

THE Freethinker

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For the slave, degradation and moral death are certain; but for the rebel there is always a chance of becoming conqueror: and the force to resist is far better than the faculty to succumb.—GERALD MASSEY.

Campbellism.—III.

IX.

MR. CAMPBELL rails at the orthodox God, but I cannot see that his own God is really any better. He seems to have overlooked Butler's famous *Analogy*, in which that last of the Church of England divines before Newman showed how all the difficulties of Christian Theism, based upon the Bible, were matched by the difficulties of Deism, which found its God by "the Light of Nature."

When I speak of Mr. Campbell's "own" God I am not speaking too personally. He himself uses the expression "My God." "My God," he says, "is my deeper Self, and yours too; He is the Self of the universe, and knows all about it." Perhaps "He" with a capital H does know all about it; but I am certain that "he" with a small h knows nothing about it. Mr. Campbell's words are all intelligible singly, but they are unintelligible collectively. When he says that his God is "the Self of the universe" he may mean something, but it is impossible for anyone else to know what. And it might occur to him that if his God is his deeper Self (this also has a capital S) a sceptic (that is, a person who keeps his eyes open) might enquire what Deity or Demon is his shallower Self. In other words, if God stands for the best that is in us, who stands for the worst that is in us? And would not an honest answer to that question prove the whole argument to be a mere exercise in personification?

"My God," Mr. Campbell says on another page, "calls always to my deeper soul, and tells me I must read Him by mine own highest and best, and by the highest and best that the universe has yet produced." What is it, then, that calls to the other part of his soul? What is it that must be read by his own lowest and worst?

If the reverend gentleman would try to answer that question, he would soon see what would become of his "spiritual Monism."

"Why is there a universe at all?" Mr. Campbell asks this extraordinary question—and he is still at large. But what a colossal egotism he displays! Religious people are generally like that. They fancy that all things exist solely in relation to them; whereas, if they were wiped out, the universe would not miss them. An ephemeron asks why the everlasting universe exists at all, and other ephemera applaud him as the incarnation of wisdom. A fly asks why there is a summer, a worm asks why there is a world, and Mr. Campbell asks why there is a universe. And the cream of the joke is that *he* knows. He tells us that the unlimited became limited (which is sheer jargon) because "this finite universe of ours [which is mere assumption] is one means to the self-realisation of the infinite."

"To all eternity God is what He is, and can never be other; but it will take Him to all eternity to live out all that He is. In order to manifest even to Himself the

possibilities of His being, God must limit that being. There is no other way in which the fullest self-realisation can be attained."

I have no doubt that Mr. Campbell thinks he quite understands these sentences, but I am sure he does nothing of the kind. To talk of the infinite becoming finite is absolute nonsense. And fancy Omniscience deciding to understand itself! Fancy Omnipotence deciding to see what it could do! And fancy both Omniscience and Omnipotence failing because the lesson and the experiment could never be concluded!

"God," we are told, "is ceaselessly uttering Himself through higher and ever higher forms of existence." He used to do no better than bugs and beetles, but his self-realisation has now reached up to Mr. Campbell. Judge, then, of what he will be in time. Nay, do more than that. Push him along. "God is getting at something," Mr. Campbell says, "and we must help him." Poor God! Nothing as cruel as this was ever said of him in the *Freethinker*.

X.

While the Rev. R. J. Campbell is helping God, I may observe that there is something peculiarly flattering to excitable minds in what he (Mr. Campbell, not God) says about genius, reason and intuition. Genius, he tells us, on the high authority of "the late F. W. H. Myers," is "an uprush of subliminal faculty." All we have to do, then, is to wait for the "uprush." "Reason," Mr. Campbell says, "by which we ordinarily mean the conscious exercise of the mental faculties, plods along as if on four feet," while "intuition soars on wings." And he assures us that "reason has comparatively little to do with the way in which people ordinarily conduct themselves." Which, I admit, is perfectly true—though I wish it were otherwise.

