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PRICE TWOPENCE

If that thou hast the gift of strength, then know
Thy part is to uplift the trodden low;
Else in a giant's grasp until the end
A hopeless wrestler shall thy soul contend.

—GEORGE MEREDITH.

The Resurrection of Christ.

EASTERTIDE is with us again, and the ancient cry, "Christ is risen," is being heard on every hand. There have always been doubters who could not join in the mighty chorus, and their number has kept on steadily increasing through all the ages. At first, they were all outsiders, positive non-Christians, who had to endure severe disabilities and direct penalties inflicted upon them by the Church of the meek and lowly Jesus. But persecution only nourished and multiplied them. Their arguments were intellectually irresistible. The arguers were often crushed, but never once the arguments; and as one set of arguers disappeared, another arose to carry on the mission. The Renaissance made the Protestant Reformation possible, the Protestant Reformation made the New Theology possible, and the New Theology is really an anti-theological movement, or an approach towards the purely non-Christian position, and has already marvellously reinforced the cause of Atheism. On the subject of the resurrection, the New Theology and Freethought are essentially agreed. They both repudiate its actuality, regarding the story told in the Gospels as wholly legendary.

This is a most significant fact to which we have not as yet devoted sufficient attention. It is well-known that on the subject of the resurrection nothing new can be advanced. All the arguments for and against it are old and perfectly familiar to all intelligent readers, and so their repetition here would be a culpable waste of time and energy. But it may serve a useful purpose to call attention to the wonderful progress which non-belief in it has been recently making within the Church itself. The view which Thomas Paine advocated in his *Age of Reason* is now being largely adopted and promulgated by theological professors and preachers of the Gospel. To Freethinkers it is a hopeful sign of the times that their past labors are now beginning to bear abundant fruit in most unexpected quarters. Professor Pfeleiderer, of Berlin, has just published the first volume of a great work, entitled *Primitive Christianity*, which opens with a firm statement of the unhistoricity of the resurrection legend. Dr. Pfeleiderer says:—

"The oldest Gospel, on which we might fairly expect the earliest clear historical tradition, is mutilated at the decisive passage, and the genuine conclusion, now lost, has been replaced by an abstract from a later Gospel (Mark xvi. 9-20); while the reports of the other Gospels are so contradictory that it is not possible to gain from them a clear mental picture."

In order to attach its due value to that extract it is necessary to bear in mind that Professor Pfeleiderer is a Doctor of Divinity, and that he is an official teacher of "Practical Theology in the University of Berlin." With this fact in mind, let us read the following passage:—

"In Mark, the disciples are directed to go to Galilee in order to see the risen Jesus there; similarly, in

Matthew, who further, gives an account of the appearance on a mountain in Galilee, but places it after another appearance to the women as they were returning from the grave; Luke, on the other hand, tells only of appearances on the road to Emmaus in the neighborhood of Jerusalem, and in Jerusalem itself, and completely excludes the Galilean appearances by indicating that the disciples were charged to remain in Jerusalem; John, again, recounts, like Luke, the appearances to the disciples in Jerusalem, but at the same time reports, like Matthew, the previous appearance to Mary at the grave, and a last appearance to the disciples in Galilee, at the lake of Gennesareth. Finally, Paul knows nothing of that which the Evangelists place in the forefront of their account—how the women found the grave empty, and witnessed an appearance of an angel or of Christ; instead, he mentions a series of appearances which do not agree with the report of any of the Evangelists (1 Cor. xv. 5-8)."

Professor Pfeleiderer finds himself, therefore, "in the position of being obliged to deny all historical foundation to the group of narratives of the Easter appearances at Jerusalem," and to elaborate a theory to explain the Galilean appearances without involving himself in the belief in any physical resurrection. He frankly calls the account of a bodily rising legendary. Is it surprising, then, that "we are confronted with a multitude of problems, from which the only thing that clearly appears is, how very little certain knowledge even the earliest Christian tradition preserved in regard to these events"? By "these events" we are to understand, of course, the various Galilean appearances; but even on our author's own showing, what proof is there that such appearances ever took place? Dr. Pfeleiderer himself admits that "the mere examination of the witnesses shows that their narrative cannot be taken as a literal transcript of the facts," that they "give merely a transmutation of what actually occurred under the influence of the growth of legend, of apologetic reflection, and of allegorising imagination." He makes the further admission that in dealing with such material, "we are thrown back upon conjectures of more or less probability."

With the views of Professor Pfeleiderer, most of the New Theologians are in substantial agreement. There are thousands of clergymen in Great Britain who do not believe the legend of the empty tomb. They still preach a risen Savior, the abolisher of death, and the bringer-in of life and immortality; but they have abandoned the theory of a physical resurrection. It was only in a spiritual sense that Jesus rose from the dead, they tell us. That is to say, the Church was founded on the belief that Jesus still lived in the unseen world. This was the doctrine recently expounded by Canon Henson in the *Hibbert Journal*; and now even the *Christian Commonwealth* advocates the same view. Writing in the latter for March 21, the Rev. Dr. Warschauer, whose works Dr. Robertson Nicoll admires so much, says:—

"On the question of the bodily resurrection of Jesus I can only say that it is all a matter of historical proof for a historical statement; and, to my mind, that proof is not adequate. I would suggest that the belief in such a material miracle could only arise in an age which regarded heaven as an actual locality above the clouds; and if we have discarded that idea, the difficulty appears at once when we ask, What has become of the physical frame of Jesus since it ascended into the skies?"

Mr. R. J. Campbell, in virtue of his monistic idealism, does not recognise that difficulty at all, for to him there

is no essential distinction between matter and spirit, just as there is no real difference between humanity and deity. He believes in the fourth dimensional plane, in which Jesus has had his abode ever since his crucifixion; and in the post-resurrection appearances recorded in the Gospels "we have a being whose consciousness belongs to the fourth dimensional plane, adjusting himself to the capacity of those on a three-dimensional plane for the sake of proving to them, beyond dispute, that—

"Life is ever lord of death,
And love can never lose its own."

Mr. Campbell, however, is not quite sure that his theory is the true one. He says:—

"Most of my New Theology friends will probably reject it at first sight;" but at least it is consistent with the philosophical position assumed throughout this book, and appears, on the whole, to present fewer difficulties than any other in face of the New Testament accounts. I do not insist upon it: it is purely hypothetical, but so is every theory of this great event which has occupied the field until the present moment.....No theory of the resurrection of Jesus is absolutely indispensable or of first-class importance; the main thing to be agreed upon is that Christianity started with the belief that its founder had risen from the dead in order to demonstrate that death has no power to destroy anything worthy of God" (*The New Theology*, p. 224).

Enough has now been said to demonstrate two things, the first being that, according to the New Theology, the foundation on which Christianity rests is the belief in Christ's resurrection, and the second that, according to the same authority, there is no adequate evidence that the belief is based on a corresponding fact. Freethinkers may take comfort from the certain knowledge that the sceptical attitude which they have all along maintained towards this fundamental dogma of theology is now becoming the attitude of the Christian pulpit itself. On this Easter Sunday many a preacher will declare that the resurrection narrative in the Gospels is not to be taken literally, that Jesus rose from the dead only in the hearts of his disciples, and that, if we will, he will rise in the same sense in our hearts and lives to-day. To outsiders, such teaching does not ring true: it involves a dishonest use of terms, but it shows conclusively that the belief in the resurrection is steadily dying out even in the Holy of Holies of the Christian religion; and this proves that Christianity itself is slowly but surely losing ground. People are beginning to realise how profoundly true, after all, these words of St. Paul are: "If Christ hath not been raised, then is our preaching vain; your faith also is vain." The people will not continue to believe in a sham resurrection. Once they are disillusioned as to this supreme miracle, once they discover that it never really happened, they will throw Christianity to the winds, and decline to be guided by men who trifle with words. Once they learn that such lines as these—

"Hallelujah! now we cry
To our King immortal,
Who, triumphant, burst the bars
Of the tomb's dark portal"—

are not true, and that Paul and the Evangelists were false witnesses, is it likely that they will still profess faith in a risen, ascended and glorified Lord and Master? The denial of the resurrection of Jesus by Christian theologians and preachers is the most fatal blow the religion of the Cross has ever received.

J. T. LLOYD.

Sir Oliver Lodge's "Catechism."—III.

THERE is another aspect of this doctrine of Divine Immanence which must not be overlooked. Sir Oliver Lodge does not believe in a God outside the universe, who created it in some mysterious way, or found it eternally co-existent with himself, and controls it as a clever engineer controls his machine. The author of this Catechism worships a God who is "not apart from the Universe, not outside it and

distinct from it, but immanent in it" and even "incarnate in it," so that "the nature of God is displayed in part by everything." Man is a part of God, and so in its degree is everything else, by the very necessity of the argument; and thus God is all, and all is God. Sir Oliver Lodge is a part of God; so, certainly without knowing it, is the writer of this criticism. Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman is a part of God, and so is Mr. Balfour. The "suffragette" is a part of God, and so is the policeman who runs her in. Dr. Johnson described fishing as a worm at one end of the rod and a fool at the other—and both the fool and the worm are parts of God. Philosophers are God and so are idiots. Men and women are God, and so are bugs and fleas. This is what Divine Immanence comes to, and it is extremely interesting. People in the East really believe that sort of Pantheism. One consequence of it is abstention from killing things, even for purposes of food. But the more prosaic Westerns are not so fastidious. Sir Oliver Lodge, as one part of God, does not mind sitting down and dining off another part of God in the shape of a beef-steak or a mutton-chop. According to this brilliant theory, God eats God, and God is eaten by God; and a daring imagination might follow the Deity through the subsequent processes, as Hamlet followed "the noble dust of Alexander" till he found it "stopping a bunghole."

The fact is, that it is impossible to talk of God without getting entangled in a mesh of absurdities. Sir Oliver Lodge does, indeed, protect himself as far as possible by declaring the impossibility of a proper definition of the term "God." "But it is permissible," he says, "reverently to use the term for a mode of regarding the Universe as invested with what in human beings we call personality, consciousness and other forms of intelligence, emotion and will." Yes, the term may be used in that way, reverently; but reverence is not logic, and Sir Oliver Lodge's emotions will not save him from the sins of his intellect. He has to pay the penalty, like others; the mesh of absurdities catches him at the finish.

