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*Providence is the Christian name of chance.*  
—CHAMFORT.

## Campbellism.

*The New Theology.* By the Rev. R. J. Campbell, M.A.,  
Minister of the City Temple, London. Chapman & Hall.

LET me, first of all, explain my title. It is not my wish to be rude to Mr. Campbell. I had to read him a lesson in accuracy last week on two incidental points in this book, but there is nothing else in it with which Freethinkers need quarrel. Why then do I use the word "Campbellism"? For this reason. Mr. Campbell explains in the Introduction that he only deals with the "New Theology" as far as his "own pulpit teaching is concerned." He says that he "cannot pretend to speak for anyone else." His book is only "intended as a concise statement of the outlines of the teaching given from the City Temple pulpit." What else but "Campbellism" can this be called? It is simply an expression of Mr. Campbell's personal views. He speaks for no one but himself, and he commits no one but himself; so that what he says belongs to no one but himself; and I call it "Campbellism" because I do not know what else to call it. Of course I might have called it, as he does, the "New Theology." But he expressly states that he did not invent this designation, and is not responsible for it. "The title," he says, "will do no harm," but, as a matter of fact, the book is "but an outline statement of my own personal views." Therefore I repeat, without the slightest desire to give offence, that I really cannot see my way to call the contents of this book anything but "Campbellism."

### II.

Mr. Campbell's book has created considerable excitement in the Christian world. Some of his Christian critics look upon him as a second Luther, while others look upon him as a second Judas. Both sides, in my opinion, are wrong. Mr. Campbell has an interesting personality, and, for those who care for such literature, he has written an interesting book. But neither his voice, nor his pen, nor the character revealed in his face, marks him out as an epoch-maker. Luther's lance was leaden—as Shelley finely says—but he wielded it with immense power. With all his faults, he belonged to the masculine type. Mr. Campbell belongs to a different type altogether. There is something feminine in his features, as there is something feminine in his sermons and writings. Compare one of his sermons, for instance, with one of F. W. Robertson's on the same or a similar subject, and note the vast difference between them—the predominant emotionalism of the one and the predominant intellectuality of the other. I need not go farther and compare Mr. Campbell's utterances with those of Newman. That would be too cruel. Besides, a Newman, with his wonderful gifts of intellect, feeling, imagination, and style, comes but once in the history of the Church in any country, and cannot be used as a standard for common measurements. No, Mr. Campbell is not a Luther. On the other hand, he is not a Judas. It is nonsense to talk about his betrayal of his denomination or his church. How many Christian ministers are really orthodox? How many of them preach Spurgeon's theology with Spurgeon's straightforwardness? How

many of them are there who do not sprinkle their sermons with reservations and qualifications? How many of them teach all the doctrines they have signed, or openly or tacitly accepted, in the plain meaning of the language in which they are couched? Those who rail at Mr. Campbell on this account should remember their Master's saying, "Let him that is without sin amongst you cast the first stone." As for the talk about church trust-deeds, is it not the veriest hypocrisy? What church is there, in any great centre of population, in which the minister's sermons are in absolute harmony with the tenets solemnly set forth in the musty old confession of the founders? Why should the whole burden of this discrepancy be laid upon the shoulders of Mr. Campbell? Why not share it all round? And it is positively asinine to ask, as some open-mouthed, saucer-eyed people do, why Mr. Campbell does not resign his pastorate at the City Temple, and go out into the wilderness like another Ishmael. Why should any man give up a fine situation—with a liberal salary, an agreeable country residence, and a handsome motor-car—on the invitation of the first person who wishes to see him out of it? Mr. Campbell pleases his employers, and does well to sit tight on a first-class engagement. Moreover, it is extremely doubtful whether he could play the part of an Ishmael, or fight for a thoroughly unpopular cause. In some respects he is very like the Jesus whom he worships, and in whom he probably sees the magnification of himself. I can imagine him saying, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do"—and I can also imagine him crying, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

### III.

Various opinions are expressed as to the value of Mr. Campbell's book on the "New Theology." His friends praise it to the skies; his enemies damn it to the pit. Dr. Fairbairn calls it a "farrago of nonsense." Dr. Horton says it will rank with Saint Augustine's *City of God*. Both estimates seem to me much mistaken. The book is *not* a farrago of nonsense; it is nonsense to say so—and ill-tempered nonsense too from the mouth of a fellow Christian. It is equally nonsense—though less ill-conditioned nonsense—to mention the book in the same breath with the masterpiece of the first mind of the first order that cast its intellectual glamor over the superstitions of Christianity.

For my part, I feel inclined to echo Coleridge's dictum on Wordsworth's prose introduction to the immortal Ballads. Wordsworth imagined himself to be propounding novel principles of criticism. But the subtler, and more learned, and more magical Coleridge, who was a great critic as well as a great poet, could not refrain from observing that what was true in Wordsworth's prose introduction was not new, and what was new was not true.

All that Mr. Campbell says which is true is of a negative character. The importance of his book lies in what he discards. He borrows, accepts—call it what you will—certain conclusions of the Higher Criticism, and certain principles which have done duty in the Freethought movement ever since the days of Voltaire and Thomas Paine. He rejects the more obviously crude features of the Old Theology—and christens the remainder the New Theology. The true part of his book is the sceptical part, and that

existed before he was born; only it was outside the Christian Church then, and he is trying to bring it inside. The false part of his book is the selected and sifted Christianity which he puts forward as a substitute for the old original article. His own form of Christian supernaturalism is just as unscientific, just as uncritical, just as unfounded as the Christian supernaturalism he is seeking to displace. He may recognise this in the course of time—or he may not. But, in any case, the fact remains that there are only two camps in the world—the camp of reason and the camp of faith; and Mr. Campbell is as much in the camp of faith with his New Theology as Mrs. Besant is with her Theosophy, or the Archbishop of Canterbury with his Thirty-Nine Articles, or the Pope of Rome with his Catholicism.

## IV.

I propose to go through Mr. Campbell's book in the light of the foregoing introduction; to point out what, from my own point of view, is most valuable in it, and to deal with what is most open to criticism.

Mr. Campbell is of opinion that "theology is every-one's business." We are all to be theologians. There are to be no more specialists. Theology is, once for all, to be separated from ecclesiasticism. "It is my conviction," Mr. Campbell says, "that the battle with ecclesiasticism has long since been decided, and civilisation has nothing to fear from the official priest. Those who spend their time in protesting against sacerdotal pretensions are only beating the air." This must be pleasant reading for Dr. Clifford. But let us follow Mr. Campbell. The real "danger to spiritual religion" arises from "practical materialism on the one hand and an antiquated dogmatic theology on the other."

"Every one knows that, broadly speaking, certain ways of stating Christian truth are taken for granted both in pulpit and pew; the popular or generally accepted theology of all the Churches of Christendom, Catholic and Protestant alike, is fundamentally the same, and somehow the modern mind has come to distrust it. There is a curious want of harmony between the ordinary views of life and our conventional religious beliefs. We live our lives upon one set of assumptions during six days of the week, and a quite different set on Sunday and in church. The average man feels this without, perhaps, quite realising what is the matter. All he knows is that the propositions he has been taught to regard as a full and perfect statement of Christianity have little or nothing to do with his everyday experience; they seem to belong to a different world.....For a generation or more in every part of Christendom there has been a steady drift away from organised religion as represented by the Churches, and the question is being seriously asked whether Christianity can much longer hold its own.....The masses of the people, on the one hand, and the cultured classes on the other, are becoming increasingly alienated from the religion of the Churches. A London daily newspaper made a religious census some years ago, and demonstrated that about one-fifth of the population of the metropolis attended public worship, and this was a generous estimate.....It will hardly be denied that the average working, business, or professional man looks upon the Churches almost with indifference. In many cases this indifference passes into hostility or contempt. The world is not listening to theologians to-day. They have no message for it.....To be sure, there are many social activities in connection with Christian Churches. If it were not for these, most of the Churches would have to shut up.....The main stream of modern life is passing organised religion by."

This has all been said for any number of years in the *Freethinker*. But it was lies and libels when we said it. There must be some truth in it, however, when it comes from the pen of the Rev. R. J. Campbell. This, indeed, is what maddens such a number of Christians. They know it is not partially but entirely true, and they hate the man who says so; as if ostrich tactics could save their faith from its fate! Mr. Campbell is to be congratulated on refusing to be a party to this ignominious attitude. Whether he has the remedy or not, he is perspicacious and candid in diagnosing the disease.

(To be continued.) G. W. FOGTE.

## Why Should Man Trust God?

ONE of the sayings attributed to Abraham Lincoln is that while one may fool all the people some of the time, and even some of the people all the time, it is impossible to fool all the people all the time. Sooner or later the sham is discovered and the fraud exposed. An institution that may have stood for centuries loses its hold on one here and another there, and, while there may be some who remain constant to the end, their number is, in the very nature of the case, a diminishing quantity. Lincoln's saying is, broadly, only an acknowledgment of the persistence of facts, and of their ultimate supremacy simply because they are persistent. A fact is the most stubborn of all things. One may refuse to acknowledge its presence for a time, but it remains unconquered and unconquerable. We may run our heads against it as often as we will—it is immovable; and the recurring concussion is only productive of a growing feeling of humiliation. The Gradgrindian philosophy was false only because it refused to acknowledge the whole of the facts, but persisted in an arbitrary selection of a few. And it was the neglected facts that ultimately wrecked it, as they sooner or later wreck all false or distorted views of life.