Mr. Campbell is evidently not a plodder. He soars. He is no slave to reason. He belongs to the party of intuition. His radiant spirit disdains the dull exercise of the mental faculties. He reaches his conclusions by a more rapid and agreeable process. And it is a process which saves no end of trouble. If a man argues in the name of reason, he has to defend himself in the name of reason—and that is sometimes very awkward; but if he argues in the name of intuition, he can defend himself in the name of intuition—which is very convenient, for it simply means answering every objection with another assertion. And if the intuitionist finds himself hard pressed, he has only to flutter his wings and point to his antagonist's four feet, and the game is over.

XI.

I cannot help thinking that if Mr. Campbell were less an intuitionist, and more a reasoner, he would hardly have followed up a hackneyed quotation from Wordsworth's famous Ode with the questionable observation that "The great poets are the best theologians after all, for they see the farthest." Undoubtedly poets see farther than ordinary men in some directions. But one man cannot see farther than another in the dark, and all theology is looking into the dark and guessing what it contains. Nor are poets in any special sense theologians. Certainly it would be unsafe for Mr. Campbell to trust to the great poets for confirmation of his theology, unless he were allowed to pick them out himself. Dante and Milton were theologians, but Shakespeare

was not. Wordsworth was a Theist, though apparently not an orthodox Christian; but Shelley was an Atheist. Among the English poets still living, Mr. Campbell would find no countenance in his theology from Mr. Swinburne or Mr. Meredith. The greatest German poets have been sceptical. Leopardi and Carducci, the greatest of modern Italian poets, were pronounced unbelievers. Some of the most distinguished of modern French poets belonged to the same category. And if we go back to old Rome, the great singer whom Mrs. Browning called "chief poet by the Tiber side," was a passionate enemy of religion. Lucretius, as Mrs. Browning says, "denied divinely the divine." Obviously, therefore, Mr. Campbell was not making a "conscious use of the mental faculties" in referring to the great poets as the best theologians. What he said may be "intuition," but is assuredly not "reason."

XII.

Dealing with Man in relation to God, Mr. Campbell comes across the problem of the will. "I will frankly confess," he says, "that in strict logic I can find no place for the freedom of the will." This ought to settle the matter. But it doesn't. Logic and Mr. Campbell were not made for each other. "We are compelled to overleap logic," he says; and if he speaks for himself, and refers to his own necessities, I quite agree with him. He does overleap logic. And every other theologian in the world, whether old or new, overleaps it too. But let us hear Mr. Campbell:—

"No argument will convince us that we have not some power of individual self-direction and self-control. The most thorough-going determinist that ever lived forgets his determinism even while he argues about it."

Now I am bound to say that the writer of those two sentences does not understand the question at issue. Self-direction and self-control are obvious facts. But we must recognise the real meaning of these expressions. If I am swimming in the sea I direct myself towards a certain point; I do not simply tread water and let the tide bear me whither it will; and if something comes in my way I control my movements so as to avoid it. And it makes no difference whether the self-direction and self-control are exercised in relation to physical phenomena or in relation to moral phenomena. I may direct myself through a crowd to keep an appointment with my wife, or I may control my desire for some expensive object out of regard for the needs of my children. But how on earth is this inconsistent with determinism? I assert that determinism is the only theory which explains it.

What is self-direction? What is self-control? Let us try to use language precisely. "I said to myself" is a common form of speech, but the "I" and the "myself" are the same being, and the expression is therefore not scientific. When I "say to myself" it is really one part of my nature addressing another part of my nature through the medium of my intellect, which has to serve the purposes of *all* my feelings and *all* my motives. Similarly, if I exercise self-control, it is one part of my nature controlling another part of my nature. If I am weak in social sympathy and love of others, my selfish passions triumph; if I am strong in social sympathy and love of others, my selfish passions are overruled. And self-control can only mean that a temporary impulse is overruled by a permanent motive. But obviously this can only be done through the agency of the imagination and the intellect. The imagination brings near to me the distant in time and space, and thus presents to my mind considerations that would otherwise be overlooked; while the intellect works out the consequences of this or that course of action which I may be contemplating. Thus at every step of the investigation we perceive that there is a natural cause at work, and the constancy of natural causation is the basis of determinism.