Nor does Sir Oliver Lodge escape the personal vanity of all theologians. He says that "the most essential element in Christianity is its conception of a human God," and again, that "The humanity of God, the Divinity of man, is the essence of the Christian revelation." Elsewhere he speaks of "the race of man" as in training to become "an efficient organ of the Divine Purpose." All this is very flattering to man's self-esteem. But in one of his *Hibbert Journal* articles, Sir Oliver Lodge went further, and spoke of God as being in a way responsible for the sadly defective condition of this world, and of our noble selves—"the race of man"—as being under an obligation to help him in reforming it. Which is surely the acme of egotism. Fancy the Lord God Almighty, the Creator and Governor of the infinite universe, of which this globe is but as a grain of sand on a mighty seashore—fancy this Omniscient and Omnipotent being struggling with a terrible difficulty and almost losing heart; and then fancy a little "worm"—Christians are all "worms"—raising its head up on this Dutch-cheese of a planet, and crying out "Don't despair, God; help is coming—from Birmingham."

This same human vanity is apparent in the Twelfth Clause of the Catechism on "Soul and Spirit." We are said to possess "something more than mere life." "On one side," Sir Oliver Lodge tells us, "we are members of the animal kingdom; on another [he means the other] we are associates in a loftier type of existence, and are linked with the Divine." No proof of this is offered; perhaps it was thought that a statement so agreeable did not require any further recommendation. The Catechism proceeds, upon the strength of that foundation, to inform us that the cells of our bodies will some day disperse, but "our soul" will not "cease with bodily decay." It has a different origin from the body, and therefore a different destiny. But is human vanity, after all, a safe guide in such matters? Would it not be better if Sir Oliver Lodge attempted a scien-

tific demonstration of a future life? Or is he aware that such a demonstration is impossible? Does he share the view of Dr. William Osler, who was invited, as a medical man, to deliver a lecture at Harvard University on "Science and Immortality," and who wound up by declaring that, "On the question of immortality the only enduring enlightenment is through faith"?

Let us now take this Catechism on what is, relatively, its more practical side. We have said that Sir Oliver Lodge gives the game away, and that there is no real Christianity left at the end of his performance. He begins this process in the very Second Clause, which runs as follows:—

Question.—What, then, may be meant by the Fall of man?

Answer.—At a certain stage of development man became conscious of a difference between right and wrong, so that thereafter, when his actions fell below a normal standard of conduct, he felt ashamed and sinful. He thus lost his animal innocence, and entered on a long period of human effort and failure; nevertheless, the consciousness of degradation marked a rise in the scale of existence.

Now this is not the Fall of Man at all; it is the Ascent of Man. The more man feels remorse for wrong action the more he is rising in the scale of existence. Sir Oliver Lodge admits this, and we agree with him; indeed, we have said it in this journal for twenty-five years. There is absolutely no Fall involved in these facts of Evolution. Yet the whole edifice of Christianity is based upon the doctrine of the Fall. Even if the Genesis story be treated as a myth, it must still be regarded as symbolising an inherent and ineradicable tendency in all men to sink into depths of sin and misery; whereas the tendency in all men, according to the teaching of Evolution, is to rise to greater heights of virtue and happiness. Sir Oliver Lodge may juggle with the word "Fall" as much as he likes. He may try, in this way, to please his orthodox friends. But there is no real "Fall" in his statement, and he must be as well aware of it as we are.

Sir Oliver Lodge indulges in fantastic verbiage about "Incarnation," but he is careful not to confess his belief in anything like the orthodox doctrine of the Deity of Christ. "The life of Jesus," he says, "was an explicit and clear-voiced message of love to this planet from the Father of all." "Every son of man," he says again, "is potentially also a son of God, but the union was deepest and completest in the Galilean." We hope Sir Oliver Lodge does not imagine that this will, or should, satisfy the ordinary Christian. And the same observation applies to his Clause on "Inspiration":—

"We should strive to learn from the great teachers, the prophets and poets and saints of the human race, and should seek to know and to interpret their inspired writings."

This reference to "the human race" abolishes the unique inspiration of the Christian Scriptures, and the inclusion of "poets" with "prophets" and "saints" abolishes the special inspiration of professedly religious teachers. Even in relation to the "Canon of Scripture" the Catechiser is careful to say that only "some portions are the most inspired writings yet achieved by humanity." And that very expression "achieved by humanity" abolishes the old idea of "inspiration" root and branch.

In elucidating the Clause on "Inspiration," the Catechiser uses language which plainly reduces inspiration to the same level as genius, which once meant an attendant spirit, but now means a high development of natural faculty. "Great men," Sir Oliver Lodge says, "are the finger posts and lode-stars of humanity; it is with their aid that we steer our course, if we are wise, and the records of their thought and inspiration are of the utmost value to us." Clearly the word "inspiration" as used here has no relation whatever to the word "inspiration" as it used to be applied to the Bible. The word is the same in both cases, but the meaning is entirely different. The word "inspiration," in short, just

like the word "genius" before it, has dropped out of supernaturalism into poetry.

Similarly, Sir Oliver Lodge believes in the "Life Eternal," but his exposition of it is not at all Christian. He repudiates the doctrine of resurrection, and says nothing about heaven and hell, neither does he hint at the life to come as conditional on any promise or work of Christ. What he sets forth is the old Platonic doctrine of immortality, with some additions borrowed from the Oriental idea of reincarnation. All that he says on this subject might have been said if Christ had never been heard of and the New Testament had never been written.

Nor is Sir Oliver Lodge's conception of "sin" to be honestly called Christian. According to the Bible, sin is rebellion against God, and is punishable quite independently of its natural consequences. But in this Catechism "sin" is represented as a purely human offence:—

"Sin is the deliberate and wilful act of a free agent who sees the better and chooses the worse, and thereby acts injuriously to himself and others. The root of sin is selfishness, whereby needless trouble and pain are inflicted on others; when fully developed it involves moral suicide."

We do not object to this. It is borrowed from an excellent source. Ingersoll preached the doctrine that "the only sin is selfishness" all over the United States with his voice, and all over the English-speaking world with his writings; and now that he has been dead some years, the doctrine for preaching which he was denounced from thousands of pulpits is being paraded as a new discovery by Christian gentlemen like Sir Oliver Lodge and the champions of the New Theology. But while we do not object to this doctrine of "sin" we are bound to say that it is not the Christian doctrine. It is the doctrine of Naturalism.

What we read in this Catechism about "Character and Will" is not Christian either. Sir Oliver Lodge makes the same mistake as Mr. Blatchford. He assumes that Christianity is bound up with the doctrine of free will. But there is nothing about free will in the New Testament, and Paul's teaching is plain predestination; and, as a matter of fact, some of the very greatest Christian divines—such as Luther, Calvin and Jonathan Edwards—have been necessitarians. Christianity does not stand or fall with the doctrine of free will. Sir Oliver Lodge is a free-willer, but that is on his own account, and his ideas on the subject seem to us confused. The following is from the third Clause of his Catechism:—

"The distinctive character of man is that he has a sense of responsibility for his acts, having acquired the power of choosing between good and evil, with freedom to obey one motive rather than the other."

Now the man who wrote that could hardly have thought out what he was writing. The "power of choosing" and the "obeying one motive rather than the other" are really the same thing. For the rest, Sir Oliver Lodge's statement does not even touch the question at issue between free-willers and determinists. Certainly man chooses; the fact is admitted—it is undeniable; but why does he choose—why does he prefer one thing to another? The whole problem lies in that "why." And if any man will take the trouble to think it out, we cannot understand how he could arrive at any other conclusion than that the choice of the moment is determined by the whole power of a man's past, which in turn was determined by all the known and unknown antecedent causes summed up in the highly abstract terms "heredity" and "environment." Sir Oliver Lodge half admits this. Free will, he says, does not mean that actions are "capricious and undetermined; but that they are determined by nothing less than the totality of things. They are not determined by the external world alone, so that they can be calculated and predicted from outside: they are determined by self and external world together." Of course they are. Every determinist knows that as well as Sir Oliver Lodge does. The point is that actions are determined. How they are determined is often a

very intricate question, but that is owing to the subtle and complex nature of the phenomena. If they are determined—that is to say, if causation obtains here as well as elsewhere—the determinist is right. And we have no hesitation in saying that Sir Oliver Lodge is not a determinist simply because he cannot, or does not, keep his mental eye fixed upon the essential point of the problem. To use common language, he wobbles. Otherwise, having written what we have just quoted, he would never have said in the very next sentence that—"A free man is the master of his motives, and selects that motive which he wills to obey." No man selects his motives; he does not exist apart from his motives; and, if language is to be strained, it would be truer to say that his motives select him. Nor is a man's will something that he wields, as he does his arm; his will is an aspect of himself; it is the definite projection of his energies under the impulse of a certain motive, or combination of motives, which may either act with swift, because overwhelming, power, or tardily after fighting and defeating other motives that struggled for the mastery.

But, in any case, man's responsibility—which is a fact, in spite of Mr. Blatchford—is social; and such it is admitted to be in what we have quoted from Sir Oliver Lodge. Responsibility to God, which is the only true Christian responsibility, entirely disappears.

Finally, the doctrine of Evil propounded by Sir Oliver Lodge is not the Christian doctrine. He takes the position that evil is not positive, but negative; like cold, which is only the absence of heat. In one sense this is true; in another sense it is playing with words, and paltering with the most awful facts of existence. But whether true or false, or partly one and partly the other, it is not taught in the Bible or in Christian creeds. Christianity has always dwelt upon sin and evil as the most positive things in the world. Do not the Church of England Articles, following the general Christian tradition, declare that original sin so vitiates man's nature that his very virtues are evil unless they are performed through faith and the grace of God?

On the whole, we regard Sir Oliver Lodge's "Catechism" as one of the many signs of the decadence of Christianity. It is of no particular value in itself, but it shows how historic Christianity is perishing—little by little, yet most surely—in the light of modern knowledge. John Morley, in his more virile days, said that all religions die of one disease—being found out. Christianity was safe in the times of ignorance. The star of Christ shone brightly in the night of faith. All other lights had been extinguished; it had the whole sky to itself. But this is no longer the case. Other lights have appeared in the sky since Christian power and bigotry were first challenged, in the name of science and philosophy, some three hundred years ago. The star of Christ is now paling and dwindling. Millions of eyes are still turned to it adoringly because of old inherited habits, because of the power of early education, and because of the vast material resources that are dedicated to its worship. But the myriads of more educated and thoughtful persons who are free from its glamor, see that its fate is inevitable. It is only a question of time. Christianity, like other great religions, is melting "into the infinite azure of the past."