A proper perception by the clergy and their supporters of this would go far towards supplying an answer to their laments at the insincerity of religious professions. For centuries the clergy have been complaining that a profession of belief in Christian doctrine carried with it little or no value in practice, and age has neither withered nor weakened the complaint. On the contrary, the outcry gets stronger with the lapse of years. Under special stress, or in special cases, religious belief may be operative in life for good; but under normal conditions it becomes, in the vast majority of cases, a mere profession, active only for harm, since it stands in the way of beliefs of a more helpful character. This phenomenon is not at all difficult to understand. If religious beliefs were based upon the permanent realities of human nature, there would have been formed—instead of a mere profession of belief—a habit of thinking and acting that would be almost automatic. The mere profession of religious belief would be no more intrusive than that of family affection, while its result in action would be almost as secure. The pressure of life, in other words, would maintain the real influence of religion as it maintains the influence of the feelings that cluster round the family or society at large. But religious beliefs have no such conservative force behind them. They are based upon views of the world and of man that have for long been discarded, and upon a type of mind that is in process of extinction. The result is that religion has to be kept alive by a series of artificial stimulants, and, in the nature of the case, the stimulants become less and less effective as their nature is realised.

An illustration of what has been said above is furnished by a sentence in a recent sermon by Mr. G. Hay Morgan, M.P. Mr. Morgan belongs to the rather numerous band of Nonconformists which graces the present House of Commons, and who, in addition to their brain-taxing legislative labors, deliver occasional sermons to religious audiences. These will at least have the effect of making educated religionists feel grateful to them for having devoted their principal energies to the political field. Mr. Morgan notes how little real faith people have in the general goodness and wisdom of Deity, and observes:—

"We are often far greater Atheists than we dare confess to ourselves. We believe in God theoretically, but we do not believe in Him practically. We have more faith in a millionaire to help us in our daily life than in the Lord God Almighty."

I have not quoted this statement in order to impeach its accuracy. On the contrary, it is only what has been said over and over again in these

columns, although Christians, when confronting Freethinkers, have been slow to admit its truth. I quote this sentence merely to point the moral which Mr. Morgan fails to deduce.

Suppose one were to put the plain question to Mr. Morgan, "Why should we have more faith in the Lord God Almighty than in a millionaire?" How would he reply? He would probably regard the question as too "blasphemous" to deserve one; yet it is surely pertinent enough. Or he might—which is more likely—treat the questioner to a liberal dose of the customary platitudes concerning the wisdom and benevolence of God as the Creator and Sustainer of the universe, which would be a sheer evasion of the question. Millionaires may be frequently not very admirable persons; but let us be fair even to them, and we must admit that they do often use their money and their power so as to benefit their fellows. At any rate, and whether for good or evil, the existence of the millionaire is a fact. No one questions it; enemy and friend are alike agreed upon the power he wields. Is there any such certainty in the case of God? His existence, on the most favorable view, is but a possibility; his wisdom and benevolence a mere inference, and one rejected as unwarrantable by some of the keenest thinkers of modern times. More; we should, in the case of distress or suffering, approach a millionaire with some amount of reliance as to the way in which he would act. Could we place an equal reliance upon God showing the same regard for human welfare? If there is a God, he shows himself positively callous to human well being. Thousands of human beings are destroyed by fire, flood, pestilence, or earthquake, with as little regard for human welfare as though humanity were a variety of the ephemeridæ. Why, a millionaire who acted with as little regard for individual human well being as, presumably, God acts, would stand before his fellows as a moral monster. It is not an Atheist, but a professing believer, and one with far more ability than the average preacher—Mr. W. H. Malloch—who plainly says that if people look at nature with an unprejudiced eye they will see that if it bears witness to the existence of any controlling Being, instead of a good and wise God, he is "a scatter-brained, semi-powerful, semi-impotent monster..... Most of his acts are exhibited to us as those of a criminal madman..... We are forced to regard him, when he seems to exhibit benevolence, as not divinely benevolent, but merely weak and capricious, like a boy who fondles a kitten and the next moment sets a dog at it"; while all the supposed proofs of the grandeur of God, in Mr. Malloch's opinion, only suggest "some blackguardly larrikin kicking his heels in the clouds, not, perhaps, bent on mischief, but indifferent to the fact that he is causing it."

Why should man place reliance upon a God of this description—a God who speaks to him through a disaster like the wreck of the *Berlin*, or a catastrophe like that of San Francisco or Kingston? Has he any reason to place more faith in him than in the millionaire? One might even ask, as a matter of fact and not of mere theory, on whom or on what did Mr. Morgan himself place most reliance during the last general election—on the war-chest of the Liberal Party or on the power of God; on the influence of canvassing and speech-making or on that of a chapel prayer-meeting? When it comes to a question of fact, I have not the slightest doubt that Mr. Morgan acts as other Christians, as we all, act—upon our experience of life, and upon that of our predecessors. And what is this experience? It is that all human civilisation is the outcome of the human effort of thousands of generations. That humanity has had to tread every step of the way at the cost of bitter experience and incalculable suffering. The innocent have suffered through the guilty, with kindness and gentleness often seized upon by nature or God as an occasion for the infliction of punishment. The Gods have been either supinely indifferent to man's welfare, or bitterly hostile to his development. There is hardly a step forward that has not been made in defiance of the supposed will of God; and, if

human experience has taught man anything at all, it is surely that human development depends upon mankind acquiring the power of self-dependence and the quality of co-operation, while treating the Gods as a negligible factor in their lives.

And is not this what is actually coming to pass? Mr. Morgan says we are often far greater Atheists than we think. Of course we are; how could it be otherwise? We may profess faith in prayer to cure disease, but in times of necessity we call in a physician or a surgeon. We may believe that faith will move mountains, but experience has shown that we must depend upon engineers to bore tunnels or construct bridges. We may pray for the safe voyage of a ship, but we all know that a well-built vessel, with a skilful navigator, is far more efficacious. We may say we believe that God is on the side of right in warfare, but we neglect no opportunity of outnumbering the enemy in men and metal. No goodness of disposition will protect a man from the attack of a deadly disease, nor has the social value of a single individual ever been known to guard his life against the knife of the assassin or the destructive action of natural forces. Man does not trust his God in practice because invariable experience has shown what a broken reed it is on which to rely. And mankind, to vary Lincoln's phrase, cannot go on fooling itself for ever.

We are, then, Atheists in fact, because action very often precedes theory. Ethical theory is only, after all, putting into words what has long been implicit in action. Life precedes theory, and philosophy at best can only explain and systematise what is and what has been. Let us, then, try and be philosophic; and instead of seeing in this long-lamented divorce between Christian theory and Christian practice, not human wickedness, but an expression of the truth that life's forces are too strong for Christian doctrines. We ignore God in practice because, in practice, deity has failed to justify itself. Had it been otherwise, the belief in God is too old and too widespread a fact in human history for it not to have dominated practice as it has dominated theory. But all institutions, all beliefs, all forms of life, are subject to the operation of Natural Selection—they must refrain, beyond a certain point, from obstructing social welfare, or they must vanish. Religious beliefs have not vanished, but they have been profoundly modified under the pressure of life's insistent forces. And the practical Atheism of our normal life is a registration of this fact, and a trustworthy promise of their ultimate disappearance.

C. COHEN.

## The Making of the Gospels.—VI.

(Continued from p. 214.)

### THE FASTING AND TEMPTATION.

HAVING represented Jesus Christ as filled with the spirit of God at his baptism, the Gospel-maker next made his Lord exhibit proofs of the possession of that spirit. It was recorded in the Hebrew scriptures that Moses and Elijah went without food for forty days when under the influence of that potent spirit (Exod. xxxiv. 28; 1 Kings xix. 8). Jesus was therefore stated to have fasted for exactly the same period. The same two prophets were also represented, on another occasion, as appearing to Jesus in the flesh on a mountain (Matt. xvii. 3), after which the face of the Savior was described as shining like the sun, as was related of Moses upon coming down from Mount Horeb (Exod. xxxiv. 30).

The statement in 1 Chron. xxi. 1, in which Satan is recorded to have tempted David, suggested a temptation of Jesus by the same imaginary personage. This, in the primitive Gospel, was limited to a brief statement of the alleged fact (Mark i. 13); but, later on, the first account was elaborated, the number and nature of the temptations were specified, and texts of scripture were put in the mouths of Jesus and the

tempter (Matt. iv.; Luke iv.). In concocting the detailed Gospel story the pious evangelist had his eye upon the writings of Ezekiel, in which it was related that "the spirit took" the prophet "up" into the inner court of the temple (xliii. 5; viii. 3; xi. 1), and that he was set by God (in a vision) on a "very high mountain" (xl. 2). Following this Old Testament narrative, it was recorded of Jesus that he was "led up of the Spirit into the wilderness," that Satan "set him on a wing of the temple," and that the tempter "took him unto an exceeding high mountain" (Matt. iv. 1, 5, 8).

#### THE SON OF MAN.

In the writings attributed to Ezekiel, Daniel, and Enoch, the Gospel-maker had seen and noted the meaningless title "son of man." In the first of these the writer, in describing his visions, almost invariably spoke of himself as "the son of man." Naturally, therefore, Jesus was represented as doing the same. In the other two books, however, the person so named was an adopted son of God, to whom was to be given power, glory, and the office of judge at the last great day. It was written in the Book of Enoch (lxi., lxviii.) that "from the beginning the Son of man existed in secret, whom the Most High preserved in the presence of his power, and revealed to the elect," and that "He sat upon the throne of his glory, and the principal part of the judgment was assigned to him, the Son of man." In accordance with this nonsense Jesus was said to have existed "in the beginning with God" (John i. 2), and was represented as saying of himself:—

"When the Son of man shall come in his glory..... then shall he sit on the throne of his glory; and before him shall be gathered all nations," etc. (Matt. xxv. 31).

It was also written in the Book of Daniel:—

"And behold there came with the clouds of heaven one like the Son of man.....And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom" (vii. 13).

Jesus being identified as this "Son of man," it was said of him: "And they shall see the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory," etc. (Matt. xxiv. 30), and he was represented as going about proclaiming that his kingdom—"the kingdom of heaven"—was "at hand."