The radical objection to free will is that nobody has ever succeeded in making it intelligible, except in terms which are really compatible with deter-

minism. Those who assert that man has freedom of choice, assert what is often (though not always) true. If a glass of beer and a glass of water are in front of me, I may choose one instead of the other. But *why* do I choose the one instead of the other? In *that* question lies the kernel of the whole discussion. And to answer it is simply to disclose the causes which produced the effect. If we knew all we should foresee all. It is because we do *not* know all, and therefore *cannot* foresee all, that the idea of free will arises in confused minds. Free will is to determinism what chance is to necessity. There is no chance in nature; the word merely expresses our ignorance of what is happening. Neither is there any free will in nature; the words merely express our ignorance of what has happened.

But the most ridiculous idea of all is the one adopted by Mr. Campbell. He argues for "some measure of free will." *Some* measure! This is necessarily a case of all or nothing. It is a question between causation and chaos.

Mr. Campbell proceeds to say that no man has ever chosen evil, understanding it to be such. "Freedom of the will in this sense," he says, "has never existed." Which is an admission that vice and crime are blunders, and does away with the whole Christian doctrine of sin.

Finally, Mr. Campbell says that "the only freedom we have is like that of a bird in a cage." We can choose the higher or the lower perch, but we cannot choose where the cage shall go. But who carries our cage? Mr. Campbell would answer "God." But if there be a God, he made the birds as well as the cages; and everything inside the cage, as well as everything outside it, is determined by his omnipotent will.

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

The Blight of Religion.

THOUSANDS of generations have passed since man first arrived at any definite conclusions concerning the nature and causes of natural phenomena. At the beginning, these conclusions were few and, of necessity, faulty. In all probability, too, these simple conclusions were not reached by any elaborate process of reasoning, but rather in the same semi-conscious or unconscious manner in which even modern man registers the bulk of his daily experiences. For the philosophy that represents primitive man eagerly speculating on natural problems is quite false. Savages are not curious people. Like unintellectual people, everywhere ordinary things are accepted as a matter of course, and even extraordinary ones arouse fear rather than curiosity. The attitude of a domesticated animal in the presence of a quite unusual sight or sound probably gives us a pretty close analogy to the mental state of early man confronted with anything that passed his experience or roused his fears. Many, many generations must have passed between the time when the human deviated from the purely animal type and the stage when definite ideas existed concerning the nature of natural forces. And then their expression would be far more the unconscious fruition of the generations that had passed than the results of conscious ratiocination.

But a conclusion *was* reached, faulty, but inevitable. The world was alive; or, rather, it was made up of a number of lives, any or all of which might make things very uncomfortable for man. It was a wrong conclusion, and yet an important one, in the history of the human intellect. For it meant that the first great step had been taken in the long line of development that culminated in a Newton, a Lyell and a Darwin. It marked the beginning of scientific thinking. True, science no longer regards the world as alive or as dominated by living forces, but this is because our knowledge of the real character of natural forces has changed. But the primitive thinker did exactly as the latest one does—both

interpret phenomena in terms of the forces known to them, and cannot do otherwise. The earliest thinker had only himself to fall back upon, and, of necessity, he read himself, his feelings and volitions, into all around him. Later ages slowly corrected this error; but in the beginning it had its purpose. It codified experience, and so paved the way for future corrections and new theories. For the great thing was that there should be a theory, whether it was right or wrong, was a question of only secondary importance.

