and as he did not do so, Pamplin threw a large hymn-book at him, striking him on the face. Baker didn't want two doses of that medicine, so he walked out. Subsequently the magistrates were interviewed, and Pamplin was fined "five bob," including costs, for a technical assault. "Let brotherly love continue."

According to the Rev. G. F. Holden, "This world has in it no sign of universal justice"—which is not saying much for the character of the God who is assumed to have created it—and then goes on to argue that "unless there is a great hereafter, where all wrongs are made right, God is no righteous God, but a moral monster." But how is it possible to set right in some other world wrong done in this? A wrong once done cannot be undone, and any amount of benefit conferred upon the wronged cannot remove the injustice. And the punishment of the wrongdoer can only minister to the sense of revenge, without having the compensating feature of correcting a faulty character. Mr. Holden appears to forget that if there is a God this world must be taken as being as much an indication of his character as any other world. At any rate, it is the only—and we are bound to take it as the only—reliable ground on which to base a judgment. And that judgment is, according to Mr. Holden, that the world shows no sign of an over-ruling justice, and that unless God has made an attempt to correct elsewhere his handiwork here, the whole plan of creation amounts to an indictment of him as a moral monster. It is gracious of Mr. Holden to give God another chance, and not condemn him on account of his prentice effort, but his generosity is quite lacking in anything like logic.

"The Missionary-Ridden Madras," is the heading of a letter by "Fore-thought," who is evidently a native, in the *Hindu*. The following extract is noticeable:—

"The Madras Presidency has been the scene of the labors of many great educationists. It is here that secular education was once productive of good results—statesmen, scholars, lawyers of the first rank, but gradually the Missionary influence predominated and made education very narrow."

The writer goes on to say that, while the Mission Societies have done much for the spread of education, the narrow spirit in which they work is proved by the fact that "they have not succeeded in producing one scholar capable of handling the collegiate classes."

Dr. Whiteside, the Catholic Bishop of Liverpool, in a pastoral addressed to his flock, discusses "the marked decline throughout the country of the religious observance of Sunday." The following is an interesting extract from this official document:—

"The census of churchgoers taken in various centres of population records the sad fact that a very large proportion, according to some almost a half, of the people of this country stand outside organised Christianity, and attend no place of worship. As regards the more religiously-minded portion of the community, it is admitted that they go less frequently to church than formerly; and with respect to others, who are attached to particular religious organisations more by family tradition than by conviction, the fact is only too evident that if they are to be induced to go to church at all, the form of service must be made to assume less and less of a distinctly Christian, or even of a religious, character. There is, furthermore, a tendency, at least in certain parts of the country, to devote the whole of the week-ends, including Sunday, to pleasure and amusement. It is not surprising, then, that the leaders of the chief denominations should have recently issued a united appeal to the people of England urging them to try and stem an evil which threatens to destroy what has hitherto been one of the proudest traditions of this country."

The Bishop goes on to say that Catholics have not to "deplore any decline in the attendance at Mass on Sundays." Yet he makes the sad admission that "there are still tens of thousands of Catholics who habitually and wilfully miss Mass on Sundays" and "far more who seldom or never

come to evening service." So the dry rot seems to be spreading all round.

Why don't men go to church? The Bishop of Southwell explains it. He says that men are extremely shy creatures and hate walking up the church aisles. The women, we suppose, rather like it. We know now.

The Vicar of Thames Ditton says that in his parish only five per cent. of the parishioners attend any place of worship. We are sorry for *him*, but that is five per cent too many.

Dr. Bickersteth, Vicar of Leeds, is prepared to vote for the abolition of Sunday delivery of letters in Leeds. If such matters must be settled by voting, we are prepared to vote for the abolition of Sunday preaching in Leeds. Let it be a day of rest all round. Tie up the parsons' jaws as well as the letter-carriers' feet. Why not?

The Wandsworth Public Library Committee, after waiting three months, instructs the Librarian to inform us that our offer to present a copy of the *Freethinker* to the reading-room is declined. We understand that the *Clarion* and the *Literary Guide* are accepted, with or without thanks. Something must be excluded for the sake of appearances, and the line is drawn at the *Freethinker*. Which, in its way, is a compliment. This is the *dangerous* paper.

Christianity is progressing in the Eastern Counties. At a recent confirmation by the Bishop of Norwich there were three candidates from St. Mary-le-Tower; one was an old gentleman eighty-three years of age, who must have been just in time; the other two were ladies, and one of them was both blind and deaf. We congratulate the Church of Christ in Suffolk on this splendid windfall. A few more such confirmations will counteract all the work of "infidelity."

Death of M. Berthelot.

M. MARCELIN BERTHELOT, the world-famous French scientist, died at Paris on Monday evening. In the afternoon he attended the meeting of the Academy of Science, of which he was the permanent secretary. When he reached home again he found his sons sitting by their mother's bedside. She had been ill for some time, but her death did not seem imminent, and M. Berthelot went to his work in an adjoining room. A few minutes after six Mme. Berthelot suddenly expired. The great scientist's affection for his wife was well known—although many English Christians believe that sort of thing is unknown in "Infidel France." He had said to his sons, "I could not survive the death of your mother." And it was literally true. When the news was conveyed to him he fell back dead in his chair.