Furthermore, the author of the Fourth Gospel indirectly indicates the source of the appellation bestowed on Jesus; for he represents that individual as saying that God "gave him authority to execute judgment *because he is the Son of man*" (v. 27). If it be asked, Why should Jesus, *because he was "the Son of man,"* have "authority to execute judgment"? the answer is that in the works of fiction ascribed to Daniel and Enoch such authority is given to one called "the Son of man." We know, further, that the early Christians were well acquainted with the Book of Enoch, and believed it to be an inspired prophetic writing. It is even quoted as such by one of the New Testament writers (Jude 14-15), who actually believed it to have been written by the mythical Enoch named in Gen. v. 21-24.

#### JESUS A SHEPHERD.

Following the language of the old Hebrew prophets, the Jewish people were spoken of as sheep, and Jesus as their shepherd.

OLD TESTAMENT.—"And they were scattered because there was no shepherd"—"Therefore they go their way like sheep, they are afflicted because there is no shepherd" (Ezek. xxxiv. 5; Zech. x. 2).

THE GOSPELS.—"But when he saw the multitude, he was moved with compassion for them, because they were distressed and scattered, as sheep not having a shepherd" (Matt. ix. 36; Mark vi. 34).

The author of the Fourth Gospel goes a step further, and makes Jesus proclaim himself "the good shepherd" who "giveth his life for the sheep"—language unknown to the three Synoptists.

#### THE WORKING OF MIRACLES.

A well-known passage in the Book of Isaiah, which the Gospel-maker twisted into a prediction relating to Christ, was a most important factor in the making

of Gospel history. This passage, distorted in the same way, is cited by Justin Martyr, who says (1 Apol. 48):—

"And that it was predicted that our Christ should heal all diseases and raise the dead, hear what was said. These are the words: 'At his coming the lame shall leap as a hart, and the tongue of the stammerer shall be clear speaking; the blind shall see, and the lepers shall be cleansed; and the dead shall rise and walk about.' And that he did those things you can learn from the Acts of Pontius Pilate."

The words in this quotation predicting the raising of the dead are a Christian addition to the text; they are found neither in the Hebrew nor the Septuagint. It may also be noted that the apocryphal writing named by Justin as a historical record of facts (*i.e.*, the *Acts of Pilate*) is the first Christian book of the nature of a Gospel that we find mentioned by name.

The passage in Isaiah misquoted by Justin (xxxv. 5-6) had, of course, no reference to miraculous works of healing. The language is simply figurative, and describes the joy and alacrity with which "the ransomed of the Lord" were to return from captivity in Babylon. The Gospel-maker gave a literal interpretation to the passage, and so Jesus was represented as going about the country curing all he met who were lame, blind, dumb, or leprous, and in three instances raising the dead. Moreover, he was also represented as working various other miracles of healing not named in the passage—fever, palsy, issue of blood, etc.—and as miraculously feeding 5,000 men, turning water into wine, stilling a tempest, walking on the sea, and causing a fig-tree to wither away. That the Gospel-maker had his eye on the passage in Isaiah is proved by the fact that he represents Jesus as appealing to the miracles therein named in proof of his being the wonder-worker supposed to be predicted in it (Matt. xi. 4-6).

Most of the stories of miracles ascribed to the Christian Savior were made up haphazard just as the pious inventors happened to think of them. In some instances, however, the acts of some of the Old Testament heroes suggested the nature of the miracle. The great prophet Elijah, according to those scriptures, restored to life a certain widow's son (1 Kings xvii. 23); Jesus was represented as also raising a widow's son (Luke vii. 11). A miracle recorded of the prophet Elisha was likewise suggestive. This prophet, according to the ancient fiction, fed a hundred men with twenty barley loaves, and, after they had eaten their fill, had some bread remaining (2 Kings iv. 42-44). Upon this model the Gospel-maker constructed a more astonishing miracle for his Jesus, whom he represented as feeding five thousand people with only five barley loaves, and having twelve baskets of fragments left. In the miracle wrought by Elisha, the prophet said to his servant, "Give unto the people that they may eat"; upon which the servant replied, "What, should I set this before an hundred men?" In the Gospel narrative, Jesus is made to say to his disciples, "Give ye them to eat," and the disciples answer, "Shall we go and buy two hundred pennyworth of bread, and give them to eat?" (Mark vi. 37). In each case the miracle-worker commands his servant or disciples to do something which appeared impossible; in each case the impossibility of doing it is pointed out to him; in each case fragments of the barley loaves are left.

A declaration placed in the mouths of Pharaoh's magicians respecting the means by which Moses performed the miracles attributed to him—the plagues of Egypt—suggested a similar declaration on the part of Jesus. That much glorified individual was consequently also made to state the source of his miraculous power.

Exod. viii. 19.—"Then the magicians said unto Pharaoh, This is the finger of God."

Luke xi. 20.—"But if I by the finger of God cast out devils, then is the kingdom of God come unto you."

#### CASTING OUT EVIL SPIRITS.

Besides the miracles of healing mentioned, Jesus was further represented as casting out imaginary

evil spirits or demons, who in that age were believed to take possession of the bodies of men. Amongst the Jews in the first century there existed an order of men called exorcists, who claimed the power, in certain cases, of expelling these evil spirits—a power in those days denied by none. Jesus himself is even made to admit the exorcisms to be genuine.

"If I by Beelzebub cast out demons, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore shall they be your judges" (Matt. xii. 27).

This statement is a proof that the Gospel-maker believed that demons really were expelled by professional exorcists; otherwise he would never have put such words in the mouth of his Savior. In accordance with this belief, and that of the times, a number of imaginary cases were invented and narrated of Jesus expelling demons—one from a man in a synagogue at Capernaum; a legion from a man (or two men) in Gadara, the evil spirits being allowed to enter a herd of swine; an extremely violent one from a lad who was thrown down by the demon while being brought to Jesus; and numbers everywhere throughout the country.

ABRACADABRA.

(To be continued.)

### An Apology for God.

RECENTLY the Rev. W. L. Watkinson conducted a mid-day service in the Central Hall, Manchester, basing his discourse on these words: "Among the gods there is none like unto thee, O Lord; neither are there any works like unto thy works" (Ps. lxxxvi. 8). What the preacher attempted to supply was a justification of the ways and works of God. The sermon contains much that is beautiful and true, and the aptness of some of the illustrations used is a striking feature. From his own point of view, Mr. Watkinson makes out a remarkably good case for the Deity. We must not criticise the Almighty, he tells us, because we have not known him for a sufficient length of time to understand, with any degree of fulness, what his aims and methods really are. You wait long enough and all will be made perfectly clear to you. These are his words:—

"To see the providence of God sometimes you have to wait six, eight, or even ten thousand years; but what is that to you and me? We have plenty of time, for we are alive for evermore. God's plan runs on, and it is not for us to say that we can interpret his workmanship. Why, we have only been here a few days. 'Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth?' said God to Job. Ah! where were we? We were not there, and the astonishing thing is that the foundations were very well laid notwithstanding! Yet to-day we start off and we give our small verdicts. Wait for five thousand or ten thousand years, and what looked like a chaos to thinking men two hundred years ago will shape itself into a magnificent cartoon drawn by a master hand. You wait! Get the right perspective."

That is the gist of Mr. Watkinson's sermon, and it is worth examining with some care. Underneath the whole discussion, of course, are two gratuitous assumptions, namely, that there exists an ideal, perfect being called God, and that the Universe, being the work of his hand and under his management, is a flawless product. The first assumption lies outside the region of proof or disproof, and cannot be approached except speculatively and hypothetically. It transcends all human knowledge. The second assumption is equally intangible, because it rests upon the first. Now, there is absolutely no proof that the Universe ever had a beginning. Science now regards it as eternal in duration, as well as infinite in extent, and as passing through eternal cycles of evolution. Science does not know the world as a *product*, but as "Substance everywhere and always in uninterrupted movement and transformation," and as in "quantity of matter and of eternally changing force," remaining eternally constant. Is it not clear, then, that to Science the two

assumptions under consideration are necessarily unintelligible and useless?

But let us follow Mr. Watkinson in some of his flights. He is exceedingly well-read. He knows quite well what the teachings of Science are, and in the main accepts them. He is perfectly familiar with the fact that the Universe, as known to us, bristles with imperfections. He says:—

"I am reading at present a book on the discord of Nature. And any man who has much to do with Nature will soon become conscious of strange imperfections. So there is a difference between the poetry of our text and some of the findings of modern science and experience. The result is that many people speak much about the imperfections of Nature, the imperfections of society, and the imperfections of life. Now what are we to say about these? How are we to deal with these questions? Are we to deny them? No, not for one moment."

He fully admits the existence of imperfections. He grants that painful and dangerous disharmonies characterise the human body. As an intelligent reader of undeniable facts he admits them all; but as a Christian minister he must explain his admissions away. "Admit them," he says, "and then declare that the apparent imperfections of the world are only the proofs of a more glorious and more wonderful perfection." But where is this "more glorious and more wonderful perfection" to be found? All that the preacher can tell us is that if we wait *long enough* we shall see it. He asserts that it is there now, only we have not got the right perspective yet. Then he calls our attention to two principles, namely, "that everything in Nature is good in its place," and "that everything is good for its purpose." Well, those may be principles; but they do not apply to the problem under discussion. It is a fact that certain snakes have hind legs *under* their skins—will Mr. Watkinson tell us what purpose such legs serve? They are legs in the *wrong place* and *can never be used*. Darwin gives a long list of rudimentary organs which serve no purpose whatever, such as "the stump of a tail in tailless breeds, the vestige of an ear in earless breeds, the reappearance of minute dangling horns in hornless breeds of cattle." Are these examples of the "more glorious and more wonderful perfection"?

Or take the human body. Wherein does its "more glorious and more wonderful perfection" consist? Here we find numerous remnants, vestiges, or relics which are not only useless, but, in some instances, sources of fatal disease. How can you establish the goodness of the "appendix," with its fruitful crop of trouble and peril in appendicitis? Let anyone read Professor Metchnikoff's great work, *The Nature of Man*, and the idea of regarding the human body as a perfect organism will appear preposterous to him. Nothing is easier than to sing out, "He hath made everything beautiful in its time"; but it is not true. We often hear man described as Nature's crown and flower; but it is a proven fact that structurally and functionally his body falls far short of perfection.