G. W. FOOTE.

Christianity and Woman.—III.

(Continued from p. 180.)

WOMAN being what she was, and the early Christian authorities being what they were, very drastic measures had to be taken concerning her. The best plan, as Principal Donaldson says in summarising the views of the early Christians, was to shut her up. She must stay at home, or, if she has occasion to go abroad, must carefully veil her face. For her to

attempt to teach would be monstrous—in direct contravention to the advice of Paul. If she possesses beauty, it must be obliterated; grace, it must be hidden. In the very early stages of Church history certain women were permitted to be doorkeepers and hold one or two other unimportant offices; but gradually even these were taken from her, and she became, what she religiously and legally remained for many centuries after, a mere appanage to the man. This complete exclusion of women from holding religious office was, says Principal Donaldson, in striking contrast with heathen practice.

In all the legislation that came into existence under Christian influences the inferiority of women is insisted on. The right of a married woman to own property was taken from her, and only restored a little more than a generation since. Along with this went the right of sisters to share an inheritance equally with brothers, the larger portion going to "the worthiest of blood"—a distinction which Blackstone admits was unknown to Roman law. Under Christian law a woman could not bring an action against a man save for personal injury, nor could she appear as witness in a criminal suit nor attest a will. As late as the thirteenth century the Church Courts in England ruled that a husband could transfer his wife to another man for a period determinable at the recipient's pleasure. The same offences committed by a man or a woman entailed different penalties. An Act of Parliament in the time of Henry VIII., prohibited women, with other persons of "low estate," from reading the New Testament. Until Elizabeth's time they were denied benefit of clergy. The lord of the manor could compel any boy of fourteen and girl of twelve, while Lords Spiritual and Temporal claimed the right to the wife of the serf for the first twenty-four hours after marriage. And these, with other regulations, were avowedly based upon the supposed fact that woman was the origin of sin, and must therefore be less worthy than man. The climax of absurdity was reached by the Church Council of Macon discussing the question whether women were human beings—a thesis revived at a later date, when, according to the curious account preserved by Bayle, it was held that—

"Nature, which ever aims at perfection, would always produce men, and when a woman is born it is, as it were, by mistake, and an error of nature; as when any one is born blind or lame, or with any other natural defect, or like the fruit of some trees, which never ripen. Thus a woman is an animal produced by accident."

About the date of this charming expression of opinion, John Knox published his famous *First Blast of the Trumpet Against the Monstrous Regiment (Rule) of Women*. His opinions on the subject are quite in harmony with those of the early Fathers, whom he quotes liberally and with great approval. In his opinion, "To promote a woman to beare rule, superiortie, dominion, or empire above any realme, nation, or citie is repugnant to nature, contumelie to God." Nature, he goes on to say, "doth paynt them forthe to be weake, fraile, impatient, feble and foolish; and experience hath declared them to be unconstant, variable, cruell, and lacking the spirit of counsel and regiment." A woman who holds office in the State "is a traitoresse and rebell against God," and men must "studie to repress her inordinate pride and tyrannie to the uttermost of her power." Finally—

"By the ordre of nature, by the malediction and curse pronounced against woman, by the mouth of S. Paule the interpreter of Goddes will, by the example of that common welthe in which God by his word planted ordre and policie, and finally by the judgment of the most godlie writers, God hath dejected woman from rule, dominion, empire and authoritie above man."

If some of the present-day advocates of "Woman's Rights" were to address themselves to a proper study of the subject they would soon discover, as Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Frances Wright, Ernestina Rose, and other pioneers of the movement discovered, that their greatest enemy is the sentiment of the natural inferiority of women, carelessly perpetuated by Christian training and tradition.

How little modern Christian leaders have altered was shown some few years back in a book issued by Mrs. M. J. Gage. In that work Mrs. Gage brought together a number of instances of the way in which the Churches met the demand for the equality of the sexes. The instances given are mainly American, but they might easily be paralleled by others on this side the Atlantic. One such instance was furnished some twelve years ago by the Wesleyan Methodist Conference. One of the Wesleyan churches had scandalised the Conference by appointing a woman as its delegate. There was a very heated discussion, which ended in a resolution in favor of admitting women representatives to the Conference being rejected by 187 to 169 votes. It may also be recalled that at an earlier date English Christian sentiment was displayed in a similar manner in connection with the American Anti-Slavery movement. At a meeting called in London, and addressed by Lloyd Garrison and his supporters, great indignation was expressed at the fact of there being women delegates present, and they were ultimately compelled to withdraw. One of the charges brought against the Abolitionists was that they had set aside the "laws of God" by allowing women to speak from their platforms.

Mrs. Gage's examples of the view taken of women by American Christianity are numerous, and I have room only for several of the more striking. In 1876, there was a great uproar in America which arose through a Presbyterian minister permitting two ladies to speak from his pulpit on the subject of temperance. Dr. Craven, says Mrs. Gage, expressed the general clerical and church view when he said:—

"I believe the subject involves the honor of my God. I believe the subject involves the headship and crown of Jesus. Woman was made for man, and became first in the transgression. My argument is that subordination is natural—the subordination of sex.....Woman was made for man, and became first in the transgression..... It is positively base for a woman to speak in the pulpit; it is base in the sight of Jehovah."

The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of America endorsed Dr. Craven's views by censuring the minister who had permitted ladies to speak from his pulpit; and if the New Testament is to be followed, they were quite warranted in their action.

The Presbyterians were not alone in their action. In 1888, the Southern Baptist Association refused, by a deliberate vote, to admit women delegates to its Conference. In the same year, the General Conference of the Methodist Church had to deal with the case of sixteen women who had come there as delegates. Eventually the Conference decided that women delegates were not to be tolerated, the feeling of the majority being, presumably, expressed by one speaker, that those who wished women to attend were "making an effort to strike at the conscientiousness of 90 per cent. of the Christian Church, which has existed for the last 1,800 years. The history of Christianity shows that women were never intended to vote." If the history of Christianity prove anything at all, it certainly proves that.

The Methodists had, a few years earlier (1880), in answer to the request of some women for permission to enter the ministry, "Resolved—That women have already all the rights and privileges in the Methodist Church that are good for them, and that it is not expedient to make any change in the books of discipline that would open the doors for their ordination to the ministry." So, too, thought the Rev. W. V. Turnstall, who laid down the following declarations in order to keep woman in her proper place:—

- First.—That woman is under a curse, which subjects her to man.
- Second.—This curse has never been removed, nor will it be removed until the resurrection.
- Third.—That woman, under the Mosaic law—God's Civil law—had no voice in anything.....That she was no part of the congregation of Israel, that her geneology was not kept, that no notice was taken of her birth or death except as these events were connected with some man of Providence.....And that in the Tenth Command-

ment—always in force—she is scheduled as a higher species of property, that her identity was completely merged in that of her husband.

Fourth.—That for seeking to hold office Miriam was smitten with leprosy.....

Fifth.—That to vote is to rule, voting carrying with it all the collaterals of making, expounding and executing law; that God has withheld from woman the right to rule either in the Church, the State, or the family; that He did this because of her having 'brought sin and death into the world, and all our woe.'

Sixth.—That the Bible is addressed to man and not to woman; that man comes to God through Jesus, and woman comes to Jesus through man; that every privilege the wife enjoys she but receives through the husband, for God has declared that woman shall not rule man, but be subject to him."

Here is, in truth, a clear and explicit view of the sound Christian view of the matter, and Mr. Turnstall has scriptural warranty for all he says. Other Christians may treat Mr. Turnstall as old-fashioned, but this is simply saying that Christianity itself is out of date. He is neither ashamed of the gospel he gets his living by, nor desirous of interpreting it in a way that says more for mental ingenuity than honesty. And his statements, with the others I have quoted, are enough to show that real Christianity has been the same right through the ages. Principal Donaldson rightly points out that the immediate effect of Christianity was to lower the character of women and restrict the range of their activity. Had he carried his researches on to a later period, he would have fully realised the truth of Lecky's statement that "In the whole feudal legislation women were placed in a much lower position than in the Roman Empire"; that "the complete inferiority of the sex was continually maintained by the law," and that, wherever Canon or Church law "has been made the basis of legislation, we find laws of succession sacrificing the interests of daughters and of wives, and a state of public opinion which has been formed and regulated by these laws; nor was any serious attempt made to abolish them until the close of the last century"—a period, be it noted, remarkable for the rapid development and open expression of Freethought views.

C. COHEN.

(To be concluded.)

The Secular Education League.

Hon. Sec., H. SNELL,
12 Leighton-grove, London, N.W.

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- | | |
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An asterisk denotes Members of the Executive Committee.

MANIFESTO.

Every attempt made to settle the Education Question in England and Wales has conspicuously failed. The reason of this failure is that partial and partisan lines have been followed. The Act of 1902 erred in one direction; the Bill of 1906 erred as badly in another direction. Everyone sees that a further attempt, to be successful, must proceed upon fresh lines altogether; and it is with a view to this new departure that the Secular Education League has come into being.

The Secular Education League aims at binding together in one effective organisation, all who favor the "Secular Solution" of the Education problem, without reference to any other convictions—political, social, or religious—that they may entertain.

The fundamental principle of the League is expressed in the resolution that was carried at the crowded inaugural meeting, which took place at the *Tribune* Rendezvous on Monday evening, February 4, under the chairmanship of Mr. George Greenwood, M.P.:

"That this meeting, recognising that the sole responsibility for religious education rests with parents and Churches, expresses its conviction that there can be no final solution of the religious difficulty in National Education until the Education Act is amended, so as to secure that there shall be no teaching of religion in State-supported Elementary schools in school hours or at the public expense."

According to this resolution, religion must not be taught in the national elementary schools either at the public expense or by means of the public machinery. Upon this basis a wise and just educational system could be established, which would necessarily prevent religious tests being imposed upon teachers, give absolute security to the religious rights of parents, and infuse serenity and efficiency into the intellectual and moral atmosphere of the schoolrooms.

The wisdom and equity of confining the teaching in public elementary schools to secular subjects were admitted by the late Mr. Gladstone. They have also been admitted by various political leaders still living—such as Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, Lord Rosebery, Mr. Joseph Chamberlain and Mr. John Morley. But many who recognise that Secular Education is ideally right declare that it is impracticable. They assert that the nation will not have it. Yet they offer no proof of this extraordinary statement. The truth is that the people have never had a clear issue laid before them. Only at Trade Union Congresses has a popular vote been taken, and on every occasion the skilled workmen, through their official representatives, have registered overwhelming majorities in favor of Secular Education.