"M. Berthelot," says the *Tribune* correspondent in Paris, "was one of the most respected men in France. His moral courage and uprightness were recognised and admired by everyone." The same paper, in a leading article, says: "It is hardly too much to say of M. Berthelot that he laid the foundation of modern synthetic organic chemistry." But he was not a mere specialist. "His was, above all things," the *Tribune* says, "a balanced and many-sided intellect." Our contemporary mentions some of his intellectual activities, but, like other English journals, it had not the courage to mention his Freethought. He was the honored President of the Federated Freethinkers of France. M. Berthelot's fine letter to the International Freethought Congress at Rome was the most important thing read or spoken at that great assembly. I translated it in full in the *Freethinker* of October 2, 1904. One sentence must be quoted now. "We shall establish in the world," M. Berthelot said, "the reign of reason freed from ancient prejudices and dogmatic systems; that is to say, a superior ideal, a higher morality more secure than that of former times, because it is based upon a knowledge of human nature, and because it proclaims and demonstrates the intellectual and moral solidarity of the people of all nations."

M. Berthelot was the original of the great scientist in Zola's *Paris*; learned, accomplished, urbane, benevolent, yet perfectly courageous in maintaining his ideas. "I am the true revolutionist," he smilingly said to the conspirators and revolvers who wanted to change the world in *their* way. And he was right. Ideas are the most powerful explosive, and they have this advantage, that they work without bloodshed and violence.

G. W. F.

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

April 28, Manchester.
May 6, Liverpool.

To Correspondents.

- C. COHEN'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—April 14, Glasgow; 21, Workman's Hall, Stratford; 28, a. Victoria Park, c. Workman's Hall, Stratford.
- J. T. LLOYD'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—March 24, West Stanley.
- W. P. KENNEDY.—Papers forwarded. Yes, our circulation is increasing, slowly, but still surely; and our friends can accelerate the process by introducing this journal to people they meet in the ordinary intercourse of life. Our readers can, in this way, advertise us most effectively. Also, if they send us the names and addresses of persons who might read the *Freethinker* regularly if they only knew of it, we shall be happy to forward them a post-free gratuitous copy for six consecutive weeks.
- P. W. M.—Much obliged.
- JAMES HUTCHINSON.—Thanks for the cuttings. See "Acid Drops." The reverend gentleman is all at sea about Garibaldi.
- E. A. BRATTLE.—All sorts of prayers have been addressed to the Lord about us by Christians, but we never found that they did us much good—or harm. Still, if you will pray for us, by all means do so; no doubt you mean well, and that is something.
- W. COX.—You say you would "very much like to meet the 'Infidel Strangler' in a throat-gripping contest." So would many more, but the man has only one neck to be squeezed—or stretched. Glad to hear you are so pleased with the *Freethinker*. A copy shall be sent as desired.
- W. MACKINDER writes: "I have already gained you one reader here, and am trying hard to get more. The *Freethinker* was introduced to me in Manchester twelve months ago, and I wouldn't miss it now for sixpence a week, although I haven't a big wage." This correspondent has given away six copies of Mr. Ronie's *From Fiction to Fact*, and finds our *Bible Handbook* "splendid to carry about" with him. "Doesn't it," he says, "open the eyes of the Christians to what their Bible contains."
- J. GARVEN.—Thanks. See paragraph.
- ANONYMOUS correspondents are once more warned that we cannot take any notice of their communications. Persons who write to us must give the usual guarantee of good faith, or their time and trouble will be wasted.
- G. ROLETT.—The Salvation Army has "face" enough—as Cobbett used to say—for anything. To make day and night hideous with its bands and street-singing, and then to object to good music in the public parks on Sunday, is just like it.
- A. MARTIN.—Much obliged, though we have seen it before, and in print too. Glad you were pleased with our answer re that "suppressed" poem of Robert Burns.
- F. R. TREASTONE.—Thanks for good wishes. We are on the road to recovery, and expect soon to be in the best old fighting trim.
- W. P. BALL.—Many thanks for useful cuttings.
- THE COHEN "SALVATION ARMY" TRACT FUND.—Previously acknowledged, £15 16s. 9d. Since received: Brixton, 1s.
- C. W. STYRING.—Cuttings duly received. Thanks.
- J. ROBERTS.—Heading a number of statements "Principles" does not make them so. If you read that "Acid Drop" of ours again, carefully, we think you will find that it explains itself. It is all very well to talk of "the good life" and "the moral ideal," and to cry "Let us all be as good as we can." But morality, as a science, must rest on certain *ideas*, and those ideas are what we mean by *principles*. Secularism has such principles, so has Positivism, but Ethicism has none. It avoids the *intellectual* questions, which are at the bottom of everything.
- J. BROUGH.—Pleased to hear that Mr. Lloyd's audiences at Manchester improve; sorry (though not surprised) to hear that the crop of questions was large but weak.
- JOSEPH BRUCE.—We never saw the verses you refer to. Glad you appreciate the "intellectual" quality of the *Freethinker*.
- G. BAILEY.—Don't say you have dared to write to us; we are always pleased to hear from our readers. Besides, your letter is interesting and encouraging. You say that your introduction to the *Freethinker* was through an old gentleman who gave away back copies at the corner of the street near the Secular Hall, Manchester; that you found the paper just what you wanted; and that it led you on to attending lectures at the Hall, which you had never heard of, although you had lived five years in the city. Facts like these should encourage the "saints" in pushing this journal round by all the means in their power. There are thousands like yourself. The thing is to reach them.
- C. S. G.—Thanks for your efforts to promote our circulation, which, you will be glad to hear, is steadily improving.
- B. H. TRUBBS.—The prospectus of the Sheffield Ethical Society, which you send us, is an improvement on some others we have seen. But all it says about Ethics is borrowed from Secularism, while it avoids Secularism's direct challenge to Theology in general and Christian Theology in particular.
- M. F. PRAG.—We expect to meet our Manchester friends on April 28 in good form for our platform work.