Speaking of the ways of God's government, Mr. Watkinson states that "the unsophisticated man looks on the world all down the ages, and says, how wonderful, how marvellous in counsel! What providential leadings we have seen." Then the unsophisticated man must be totally blind. The preacher refers him to the critic who "will ask you if you can shut your eyes to the suffering of the world, to the bankruptcies of civilisation, to the tragedies of nations, and to the miseries of individuals," and quotes this saying of a great Sceptic: "In the presence of these things no government is so bad as the government of God." After thus merely glancing at the real facts, Mr. Watkinson flies for refuge straight to his "principles." But do his principles shield him? First of all comes an interesting account of the new school of historians that has just arisen—"the philosophical historian," whose "method is to find out the succession and harmony of events." Well, what great discovery has this philosophical historian made? It is alleged that he has found out that "through the ages one increasing

purpose runs." Of course, to Mr. Watkinson the philosophical historian is a Christian, who looks at history from a Christian point of view. But is it true that "through the ages one increasing purpose runs"? If so, what is that purpose? The preacher says to us: "To-day you have got the right distance, the proper perspective, so that the whole fashions itself into a picture." But what is the picture? Having found the proper perspective, what do we see? The *Mayflower* carried a company of persecuted Puritans over the sea to a corner of the Western Continent. "Wait three hundred years," cries the preacher, "and the American Republic is God's interpretation of the *Mayflower*." What, in the name of common sense, has this to do with "the one increasing purpose"? The going out of the tormented Puritans was a perfectly natural event, and the eventual rise of the American Republic was a perfectly natural consequence. You can explain the whole business without any reference at all to any Divine purpose behind it. And surely nobody would dream of describing the American Republic as "perfect in its place and perfect for its purpose."

Where is the "one increasing purpose," and what are its achievements? Some years ago Mr. Watkinson preached the anniversary sermon of a great Missionary Society, in which he contended that Christianity, being the one perfect religion, is destined to become universal. It was a herculean task, and it took him some two or three hours to accomplish it. Being a Wesleyan, he is naturally an orthodox divine. Well, in the present sermon he informs us "how the great nations have worked for one purpose," how "the Jew contributed ethics, the Greeks beauty, the Roman jurisprudence," and "how the different nations were all working unconsciously for the bringing in of a wider purpose." The truth in that statement is not what Mr. Watkinson intended to convey by it. From his point of view, as an orthodox divine, all the great nations have been working unconsciously for the establishment of the Christian religion. Have they been successful? When Christianity appeared it adopted the ethics of the Jew, but rejected with scorn the beauty of the Greek. For fifteen hundred years it did its utmost to crush the Greek culture out of being, and it succeeded in arresting the progress of intellectual and scientific inquiry. The penalty came in the form of the Dark Ages. During all this period, however, the grand old Humanism was not dead, but in a state of suspended animation; and the time came, at length, when it began to show signs of reviving, shaking itself and rubbing its eyes after its long drugged slumber. This revival has been in progress for fully three hundred years, and is now far more ardent than at any former period. What is the consequence? The steady retreat of Christianity. The old Greek culture is getting its sweet revenge at last.

Now can you discern in all that strange history, the working out of the one increasing purpose of crowning Jesus Lord of all? Where are the signs that the Crucified is drawing all men unto himself? He is losing Christendom and not gaining Heathendom; he is being rejected by the West and not finding welcome in the East. Emerson says that "when half-gods go, God comes"; and half-gods go because God comes. So, likewise, when superstition goes, knowledge comes; and superstition goes because knowledge comes. We do not see the Christian God with his ever increasing purpose, but we do see humanity groping its way through darkness unspeakable to a fuller and richer realisation of itself, or pursuing "a dim, blundering quest for life." Is it making any real progress? Who can tell? Our only hope is in continuous struggle—the instinctive and now intelligent struggle for a more abundant life.

J. T. LLOYD.

Those who have the largest hearts have the soundest understandings.—*Hazlitt*.

## Acid Drops.

Mr. G. Bernard Shaw has *not* joined the new Secular Education League. When a member of the Executive Committee asked whether "G. B. S." had joined the General Council, another member replied, "Oh, Shaw will never do anything sensible." And the matter dropped.

A little light is thrown on this aspect of the great "G. B. S." by his own article in last week's *Clarion*. Mr. Shaw is a Socialist, as everybody knows, and he now says that "a Church is an eminently Socialistic institution." Religious education is to be upheld for the sake of the Church, and the Church is to be upheld in order that Mr. Shaw and his friends may run it. We don't think they will live long enough to taste that luxury. We also think that most people will object to Mr. Shaw's religion, as much as to anybody else's, being accommodated in public buildings at the public expense.

Mr. Shaw has another "go" at Darwinism. Darwin was an Englishman, and Mr. Shaw is loth to acknowledge genius in any but the Irish part of the United Kingdom. Still, if we allow, just for the sake of argument, that Darwin, being an Englishman, was a dull and foolish person, the fact remains that he stuck to science and never took any part in religious controversy. He had opinions of his own, but they were published after his death. *He* never made a noise with them. Yet the great "G. B. S."—who, being Irish, is a man of genius—raves against "the Darwinian religion of the latter half of the nineteenth century" as "quite the stupidest, cruellest, blindest and most superstitious religion that the reaction against Calvinism has produced." We never heard of that "Darwinian religion" before. Darwin was an Agnostic, so was his henchman, Professor Huxley. Neither of them started a "religion."

If we were to take this tirade against "Darwinian religion" with the reference to "the reaction against Calvinism," we might conclude that Mr. Shaw is heading straight for Roman Catholicism.

On one point—the *cruelty* of Darwinism—Mr. Shaw is hopelessly wrong. Darwinism has demonstrated the kinship of all life; the lower animals are our more or less humble relations; and this extension of the feeling of kindred to the lower animals has had more to do with their more humane treatment than all the teachings of Christianity and all the efforts of the Church—although it is such an "eminently Socialistic institution."

Rev. R. J. Campbell has been preaching another rationalising sermon, this time on the Second Coming of Christ. But the First Coming of Christ is not settled yet. Mr. Campbell has to prove that the hero of the four Gospels was an historical character. Whether he will come again is a question that can wait until we are sure that he ever came at all.

Rev. R. J. Campbell ought to be an Irishman. Addressing the Socialists at that Hope Hall meeting in Liverpool, he said that he had a gardener and several farm-hands who all had votes. "But," he said, "it would be as much as all our lives were worth were we to vote otherwise than my wife here on the platform wishes us to do." "I am in favor of woman suffrage," he added, "because I want myself and other men to be free to vote according to our own minds." That takes the cake.

The Campbell tradition is growing. We see that a *Campbell Birthday Book* is advertised, giving extracts from his sermons and prayers for every day in the year. It can be had in cloth or red leather. There ought to be some green copies.

"Are Ministers Honest?" This question was printed right across the top of last week's *Christian Commonwealth*. It is high time that the question were asked *inside*. It was asked, and answered, *outside*, long ago.

Rev. E. A. Owen Jones, who deals with this question in our contemporary, winds up in this way:—

"R. J. Campbell has caused a sensation, but if every minister revealed the inner workings of his mind and heart as freely as he is doing, heresy hunters would become such an innumerable multitude that almost all interest in the game would evaporate."

What is this but saying, in effect, that ministers are *not* honest?

Rev. George Denyer, vicar of Christ Church, Blackburn, provoked a spirited reply from Dr. A. W. Martin, medical officer of health for Gorton. Dr. Martin winds up by plainly telling the reverend gentleman that the very name of "Christian" will be used in time to come as a reproach and a byword to indicate hypocrisy, cheating and lying. A bitter pill—with no coating.

Our readers will remember the famous Miss Stone case. The lady was an American missionary, and she was captured and held to ransom by a band of brigands. Some thousands of pounds were raised in the United States, the brigands were privately treated with, the money was paid, and the lady was restored to her friends. But it turned out that the brigands were a band of Greeks who took that method of raising the wind for their political objects. Of course they were Christians. It is a common theory that all the wickedness in that part of the world is done by the terrible Turk, but the Christians of that neighborhood can easily give him points when they are on the warpath. Greeks and Christian Albanians have performed many a similar act of brigandage since the capture of Miss Stone. A week or two ago they carried off Mr. Robert Abbott near Salonika. Such acts are quite consistent with Christianity as they understand it. We suggest that they would be good subjects for the reforming zeal of the Rev. R. J. Campbell.

Salonika, by the way, is inhabited by Christians and Mohammedans, who live in separate parts of the city. The Christians believe in insurance; the Mohammedans, who are fatalists, don't believe in it. On the Christian side of the city the houses are well insured; on the Mohammedan side they are not insured at all. And what is the result? A fire occurs very rarely on the Mohammedan side, while the Christian side is always blazing.

The Lord Mayor of Cardiff has unveiled a tablet to the memory of Rawlins White, who was burned at the stake in 1555. No doubt this "martyr" is regarded as a bit of Christian "evidence." Well, we agree with that view. He was put to death, not by Freethinkers, but by his fellow Christians; which shows how Christianity had humanised the world in fifteen hundred years.

Mrs. Mary Forbes, of Yardie, near Backic, obeyed the Bible by thrashing her boy for throwing a stone and breaking a window. She was taken ill, however, in the middle of the performance, and expired immediately. This "act of Providence" seems to show that there is some mistake in the theory of Bible inspiration. God would hardly kill a woman in the very act of obedience.

A constable was in the witness-box at Feltham, and the prisoner against whom he was giving evidence asked him whether another constable concerned in the case was "a man or a gentleman." "He is a policeman," was the discreet reply. That constable ought to have been a lawyer—or a theologian.

Risbridge Guardians have had a jubilee dinner—in commemoration of the fact that their workhouse has been open for fifty years. We hope the local clergy were invited to do honor to this monument of Christian civilisation.