It cannot be questioned that the religious controversy has been a serious hindrance to national education. England will never take her proper place in the van of educational progress until the State hands religion over to those who should care for it, and organises education on a scientific and civic basis.

Certainly the religious controversy shows no signs of abating. Passive Resistance, pursued by Nonconformists is now being threatened by Anglicans and Catholics. Even if a majority were to agree upon a compromise, it would still excite the passionate resentment of the minority. There is, indeed, but one way of peace—the way of Secular Education.

The Secular Education League neither professes nor entertains any hostility to religion. It simply regards

religion as a personal and private matter, which all should be free to promote in voluntary associations, but which should never come under the control of the State. The League takes its stand on the principle of citizenship—with freedom and equality for all in matters that lie beyond.

It is with confidence that the Secular Education League appeals for moral and financial support. A number of distinguished names are already included on its General Council, and more will assuredly be added in the immediate future. What is now sought is a great accession of members who give the motive power to every organisation. The way into the League is easy. Only the essential points of principle and policy are insisted upon; and the members' contribution is purely voluntary, each being left to subscribe according to interest and opportunity.

With the issue of this first Manifesto the general work of the Secular Education League begins and the battle opens for the victory of "the Secular Solution."

Acid Drops.

Most of our readers will have this copy of the *Freethinker* in their hands by Good Friday. We might call it our Easter number. And we may as well write a few "Acid Drops" appropriate to the season.

Good Friday is an odd name for the anniversary of the death of the second person in the Christian trinity. It is also an odd name for the death-day of Jesus considered as a man. The story of the Crucifixion is pathetic enough; in fact, it has been half the making of Christianity. Jesus was nailed up on his cross between two thieves. It was a painful and humiliating fate; and to add to his lonely misery, his disciples had all forsaken him and fled, while one had betrayed him and another had openly denied him in a public court. The blood poured forth from his thorn-pierced brow and from his nail-pierced hands and feet; his head drooped with anguish of body and mind under the fierce Syrian sun; and in a moment of intolerable despair he cried out "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Yet every time the anniversary of that piteous tragedy comes round the Christians call it Good Friday. Good Friday! What a name for it! And what strange people the Christians are to call it so!

We have spoken of Good Friday as the anniversary of the crucifixion of Jesus, for that is what the Christians consider it; but, of course, it is nothing of the kind. If the death of Jesus were really an historical event, its anniversary would fall on the same day every year. Shakespeare's Day—the day of his death, and apparently the day of his birth—is the twenty-third of April. But the death-day of Jesus never falls on the same date two years running. It is not even confined to one month. It may occur in March or in April. Why is this? Because the Life of Jesus in the four gospels is a mythical story; and all mythology is related to worship of the heavenly bodies. Good Friday is part of the Easter fixture. It is the first Friday before Easter Sunday—and Easter Sunday is the first Sunday after the first full moon after the twenty-first of March—which is the vernal equinox, and was reckoned of old as the beginning of the year. And a reminiscence of this still lingers in our enumeration of the seasons—spring, summer, autumn and winter.

Easter is fixed every year by an astronomical calculation. This is a relic of ancient nature worship. The vernal equinox was a critical point in the sun's procession in the zodiac. But sun-worship was not everything. The moon was worshiped too. And her worshipers had to be conciliated. So the great spring festival was arranged to happen after the first full moon after the vernal equinox.

Curiously enough, a similar instance of the conciliation of the moon-worshipers occurred in the time of Julius Caesar. When that great man—one of the greatest men in all history, and by the way, an Atheist—reformed the Calendar, the year would have started on the twenty-fifth of December, which was celebrated as the birthday of the Sun by all the Pagan nations—and was borrowed in the fourth century by the Christian Church as the birthday of their Man-God. But another seven days (one quarter of the lunar month) was allowed to elapse, in order to satisfy the moon-worshipers; and so the year began on the first of January instead.

The Jewish Passover falls at the same time as the Christian Easter. The Jews say it commemorates an incident in their escape from Egypt under Moses. But that is all nonsense. They never were in Egypt, and Moses is not an

historical character. Their Passover is really a celebration of the passing-over of the spring equinox by the sun. They have lost the knowledge of this, and falsely associate it with circumstances in the legendary life of Moses; just as Christians have lost the knowledge of the real meaning of their religious celebrations, and falsely associate them with circumstances in the legendary life of Christ.

The Pagan origin of Easter is obvious to all who have studied the facts of the case. The very word Easter is derived from that of an old Scandinavian divinity. Easter eggs are symbolic of the fecund powers of nature, which are reasserting themselves in the spring after the dormancy of winter. The decoration of churches with evergreens and flowers has the same meaning. It is not Christ springing from the tomb of death that is celebrated, but nature springing from the tomb of winter. That is why man rejoices. That is why—in spite of all the sad story of the death of Jesus—the Christians call the Friday before Easter Sunday "Good Friday."

The resurrection of Christ is not history. It is mythology. Easter is the resurrection of the year. It is the spring festival. And when this is properly understood there is an end to the whole Christian superstition.

Pobiedonostseff is dead. He was at once the greatest scoundrel and the most honest man in Russia. He was a sort of Slav Torquemada. Simple, unselfish, ascetic, he cared nothing for the prizes that ordinary men strive for; and although he might have amassed a mountain of wealth, he died a poor man. On the other hand, he was the very incarnation of merciless reaction. His theory was that the Czar ruled by the grace of God, that religion should be the supreme power in the State, and that all who stood in the way of this theory of things should be crushed out like so many vermin. Thousands of men and women have suffered torture, and been done to death, because the Chief Procurator of the Holy Synod stood behind the throne, and shaped the mind and the policy of Alexandra III. and Nicholas II. He was a supreme illustration of the truth of Pascal's saying that evil is never wrought so fully and so light-heartedly as when it is wrought in the name of a false principle of conscience.

Pobiedonostseff was a very able man. It is impossible to dispute that. When his book called *Reflections of a Russian Statesman* was published in English we reviewed it at considerable length, and pointed out how much force there was in his criticism of the weaknesses of modern democracy under parliamentary government. His book will for a long time be well worth reading by earnest students of political, social and religious affairs. One thing he said was certainly worth remembering. He laughed at the "freedom of the press" in England, America and elsewhere. He said that the press was worked by capitalists and wire-pullers. And so it is. Hardly a newspaper in England—outside a few personally conducted journals like the *Freethinker*—dares to say a word about the most vital questions in religion and sociology. There is really more outspoken thought in Russia, in spite of the Czar, and the Holy Synod, and the Censorship. The great vice of England is hypocrisy, and the greatest nurse of that vice is our "glorious free press."

Infamous torture of untried prisoners has been carried on for some time at Riga. Even young women have been beaten and kicked in a state of nudity by the Holy Czar's ruffians. One girl was tormented several nights in succession. Her teeth were broken, her hair pulled out, and her abdomen kicked until blood gushed from her mouth. Other tortures, we are told, were quite "unprintable." Well, we all know what that means, and it is enough to make a decent man's blood boil. We have said before, and we repeat, that it were better for men to die by the thousand on battlefields than for such infamies to go unchallenged. Fortunately they have not gone altogether unavenged. A wretch called Grün, who was the head of the Riga torture department, was surrounded in the street one day by revolutionists, who shot him dead and closed his account with humanity.

South Wales is informed by Mr. William Penn-Lewis, of Leicester, of the condition of Mr. Evan Roberts. It appears that the Welsh revivalist has been Mr. Penn-Lewis's guest for many months. He arrived at Leicester thoroughly broken down, and on the verge of paralysis—which we can well believe, considering the debauch of emotionalism he had passed through. Of course he was in the hands of the Lord; still, he thought he had better see a doctor, and one was called in. Dr. George Clifton was "under the guidance of God" in his treatment of the done-up soul-saver, who

began to mend; which proves that "the seal of the Lord's approval" was given to the arrangement. Such is the jargon of these religionists. What they mean is, that rest and comfort and good medical attendance did Evan Roberts good; which would have been the case if he were an Atheist instead of a Christian.

Evan Roberts's kidneys were affected as well as his nerves. We suppose he had "devilled" them by the hygienically vicious life he had been leading. However, his nerves and kidneys are being well looked after now, and in "God's good pleasure" they will be all right again—some time. Meanwhile he "is assured that it is the will of God that he should accept the advice of the physician in whom he has every confidence, and not attempt active service until his health is permanently regained." This is the man for whom miracles were wrought in answer to prayer! What humbug it all is, to be sure! These pious people live in an atmosphere of unreality, which soon degenerates into hypocrisy.

Some of the passengers stated that two Salvationists and a missionary got away in the first boat from the wrecked *Suevic*—with the women. One of the Salvationists, being interviewed on the subject, indignantly denied the accusation, and said there was some sort of misunderstanding. We don't take sides, therefore, but let each side speak for itself. But if three soul-savers did get away with the women, we might devise an excuse for them. Sidney Smith said that there were three sexes—men, women and clergymen. Now there was no special boat for the third sex, and it might be more natural for them to go with the second sex than with the first.

We have been favored with some pages torn out of the March number of the *Polytechnic Magazine*. They contain a verbatim report of a discourse on "The Old Theology" by the enterprising, talkative, and not very profound Dr. Emil Reich. The sum and substance of the whole windy discourse is this, that history proves that Jesus was more than a man. Napoleon said so; and, if that isn't enough, Dr. Emil Reich says so—which settles it. Evidence? What more do you want? But take this, if you must. Christianity has spread so far and lasted so long; that proves its divine origin. Well, the same argument proves the divine origin of Buddhism and Mohammedanism. And another thing. If the Christian religion had really come from God, would it have taken nearly two thousand years to spread over less than a third of the world's inhabitants? Is Omnipotence such a miserable missionary?

Bishop Gore, of Birmingham, has been telling a crowded congregation (if we may go by the local *Daily Mail* report) that "in the Gospels they had first-hand evidence of those who had been with their Lord as eye-witnesses as well as ministers of the word." Now this is an absolute falsehood. And we are sorry to say that Bishop Gore probably knows it as well as we do.