E. MOORCROFT.—You are right about the soul-savers.

"JAN DE BOER."—Thanks.

HAROLD ELLIOTT.—We have not issued a weekly contents-sheet for a good while, as so few newsagents displayed it; but we supply a permanent bill to those who can use one.

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.

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

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months, 2s. 8d.

Sugar Plums.

One of our Continental exchanges, the *Journal de Charleroi*, reproduces some of our "Acid Drops" on the wreck of the *Berlin*. It translates "Acid Drops" as "Gouttes de Vinaigre"—literally "Drops of Vinegar." This, of course, is not exactly accurate, but our contemporary cannot be expected to be familiar with every idiomatic expression in English. "Acid Drops" have no vinegar in them. They are acid, but they are also sweet; and the mixture of opposites makes them very palatable.

Another contemporary of ours, *La Pensée*, the organ of the Freethought Societies of Belgium, translates the greater part of our article on "Providence" in relation to the wreck of the *Berlin* and the rescue of the fourteen survivors. The editor says that one phrase of ours "the jargon of religionists" deserves to pass into the French language.

"F. M.," Paisley, contributed an excellent letter to the discussion on religion going on in a local newspaper. We see that he has drawn upon our *Crimes of Christianity*. Not that we complain of that; on the contrary, we are glad to see that the book is useful to the defenders of Freethought. This correspondent's remarks on Josephus were particularly good. He was replied to, but not answered, by Ernest Thompson, a local evangelist, who says not a word in opposition to "F. M.'s" arguments against the famous passage in Josephus, but simply quotes what he calls Renan's opinion, as if that alone outweighed the great consensus of opinion to the contrary. Moreover, this Paisley evangelist does not, in all probability, quote from the original—and no edition of that is of any value now before the thirteenth, which was largely rewritten. In the Introduction to that edition of the *Vie de Jesus*, Renan makes certain reservations as to the "authenticity" of the Josephus passage, which Ernest Thompson was either too ignorant or too dishonest to mention. He says that a Christian hand has retouched the passage, adding some words, and perhaps cutting out or modifying some expressions. And he adds that there was probably current in the second century an edition of Josephus "corrected according to Christian ideas." Now if the Christians acted in that way, they were fraudulent forgers; and it is obvious that the second half of Renan's remarks on Josephus destroy the value of the opinion he expressed in the first half.

Mr. Lloyd, whose audiences at Manchester on Sunday were the best he has had there, pays his first visit to West Stanley to-day (March 24), and is to give two lectures in the theatre. We hope there will be a strong rally of the district "saints."

More copies of Mr. Cohen's "Salvation Army" tract are wanted, and we shall be happy to receive further subscriptions towards the cost of production. We are putting on a fresh supply, in the hope that the necessary funds will be forthcoming. Within a few shillings the amount already acknowledged has been expended.

The Secular Education League, which was started at the *Tribune* Rendezvous meeting which Mr. Foote attended early in February, is making progress. It has a list of distinguished people on its General Council, and is just launching its first Manifesto. We could print that document this week, but it might not be considered fair, and we are anxious that Secularists should show up well in this enterprise. We shall therefore print it in our next issue. Mr. Foote has been an active member of the Executive Committee of the League, and has devoted a good deal of time and attention to its work, particularly in connection with the Manifesto.

The Making of the Gospels.—III.

(Continued from p. 171.)

NO stories of miraculous works of healing or wise sayings appear to have been in circulation respecting Jesus in the days of the authors of the Pauline Epistles and the Revelation. In none of these first century writings is any knowledge of the Gospel fictions displayed—and a score of reasons can be adduced to show that many of them must have been referred to had they been known. It was not until a later generation that sayings and doings attributed to Jesus, came to be fabricated and committed to writing.

The originators of these stories were Christian teachers and others, who were well acquainted with the Old Testament Scriptures. Their *modus operandi* was the simplest in the world, and the source of their narratives the most natural imaginable. They knew nothing whatever about their beloved Lord and Master, but that small matter was not of the least consequence. Was not Jesus Christ the one great subject of prophecy in the Hebrew Scriptures? And would any devout Christian dare to deny that those predictions had been fulfilled? Was not Isaiah liii., for instance, a series of prophecies dictated by the Spirit of God, foretelling the treatment of Jesus by the Jewish nation? And was it not, then, a matter of absolute certainty that all the indignities described in that chapter must have been inflicted, and had, in fact, actually been borne by the Jewish Savior? Many important details of these sufferings were, no doubt, lacking in this chapter; but the full accounts might be found in other portions of the ancient Hebrew prophetic writings. This was the kind of reasoning that led to the writing of the Gospel "history."