Had religion—this primitive science of nature—held only the same rank as later science held and holds, the history of mankind would be very different to what it is. The older hypothesis would then have yielded to a better as, and with no greater trouble than, a scientific theory is modified or discarded to-day. But there were two factors that made this impossible. One was fear, the other self-interest. All the early religions are more or less based on fear; and fear, indeed, has been the chief ingredient in religion right through human history. Man began to worship the gods he had created because he feared their malevolence should he not gain their goodwill. Nor was their anger of a discriminating description. If one person offended, the whole tribe might be made to suffer; and therefore offence to them had to be carefully guarded against. It was thus that heresy—doubt of the power or wisdom or existence of the gods—assumed the nature of a tribal offence; and as an offence against all, it was punished by all. Thousands of generations have passed since this ception was generated, but the feelings created by it persist even to-day.

Then there is the feeling of self-interest. The thinkers among mankind have ever been the few, and there is no reason for doubting that the primitive priesthood was largely composed of those who thought most about natural forces and imposed their conclusions upon the rest. But this involved a position of aggrandisement, and one not lightly surrendered, as the whole history of priestcraft shows. Thus a priesthood growing steadily in power, and clinging with all the tenacity of vested interests to its privileges and possessions, would act as a constantly opposing force to all those new ideas that threatened their power. In this way the two have combined throughout the ages to prevent that process of modification, rejection and addition which has been the most valuable feature in the history of science.

It is, therefore, only in the very earliest stages of human existence that religious beliefs answer any kind of a useful purpose. Afterwards they act as a drag upon the mind, an obstruction to further development. This is observable even among tribes of savages, where deviations from the customary routes is prevented owing to fear of the anger of the gods. In the ancient civilisations of Chaldea, Babylonia and Egypt, one can see how senseless customs were perpetrated, and improvements frustrated, from the same cause. Even freethinking Greece and Rome felt the weight of the ancient incubus, although the restless intellect of the one, and the practical genius of the other, reduced the obstructive influence of religion to a smaller measure than it had ever been before in human history, or than it has been since. A change came when various causes contributed to place religious beliefs in a position of commanding influence, and to establish Christianity as the religion of the western world. How repressing this influence was can only be gauged by those who are sufficiently acquainted with the history of science to know how much had been discovered when Christianity assumed control. Consider for a moment what it was in physical science that the ancients knew.

The geometry of the ancient world comes to us in the form of Euclid—a text-book now as it was over two thousand years ago. Mechanical skill speaks to us in the Pyramids and in the countless remains of ancient monuments and buildings. The ancients had not only created and developed mathematics,

but their application of mathematics to optics and acoustics had enabled them to discover many of the laws of light and of musical theory. They knew that the earth was a sphere suspended in space, had an approximate notion of its size, discussed the question of other continents beyond the seas; had measured the width of the tropical zone and discovered the relation of the moon to the tides. Something was also known of the size of the sun and its distance from the earth. They had even constructed an orrery. The writings of Lucretius and Pliny also furnish evidence that speculations were rife on such subjects as electricity, on the birth and death of worlds, of the origin of language and of civilisation. In medical science the crude theories of possession had been discarded, the body dissected, and medicine made to rest upon a basis of anatomy. In a word, the better thinkers among Greeks and Romans had reached the perception of nature as an aggregation of phenomena—orderly, knowable and predictable.

After Greek and Roman thinkers, Christianity. After light, darkness. After civilisation, barbarism. Historically it may be true that Christianity was not wholly responsible for the death of the ancient civilisation and the extinction of its thought. The decline had set in before Christianity assumed control. But this decline was coincident with the growing power of those less civilised religious beliefs of which Christianity was the full expression. At any rate, the decline of the ancient strength was essential to the growth of Christianity; and most certainly it did nothing to arrest, but everything to hasten, its overthrow. And for centuries it fought strenuously against its renaissance. Moreover, the most ignorant period during the history of civilised humanity, the period during which science was at its poorest, and investigation banned, was the period when Christianity was strongest. Starting from next to nothing, the ancient world had built up a huge fabric of actual knowledge and suggestive speculation. With this to build on as a foundation Christianity gave us—the Dark Ages. Against this fact all the apologists for the religion of the Dark Ages struggle in vain. On the most favorable view a Church that could allow freedom of thought to be stifled, civic life and sanitation to decay, learning to die out, and the arts of civilisation to disappear, ought not itself to have survived. With such a condition of things mere survival is little short of a disgrace; it argues passive acquiescence with what occurs. But to be in a position of power right through the period is evidence of more than acquiescence; it is proof of participation.