St. Patrick's Day was celebrated in the customary fashion at Stewartstown, County Tyrone. Catholics and Protestants fought each other for the love of Christ, and the police had to deal with both factions. There were many casualties, and for several hours the town was in a state of siege.

Of course there was plenty of rowing at Liverpool on St. Patrick's Day. It took thirty-five policemen, Inspector Hammond said, to restore order in the Everton-valley neighborhood. What was it that the angels sang on a certain night nineteen hundred and seven years ago? "Peace on earth, good will to men." That was the song. The chorus is still going strong—especially where Catholics and Orange Protestants get a sight of each other.

Rev. Dr. Ewart James, preaching at Edge-hill Congregational Church, is reported in the *Liverpool Daily Post* as saying that, "When the Church and the Socialists understand each other they might march into line, and there would then be hope for the kingdom of God." We are sorry to hear that God is dependent on that coalition. And we should like to know—when the Church and Socialism lie down together—which will be inside.

William Walsh, described by the press reporters as a merry Irishman, appeared the other day before Mr. Paul Taylor. He was charged with being disorderly at Dayswater, but he had a grievance against the constables. He said that one of them had called him a monkey. "I don't belong to Darwin's family," he added, "so why should he call me a monkey? I leave that to your worship's consideration."

Evidently the prisoner had been listening to some pious preacher or lecturer who had denounced Darwin and the "monkey" theory. However, he got fined ten shillings (or seven days) for the disorderly conduct; but he paid this cheerfully, having cleared himself from all connection with "Darwin's family." And really he doesn't seem calculated to do it much credit.

Talmage used to say—and Torrey took up the tale after him—that "infidelity" was the greatest cause of suicide. Very few "infidels," however, seem to rush out of existence. They generally wait their turn—which is usually most considerate to those around them. But the papers are full of cases of Christians who "go to God" or whatever their destination is—in a hurry. A coroner's jury, for instance, has brought in a verdict of "suicide whilst temporarily insane" over the dead body of the Rev. Frank Marchant Chetwynd, pastor of St. John's Free Church of England, Tottington, who died from the effects of an overdose of chloral. In a letter he had written: "I cannot endure this awful depression any longer. May God bless my sweet wife and children. I can no longer do my church work as it ought to be done. God bless my church and people." This is very sad, of course, and we are not gloating over the poor pastor's trouble. We only wish to point out that his religion was not much of a comfort and support. Perhaps he would have borne up more bravely if he had no God to leave his "sweet wife and children" to. The present writer has suffered badly from insomnia, but has always resolutely avoided drugs and alcohol as an aid to sleep; and when he has felt done up, he has also felt that his "sweet wife and children" depend upon him—not upon God; and then there was his work for Freethought, on which he would like to spend his last fraction of strength.

"Thank God, I have just taken poison," said Rebecca Eliza Mullany when Mrs. Daisy Holder called upon her. She died the next day at the Royal Free Hospital, and the St. Pancras Coroner's jury returned a verdict of "suicide during temporary insanity"—in spite of the Coroner's remark that there did not seem to be any insanity in the case. There was no Atheism, anyway—was there? We put the question to the logical and veracious Torrey.

The boy Parrett, who is to be tried at the Chester Assizes for the Bradeley Hall murder, was a regular attendant at the Wesleyan Sunday School, and chose for his prizes such pious books as *Pilgrim's Progress*, *Dare to Do Right*, and *At Last*. What a howl would go up from the Christian press if he had been a reader of the *Freethinker*. They would have wanted to hang us.

Ellen Britton, of Hawes-street, Haslingden, aged fifty, was kneeling at her bedside, with her sister, saying her prayers, when she fell sideways and died on the spot. Nature had her way in spite of religion. It was heart failure.

Religious people are up in arms—at least, the professional ones are—at Carlisle, where the Social Democratic Federation is billed to hold its annual Conference from Good Friday to Easter Sunday inclusive. The Dean of Carlisle says that the Socialists are "doing their cause irreparable harm by taking this anti-Christian line." He further says that "it is extremely bad taste to disregard the feelings of Christian people." Bless their "feelings." They seem to think they possess a monopoly of the article. Anyhow, it is always *their* feelings that are to be regarded. Other people's don't count.

Rev. B. H. Bosanquet, vicar of Thames Ditton, supported by his churchwardens, protests against the race meeting at Imber Court (in his parish) on Good Friday. He calls it a "gross violation of the sanctity of the day." But he forgets that the sanctity of the day is a personal matter to Christians. They need not go to the trotting match; they can go to church. The reverend gentleman is more to the point in saying that the horsey gathering "is calculated to cause deep offence to Christian people in the parish." But that is the fault of the Christian people themselves. They want to do what they like, and to direct other people's movements too. Which, as our old friend Euclid says, is absurd.

Canon Dolan, at St. Peter's Church, Scarborough, had blessed the palms and distributed them to the congregation on Sunday morning, and had just commenced Mass, when he fainted. For over an hour he lay in a semi-conscious state. We do not know that there is any moral. There would have been one if the "painful scene" had occurred in a Secular Hall.

Another good man gone wrong. Rev. Canon William Edward Rawstone, aged 87, of East Putney, left £38,914. What is it the New Testament says? "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom." "And in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torment."

We are afraid the late Rev. Albert Brook Webb, of Wickham Market, Suffolk, is undergoing similar treatment. He only left £9,130, but he could hardly squeeze through the needle's eye with a hump like that.

The cry is still they come. Here are more clerical unfortunates. Rev. Alfred Hall, aged 80, of Leamington, left £20,792. Rev. Canon Francis James Holland, aged 79, of Canterbury, left £51,781. These reverend gentlemen had a good time on earth. We cannot say that they kept out of heaven all those years. They probably kept out of the other place.

The religious papers continue to fill their columns with discussions on the New Theology, without any of them appreciating the real significance of the agitation. Mr. Campbell is doubtless very advanced in relation to the body of Christians, and to them he is, by contrast, a reckless revolutionist. But to outsiders his chief interest lies in his being a mere symptom of a general revolt against Christian doctrines. Morally and intellectually, Christianity is out of touch with the best life of our time, and although the power of the churches as organisations serves to disguise the fact somewhat, the truth is tolerably obvious to all who care to look at the matter carefully. Mr. Campbell thus acts as a kind of barometer in indicating the mental pressure on the churches, and so far serves a purpose. Further than this, his personality is of small consequence. The man who thinks that the conflict of modern thought with Christian doctrines can be brought to an end by a manipulation of phrases, has but a poor conception of the real nature of what is going on around. Mr. Campbell and his supporters fancy they are assisting at a readjustment; they are really witnessing a dissolution. For over three hundred years Christianity has been retreating before the advance of modern thought, and the process is bound to end some day. And now that the history of religious ideas is so well understood, the end must be drawing dangerously near.

When I Survey the Wondrous Cross.

An Easter Hymn, "Ancient and Modern."

WHEN I survey the wondrous cross
On which I'm far from sure He died,
I loathe J. C.'s unnatural Boss
Who preordained His suicide.

Forbid it, Lord, that men should boast
About His deeds: the Bible God
Is worse than all the tyrant host
Who've ruled our race with iron rod.

Read Jahveh's Book, His Word complete,
By His reporters' taken down.
Employed upon a "Harmsworth" sheet,
How they'd enhance its great renown.

Were the whole wealth of Christians mine,
My contributions would be small
To those who puff the "Book Divine,"
The minds of people to enthral.

To Christ, who's cursed the human race
With bitter grief and anguish sore,
We'll turn our back, and turn our face
Towards the light for evermore.

ENCORE VERSES.

When I survey the ball and cross
On Ludgate Hill's Cathedral top,
Think I, why honor such a joss
With such a gorgeous gospel-shop?

When I survey a cold cross bun,
I give that bun a berth that's wide;
Why swallow pastry underdone
To celebrate God's suicide?

ESS JAY BEN.

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

April 28, Manchester.
May 5, Liverpool.

To Correspondents.

C. COHEN'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—April 14, Glasgow; 21, Workman's Hall, Stratford; 28, a. Victoria Park, e. Workman's Hall, Stratford.

J. T. LLOYD'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—April 21, Failsworth.

WATCHFUL.—See "Acid Drops." Thanks.

A. G. suggests that J. H., who wrote vindicating "Ouida," should read that lady's *Views and Opinions*, in which she "devotes a whole chapter to exposing the hollowness of Christianity in plain and forcible language."

K. M. SCHWEIZER.—Altered as desired. Thanks.

T. D.—Thanks for the Metchnikoff book, which we are glad to receive. Raleigh's *Style* was acknowledged, though not by name, when it arrived.

W. RIGBY.—Always glad to receive cuttings.

C. W. S.—To get your letter, in any shape, in the *Yorkshire Evening Post* was something. You must be thankful for small mercies.

C. H. HOWSON.—Pleased to hear that you have read the *Freethinker* for twelve months and still "like it immensely." You say you regret not having met with it before, but you must be content with what you have gained. We believe there are thousands like you, if we could only reach them. It would be a good thing for them, and for us too; as the paper would then pay us a living wage for our work upon it, and we should bid good-bye to financial worry. Perhaps this will stimulate our readers to push the circulation of this journal all they can.

W. TREY.—You will see the matter is partially dealt with in our "Acid Drops" this week. No doubt a small book upon the whole subject would be very useful.

"JAN DE BOER."—Thanks for cuttings.

A. GALBERT is "taking extra copies of the *Freethinker* frequently for distribution"; and, "although they may not avail to bring subscribers, it is sowing the seed." Truly.

S. CURTIS.—(1) Huxley did not bury himself or put up his own tombstone. We prefer to go by what he wrote and published during his lifetime rather than by what others said in connection with him when he was dead. (2) Mr. Reader Harris, K.C., never was a "prominent Atheist." We have asked him again and again to mention any other Atheist who ever knew him to be one at all.

W. HEAFORD.—Profoundly sorry to hear that Signor Ferrer's trial is again postponed till June. It is an infamy. No doubt the Spanish authorities, instigated by Christian bigots, hope he will end their troubles by dying in prison.

THE COHEN "SALVATION ARMY" TRACT FUND.—Previously acknowledged, £15 17s. 9d. Since received: L. E. Singer, 1s.; J. McARA, 3s.; V. T. Mitchell, 2s.; R. Wilson, 1s.; E. Clarke, 1s.; J. Challenger, 1s.