In one of the Gospels, Jesus is represented as saying:—

"These are my words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, how that all things must needs be fulfilled, which are written in the law of Moses, and the Prophets, and the Psalms, concerning me.....Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer, and rise again from the dead the third day," etc. (Luke xxiv. 44-46).

It is scarcely necessary to say that there is not one word in the Old Testament which refers to Jesus Christ. Hence the writing the "history" of Jesus from "prophecy"—in the second or third generation after his death—was a work of pure misrepresentation, and could only have been done by men of some education who had spent considerable time in studying the Hebrew Scriptures. This pious work of distortion was long and arduous; but it was finished at last, and we possess three very much revised and improved copies in the Gospels "according to" Matthew, Mark and Luke.

That the method of "history-writing" here outlined is not fanciful, and was that actually employed by the original Gospel-makers, is the next point to be elucidated. The fact stated becomes clearly evident from a comparison of the New Testament writings with the earliest Christian documents extant. In the Gospels, for instance, it cannot escape notice that the writers were acquainted with a number of Old Testament passages which, they assert, were predictions concerning Jesus Christ, and such being the case, were bound to be fulfilled. The following are a few examples from the First Gospel:—

1. The Virgin Mary was "found with child by the Holy Ghost.....that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying"——.
2. Jesus was to be born in Bethlehem because "thus it was written by the prophet"——.
3. The child Jesus was taken to Egypt "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying"——.
4. A massacre of babies took place in Bethlehem in fulfilment of "that which was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet saying"——.
5. Jesus "dwelt in a city called Nazareth.....that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets"——.

If the Old Testament passages which are referred to in the foregoing examples had never been written, then Jesus or his parents would not have had to act so as to fulfil them. We know, moreover, that not one of the passages quoted had any reference to Jesus Christ. Consequently, that much-misrepresented individual, if possessed of ordinary intelligence, would not have acted as recorded of him in the Gospels. The original Gospel-maker, however, was not possessed of ordinary intelligence, and the fact that he had his eye on the passages he cites raises the presumption that it was a distorted view of those passages which suggested to him the acts he has attributed to Jesus.

Apart from the books of the New Testament, the earliest Christian writing of which we have any knowledge was the "Preaching of Peter." This was a kind of romance something like the "Recognitions," in which Peter and the other apostles were represented as going about promulgating the new Christian religion. The book was "lost" at an early period; but Clement of Alexandria has preserved some extracts from it. The following paragraph indicates pretty plainly the source whence the history of Jesus was derived. Clement says:—

"Whence also Peter in the 'Preaching,' speaking of the apostles, says: 'But we, unrolling the books of the Prophets which we possess, which name Jesus Christ, partly in parables, partly in enigmas, partly expressly and in so many words, find in them his coming, and death, and cross, and all the rest of the tortures which the Jews inflicted on him, and his resurrection and assumption to heaven.....Recognising them, therefore, we have believed in God in consequence of what is written respecting him.....For we know that God enjoined these things, and we say nothing apart from the [Hebrew] Scriptures'" (Strom. vi., xv.).

There cannot be the slightest doubt that had there been no such passages in the Old Testament as those distorted by the early Christians, we should have had no history of Jesus Christ. This system of perversion was common to all Christian teachers of that age. Even Clement of Alexandria, who has quoted from the "Preaching," was guilty of the same practice. He says (Strom. v., vi.):—

"It were tedious to go over all the Prophets and the Law, specifying what is spoken in enigmas; for almost the whole Scripture gives its utterance in this way."

To take a more relevant example, Clement says in another place:—

"And that the Lord [Jesus] himself was uncomely in aspect the Spirit testifies by Isaiah: 'And we saw him, and he had no form nor comeliness; but his form was mean, inferior to men' [Is. liii. 2]. Yet who was more admirable than the Lord?"

One of the earliest of the Christian writings which have come down to us is the "Epistle of Barnabas," a document composed by a primitive Christian teacher some time before the appearance of the canonical Gospels. I have space for but one sample of this pious writer's distortions, but this will amply suffice to show to what lengths Christian misrepresentations were carried. In this extract, Barnabas ascribes to Abraham a knowledge of the Greek language and a foreknowledge of the coming of Jesus. He assumes that the mythical patriarch named knew that I and H were the first two letters of the name Jesus, written in capitals—IHSOUS—and that, as numerals, the Greek letter I stood for 10, H for 8, and T for 300. This ancient Christian instructor says:—

"Learn then, my children, that Abraham, the first who enjoined circumcision, looking forward in spirit to Jesus, practised that rite having received the mystery of the three letters. For the Scripture saith, 'And Abraham circumcised ten and eight and three hundred men of his household.' What, then, was the knowledge given to him in this? Learn the eighteen first, and then the three hundred. The ten and eight are thus denoted: ten by I, and eight by H; you have thus the initials of 'Jesus.' And because the cross was to express the grace of his redemption by the letter T, the Scripture says also 'three hundred.' He knows this who has put within us the engrafted gift of his doctrine. No one

has been admitted by me to a more excellent piece of knowledge than this; but I know that ye are worthy."