Fourteen hundred Salvation Army emigrants left Liverpool for Halifax, Nova Scotia, on Thursday, April 4. An inspired paragraph in the newspapers states that since the institution of the emigrants' department 25,000 persons have left England under its auspices. It would be interesting to know the amount of the Army's profits on the whole of these transactions. The common notion, that the Salvation Army sends emigrants to Canada at its own expense, out of the funds subscribed by the British public, is grotesquely incorrect. As far as we can make out, General Booth simply runs an emigration agency, and takes the usual percentage of such enterprises. Practically, he is helping to strip England of its manhood; for he does not export the "submerged tenth," or even the half-submerged tenth; and it is high time that the doings of this social charlatan were challenged by the leaders of the Labor movement in this country.

Gipsy Smith continues his triumphant procession in America. Three hours before one of his Brooklyn meetings the crowd assembled outside, and "passed the time singing familiar hymns." Which shows that the people he was there to "save" were "saved" already. All these "missions" are simply a fresh excitement for the faithful. And as Gipsy Smith has caught on with them we are not sur-

prised to hear that, over and above his "modest salary," whatever that is, several Brooklyn churches gave him "substantial private gifts." (We quote from the *British Weekly*). It seems to be a paying game.

Rev. Thomas Law has suggested to the 900 Free Church Councils in England and Wales that they should have a "Congo Sunday" on April 14, when special sermons should be preached on the "Congo Horrors." But why not make a special appeal to "Providence"? What is that old party doing? Nothing, apparently. Yet if the Lord does nothing, what do the Churches exist for?

Rev. Dr. Fairbairn says an odd thing about sermons. Referring to Mr. Campbell's *New Theology*, he says that it is "essentially a preacher's book," which does not mean that it is a book for preachers, for "they ought not to read sermons, but rather books that enrich mind." Evidently sermons don't enrich mind. We always thought so, and we are glad to find our opinion corroborated by an expert.

According to Dr. Fairbairn, the *New Theology* is "a farrago of nonsense." Had we said that it would have been thought uncivil. How they love one another!

Mr. Philip Snowden says that "Socialism will justify God's ways to man." He doesn't say *when*. And while he is calculating the date, we suggest that he might settle the main question with Mr. Robert Blatchford.

Mr. D. A. Romain, a Jew, got nominated as a churchwarden at the vestry meeting for the parish of St. Botolph Without, Bishopsgate. The Vestry Clerk, however, stated that a Jew was disqualified for the office, and that if he were appointed the Chancellor of the diocese would oppose it. Mr. Romain admitted that a Christian would be out of place as an officer in a Jewish synagogue, but he thought that a Jew would be all right as a churchwarden in an Established gospel-shop, and it was only "prejudice" that kept him out. Perhaps it was. But what a funny world we live in!

Bessie Jane James drowned herself in a well in the garden of a house at Nightingale-road, Wood Green, and the coroner's jury returned the usual verdict of "temporary insanity." In a roughly pencilled note to "Dear Friends and All," she said "May we all meet in heaven." There was no apparent reason why she should destroy herself, but Dr. Slater Jones said that she suffered from religious mania, which caused her to believe that she was unworthy to live. Is this one of the "blessings" of religion?

Miss Gertrude Holder, a Marylebone lodging-house keeper, has been prosecuting a German waiter for theft. She got him from the Christian Waiters' Home.

There are wails over the poverty of the clergy even in Ireland. It is curious how reverend gentlemen cry out the nearer they get to the kingdom of heaven.

Rev. J. T. Stanley, of Belfast, wanted to shut up the shop of Mr. James Corr on Sunday. He went about the job in an arrogant and threatening manner. The result was a libel action before the Recorder, who gave judgment for the man of God. On appeal, however, Justice Andrews gave judgment for the shop-keeper, with £10 damages and costs. The judge said that the reverend gentleman had a right to champion the sanctity of the Sabbath, but no right to issue documents bringing other citizens into "hatred, ridicule and contempt."

Printed circulars (the *Daily Dispatch* says) were placed in the pews of a certain Anglican church in Lancashire on Easter Sunday, stating that the day's offerings would be given to the rector—whose salary is £600 a year. "Carry neither scrip nor purse," said Jesus. The rector of that church smiles at the text—and holds out his portmanteau.

Someone sent two shillings anonymously to St. Luke's church, South Norwood, to pay for the curate's surplice to be washed. Was it as bad as that?

"A Slight" is the title of a sketch in the *Sydney Bulletin*. Mr. and Mrs. Smug are walking arm in arm, and the lady turns to look at a man of God passing by, armed with Bible

and umbrella. Mrs. Smug says to her husband: "There's always an odor of piety about that dear man." Mr. Smug replies: "You never say that about me, and we both drink the same brand."

There is to be a Pan-Anglican Congress in London from June 16 to June 22, 1908. That is what we see in the papers, but surely such an announcement ought to be accompanied by a "D.V." In addition to the sectional meetings, there are to be great popular meetings in the Albert Hall—where we believe the *people* will be conspicuous by their absence. Amongst the topics to be discussed is, "The Church and Human Thought." This must be a misprint for "The Church and Human Credulity."

Mr. Richard Le Gallienne, in a small way, is like the Alfred De Musset of Heine's bitter witticism—a man with a promising past. He once wrote some poorish books on religion—in one of which, by the way, he doubted whether men really did care for the future life, in the sense of wishing to live again. Then he had the cheek to publish a translation of Omar Khayyam, after Edward Fitzgerald's magnificent and immortal rendering. Finding his market getting dull in the land of his birth, he took his pen over to America, where he appears to have done better. He also seems to have turned Christian. And now he sends over a goody-goody article to the *Reader* on "The Tear in Literature," in which he writes a lot of nonsense about the "unchristian" spirit of the age.

Here is a sample of Le Gallienne in the pulpit:—

"Whatever the reason or whatever the source, there is no denying that a spirit of cynical hardness of heart has been abroad in the world during the last two decades, a spirit manifestly and even explicitly, unchristian; and this spirit has not only been reflected in the literature of the time, but perhaps even it has emanated from two writers who certainly have wielded a marked influence: the German philosopher Nietzsche on one side and Omar Khayyam on another—one scornfully rending the Christian doctrine of pity, in the glorification of imperious physical force, and the other sapping a serious interest in life by an atheistic gospel of passing pleasure. Nietzsche's scourge and Omar's roses! They may seem very different things; yet both have been doing the same work of moral and spiritual disintegration, both have hardened the heart of man. One stanza of Omar Khayyam has done more to shake man's belief in his spiritual destiny than all Ingersoll's lectures put together."

Omar's roses! Mr. Le Gallienne traded on them once—and failed. He now tries a different business. But he might recollect that the "atheistic gospel of passing pleasure," as he calls it, in Omar Khayyam, is very similar to what is expounded in one of the "inspired" books of the Bible—the Book of Ecclesiastes.

There is no "atheistic" gospel of passing pleasure. This is an echo of Dr. Talmage and Dr. Torrey and other religious lights of the great American continent. Atheists used to be called sombre and morose. Now they are called pleasure-loving and frivolous. And both descriptions are false.

We don't suppose that Mr. Le Gallienne has read Ingersoll. Had he done so he would have known that Ingersoll was a master of pathos as well as of wit, and made his audiences laugh or cry at his pleasure. So far from being cynical and hard, Ingersoll was often thought too tender and generous. And in one of his most eloquent passages, which we have not at hand as we write, he said that when we can no longer shed tears we are withered and nigh ready for our funerals. He himself had a never-dry well of sympathy. We remember seeing the artless tears roll down his face in private as he told us the story of an innocent man he had saved from hanging, and the woman and children to whom he had restored their husband and father. The break in his voice was more eloquent than the most skilful platform oratory. And as we listened we loved the man.

Foolish Christians boast of the alleged fact that a house once occupied by Voltaire is now used for printing Bibles. They seem to think, in their muddle-headed way, that this proves the Bible to be the Word of God. Any logician would tell them that there is no connection between their conclusion and their premises; but logic was never the Christian's strong point.

We might as well say that the Manchester Secular Hall is a proof that Christianity is false. It was a chapel before the Secularists obtained it, and the baptismal font was still there when Mr. Foote delivered the inaugural lectures. He suggested that he might raise the wind for the movement by

baptising the audience at a shilling a head—which is a very cheap rate.

Here is another "proof" of the falsehood of Christianity. A fine new church, which the Congregationalists built at great expense about twenty years ago in the Bethnal Green-road, has recently been sold to the Jews for a synagogue. What price "the cross of Christ" now?

According to the *Daily News*, the Congregationalists are "losing their former grip of the working classes in East London." The handsome memorial church, built in 1868, on the site of Whitefield's first "tabernacle" in Finsbury, is "now apparently being sold for lack of a flock, though there is a considerable working-class population in the neighborhood."

Consciously or unconsciously, Mr. John Lobb is a humorist. He professes to be in frequent communication with Dr. Joseph Parker in the spirit-world. Well, he questioned the Doctor on the Rev. R. J. Campbell's position, and the Doctor answered that "this was only the beginning of what was to follow."

When the rector of Lowestoft went on board his first boat, with a view to getting acquainted with the fishermen, five men rushed down into the cabin, two disappeared down the funnel, and another jumped overboard. Instinct is a great thing.

Christian ministers are always talking about "self-sacrifice," and pointing to Jesus as its great exemplar. But, properly speaking, there is no such thing as self-sacrifice. A man may be sacrificed by others, but he gives himself; and, as the giving is in accordance with his nature, he follows the line of least resistance, like everything else in the universe. Not that this detracts from his glory. It is a question of accuracy.

Jesus does undoubtedly make a certain appeal, but it is an appeal for passive endurance rather than active heroism. And after reading his (real or alleged) pathetic utterances, one turns with all the more zest to the stirring utterances of more lion-hearted men. Mr. Trevelyan's admirable new book on Garibaldi calls attention once more to the matchless appeal the hero made when he broke away from Rome after the end of the short-lived Roman Republic. "Let those who wish to continue the war against the stranger," he said, "come with me. I offer neither pay, nor quarters, nor provisions; I offer hunger, thirst, forced marches, battles, and death. Let him who loves his country, in his heart and not with his lips, follow me." The words still stir the blood like the sound of a trumpet. But even such an appeal does not make heroes; it finds them.