There is no escape from the one conclusion that the blighting influence which rested upon Europe for so many centuries was its religion. Other causes may be found, but this is the predominant one, and the condition of the existence of many of the others. Consider that the death of the ancient civilisation meant not only a loss of knowledge; it meant also the loss of a mental habit—of the habit of facing the world as something to be studied and conquered, and its replacement by habits of mental servility and credulity. Who would trouble to acquire knowledge, when merely to be suspected of study might mean imprisonment or the stake? What was the use of considering schemes of social improvement, when the Church sat enthroned above all, sucking from society its very life-blood? Europe was palsied by its religion, robbed of initiative by its belief. Ranke, a tolerably cautious writer, calculates that the reign of the Catholic Church cost Europe over *ten millions* of lives. All of these were not, of course, thinkers, but many were, and the fate of those that were offered little encouragement for others to follow in their footsteps. And in the end it was the little of the Greek and Latin writings that survived the storm that enabled Europe to partly throw off the cramping influence of its creed.

Unhappily, the blight of religion did not cease with the Dark Ages. The Renaissance did not end its career; it only limited its influence. It is seen in all the opposition offered to science during the

past four centuries. It was responsible for the deaths of Bruno and Vanini at the stake, and for the ignoble persecution and imprisonment of Galileo. It was at the bottom of the outcry against the physics and mathematics of Newton, the astronomy of Laplace, the geology of Lyell, and the biology of Darwin. Worse even than this, it is responsible for the mental cowardice and hypocrisy which is the bane of contemporary life. If the social atmosphere is thick with insincerities and hypocrisies, if the truth-seeker is frowned upon and the truth-speaker persecuted, how shall the religion that has dominated Europe for fifteen centuries escape responsibility? We are influenced by a vitiated heredity, and we move amid an unhealthy environment. The race has been taught to look to its religion for guidance, and that religion is permeated with fear; and fear perpetuates ignorance as ignorance creates and perpetuates fear. In earlier times the gods demanded and received human sacrifices—a brutal custom, and one that we have outgrown. What we have yet to outgrow is the sacrifice of man's mental and moral nature to the remnants of that horde of gods called into being by the ignorance of our primitive ancestors and perpetuated by the fear and cupidity of their descendants.

G. COHEN.

The Alternative to Christianity.

IT is taken for granted by Christian teachers that, apart from Jesus, life is not worth living. The fact that millions of people do find life worth living, though they have never heard of Jesus, they either openly deny or utterly ignore. To this class of leaders belongs the Rev. John W. Veevers, who vigorously maintains, in a sermon published in the *Christian World Pulpit*, that "for working purposes, for daily living, a living faith in the living Christ is absolutely necessary." That is the central thesis of the whole sermon. To Mr. Veevers, Peter's question, "To whom shall we go?" is "the question of every man of faith, of every man who thinks." Then he adds: "The Christian says, 'If I leave thee the reason for faith ceases, life loses all its buoyancy and spring, its hopefulness and joy; it becomes tuneless and tame.' The unbeliever says, 'If I refuse thee, I shall go farther into the dark, multiply my difficulties, accentuate my troubles.'" We will not now trouble ourselves about what the Christian may or may not say hypothetically; but will Mr. Veevers kindly give us his authority for the saying which he attributes to the unbeliever? Did he put such a statement into the unbeliever's mouth with or without his consent? We happen to know hundreds of conscientious unbelievers, not one of whom would ever dream of speaking as Mr. Veevers thinks they ought to speak. At one time, most of them were professing Christians, but their awakened intelligence compelled them to renounce their supernatural beliefs, and so to relinquish their faith in Christ; and their testimony to-day is, not that their life has lost "all its buoyancy and spring, its hopefulness and joy, and become tuneless and tame," but that it has a higher and deeper meaning for them than it ever had before, and that the natural joy of it is much sweeter and fuller. This is a fact, and no pulpit dogmatism can ever set it aside. If you take a certain number of average Sceptics and compare them with the same number of average Christians, you will find that the comparison will not afford an argument against Scepticism and in favor of belief.