For consummate impudence and unscrupulousness in the distortion of a simple passage of "scripture," the pious Barnabas beats all modern commentators hollow. Nevertheless, it was probably Barney's "excellent piece of knowledge" which suggested to the author of the Fourth Gospel the mendacious statement he has placed in the mouth of his fictitious Jesus (John viii. 56), who is represented as saying to the scribes and Pharisees:—

"Your father Abraham rejoiced that he should see my day; and he saw it, and was glad."

Of course, the imaginary Jews in the story did not deny the impudent falsehood here cited; that would not have done: yet only belief in some such crudity as "the mystery of the three letters" can account for the ridiculous declaration put in the mouth of the Fourth Gospel Jesus.

Some decades later than Barnabas appeared Justin, called "the Martyr," who followed the same fraudulent system of Old Testament interpretation. One luminous sample of this ancient apologist's method of reading the Hebrew Scriptures may be given. In contending that Psalm xxii. was a series of predictions referring to Jesus Christ, Justin says (Dialogue 103):—

"And the expression, 'Fat bulls have beset me round' [xxii. 12], was spoken beforehand of those who acted similarly to the calves, when Jesus was led before the Jewish teachers: and the Scripture described them as bulls."

"And the expression, 'For there is none to help' [xxii. 11], is also indicative of what took place [at the arrest of Jesus]: for there was not even a single man to assist Him as an innocent person."

"And the expression, 'They opened their mouths upon me like a roaring lion' [xxii. 13], designated him who was then king of the Jews, and was called Herod."

The apologist Justin, it should be borne in mind, was acquainted with a large number of Gospel stories, and was adducing what he deemed the most convincing evidence of the truth of those stories.

Further examples of the system in such general use among the early Christians—that of deducing the "history" of their Lord and Master from Old Testament "predictions"—are, I think, unnecessary. This was undoubtedly the method by which the unknown history of the Savior was invented and compiled, and only by some such process could the Gospel narratives have been written.

ABRACADABRA.

(To be continued.)

Voltaire in England.—II.

BY THE LATE J. M. WHEELER,

Sub-Editor of the "Freethinker" and Author of the "Biographical Dictionary of Freethinkers," etc.

(Concluded from p. 173.)

THERE were apparently few celebrities in England with whom Voltaire did not contrive to become acquainted. Thomson he knew, and "discovered in him a great genius and a great simplicity." We wonder if he had heard the anecdote of his standing in his garden biting off the sunny side of a peach. Voltaire goes on to say, "I liked in him the poet and the true philosopher, I mean the lover of mankind. I think that without a good stock of such a philosophy, a poet is just above a fiddler who amuses our ears and cannot go to our soul." With Edward Young, the author of *Night Thoughts* and the *Centaur Not Fabulous*, he formed a friendship "which remained unbroken when the one had become the most rigid of Christian divines and the other the most daring of anti-Christian propagandists." Of Pope he was a great admirer, and as Desnoiresteres shows, the anecdote related by Johnson of his offending Pope's mother by the grossness of his conversation, is probably mere calumny. Certain it is Pope continued on terms of

courtesy if not of friendship, and sent to him a copy of his famous *Essay on Man*, inspired by their mutual friend Lord Bolingbroke. In his early days, Voltaire thought much of the optimism of the essay, but maturer thought, experience of the world and the Lisbon earthquake, produced *Candide*, that immortal satire on the theme "Whatever is, is right."

Having access to the best circles, the brilliant Frenchman made the most of his opportunities. His essays were published as an introduction to *La Henriade*, which he did not fail to advertise in a delicate fashion by saying the cuts were masterpieces of art, "'Tis the only beauty in the book that I can answer for." He appears to have sought subscribers personally. To Swift he writes: "May I beg you to use your influence in Ireland to procure some subscribers for *La Henriade*, which is finished, and which, for want of a little aid has not yet appeared. The subscription is only one guinea, payable in advance." Voltaire was evidently not one to hide his light under a bushel, or to go unnoticed for want of pushing. He always had two or three irons in the fire, and before one task was ended another was begun. *La Henriade* was a great success, going through three editions in a short period, and the money thus obtained formed the foundation of the large fortune which Voltaire accumulated, not by his writings, but by his ability in finance.

Voltaire's *Letters on the English* reads, at the present day, as so very mild a production, that it is difficult to understand why the Parliament of France should order its suppression. Yet it was a true instinct which detected that the work was directed against the principle of authority. The introduction of English thought was destined to become an explosive element shattering the feudalism of Europe. One educated in the current delusion that Voltaire was a mere mocker, will be surprised to find the temperate way in which he speaks of the Quakers. Here, where there was such excellent opportunity for raillery, Voltaire shows he had a genuine admiration for their simplicity of life and their distaste for warfare. In these *Letters*, as in all his writings, he proves how far he was the embodiment of the new era by his boldly expressed preference for industrial over military pursuits.

In his remarks on the Church of England, Voltaire, however, gives an unmistakable touch of his quality: "One cannot have public employment in England or Ireland without being of the number of the faithful Anglicans. This reason, which is an excellent proof, has converted so many Nonconformists that not a twentieth part of the nation is out of the pale of the dominant church."