It makes no difference to a ship whether she carries rum or missionaries—or even both. She floats or sinks all the same. Men of God are evidently not under any special protection. We often hear of their falling down dead, sometimes in the act of prayer, and sometimes at divine service. A "sad" case is reported by the Congo mail steamer *Albertville*, which has just arrived at Antwerp. It appears that two English missionaries were boating on the Lulonga River, when their craft was caught in the rapids and overturned. There were people on the bank at the time, but it was impossible to help them, and the "unfortunate" men perished after a brief struggle. Calling them "unfortunate" is a denial of the doctrines they preached; for how can they be "unfortunate" if they have gone to heaven? The really "unfortunate" persons must be the natives, who have lost two certificated guides to glory.

#### "CERTAINLY," SAID GOD.

A Presbyterian clergyman of Germantown, at the close of a business meeting held recently in the local Young Men's Christian Association, related the following story about his absent little daughter: Her mother, having occasion to be absent one evening, left the tiny girl in charge of a loving nurse, admonishing her before her departure to try to be a good child, to obey the nurse and to be sure to recite her prayers before retiring for the night. The following morning the fond mother asked the child if she had remembered the above injunction. "Ah, yes, mamma," said the prim tot, "I was a good girl and I obeyed the nurse." "Did you say your prayers?" the mother enquired. "Well," she hesitated before replying, "I just didn't exactly say 'em, mamma, dear. I was so dreadfully tired and sleepy, too, that I just tumbled into bed and said: 'God, won't you please excuse me from saying my prayers to-night?' and God said: 'Why certainly, Miss Virginia Elizabeth, with pleasure.'"





the League; and, if we find them less zealous than we could wish, we shall be able to stir them up from time to time.

Rev. W. T. Lee writes us again on the subject dealt with in "Acid Drops" in our issue of March 24. He mentions Swansea, Pontypridd and Glasgow as places where he debated with Mr. Foote, in addition to those we mentioned. On this point he is right, but that does not bring the debates up to twelve, much less to eighteen. The arithmetic, however, is not worth laboring; nothing really hangs to it. The really important point is that Mr. Lee, after saying that he had debated so many times, added that he "was about tired of it." In regard to this, we remarked that so many years had elapsed since his last debate with Mr. Foote that he ought to have got rid of the "tired" feeling by now.

Mr. Lee finds that the Huddersfield *Examiner* of Feb. 26 does report him as referring to Mr. Foote as a man "who wrote garbled rubbish and had no reputation to lose." Mr. Lee does not state that he has sent a contradiction of the report to the *Examiner*. "I now repeat," he says (to us), "that I never have in Huddersfield, or anywhere else, spoken of you in the terms of which you complain." Mr. Lee's denial of the report as "utterly untrue" was published in our issue of March 24, and repetition cannot add to its value. He points out that the *Examiner* report was very brief, and says it was confused, and adds that "garbled rubbish" and "reputation to lose" were expressions used in quite another connection. With this the matter may drop.

Mr. Algernon Charles Swinburne, the poet, has just turned seventy, and his praises have been sung in the British press. Even the dear *Daily News* came out with a highly eulogistic article from the pen of Mr. Masterman. But, of course, the readers were not treated to any shocking quotations—especially of the atheistic variety. We also salute the great English poet at the point of his three score years and ten; and we hope the rest of his life will falsify the Psalmist's description. Mr. Swinburne has always been true to his genius and to himself. He never sang for praise or pelf. And we rejoice to say that his last fine atheistic poem, "The Altar of Righteousness," was worthy of the "Hymn of Proserpine" of the *Poems and Ballads* and the "Hymn of Man" in *Songs Before Sunrise*. Mr. Swinburne, through his seventy years, has no more wavered than Shelley, in his thirty years, in holding aloft the standard of Humanity against all the gods and godlings of the Pantheon, and all their designing and parasitical representatives in the various priesthoods of faith.

The noble boast of Swinburne in the splendid "Mater Triumphalis" time has made good.

"I am the trumpet at thy lips, thy clarion  
Full of thy cry, sonorous with thy breath;  
The graves of souls born worms and creeds grown carrion  
Thy blast of judgment fills with fires of death.

Thou art the player whose organ-keys are thunders,  
And I beneath thy foot the pedal preist;  
Thou art the ray whereat the rent night sunders,  
And I the cloudlet borne upon thy breast.

I shall burn up before thee, pass and perish,  
As haze in sunrise on the red sea-line;  
But thou from dawn to sunsett shalt cherish  
The thoughts that led and souls that lighted mine."

And so on to the glorious finale. But there was *one* mistake in the verse. Mr. Swinburne was not destined to pass and perish like haze in sunrise, any more than Keats had "written his name in water."

Mr. Swinburne's fierce irreligion is the negative side of a positive faith in humanity:—

"Because man's soul is man's God still,  
What wind soever waft his will.

Save his own soul's light overhead,  
None leads him, and none ever led."

And again in the great rushing "Hymn of Man":—

"Thou art judged, O judge, and the sentence is gone forth against thee, O God.  
Thy slave that slept is awake; thy slave but slept for a span;  
Yea, man thy slave shall unmake thee, who made thee lord over man.

And the love-song of earth as thou diest resounds through the wind of her wings—  
Glory to Man in the highest! for Man is the master of things."

This is the imperishable Swinburne.

## Common Sense and Unbelief.

ONE of the more recent developments in connection with religious agencies is the institution of the Church "Magazine," a large and increasing number of individual churches, both Anglican and Nonconformist, publishing a monthly periodical; or, to be strictly accurate, they print a few pages of church notices and a goodly supply of advertisements, and have these bound with a magazine supplied by the religious "wholesale" house, and which does duty in a similar capacity as a substitute for the mental poverty of the reverend gentleman and Christian "workers" who are responsible for the combination. The sentimental pap proffered by these "wholesale" magazines is enough to make one blush for the mental condition of their fellow creatures. If their subject-matter be a true criterion of the intellectual status of the religious public among whom they circulate—and we must believe that it is—the difficulties of Free-thought propaganda are, to some extent, accounted for. Because there must be some logical groundwork to build upon before an intellectual truth can be grasped or comprehended, and it would be hopeless to look for it in minds that feed upon the illogical trivialities which these magazines deal in. The "husks that the swine did eat" must have been sumptuous fare as compared with the mental food dished up in these periodicals.

One of these "combination" magazines lies before me, gorgeously dressed in a glaring red back, and with the imposing title, "The Christian Clarion." It is issued from the Central P. M. Church, Newcastle-on-Tyne, of which the Rev. A. J. Guttery is the minister. A special feature of the *original* part of this hybrid production is a page of "Echoes from the Church Pulpit," by the Pastor; being, evidently, the skeleton of some sermon—with the "padding" left out. These "Echoes," for the month of February, are headed, "Common Sense and Unbelief"; and as an example of wild and reckless assertion, would be very difficult to beat. Listen to one of the "Echoes":—

"We can only be relieved of religious obligations when religion is absolutely disproved, and not even the most blatant unbelief claims to have done this. To prove that there is no God, no soul, no sin and no salvation, is a negative so monstrous that the most blasphemous infidelity shrinks from so impossible a task; but the bare chance that God *may* live, that sin may exist in the soul and find salvation, at once lays upon us tremendous moral obligations which it would be madness to ignore. It is just as impossible to disprove the Christian Gospel. Not even the wildest enemy of the faith dares to claim that he has proved that Christianity is false, that Christ is a myth, that His literature has no value and His ethics no authority; he may try to rob the Christian faith of its supernatural elements, to whittle away its evidences, but to disprove it is impossible, for it would involve the most absurd and incredible issues; for then all the saints of history would be shown to be wrong, and all the sages right. The bare chance that Christianity *may* be true, that Christ *may* have lived, lays upon us imperative religious obligations, and the plain man says: 'I must take no risks. If this may be true, I must act as if it were true'; and before such an answer unbelief is helpless."

One feels like apologising to the readers of the *Freethinker* for attempting to criticise such a bombastic piece of composition. From the frequency with which the word "logic" occurs in these two short columns of "Echoes," the unwary might suppose that the writer of them possessed a profound logical knowledge; but it will be apparent, from the above extract, that however much he may sling the word about, his reasoning exhibits a woeful ignorance of the subject itself. A mere scraping acquaintance with the canons of logic would have taught him that it is the assertor of a proposition who is called upon to substantiate its truth, and that the unbeliever is under no logical obligation to prove its *negative*. If a person asserts that the moon is made of green cheese, the task of proving it rests with him;

sensible people have something better to do with their valuable time than to spend it in attempting to prove the negatives of all the foolish propositions that superstition or ignorance may allege to be true. As our friend makes no pretence to furnish the necessary evidence that there is a God, that Christianity is true, that man has a soul, and that sin does exist, we can only suppose that he "shrinks from so impossible a task."

The statement that "not even the wildest enemy of the faith dares to claim that Christ is a myth" is somewhat difficult to understand in view of the fact that Mr. Guttery was one of the staunch supporters of the author of *Pagan Christs* during his late electioneering campaign on Tyneside. Surely the minister of an important church must have heard of the mythical theories that have been suggested as to the origin of the Christ idea; it seems incredible that his ignorance is real, or that he never heard of the names of Strauss or Baur. And again, when he says that no one has claimed to prove that Christianity is false, he is either merely "hiding his head in the sand," or, what is more probable, playing the game of bluff.