Mr. Veevers allows his religious emotionalism to obscure his intelligence. Only a hopelessly prejudiced man could ever assert that the absence of Christ involves "an undeveloped soul," "no ideals of life, no uplifting enthusiasms, no purpose throbbing with an intense desire to be a true man and a longing for the higher things, no power of resistance, at the mercy of sin." If Mr. Veevers gave his intellect fairplay for ten minutes he would perceive how abso-

lutely false such an assertion is, and that both within and without Christendom there are myriads of living witnesses to its absurdity. But Mr. Veevers shuts his eyes against facts, and stumbles on as if they did not exist. "Such a reply," he says, "is sufficient to show the disastrous effects of refusing Christ. A life without Jesus in it is the narrowest and least satisfactory. It is a life without the light; a life in which there is no music." Is it not inexpressibly sad to think that intelligent men can be so blind? Are all the good people in our land to be found inside the Churches? Are there no beautiful lives nobly lived outside Christendom? Speaking in New York recently, Mr. Stead said:—

"In my visits to various parts of the world, I haven't found anyone who thought the Church of Christ was a force in the world to-day. You speak of it to kings or the great men of Europe and ask their opinion of its power, and they shrug their shoulders and tell you that the Christian Church has been allowed to go to the devil."

There are three distinct Christs being preached at present in Christendom, namely, the orthodox Christ, the Unitarian Christ, and the New Theology Christ, and each is essentially different from the other two. Mr. Veevers champions the Christ of orthodoxy, the Christ who "on the Cross paid the penalty of sin," "satisfied the claims of Divine justice," and made "reconciliation to God and salvation from sin possible to all." Such is the Christ proclaimed by Mr. Veevers in Upper Holloway Congregational Church, London. Without this Christ "reconciliation to God and salvation from sin" are quite impossible. Just think of it. In the year 1896, according to statistics approved by the Bishop of Ripon, there were 1,000,000,000 human beings lying under the wrath of God, unsaved from sin, and living the narrowest and least satisfactory lives, lives destitute of the light, and in which there was no music! Well, all we can say is that, from the orthodox point of view, the living Christ, the Savior of the world, has been a colossal failure. He paid the penalty of sin, and endured the hiding of his Father's face, in vain. And yet Mr. Veevers can sleep soundly at night and enjoy a good dinner. His Christ is said to have died for every man, so that every human being on the globe to-day, if he only knew it, could say: "He died for me—"

"Bearing shame and scoffing rude
In my place condemned he stood,
Sealed my pardon with his blood."

And yet in 1896 there were still 1,000,000,000 Christless people in the world! Of course, to state the Christian case thus is wholly to discredit it in the eyes of all thinking men and women. To say that every non-Christian is "a cipher," and "has not begun to live," and at the same time to be obliged to admit that, after two thousand years, there are at most only 500,000,000 Christians on earth, in a population estimated at 1,500,000,000, is to give the lie direct to the teaching of the pulpit.

The title of Mr. Veevers's sermon is, "Is 'There an Alternative to Jesus Christ?' Did the preacher think that he answered that question satisfactorily by merely repeating, again and again, without making the least attempt to prove the dogmatic assertion that, without Jesus Christ, "life is a hopeless, a lamentable failure"? Is he not aware that such silly dogmatism has driven the masses of the people away from the Churches? The only alternative to the Gospel mentioned by Mr. Veevers is the world. "When we need strength and direction, when we need encouragement and help," he asks triumphantly, "shall we go to the world?" Mr. Veevers does not tell us what he means by the "world." It is to be feared that he is a total stranger to the world, in any intelligible signification of the term. And, here again, he contents himself with throwing out bald assertions. The world is "coarse," and "sneers at Christian refinement and grace." It is also "sinful," and "behaves itself unseemly." Its teaching leads to moral bankruptcy and spiritual perdition. But what world is this? Where is it to be found? Does Mr.