After alluding to the "holy zeal" of ministers against dissenters, and of the lower house of Convocation, who "from time to time burnt impious books—that is, books against themselves"—he says: "When they learn that in France, young fellows noted for debauchery and raised to prelacy by the intrigues of women, openly make love, compose love-songs, give every day elaborate delicate suppers, then go to implore the illumination of the Holy Spirit, boldly calling themselves the successors of the Apostles—they thank God they are Protestants. But they are abominable heretics, to be burnt by all the devils, as Master Francois Rabelais says; and that is why I do not meddle with their affairs."

The Presbyterians fare little better, for Voltaire relates that when King Charles surrendered to the Scots they made that unfortunate monarch undergo four sermons a day.

It was, however, his admiration for English philosophy which was most startling to the French mind. He came here a poet, but he left a philosopher. Locke's *Essay* became his philosophical gospel. "For thirty years," he writes in 1768, "I have been persecuted by a crowd of fanatics because I said that Locke is the Hercules of Metaphysics, who has fixed the boundaries of the human mind." Newton, whose *Principia* he also introduced to his countrymen, was buried during Voltaire's visit to England. That at his funeral in Westminster Abbey the pall

was borne by the Lord High Chancellor and other dignitaries, contributed to Voltaire's esteem of a country where Addison could become a Secretary of State and Prior and Gay plenipotentiaries. With Dr. Samuel Clarke, Newton's ablest disciple, and a liberal theologian to boot, he was on terms of intimacy. But what pleased him most in England was the freedom of discussion. A little before his arrival, Anthony Collins had published his *Discourse on the Grounds and Reason of the Christian Religion*, and the controversy raised by that work was still going on. During his visit, Thomas Woolston published his bold *Discourses on the Miracles*, in which the gospel narratives were, for the first time, ridiculed in England. Their success was great. Voltaire says that thirty thousand copies were sold. He writes with admiration: "I have seen four very learned treatises against the miracles of Jesus Christ, printed here with impunity, at a time when a poor bookseller was put into the pillory for publishing a translation of *La Religieuse en Chemise*." Alas! in the very month Voltaire left England (March, 1729), Woolston was tried and sentenced to one year's imprisonment and a fine of £100. Voltaire volunteered a third of the sum, but the brave prisoner refused to give an assurance that he would not offend again, and died in prison in 1733. Leslie Stephen gives countenance to the view that the Freethought martyr was mad. Voltaire, who understood somewhat better the circumstances of the time, always spoke of Woolston with the greatest respect.

During Voltaire's stay in England, he proposed to bring over a French theatre. He wrote to Paris, and a company of players came to London. They arrived with but little cash, and not finding the patronage they expected, soon departed. Voltaire gives a peculiar reason for the non-appreciation by the English of Molière's *Tartuffe*, the original of Mawworm if not of Uriah Heep. He says they are not pleased with the portrayal of characters they do not know. "One there hardly knows the name of devotee, but they know well that of honest man. One does not see there imbeciles who put their souls into others' hands, nor those petty ambitious men who establish a despotic sway over women formerly wanton and always weak, and yet over men more weak and contemptible." We fancy Voltaire must have seen society mainly as found among the Freethinkers. Certainly he could not give so favorable a verdict did he visit us now. The same remark applies to his statement that there was "no privilege of hunting in the grounds of a citizen, who, at the same time, is not permitted to fire a gun in his own field." But this, as well as the more important passage that "no one is exempted from taxation for being a nobleman or a priest," was possibly intended exclusively for the benefit of his compatriots.

It is certain, however, that Voltaire retained his esteem for England and the English to the last.

Goldsmith relates, thirty years after his return to France, that he was in his company one evening when the conversation turned upon England, and one of the company (Goldsmith says Fontonelle, but then he was nearly a century old) undertook to revile the English language and literature. Diderot defended them, but not brilliantly. Voltaire listened a long while in silence, which was, as Goldsmith remarks, surprising, for it was one of his favorite topics. But at last, about midnight—

"Voltaire appeared roused from his reverie. His whole frame seemed animated. He began his defence with the utmost elegance mixed with spirit, and now and then he let fall his finest strokes of raillery upon his antagonist; and his harangue lasted until three in the morning. I must confess that, whether from national partiality or from the elegant sensibility of his manner, I never was more charmed, nor did I ever remember so absolute a victory as he gained in this dispute."

Voltaire continued to correspond with his English friends to the latest period of his life. Among his correspondents were Lord and Lady Bolingbroke, Sir Edward Falkener, Swift, Hume, Robertson,

Horace Walpole, George Colman and Lord Chatham. We find him asking Falkener to send him the *London Magazine* for the past three years. To the same friend he wrote from Potsdam in 1752, hoping that his *Vindication of Bolingbroke* was translated, as it would annoy the priests, "whom I have hated, hate, and I shall hate till doomsday." In the next year, writing from Berlin, he says: "I hope to come over myself in order to print my true works and to be buried in the land of freedom. I require no subscription, I desire no benefit. If my works are neatly printed and cheaply sold, I am satisfied."