The main argument of these "Echoes" (if we may dignify such specious reasoning as *argument*) is that, as absolute and exact knowledge is not always obtainable in the affairs of everyday life, therefore, to refuse to accept religion because of incomplete knowledge, is illogical. "Probability," he argues, "is the law of life," and says that, "if we waited for mathematical certainty before we acted, we should never study a science." Now while it may be true that we are obliged to accept the "probable" as a basis of action in innumerable instances, it is, nevertheless, fallacious to speak of it as being a "law" of life. No sane person is content to accept "probable" truth when certain knowledge is obtainable. The very object of all scientific study is the establishment of *exact* knowledge: and to speak of "probability" in connection with "law" is evidence of considerable mental confusion. The same applies to the remark that "if we waited for mathematical certainty before we moved, we should never study a science." This is a case of putting the cart before the horse; because, in the nature of things, the study of a science must precede the knowledge of that science—which can only be attained as the result of prolonged and laborious research.

Again, the fact that our knowledge of natural phenomena is imperfect and incomplete is no reason whatever why we should accept as true the vagaries of theologians. No less an authority than the Rev. R. J. Campbell appears to be in doubt as to whether the God of theology is a "he" or a "she," and it would be difficult, we presume, to get a medical certificate as to the deity's *sex*. In "the realm that is physical" we can correct or modify our knowledge by closer observation and more extensive induction; but in "the realm that is religious" such an opportunity is not possible, the objects of religion being beyond all human ken, and utterly incapable of being "known." When, therefore, Mr. Guttery says that "in religion the common-sense man accepts the testimony of others," it will be seen that there isn't any *testimony* to accept—only *opinions*, which are the relic of the unscientific ages of man's past history. The common-sense man "proves all things," and accepts only testimony that is in accordance with experience and consistent with cultivated thought. Who is to decide whether we are to believe in the existence of one God or three? Whether we are to believe in re-incarnation equally with the dogma of immortality? Whether the Devil and all his holy angels *still* exist? Whether hell-fire is *still* burning? In "the realm that is physical" we have the tested conclusions of science, but in "the realm that is religious" we have only the unverified assumptions of the mystery-monger.

Again, "the bare chance that God *may* exist" has no more to do with "moral obligations" than the existence of the Devil himself. Moral obligations have their basis in man's social relationships, and

exist quite independently of the truth or falsity of religious dogma. To claim that religious belief has been synonymous with the practice of an exalted morality is to ignore the teaching of all history. And when we further find the extraordinary claim that Christianity has "created all the forces that make for beauty, art, charity and freedom," one is inclined to think that audacious recklessness has about reached its limits in such an utterly foolish and false assertion. The ideal art and beauty for which the world is indebted to Pagan Greece, hasn't even the remotest connection with any "forces" of Christianity.

It would be difficult, we think, to find a greater mass of error in such a smallness of space than is to be found in these two short columns of "Echoes," for we have by no means exhausted them. The reasoning represents Christian apologetics of the lowest and most irrational type. The phrases "blatant unbelief," "blasphemous infidelity," "wildest enemy of the faith," evidently mark their author out as a person who would have distinguished himself in the ages of the Inquisition; they "echo" that intolerant, persecuting spirit which has been such a prominent feature of historical Christianity.

"I will judge this tree by its beauty, its life and its fruits; that is the cry of common sense"—so says Mr. Guttery. But even the wildest optimist of the faith can scarcely claim that the result of this exercise of common sense has been a satisfactory one to religion. The bitter cry of every Church Congress, every Nonconformist Conference, and the lament of the present-day pulpit, is the wholesale alienation of the masses from divine service and religious influences. They *have* judged the tree by its fruits, and found it about as barren as that ancient fig-tree. Our friend himself speaks of "the tremendous difficulties of winning the masses to a full and loyal acceptance of the Christian Gospel," not realising, apparently, that in the words "Common Sense" lies the explanation of all the difficulties. Of one thing he may be certain—that bombastic and vituperative language will not help to reinstate Christianity in the popular favor. JOSEPH BRYCE.

## Magic and Prayer.—I.

BY THE LATE JOSEPH SYMES.

IT may not be easy to define magic; though prayer, in that respect, creates no difficulty. Magic, however, is difficult to define only because the number of superstitions it embraces. *Ogilvie's Dictionary* thus defines it:—"The pretended art or science of putting into action the power of spirits; sorcery; witchcraft; necromancy; conjuration; enchantment." To these may be added, spells, charms, fortune-telling, prophecy, infliction and cure of disease. All the above and very much more are generally included under the head of Magic. The reader will kindly bear in mind that it is Magic of the serious sorts that I now deal with (or what its dupes regard in a serious light, whatever the performers may think), not that fantastic department of popular amusements so denominated.

It is my opinion that Magic and Prayer are essentially one, though differing somewhat in non-important particulars. Magic, no doubt, covers a somewhat wider range. A full discussion of the subject cannot, however, be here entered upon.

In the first place, it cannot be denied that Magic and Prayer are absolutely identical in their fundamental conception; both exist for the same objects. 1. Each of them assumes the existence of something supernatural. 2. Each of them assumes that it is possible for men to influence that supernatural existence. 3. Each of them assumes that the supernatural can be induced or compelled to do for men what cannot be done by nature or art—that is, art in its common forms. Both Magic and Prayer, then, make an appeal to the supernatural to do for men

what cannot be accomplished in any other known way. And herein Magic and Prayer are identical; or, more strictly speaking, Magic is the genus, and Prayer but a division or species of Magic.

Within the domain of Magic amulets play a most important part. We may here notice a few.

1. A child's *caul* is supposed to have wonderful virtues. Sailors formerly carried them to sea in the belief that they would preserve them from drowning. And the superstition still survives. Some year and a half ago, in a long railway journey, I met with a young naval (mercantile) officer, just returning home after an absence of three years or so. In course of conversation, I remarked—

"Seamen are not so superstitious, I daresay, as they were formerly?"

"Oh! dear no," he replied.

"Few of them believe now, I presume, in the virtues of a child's caul?" I continued.

My companion's face flushed, as he replied—

"I have one in my pocket."

This was the first opportunity I ever had had of seeing one, and I begged the favor of being allowed a peep at it. He readily complied. It was kept carefully in a case; and when opened, I found it to be gummed to very thin strong paper. He informed me that one of his sisters was born with this cap or membrane on her head; that his mother had given it to him; and that he would not part with it for any money.

The caul, I believe, is, in the estimation of the superstitious, a sure preservative against drowning; and it seems just as likely to secure that end as prayer.

2. Don Carlos's soldiers, a few years ago, wore amulets in battle, consisting of little pieces of flannel, cut into heart-shape by sympathising nuns and blessed by the Pope. Many a Protestant soldier, fighting in an equally holy cause, will resort to prayer against bayonet thrusts and bullets, though he would smile contemptuously at the superstition of those Spaniards. But, pray, where is the difference?

3. According to the Bible and the modern Jews, the "words of the Lord" constitute a good amulet. They were to be bound as a sign on the hand, as a frontlet between the eyes (Deut. v. 8, 9)—also fastened upon the door-posts of the house. Hence the phylacteries worn by the Pharisees and placed upon the door-posts of modern Jewish houses. The latter consist of a few Hebrew words on parchment, folded up in a little tin receptacle and fastened to the wood, a small round hole in the metal showing a Hebrew letter or two. Holy water, pebbles, horse-shoes, hung or fastened to doors or sunk in the threshold, are still used to keep witches out of houses and stables. An old servant of ours duly observed this custom, at least, to the extent of the horse-shoe. It need not be said that no witch ever entered our house after that; though the poor old woman herself fell down and died in an apoplectic fit within a couple of yards of the horse-shoe a little more than a year ago.

Many wiser heads than hers are still slaves to the superstition of prayer; though I am not sufficiently enlightened to see the difference between it and amulets.

Magic also comprehends the use of *spells*, *charms* and *enchantments*. What is a spell? It is merely a story, or a set of words, a formula. A gospel is a *good spell*, that is, a good story. We still use the word spell-bound to denote the marvellous power the orator exercises over his hearers. And here we find absolute identity between Prayer and Magic. A prayer is a spell, a story, a set of words addressed to a superior being to draw or induce him to do something for the petitioner. A Prayer Book consists of a collection of spells of this sort, for blessings, fine weather, power, success in war and a variety of other things. Collections of spells are very ancient indeed, many of which, more or less changed, still survive. The Prayer Books of the Churches are nothing more.

*Charms* were used for similar ends. But what is a charm? This is but the Frenchified form of the Latin *carmen*, a song or hymn. Magical charms and church hymns are identical. They were and are intended (unconsciously to-day) to impress, draw, *charm* the god. Enchantment, chanting and chants, and cant are the same word writ longer or shorter to suit circumstances. When a person is enchanted he has been sung or chanted into a state of semi-intoxication, so to speak, or elevated, or excited, or unduly soothed. And that is precisely what songs, hymns and chants were originally intended to effect as regards the gods—to humor or mesmerise them, so that they might do the bidding of the magician. In former days, as now, they all aimed at spiritual aid.

In former days these kinds of performances were the chief lawful ones for gaining changes of weather, success and safety in travel, and recovery from disease. They are the only methods permitted to Christians by the Bible for the cure of sickness.

(To be concluded.)

## Copernicus.

By J. HOWARD MOORE.

ON the 24th day of May, 1543, Copernicus proclaimed his well-known theory of the solar system—the Copernican or heliocentric theory. For twenty years the great Pole had revolved this theory in his mind, but was afraid to publish it. He feared the ferocity of his fellow men. The Ptolemaic conception, that the earth was fixed and around it as a centre circled the sun, moon and stars, was so unreservedly accepted by everybody and was supported in the popular mind by such incontestable proof, that no one but a knave was supposed to be adventurous enough to question it.

Copernicus was led to doubt the old conception on account of its complexity. The complicated system of cycles and epicycles which had been formulated by the metaphysical school-men, did not seem to him simple enough to accord with nature as he observed it every day around him.

They told him that if the earth rotated, the water and air would be thrown, by the force of rotation, like water from a grindstone. This was the most common objection to his new theory, and was considered by its authors as absolutely conclusive.

Copernicus replied that these fluids were a part of the earth, were endowed with the same motions as the solid parts, and hence necessarily moved with these solid parts.