Veevers imagine that Piccadilly Circus constitutes the world, or is representative of the world's ideas and sentiments? Or does he understand by the world all outside the Church? But let him bear in mind that what he ascribes to the world is true of many individuals within the Church. Yes, the world he condemns is within, as well as without, the house of God. Hence Mr. Veevers is not quite fair when he asks, "Jesus or the world—which?" because the real choice is not between Jesus and the world, but between Christianity and Secularism, or between Supernaturalism and Naturalism, or between this world and the next.

At this point we part company with Mr. Veevers in order to emphasise the fact that the alternatives to Christianity are very numerous. Judaism, Mohammedanism, Buddhism, and even Theosophy may be regarded as alternatives, and Christians not a few have already renounced their own religion and adopted one or another of these as an alternative. Does not Mr. Veevers know that there are many thousands of British Theosophists, won, for the most part, from Christianity, who testify that life has a richer and brighter meaning for them now than it had before? And surely their witness is as worthy of credence as that of Mr. Veevers and his friends. But the trend of modern history is away from all religions, from all supernatural beliefs, and towards secularity, pure and simple. All religions, with the exception, perhaps, of Buddhism, are the offspring of ignorance and fear; and in proportion as ignorance and its resultant fear disappear, religions decay, and humanity mounts its appropriate throne. That is to say, the spread of knowledge checks the spread of religion, and makes room for Secularism, which is the only adequate and permanent alternative to Christianity. Now on what ground can preachers of the Gospel object to Secularism? Certainly not on any moral ground, because Secularism makes morality its all in all. It is a system of thought that concerns itself alone with the life that now is. Its one aim is to secure the welfare of mankind in this world, and this welfare can only be secured by observing the natural law of morality. What reasonable objection can be raised against such teaching? "But it leaves God and eternity out of account," exclaims the theologian. True; but God and eternity are unknown quantities, and cannot be brought into the problem without hopelessly complicating it. That Secularism is fully justified in repudiating God and eternity is clear from the fact that when men's faith in God and eternity was strongest, morality was at its weakest and worst. The same is true of faith in Christ. When it was most fervent and general some of the most degrading social evils were most triumphant. And everybody knows that Christ is the most uncertain of all quantities. Think of the fierce controversy about him now going on in the religious world. At this very moment his followers are eloquently cursing one another in his name and on his account. This conflict is highly injurious to the moral life of the people engaged in it. Thus God, Christ and eternity, being unknown quantities, and causing so much moral damage to those who believe in, and quarrel about, them, should be ignored by any system that seeks to deal seriously with the problem of human life in this world.

On this ground we therefore confidently recommend Secularism as a suitable substitute for Christianity. We offer its sound sense in place of the wild nonsense of the pulpit. We exhort all to accept its scientific instruction in preference to the ignorant babbling of the priests. The pulpit says: "Life is unreal without Christ"; but Secularism puts in this simple contradiction: "Life is unreal as long as Christ, an unnatural being, remains in it." To be real, life must be natural; which it cannot be with a supernatural being in command of it. Everything human is natural, and the natural must be regulated, in all its activities, on natural principles, or it is bound to be injured.

J. T. LLOYD.

The Making of the Gospels.—VIII.

(Continued from p. 245.)

IN concocting narratives of suitable events for their Lord's public ministry, the Gospel-makers, in many cases, derived assistance from various passages in the Old Testament. The following may be taken as samples:—

A WOULD-BE FOLLOWER.

An incident recorded in the mythical history of the prophet Elijah suggested a similar incident in the equally mythical history of Jesus Christ.

ELIJAH (1 Kings xix. 19-20).—"Elisha the son of Shaphat, who was ploughing.....left the oxen, and ran after Elijah, and said, Let me, I pray thee, kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow thee. And he said unto him, Go back again; for what have I done to thee?"