E. MOORCROFT.—Sorry to hear your eyes are troubling you, and hope they will soon be better. Thanks for cuttings.

C. SALDHANA.—We dealt with H. Musgrave Reade's conversion some two years ago. He was a member of the Manchester Branch of the National Secular Society twenty odd years ago, but he was never of any importance in the Secular movement, and we were totally unacquainted with his name when he was paraded at one of Dr. Torrey's meetings. You ask why he went to Madras instead of trying to convert us and our colleagues in London. Well, it was easier to look big in India than it was in England.

J. ROBERTS.—See "Acid Drops." Thanks.

J. BROUEN.—Cuttings are welcome.

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

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

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Sugar Plums.

The National Secular Society's Conference will be held this year in London. Full particulars will appear in our next issue. Meanwhile we are requested to state that motions for the Conference Agenda, from Branches or non-Branch members, must be in the General Secretary's hands by April 27 at the latest.

An important announcement concerning the new Secular Education League appears on another page of this week's *Freethinker*. We are able to print the League's first manifesto, together with a list of public men and women who have given their adhesion by joining the General Council. Several ministers of religion are included. Dr. Clifford is outside—as we expected he would be when the psychological moment came. The old hypocrite—for such he is on this subject, at any rate—is in favor of Secular Education, provided he is allowed to make the words mean what he pleases. But the Rev. R. J. Campbell has joined the League, which proves that when he spoke in favor of Secular Education he meant what he said. There are many members of parliament on the General Council, and we believe there will be a good many more before very long. There are also artists and literary men, and towering over all is the great name of George Meredith. It must be admitted that this is an excellent beginning. And it will be recognised by all Freethinkers that the League's Manifesto is on the right lines. Its brevity is one of its merits. All the essence of the principle and policy of Secular Education is packed into a brief compass. People can see in a minute or two what they are asked to support.

The complete constitution of the Secular Education League will be announced presently. Officers, such as President, Vice-Presidents, and Treasurer, have not been appointed yet. The first thing to do was to get representative names on the General Council. Other appointments will follow in due course. There will also be, at the proper time, a General Meeting of Members of the League. Everything cannot be done at once. We have a capital Secretary and a competent Executive Committee, who will carry on the League's work while the members are being enrolled. It is *members* that the League wants just now, and we beg our friends to flock in.

We hope Freethinkers will join the Secular Education League in large numbers. Of course we hope Christians will do so too, but we cannot appeal to them in this journal. The amount of the yearly subscription is optional; members can subscribe just what they can afford or think advisable. The poor man's shilling will be welcome as well as the rich man's pound. Forms of membership can be obtained at the *Freethinker* office, where the League Secretary (Mr. Harry Snell) has left a large supply. Subscriptions, with the filled-in forms, can be left with the N. S. S. Secretary, Miss E. M. Vance, or with our shop manager, Mr. W. A. Vaughan. These will be handed over in bulk (so to speak) to the League secretary, who will forward receipts and cards of membership from the League's headquarters. By this means we shall see how many of our own people are joining, and if we find them remiss we shall be able to stir them up from time to time in these columns. For the present, perhaps, they will take our word for it that it is of the utmost importance that our party should be strongly represented on this new League. If we don't care for Secular Education, we cannot expect *other people* to.

Copies of the Secular Education League's manifesto can be obtained at the *Freethinker* office for judicious distribution. This is a work that Freethinkers can all help in.

Last week's *Athenaeum* paid a fine tribute to M. Berthelot, the great French scientist and Freethinker, whose death was recorded in our last week's issue. After speaking in the highest terms of his immense services to chemical science, our contemporary referred to his noble personal character:—

"In private life, Berthelot was one of the happiest, because one of the most unambitious, of men. Although millions have been made out of his discoveries by the commercial world, it was his proud boast that he had himself never made a penny by them. His various stipends as Professor, as Senator, and as Perpetual Secretary of the Académie des Sciences, in which office he succeeded Pasteur—though modest enough to English eyes—were sufficient for his wants, and he took nothing more from science than the honors (including the Davy and Copley Medals of our own Royal Society) which in later life came abundantly to him. Nor was his death less worthy or a worse example than his life. He had long been a sufferer from heart disease, and on

the occasion of his jubilee, spoke touchingly of the sympathy of his fellow-workers as having caused a last flash in the lamp about to be quenched in eternal death. Yet he faced his end with the same gay courage with which he had defied the Prussian shells on the plain of Clamart, worked and wrote to the last, and discharged his secretarial duties at the séance of the Académie held two hours before his own death."

What could be finer? Berthelot's beautiful personality matched his scientific greatness. And he was an Atheist. Let the Christian world remember that fact.

On Sunday, in the Chamber of Deputies, M. Briand, the Minister of Public Instruction, introduced a short Bill authorising the deposition in the Pantheon of the remains of Marcelin Berthelot and his wife. It was passed unanimously—and then adopted with equal unanimity by the Senate. France has an eye for her great men. Of course she is "Infidel" France; but did not Carlyle say that reverence for human worth was the only true religion that ever was or ever will be?

The funeral of M. Berthelot and his wife took place at the Pantheon on Monday morning. It was attended by President Fallières and Prime Minister Clemenceau. M. Briand delivered an eloquent address, praising M. Berthelot as one of those prodigious men who honored all countries and all times. He also paid a beautiful tribute to the dead lady. There was a great crowd of people, and troops stationed at all the approaches to the Pantheon.

Mr. Thomas Bevan, of Stone Park, Greenhithe, Kent, who left estate valued at £888,191 15s. 2d., bequeathed considerable sums to his servants, including £5,000 to his valet, £300 and a life annuity of £52 to his head-gardener, £300 to his coachman, a life annuity of £200 to Nurse Mary Ann Payne, and life annuities of £52 to two old servants. He ordered that his body should be cremated, and that the ash residue should be ground in powder and again burnt and dissipated in the air. His will also contains this interesting clause:—

"Convinced as I am that it is impossible in these present times for a man possessed of the combination of the quality of straightforwardness with the ordinary intellectual qualifications to make the solemn declaration required at Ordination, which requires him to affirm, for example, his belief in the historical accuracy of the Book of Genesis, including the history, circumstances and account of Noah's Ark as contained therein, and that the writers of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John were more than feeble and fallible, who often did great injustice to the Greatest of Men—for instance, when two of them attributed to Him the expectation that figs were to be found in Judæa before Easter, and a curse from Him, being hungry, to a fig-tree because there were none—I should regard with the gravest misgiving were my daughters or either of my granddaughters to marry a clergyman, believing, as I do, that in the near future there must be much distress, uncasiness and trouble in store for right-minded men of that calling, and I bequeath to them and to each of them my devout, honest and earnest hope that they will never do so."

Evidently an exceptional man. We wish he had known of the Secular movement. Had he done so, he might have bequeathed a substantial legacy to the Secular Society, Limited.

Kaiser William has done one thing he need not be ashamed of. He has taken the opportunity of the fiftieth anniversary of Haeckel's taking his doctor's degree to recognise his great services to science by creating him a Privy Councillor, with the right to the title of Excellency. Of course, this is only a feather in Haeckel's hat, and won't affect the fine head beneath it.

The late Professor York Powell—a very able and original man—appears to have spoken very freely in his letters to his friends. In one of these he refers in the following manner to certain opinions of Robert Louis Stevenson which that writer's biographers do not bring out prominently: "Rob used to say that he would have nothing to do with a religion of so alien a character as Christianity, full of nasty Jewish remnants, and that he refused to have anything to do with their old God and X. Commandments, and if he wanted Commandments or Gods he would make them himself: which seems to me a very reasonable and historic view."

A fine copy of the first folio of Shakespeare was sold by auction at Sotheby's some days ago for the enormous sum of £3,600. In the course of time, not a single first folio will be obtainable for love or money. Every copy will be safely locked in some public institution in the English-speaking world. The most important book on earth will eventually be beyond price. And the curious thing is that as the Bible falls off its pedestal Shakespeare rises to the premier position.

Mr. R. J. Campbell's Ideal Christ.

SINCE writing my former paper on "The New Theology" I have heard Mr. Campbell's address to the Ethical Societies at Caxton Hall. He undoubtedly evoked warm admiration for his earnestness and ingenuous sincerity. The remains that still cling to him of what is generally termed theology are very similar to what we have long been accustomed to find in the more independent-minded of the Unitarians, and even in here and there a Congregationalist who has not cared to give himself a theological ticket. Probably most of the audience would agree with me in thinking that nothing differentiates Mr. Campbell from the standpoint of the Ethical Societies except a quite unnecessary and, in fact, somewhat illogical, retention of a few residual theological terms and notions.

One of his most characteristic pronouncements was what he said about his ideal Christ. And it was here that a lack of critical analysis was most conspicuous. At any rate, he cannot have carefully analysed this conception. He derived his ideal of Christ, he told us, not so much from the Gospels—the New Testament writers may have reported imperfectly—as from the effects which the Christian idea had produced in the world. This means, of course, that though the twentieth century ideal of Christ, as derived by Mr. Campbell from his study of the Christian era, may not be found intact in the New Testament, it may be read into the record by those who know what has happened since the record was penned. Now this is an assumption which I contend no one has a right to make, and which even Mr. Campbell would not make but for his theological training and associations.

In the first place, everyone who is familiar with the history of that time knows that there is nothing original in the ethics of the New Testament character of Jesus, unless it may be the representation of an exceptionally sympathetic and magnetic personality. The great prophets of the Old Testament give us an ethical standard quite as lofty as that of any of the more or less paradoxical beatitudes and aphorisms of Jesus. Half a millennium earlier, Buddhism had done the same. To Mr. Campbell, the ethics of Christianity is practically everything; to the founder or founders of Christianity it was only an element logically involved in the idea of religion, and did not give to Christianity its distinctive character. However much or little of Mr. Campbell's ideal Christ is to be found in the New Testament, it must be taken together with the teaching with which it was encumbered, and which constituted the distinctiveness of Christianity. It is not even necessary to find a personal Jesus at all. History could have made itself as it has done, had Christianity begun, as it probably did, with a small coterie of devotees of an eclectic scheme of belief, around whose central idea there crystallised, out of the religious and philosophical thought and traditions of the time, the myth of the person Jesus. This incarnation of their central idea was necessary to satisfy the traditional expectation of a Messiah, and was also a natural adaptation of religious idea and practice as found in Mithraism and other contemporary cults. This crystallisation theory is strengthened by the fact that the ideals of Jesus in the New Testament differ as we pass from the Synoptical Gospels to Paul, and from Paul to the Fourth Gospel. The Christ idea was in the air, and could well have become formulated without an actual personal origin.