It was commonly felt, in addition to the inherent absurdity of the doctrine, that the dignity of the earth was seriously impaired by the new theory—which practically turned the earth loose in space with nothing to do but dance as a subordinate around other centres and spheres. This, of course, would not do at all. Man was plainly, as was well-known, and as anyone could verify for himself by looking into a mirror, too august a being to have such an inglorious and renegade place of abode as that. Was not the earth a "foot-stool"? Could a foot-stool do what would naturally be expected of it if it were sailing around in space all the time?

How these old fogies of the ancient world remind us of a lot of people who are living now—especially those who worry about what would become of human dignity if man should turn out to be an "animal." Is human dignity more precious than truth? Is it of any importance at all, in fact, if it is a mere fiction? And is it not about as harmful to human dignity as anything we can do to resort to the ostrich-like trick of sticking our heads into the sands every time we imagine ourselves in peril of seeing something we never saw before?

Copernicus replied to his critics that it seemed more in keeping with the fitness of things for the earth to move about than for the heaven to do so. And this seems forceful. For it would certainly be more convenient to have an itinerant foot-rest than a peripatetic throne. He said heaven was the most honorable place in the universe, and was, for this reason, also the most likely to be stationary. If the sun, moon and stars moved around the earth, he argued, they would have to move much farther than the earth and at so much greater speed that they would be more liable than the earth to be dashed to pieces.

Copernicus was on his death-bed when a copy of his book was brought to him. He touched it and expired a few hours later.

People generally, both protestants and catholics, denounced his theories as absurd in themselves and contrary to the plain teachings of scripture. The people of Nuremberg had

a medal struck with inscriptions ridiculing the philosopher and his teachings. "This fool," said Luther, with characteristic assurance, "wishes to reverse the entire science of astronomy. But sacred scripture tells us that Joshua commanded the sun to stand still, not the earth." Melancthon, the disciple and co-laborer of Luther, was not less intolerant than his master toward the new astronomy. "The eyes are witnesses that the heavens revolve in twenty-four hours," said he. "But certain men, in order to make a display of their learning, have concluded that the earth moves. Now it is a want of honesty and decency to assist such notions publicly, and the example is pernicious. Such impious teachings should be restrained. The earth can be nowhere if not in the centre of the universe."

The experience of Copernicus is not an unusual experience. It is simply the experience of everyone who attempts to add anything of importance to the scanty stock of human information. Men do not want to improve. They want to be comfortable. They want to be let alone, to teeter out their dreamy existences in the lazy seesaws of respectability. And a man who starts out, in a world like this, with the intention of introducing great and lasting improvements in the stream of human consciousness, may add to his outfit of precautionary wisdom the assurance that he will sooner or later have more trouble than the usual soul knows what to do with.—*To-Morrow Magazine* (American).

## LOUISA.

Dear Child of Nature, let them rail!  
—There is a nest in a green dale,  
A harbor and a hold;  
Where thou, a Wife and Friend, shalt see  
Thy own heart-stirring days, and be  
A light to young and old.

There, healthy as a shepherd boy,  
And treading among flowers of joy  
Which at no season fade,  
Thou, while thy babes around thee cling,  
Shalt show us how divine a thing  
A Woman may be made.

Thy thoughts and feelings shall not die,  
Nor leave thee, when grey hairs are nigh,  
A melancholy slave;  
But an old age serene and bright,  
And lovely as a Lapland night,  
Shall lead thee to thy grave. —*Wordsworth.*

## TOLERATION.

There should be a perfect toleration in matters of religion. In what relates to the salvation of a man's soul, he is infinitely more concerned than I can be; and to pretend to dictate to him in this particular is an infinite piece of impertinence and presumption. But if a man has no religion at all? That does not hinder me from having any. If he stood at the church door and would not let me enter, I should have a right to push him aside; but if he lets me pass by without interruption, I have no right to turn back and drag him in after me. He might as well force me to have no religion as I force him to have one, or burn me at a stake for believing what he does not. Opinion, "like the wild goose, flies unclaimed of any man"; heaven is like "the marble air, accessible to all"; and therefore there is no occasion to trip up one another's heels on the road, or to erect a turnpike-gate to collect large sums from the passers. How have I a right to make another pay for the saving of my soul, or to assist me in damning his? There should be no secular interference in sacred things; no laws to suppress or establish any church or sect in religion, no religious persecutions, tests, or disqualifications; the different sects should be left to inveigh and hate each other as much as they please; but without the love of exclusive domination and spiritual power there would be little temptation to bigotry and intolerance.—*Hazlitt.*

## A CERTAIN CHANGE.

The superstition respecting power and office is going to the ground. The stream of human affairs flows its own way, and is very little affected by the activity of legislators. What great masses of men wish done, will be done; and they do not wish it for a freak, but because it is their state and natural end. There are now other energies than force, other than political, which no man in future can allow himself to disregard. There is direct conversation and influence. A man is to make himself felt by his proper force. The tendency of things runs steadily to this point, namely, to put every man on his merits, and to give him so much power as he naturally exerts,—no more, no less.—*Emerson.*

How am I surprised at the inconsistency of the magi; their two principles of good and evil affright me. The Indian who bathes his visage in urine and calls it piety, strikes me with astonishment. The Jews who pretend that deity is pleased with the effusion of blood are not less displeasing. I am equally surprised that rational beings can come from the extremities of the earth in order to kiss a stone or scatter pebbles. How contrary to reason are these; and yet all pretend to teach me to be happy.—*Goldsmith.*

History should explain to us how nations rose and fell, what nurtured them in their growth, what sustained them in their maturity; not which orator ran swiftest through the crowd from the right hand to the left, which assassin was too strong for manacles, or which felon too opulent for crucifixion.—*Landor.*

We are not to be astonished that the wise walk more slowly in their road to virtue than fools in their passage to vice; since passion drags us along, while wisdom only points out the way.—*Confucius.*

## DIFFERENT.

A colored preacher took some candidates for immersion down to a river in Louisiana. Seeing some alligators in the stream, one of them objected.

"Why, brother," urged the pastor, "can't you trust the Lord? He took care of Jonah, didn't he?"

"Y-a-a-s," admitted the ducky, "but a whale's diff'rent. A whale's got a memory, but ef one o' dem 'gators wus ter swaller dis nigger, he'd jes' go ter sleep dar in de sun an' fergit all 'bout me."

## WORKING ANOTHER GRAFT NOW.

"Down in my State," said Representative Adamson, of Georgia, the other day, "there is a large number of professional evangelists who go from town to town trying to save sinners. Just before the Christmas holidays, one of these soul-savers invaded a town in my district and had this notice posted: "Sam Wilkins, who before his conversion, was convicted four times of burglary, will address a gospel meeting at the Main-street Church. Come and welcome. No collection."

## GOOD ANGLO-SAXON.

A country pastor had been holding forth on the advantages of plain speaking. "Why, brethren," he said, bringing his hand down upon the pulpit with great vigor, "There's no need of all these long words and high-sounding terms; not a bit. Look at St. Paul! Look at St. Paul, I say! His words were full of the meat of knowledge and help, and he didn't make use of any five-syllable talk. No, he always spoke in plain, simple English, my brethren!"

## THE PREACHER'S TOGS.

"Mother, does Dr. Smith wear his everyday clothes under that long white gown when he preaches?" asked a little girl who had seen the edge of the minister's trousers under the robe.

"Yes, dear," was the reply.

"Well," she continued, "now I know why it is called a surplus."

## WHICH?

Church.—"Every chance he gets our new minister preaches that it is 'more blessed to give than to receive.'"

Wise.—"Well, that would seem to indicate that he thoroughly believes it."

Church.—"Or that he wants us to believe it."

## GOT THE HABIT LATER.

In a sermon preached in a small church in Glasgow, the pastor, after inveighing against slothfulness said, by way of climax: "Do you think Adam and Eve went about the Garden of Eden with their hands in their pockets?"

## THE NEW THEOLOGY.

"Who is that earnest looking individual over there?"

"That's the Boston lecturer of Higher Criticism of the Bible as literature. She conducts the 'Beliefs Removed Without Pain' classes here in town."—*Life.*

**SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, etc.**

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

**LONDON.**

QUEEN'S (MINOR) HALL (Langham-place, W.): 7.30, G. W. Foote, "Christianity and the Woman Question."

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

KING'S HALL (85 Commercial-road, E.): Friday, April 12, at 8, Harry Boulter, "The Need for a Secular Wing to the Socialist Party." Discussion to follow.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Workman's Hall, 27 Romford-road, Stratford): 7.30, Mrs. H. Bradlaugh-Bonner, "Freethought in the Old Century and the New."

**OUTDOOR.**

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): 3.15, Louis B. Gallagher, "Simple Bible Teaching"; F. R. Theakstone, "Science and Faith."

**COUNTRY.**

BRADFORD BRANCH N. S. S. (Milnes' Temperance Hotel, James-street): 7, C. J. Atkinson, "The Freethought Movement and the New Theology."

GLASGOW BRANCH N. S. S. (Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): C. Cohen, 12 noon, "Social Evolution and the Survival of the Fittest"; 6.30, "The Salvation Army: a Study of Religious Failure and Social Imposture."

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Operetta, by Sunday School.

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Secular Hall, Rusholme-road): 6.30, Lecture or Impromptu Discussion.

NELSON BRANCH N. S. S. (Weavers' Institute): 7.30, R. Broughton, "Two Years in New Zealand, and What I Saw There." With lantern illustrations.

NEWCASTLE RATIONALIST DEBATING SOCIETY (Lockhart's Cathedral Café): Thursday, April 18, at 8, W. Wilson, "The Public Library."

PLYMOUTH RATIONALIST SOCIETY (Foresters' Hall, Octagon): 7, W. H. Wise, "The New Theology"; 8.30, Important Members' Meeting.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, Market-place): 7.30, Conference, etc.

**OUTDOOR.**

EDINBURGH BRANCH N. S. S. (The Meadows): 3 and 7, Lectures.

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