To Thieriot he wrote: "Had I not been obliged to look after my affairs in France, depend upon it I would have spent the rest of my days in London." And again, long afterwards, in a letter to his friend Keate: "Had I not fixed the seat of my retreat in the free corner of Geneva I would certainly live in the free corner of England; I have been for thirty years the disciple of your ways of thinking." Mr. Collins says: "The kindness and hospitality which he received he never forgot, and he took every opportunity of repaying it. To be an Englishman was always a certain passport to his courteous consideration." When Martin Sherlock visited him at Ferney in 1776, he found the old man, then in his eighty-third year, still full of his visit to England. His gardens were laid out in English fashion, his favorite books were the English classics, the subject to which he persistently directed the conversation was the English nation.

In the land he loved so well the memory of Voltaire has been but scurvily treated. For over a century calumny and obloquy have been poured upon him. But it is at length being recognised that, with all his imperfections, which were, after all, those of the age in which he lived, he devoted his brilliant genius to the cause of truth and the progress of humanity. The impartial student will not forget that he made his exile in England an occasion for accumulating those stores of intelligence with which he so successfully combated the prejudices of the past and promulgated the principles of freedom which justify his being ranked foremost among the liberators of the human mind.

THE UNKNOWN GOD.

Lo, all the lands wherein our wandering race
Have led their flocks, or fixed their dwelling-place
To till with patient toil the fruitful sod,
Abound with altars TO THE UNKNOWN GOD
Or GODS, whom MAN created from of old,
In His own image, one yet manifold,
And ignorantly worshiped. We now dare,
Taught by millenniums of barren prayer,
Of mutual scorn and hate and bloody strife
With which these dreams have poisoned our poor life,
To build our temples on another plan,
Devoting them to god's Creator, MAN;
Not to MAN's creature, god. And thus, indeed,
All men and women, of whatever creed,
We welcome gladly if they love their kind;
No other valid test of worth we find.
We gaze into the living world and mark
Infinite mysteries for ever dark:
And if there is a god beyond our thought
(How could he be within its compass brought?)
He will not blame the eyes he made so dim
That they cannot discern a trace of him;
He must approve the pure sincerity
Which, seeing not, declares it cannot see;
He cannot love the blasphemous pretence
Of puny mannikins with purblind sense
To see him thoroughly, to know him well,
His secret purposes, his Heaven and Hell,
His inmost nature—formulating this
With calmest chemical analysis,
Or vivisectioning it, as if it were
Some compound gas, or dog with brain laid bare.
And if we have a life beyond our death,
A life of nobler aims and ampler breath,
What better preparation for such bliss
Than honest work to make the best of this?

James Thomson ("B. V.")

Correspondence.

HOW I PROPAGATE FREETHOUGHT.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—As I am now in Ireland on my spring journey, a few lines upon my method of spreading Freethought may not be unacceptable to your readers. First of all, I make it a practice to have *Freethinkers* sent on to me every week, together with other literature of a stimulating nature. At each hotel I stay I invariably leave a "*Free*." behind—either on the table or in paper-rack, or among the other literature lying about. Again, I always take good care to leave a copy in the railway carriage. On one occasion, travelling with a man of God, on leaving the carriage I left one conspicuously on the seat. The reverend gentleman called my attention to it. I politely informed him that I left it for his perusal, having already read it. On leaving the station, I had the satisfaction of seeing my friend turning over its pages and reading it.

One gentleman I met in a hotel at Coleraine I found moderately free, and giving him a "*Free*," he thanked me and said he would read it. In the North, among the Presbyterians, I find bigotry rampant, and it is often difficult to get up a really good argument. By design, however, I often open the ball by supposing a Protestant to be a Roman Catholic, and *vice versa*, supposing a Catholic to be a Protestant. It is an excellent method of indulging in a good argument, and oftentimes does more good than an open avowal of your own ideas on the subject.

When at Belfast, after the Sunday's dinner was over, and we were chatting together, one of the commercials proposed a collection on behalf of "General" Booth. From some remarks I let drop, they were trying to take the rise out of me, and asked me would I subscribe; and having point blank refused to do so, the conversation drifted on to religion, and I let off my guns. Then someone made dirty reference to the late Mr. Bradlaugh and Mrs. Besant, referring to the *Law of Population*. I gave them as much as they asked for. Firstly, I informed them that the Government had to give up every copy of the *Fruits of Philosophy* seized, and further, that Mr. Bradlaugh had vindicated the right of publication and substituted it by a better work later on. But I put this straight question to my friends: Which was best—to raise a few children in healthy and good surroundings with opportunities of an honorable career, or to propagate heedlessly numbers to a life of misery, destitution and immorality? This question was answered only by one who sided with me. They then asked that the conversation should cease, and I answered: "Yes, I have no objection; but remember you asked for it by your impertinence in the Booth affair."