But whether the Christ myth had a personal basis or not does not matter to our argument, which is that the recorded Jesus was no more ethical than the highest thought of his age, and that it was not his ethical teachings which established Christianity. Had Christ preached, or the early Christians taught merely Mr. Campbell's gospel, we should have had no Christian Church. We should have had a kind of Spinozian Gnosticism. It was the theology—to use the word in a comprehensive sense—of the early Chris-

tians that won adherents. That theology professed to fulfil Jewish expectations; it held out rewards and punishments of a very definite and imposing kind; it created a sympathetic social organisation which met certain needs of the Pagan peoples; it promised the speedy return of Christ as a conqueror and a millennium of terrestrial happiness. Some of the New Testament Christians even hoped to live to see the second Advent. Then around this theology there speedily clustered a complicated system of the ritual and magic to which the people were accustomed, but to which new names and new meanings were given. Before the hope of seeing Christ return had faded away, Constantine converted Christianity into a political system, and the Church thenceforth added to the secular hurly-burly of history the even fiercer elements of spiritual dogmatism and dissension. During the Christian centuries, it is true that the world has, on the whole, progressed ethically, but it is a disputed point as to whether the Church has in any way imposed morality upon the world, or whether the world has not rather imposed its morality upon the Church. Certainly it was the humanitarianism of the Renaissance that made the Reformation possible, and lifted the Church out of the filthy quagmire of immorality in which it was fast being asphyxiated.

It is an unpermissible assumption, in view of the above, to find beneath the imperfect record of the New Testament the ideal Christ of the twentieth century as an actual character. The most that anyone can be permitted to assume is that the ethics of the Christian records and theology were equal, and perhaps a little superior, to the ethics of the competing religions, and that the human mind, as it has evolved ethically, has been able to accept most of the spirit of the New Testament ethics, though in the letter that ethics is often expressed in paradox and in metaphorical terms of now obsolete traditions and beliefs. The Christian ethics has been a factor in ethical evolution, but it has not by any means been the sole factor, and it was itself not original to Christianity. When Mr. Campbell sees his ideal Christ in the New Testament he is seeing not an actual Palestinian Christ, not an actuality at all, but merely an idea that is in his own mind. It was upon the Christ that appears in the New Testament, not upon Mr. Campbell's ideal, that the early Church was built. Tendencies which, had they been allowed to work themselves out, might have evolved from the Christian germ something like Mr. Campbell's theology, were suppressed as heretical in the interest of the New Testament and traditional Christology. I am not criticising Mr. Campbell's theology as such, but only his assumption that the teaching of Christ was anything more than a specialised expression of a widely-spread tendency of thought at that time.

After the close of the address, several written questions were handed up to the platform, only some of which Mr. Campbell had time to comment upon. One question was as to his attitude towards the miraculous. Anyone familiar with the recent trend of discussion upon the subject of miracles would have expected Mr. Campbell to select, as an example, the great crucial miracle of the resurrection of Jesus. Perhaps he thought his remarks on his ideal Christ had sufficiently indicated his attitude towards this alleged miracle. He selected, to my surprise, Old Testament miracles and Christ's miracles of healing. Surely he knows that thousands of Christian ministers have long ceased to allow their minds to be seriously exercised about these miracles.

ARTHUR RANSOM.

Faith Healing.

WHILE Dowie's body lay in state, thousands of cripples and diseased persons poured into Zion anxious to touch the hem of his garments, in the hope that they might be cured of their afflictions

thereby. Cures through "faith" may have followed—and they have their parallels in the history of Jesus Christ—but the explanation of their cause exists exclusively in the realm of physical science. If the "Profit," at any period of his long career of craft *versus* credulity, did really effect a cure, then he did so through the medium of animal electricity. I am inclined, however, to believe that he was better provided with a propensity for "laying hands" on money than with animal electricity. It would be interesting to have the views of the Psychological Research Society upon the "Profit's" alleged qualities. To me, the cry between them does not seem so very far—except that the Society is composed of otherwise morally honest people. If the term "physical science" be tautological, as I hold it must be, then science is prostituted when it is associated with psychics. And the utter absurdity of it all that is, the very conceptions and explanations of what is called the higher psychics are incurably materialistic.

Hypnotism, as practised by Professor Bernheim and Dr. van Renterghem—which is not to be confounded with the grosser nonsense of mesmerism that has so mystified the public mind—is a legitimate physical science. There are many familiar legends concerning the cure of diseases which at once suggest themselves, in the light of hypnotic knowledge, as cases illustrating the power of auto-suggestion. The miracles of Lourdes, the healings of Christian Science, the faith-cures of "Elijah the Second," and the legends of King's Touch—all have, in this light, a rational explanation. "Psychical science" contends that these effects are "mysteries." It starts on the proposition that the physical is comprehensible, and the psychical incomprehensible. It refuses to take any account of the cause, and all the logic of a thousand Herbert Spencers would not knock the bottom out of the bald, unsupported assertion that actuates it. I would have no hesitation in accepting the term "psychics" as incomprehensible science—literally "meaningless"—had I not formed a better one. That there are more mentally hazy people outside asylums than within them it has been my misfortune to observe, and I candidly think that not a few of them are members of the Society of Modern Fanatics.

To anyone who has had a scientific training, the doctrine that causation and the sequence of phenomena are as true of human life as of mechanics, is a platitude scarcely worth saying. The idea of the universality of causation has become a necessary condition of all the thinking of such a person. Those who have a knowledge of the marvels of radioactivity and atomic evolution, and also of physiology—at least so far as the actions of the brain are concerned—will have very little trouble in arriving at a rational explanation of what is termed faith-healing.

Psychics received its death-blow—or should have, if it had been amenable to reason—when that distinguished Indian physicist, Professor Chundra Bose, of the Presidency College, Calcutta, published, in 1902, his remarkable book, entitled *Response in the Living and the Non-Living*. Therein he was enabled to show that various crystalline forms of matter exhibit response to electrical stimulation, and show fatigue and electrical phenomena identical with those which the physiologists have hitherto described as characteristic of living muscle and mind. His work was met with the usual and necessary incredulity accorded to the pioneer, but his results have stood, and last year he published another work, called *Plant Response*, which carries his work still further, proving the identity of response to stimulation in the animal, in the plant, and in various kinds of crystalline inorganic matter. The following extract from Professor Bose's admirable work, published in this country by Longmans, Green & Co., is practically a condensed summary of his discoveries:—

"By following the electrical method of inquiry which has just been described, I have been able to prove that the power of responding to stimulus, and, under certain conditions, the arrest of this power, is the charac-

teristic, not of organic matter only, but of all matter, both organic and inorganic; and that, in general, the various agencies which bring on the modification of response in one case—such as fatigue, temperature changes, stimulating or depressing chemical reagents—act in the same way in the other. The capability of responding, so long regarded as the peculiar characteristic of the organic, is also found in the inorganic, and seems to depend in all cases, both qualitatively and quantitatively, on the condition of molecular mobility."

The more we know of Nature, the less we know of God; and the fickleness of it all is thus aptly and poetically described in Byron's "Don Juan":—

"How little do we know that which we are!
How less what we may be! The eternal surge
Of time and tide rolls on and bears afar
Our bubbles."

Atheists and Theists, physicists and psychics—
evanescent bubbles in the sum total of all—eternal
and ecumenical causation.

J. H.

The Making of the Gospels.—IV.

(Continued from p. 187.)

IN the age succeeding that of the first promulgators of Christianity the primitive Christians were without any definite knowledge of the life or history of Jesus Christ. Not one of the apostles, who were supposed to have known the various incidents of the alleged public ministry of Jesus, had left to posterity any written accounts of those incidents. The primitive Church had therefore to find out these circumstances for itself. This was a simple matter, though somewhat long and tedious; all that was necessary being a careful examination of the Old Testament scriptures, which were believed to be full of "prophecies" relating to the Jewish Messiah—and Jesus was assumed to be that Messiah. To find these alleged predictions the Greek version of the Hebrew Scriptures was searched exhaustively from end to end, and all passages deemed suitable were marked and copied out. This done, the material for the past history of the Savior was ready to hand.

All the Old Testament "prophecies" selected as referring to the Messiah had, of course, to be fulfilled; narratives were therefore drawn up describing the actual occurrence of the various events and circumstances predicted. The pious Christians engaged in this meritorious work were mostly teachers, and necessarily few in number, the rank and file of the early Church having no knowledge of Greek or Hebrew letters. These self-constituted Gospel-makers were, moreover, not burdened with inconvenient scruples, and considered themselves fully qualified for the work. The crazy teacher Barnabas, for instance, after clumsily twisting an Old Testament passage quite out of recognition, unctuously says:—

"Blessed be our Lord who has placed in us wisdom and understanding of secret things.....For this purpose He has circumsised our ears and our hearts that we might understand these things."

To take a second example, Justin Martyr, after similarly distorting several other Old Testament passages, says:—

"Would you suppose, sirs, that we could ever have understood these matters in the Scripture, if we had not received grace to discern by the will of Him whose pleasure it was?"

Most of the Gospel narratives had been written in Justin's time; but that ancient apologist, having discovered the clue, elected to work them out for himself. And he does so—fearlessly.

In this series of papers I shall confine myself chiefly to the principal Gospel events which make up the life of Jesus Christ. The sayings ascribed to that much-lauded individual will require separate treatment.

THE VIRGIN BIRTH.

It is often contended by Rationalists that the Jesus of the Gospels—like Theseus, Perscus, Apollo, Hercules, Bacchus and others—was a personification

of the sun, and that to this source can be traced the origin of the Virgin Birth story. That many of the ancient deities were of this solar character may at once be admitted. We know that the Virgin-Mother myth was almost universal in Paganism, and that many of the gods and heroes were reputed to have been born of virgin mothers; but this fact, even if known to the primitive Christians—and we have no evidence that it was known—would never have originated the Gospel story, but for the presence of Isaiah vii. 14 in the Jewish Scriptures. The latter passage is undoubtedly the source of the Virgin Birth story, and this story is an addition to the first primitive set of Gospel narratives.