The greatest fun I have had lately was at Londonderry. At the hotel I was staying in, I met in the evening three red-hot Presbyterians, and after a few preliminary skirmishes, we came to close quarters. Our debate lasted until about two o'clock in the morning. They were so earnest and wishful to convert me to the old faith. The ignorance and self-assurance of these men is really beyond belief. I let off some very telling ideas, such as the existence of other religions and which was the true one. Likewise I asked them to explain the existence of a personal Devil, besides giving them many downright contradictions and a few unfulfilled prophecies. Again, a dose of the Higher Criticism ran off their backs like water, and the appearance of the New Theology did not even make them move a muscle. After even proving to them that the Atonement was only a relic of the old savage blood-sacrifice to heathen gods, these three Christians said, "God have mercy on your soul for such profanities." They are praying for me. But before saying good-night, I rubbed the Devil into them and asked them to think over and settle the question of evil and the existence of an all-wise, powerful, loving and just God—Father of us all.

I could give sundry other curious experiences; but I fear I should be taking up too much of your valuable space. Suffice it to say that such are my methods of sowing the seeds of Freethought in religious-ridden Ireland.

W. C. SCHWEIZER.

A Christian, a Deist, a Turk and a Jew, have equal rights; they are men and brethren.—*Shelley*.

In the sincere cult of "the true, the good and the beautiful," which is the heart of our new monistic religion, we find ample compensation for the anthropistic ideals of "God, freedom and immortality" which we have lost.—*Haeckel*.

THE "POSSIBILITY" ARGUMENT.

It is said that it is possible that we should continue to exist in some mode totally inconceivable to us at present. This is a most unreasonable presumption. It casts on the adherents of annihilation the burthen of proving the negative of a question, the affirmative of which is not supported by a single argument, and which, by its very nature, lies beyond the experience of the human understanding. It is sufficiently easy, indeed, to form any proposition, concerning which we are ignorant, just not so absurd as not to be contradictory in itself, and defy refutation. The possibility of whatever enters into the wildest imagination to conceive is thus triumphantly vindicated. But it is enough that such assertions should be either contradictory to the known laws of nature, or exceed the limits of our experience, that their fallacy or irrelevancy to our consideration should be demonstrated. They persuade, indeed, only those who desire to be persuaded.—*Shelley*.

TWO IN THE NIGHT.

Christian, what of the night?—

I cannot tell; I am blind.

I halt and hearken behind

If haply the hours will go back—

And return to the dear dead light,

To the watchfires and stars that of old

Shone where the sky now is black,

Glowed where the earth now is cold.

High priest, what of the night?—

The night is horrible here

With haggard faces and fear,

Blood, and the burning of fire.

Mine eyes are emptied of sight,

Mine hands are full of dust.

If the God of my faith be a liar,

Who is it that I shall trust?

—*Swinburne, "A Watch in the Night."*

A better distribution and a moralisation of wealth are approaching with a rapidity which is not exaggerated by the panic fears of the amazed Few, who hear with astonishment and horror that the world is no longer made for idlers only. The period of social revolution into which we are about to enter, will probably be marked by many mistakes and not a few crimes. Man's capacity for blunder is very great. He smarts for his blunders, and in time corrects them. But the point to be noted is, that the social revolution will be accomplished on secular principles; that this province of practical life is once for all severed from any theological interference. The proletariat of Europe is resolved to have its fair share of the banquet of life, quite regardless of the good or bad things in store for it in the next world.—*J. Cotter Morison*.

A man must have a right to think as his reason directs; it is a duty he owes to himself to think with freedom, that he may act from conviction.—*Shelley*.

Obituary.

It is with great regret that we record the death, on the 15th inst., of Mrs. James Knowles, of Blackburn. Mrs. Knowles had been for many years a Freethinker, and for some time held the post of secretary of the local Branch of the N. S. S. She brought to her work a mind considerably above the average strength, and an earnestness that was beyond all praise. Despite the cares of a large family, she took a keen interest in many advanced movements, but her first devotion was always to the cause of Freethought. She and her husband made their house for years a rallying point and meeting place for the Freethinkers of the district, neither of them grudging any effort that might make the work immediately on hand a success. Her death occurred with startling suddenness, while on her way home from attending the funeral of a relative. She was taken with a sudden seizure—due to an affection of the heart—in Bury Railway Station, and although medical aid was at once summoned, died almost immediately. Friends of the Freethought movement in Blackburn and the surrounding district will hear with sorrow of Mrs. Knowles's death, and will deeply sympathise with the husband and children in their affliction.

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, Guy A. Aldred, a Lecture.

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Prince of Wales Assembly Rooms, Broad-street): 7, Herbert Thompson, "Some Wonders of Nature."

EDINBURGH BRANCH N. S. S. (Masonic Hall, 11 Melbourn-place): 6.30, a Lecture.

FAIRFORTH SECULAR SUNDAY SCHOOL (Pole-lane): 6.30, Mossley Clarion Choir.

GLASGOW BRANCH N. S. S. (Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 12 noon, Discussion Class; 6.30, Social Meeting.

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, A. J. Essex, "Some Wonders of Life." With lantern illustrations.

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Secular Hall, Rusholme-road): 6.30, R. C. Phillips, "The Book of Job."

NEWCASTLE RATIONALIST DEBATING SOCIETY (Lockhart's Cathedral Cafe): Thursday, March 28, at 8, H. Moss Samuels, "The Jew: His Characteristics and Possibilities."

WEST STANLEY BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Theatre, Stanley): John T. Lloyd, 3, "Does Secularism Safeguard Morality?" 7.30, "R. J. Campbell and the New Theology."

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