Isaiah had predicted: "Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel," etc. This prophecy, according to the context, was fulfilled in Isaiah's own days; but such a small matter did not trouble the Gospel-maker. The meaning of the name "Immanuel" was enough for him—"God with us." Was not Jesus God, or at least the Son of God? His mother must therefore have conceived by the Spirit of God—the Holy Ghost. The concoctor of the story may, of course, have heard of Latona and her son Apollo, or of Hera and her son Hercules, or of Isis and Horos, or of the babe-gods Hermes and Dionysos. But these were all connected with Pagan idolatry, which, as a Jew or Christian, the concoctor regarded with pious horror. The writings of Isaiah, however, were of quite a different character. Were they not composed by a holy prophet under the direct influence of divine inspiration? And did not the same sacred writer, in his fifty-third chapter, show a clear and detailed foreknowledge of the rejection and sufferings of Jesus? It was not Isaiah, then, but God himself who spoke throughout the book—the great God who could not lie. And so on, and so forth. As might be expected, the pious concoctor of the Virgin Birth story wrote his veracious narrative with the passage in Isaiah open before him. He concludes by saying:—

"Now all this is come to pass, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, Behold the virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel."

The systematic dishonesty of the writer is shown by his completely ignoring the context—

"For before the child shall know to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land whose two kings thou abhorrest shall be forsaken.....For before the child shall have knowledge to cry, My father, and My mother, the riches of Damascus and the spoils of Samaria shall be carried away before the king of Assyria" (vii. 16; viii. 4).

This portion of the prophecy could not, by any amount of ingenuity, be twisted into referring to Jesus Christ; it was therefore simply ignored.

DESCENT AND BIRTHPLACE.

The prophet Isaiah had predicted a ruler, "a shoot out of the stock of Jesse," who should be filled with "the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord" (xi. 1-4). This prediction was, of course, said to refer to Jesus, who was therefore declared to be descended from Jesse's son, David. In proof of this claim two genealogies, each stated to be that of Joseph, the reputed father of Jesus, were fabricated, which contained between Jesus and David (a period of over one thousand years) but two names in common—Salathiel and Zerubbabel. In one of these genealogies there are between Zerubbabel and Joseph the Carpenter eleven generations; in the other there are twenty generations; moreover, not one of the names, during this period, in either of the genealogies, is found in the list of Zerubbabel's posterity given in 1 Chron. iii. 19-24. The fact that both genealogies were accepted as the pedigree of Jesus can only be accounted for by supposing that, at the first, each circulated singly and in a different locality. Later, when both had become well known it was found impossible to suppress either.

The prophet Micah, again, had predicted a governor who should hail from Bethlehem—"the city of David"—and "be great unto the ends of the earth." This prediction was likewise interpreted as referring to Jesus, notwithstanding the further statement in the context that the predicted ruler "shall deliver us from the Assyrian when he cometh into our land" (v. 2-7). In accordance with this prophecy a story was related of Jesus being born in Bethlehem, and the chief priests and scribes were represented as quoting the passage in Micah (Matt. ii. 6). As to the exact time of the birth of the expected ruler, no prediction could be found: the Gospel-makers were therefore free to fix upon any date they pleased. Two accounts of the birth of Jesus were written. In the first the Savior was stated to have been born "in the days of Herod the king" (*i.e.*, not later than B.C. 5); in the second, the birth was said to have taken place during an enrolment made by Quirinus, governor of Syria (A.D. 6-7). Both accounts were received as historical by the Christian Church—the explanation doubtless being the same as in the case of the genealogies.

The writer of the Fourth Gospel represents some of the Jews as saying:—

"Hath not the scriptures said that the Christ cometh of the seed of David, and from Bethlehem, the village where David was?" (vii. 42).

These mythical Jews, of course, said whatever the pious Christian fictionist chose to put in their mouths.

THE MASSACRE AT BETHLEHEM.

The Christian Gospel-makers, in their search for materials for the history of Jesus, relied mainly on the Book of Isaiah and the Psalms ascribed to David. In Psalm ii., the writer had said: "The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his Anointed." The word "Anointed" in the Greek version was "Christ"; there was, therefore, no doubt in the mind of the Gospel-makers as to the passage referring to Jesus. In accordance with this prophecy king Herod and the Jewish priests and Sanhedrim were represented as "setting themselves" in array against the Savior—Herod, as soon as he heard of his birth; the Jewish rulers, during his public ministry. Herod's attempt on the life of Jesus was, of course, made to fail; another "prophecy" suggested the remainder of the Gospel story. A passage in Jeremiah (xxx. 15) described the matrons of Ramah as mourning the loss of sons and daughters carried captive to Babylon. This was twisted into a prediction of a slaughter of babies in Bethlehem, and a story of a massacre was fabricated accordingly. This done, the veracious writer has the hardihood to say:—

"Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying, A voice was heard in Ramah, weeping and great mourning; Rachel weeping for her children, and she would not be comforted, because they are not" (Matt. ii. 17-18).

The flagrant dishonesty of the pious Christian fabricator of the story is further shown when we turn to the following portion of the context which he has conveniently ignored:—

"Thus saith the Lord, Refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes from tears.....They shall come again from the land of the enemy.....Thy children shall come again to their own border" (Jer. xxxi. 16-17).

Yet we are for everlastingly told by Christian apologists in general, and by the late Dean Farrar in particular, that the Gospels were written by men "who were intellectually incapable of having imagined the events they record, and morally incapable of having invented them."

ABRACADABRA.

(To be continued.)

The health which we call Virtue is an equipoise which easily redresses itself, and resembles those rocking-stones which a child's finger can move, and a weight of many hundred tons cannot overthrow.—Emerson.

Correspondence.

HUXLEY AND SIR OLIVER LODGE.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—The writer of a note dealing with Sir Oliver Lodge in last week's *Freethinker* remarks: "If only it were possible to have a few pages from Huxley—in Huxley's best style—on Sir Oliver's reconciliation of religion and science!" If Huxley were alive to-day Sir Oliver Lodge would receive such a castigation that he would remember to his dying day; he would be flayed, intellectually speaking. Sir Oliver Lodge and the Bishop of London make a brilliant pair. The latter, if the Church fails, would earn his living as a circus or pantomime clown. He knows as much about philosophy as a cat. But then, if he were a philosopher, he would not be a Bishop. It is much more profitable to be a Bishop than a thinker. As a thinker he might starve. As a Bishop he receives £10,000 a year for his inability to think; though, of course, pecuniary considerations do not weigh with him in the slightest. Is he not serving the Lord? Sir Oliver Lodge is in a different category. He is supposed to be a scientific man, and as such he is expected to be a disciple of truth. What induces him to pose as the champion of a dying creed it is impossible to say. He is certainly very amusing—unconsciously so. I am glad to notice that you are dealing faithfully with his precious "Catechism" in the *Freethinker*.

Sir Oliver Lodge wrote the introduction to the reprint of Huxley's essays issued in Dent's Everyman's Library. At a shilling, the volume is remarkably cheap, and would make an excellent text-book for secondary schools. But Lodge's introduction is in places simply puerile. He writes:—

"The truths of materialism now run but little risk of being denied or ignored; they run, perhaps, some danger of being exaggerated. Brilliantly true and successful in their own territory, they are occasionally pushed by enthusiastic disciples over the frontier line into regions where they can do nothing but break down. As if enthusiastic worshippers of motor-cars, proud of their performance on the good roads of France, should take them over into the Sahara or essay them on a Polar expedition."

"Brilliantly true in their own territory" is good. Huxley said truly, "Science has fulfilled her function when she has discovered and enunciated truth." Science simply declines to be dictated to and to be told: Thus far and no further. Professor Tyndall admirably expressed the attitude of science when he said:—

"The impregnable position of science may be described in a few words. We claim, and we shall wrest from theology, the entire domain of cosmological theory. All schemes and systems which thus infringe upon the domain of science must, in so far as they do this, submit to its control, and relinquish all thought of controlling it. Acting otherwise proved disastrous in the past, and it is simply fatuous to-day. Every system which would escape the fate of an organism too rigid to adjust itself to its environment must be plastic to the extent that the growth of knowledge demands. When this truth has been thoroughly taken in, rigidity will be relaxed, exclusiveness diminished, things now deemed essential will be dropped, and elements now rejected will be assimilated. The lifting of the life is the essential point, and as long as dogmatism, fanaticism, and intolerance are kept out, various modes of leverage may be employed to raise life to a higher level."

Sir Oliver Lodge professes to be an evolutionist; but like Mr. A. J. Balfour, he seems to have an idea that Christian mythology can be reconciled with scientific fact. He should be disillusioned before he humbugs any more people. He would be better engaged in writing on "electric" belts for the Harmsworth Encyclopædia or the *Daily Mail*.

J. A. REID.

Obituary.

At Abney Park Cemetery, on Tuesday, March 19, Fanny Holt, aged 55, the beloved wife of Alfred Holt, was laid to rest. She was taken ill on the previous Thursday morning and died the same evening. A loving wife, most affectionate mother and a true friend, she was admired by everyone who had the pleasure to know her. Her husband is a pronounced Freethinker, and the present writer remembers him as a generous supporter of the Freethought cause in the early years of the Finsbury Park Branch, N. S. S. Mrs. Holt for some time had come to the same views on religion as her husband. Only the Sunday previous to her death she had a long talk with her husband and a friend on the lack of Christian evidence as to the existence of such a person as Jesus Christ. Her husband decided not to have the mummery of the Burial Service over her remains, and the writer accordingly read a Secular Service at the graveside, and afterwards, at the house, gave a reading from Ingersoll.

H. R. CLIFTON.

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): 6, Business Meeting; 7, N. S. S. String Band, Grand Concert: Vocal and Instrumental Music.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Workman's Hall, 27 Romford-road, Stratford): 7.30, J. M. Robertson, M.P., "The Evolution of Religion."

OUTDOOR.

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): 3, Guy A. Aldred, "An Atheist on the Bible."

COUNTRY.

EDINBURGH BRANCH N. S. S. (Masonic Hall, 11 Melbourne-place): 3 and 7, Messrs. W. D. Macgregor, Pryde, and others.

FALLSWORTH SECULAR SUNDAY SCHOOL (Pole-lane): 6.30, Oldham Friends' Adult School Hand-bell Ringers.

NEWCASTLE RATIONALIST DEBATING SOCIETY (Lockhart's Cathedral Café): Thursday, April 4, at 8, E. Temby, "Teleology and Persistence v. Matter and Extinction."

PLYMOUTH RATIONALIST SOCIETY (Foresters' Hall, Octagon): 7, W. H. Wise, "The New Theology."

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