JESUS (Luke ix. 61-62).—"And another also said, I will follow thee, Lord; but first suffer me to bid farewell to them that are at my house. But Jesus said unto him, No man having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."

Upon the fatuity and unreason displayed by these two personages in the circumstances related, it is unnecessary to comment.

JESUS GREATER THAN THE TEMPLE.

A priestly writer in the Old Testament made King Solomon say, in effect, that the God of the Hebrews was of too exalted a nature to inhabit the newly-made temple (2 Chron. vi. 18). In accordance with this declaration, one of the Gospel-makers made his fictitious Jesus say of himself: "But I say unto you that one greater than the temple is here" (Matt. xii. 6).

DAVID'S LORD.

The opening words of Psalm cx.—"The Lord saith unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool"—were understood by the primitive Christians as a prediction, written by David, respecting Jesus Christ—the passage signifying "the Lord God said unto David's Lord [*i.e.*, the Lord Jesus], Sit thou on my right hand," etc. So certain were the Gospel-makers of this interpretation that they represented Jesus as puzzling the Pharisees with the passage, and, of course, confounding them (Matt. xxii.; Mark xii.; Luke xx.).

"Now while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them a question, saying, What think ye of the Messiah? whose son is he? They say unto him, David's. He saith unto them, How then doth David in the spirit call him Lord, saying, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I put thine enemies underneath thy feet? If David then calleth him Lord, how is he his son? And no one was able to answer him a word" (Matt. xxii. 41-46).

Now we know, as a matter of fact, that Psalm cx. was *not* written by David, and that the words quoted simply meant "The Lord [Yahveh] said unto my lord [the king], Place yourself under my protection, and I will make you victorious over all your enemies." There is no puzzle in the statement at all. Yet, according to the Gospels, not only were the Pharisees silenced, but "neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions."

In the same way, the passage in Psalm cxviii.—"the stone which the builders rejected," etc.—was interpreted as referring to Jesus, and that glorified individual was made to quote it as such (Matt. xxi. 42-45).

THE PUBLIC ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM.

A passage in the Book of Zechariah describing a Jewish king returning from victory, was twisted by the Gospel-makers into a prediction relating to Jesus Christ. This passage reads:—

"Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold thy king cometh unto thee: he is just, and having victory; lowly, and riding upon an ass, even upon a colt the foal of an ass" (Zech. ix. 9).

This passage presents two examples of the parallelism peculiar to Hebrew poetry, which consists of the repetition of the same idea in slightly different words, the second sentence often supplementing or completing the first. Thus, "Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem" is a repetition of "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion." Similarly, the phrase "upon a colt the foal of an ass" is but a varied form of "upon an ass." Only one animal was, of course, meant—a young he-ass. Furthermore, whether the connecting word of the parallelism be translated "and" or "even" the meaning remains unaltered. Thus, in the example, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors," the same "gates" or "doors" are referred to. The Gospel-maker, however, took Zechariah to mean an ass and a colt. Bearing this fact in mind, it is not surprising that in the story invented to fulfil the "prophecy" Jesus was represented as sending his disciples to loose and bring to him an ass and a colt; nor that the disciples went as directed and returned with both, "and put on them their garments, and he sat thereon," and in this mountebank fashion rode into Jerusalem (Matt. xxi. 2-7). In Luke's later and revised account only one ass is mentioned; but there cannot be the smallest doubt that it was the misunderstood parallelism in Zechariah which suggested the silly story of Jesus sending his disciples to fetch him "an ass and a colt."

The rejoicing of the multitude and the cutting down of trees by the way, as well as the so-called "cleansing of the temple" by Jesus, were further suggested by a paragraph in the Second Book of Maccabees recording a historical "cleansing of the temple" by Judas Maccabæus.

2 Macc. x. 5-7.—"Now on the same day that the sanctuary was profaned by aliens, upon that very day [three years later] did it come to pass that the cleansing of the sanctuary was made.....Wherefore, bearing wands wreathed with leaves, and fair boughs, and palms also, they offered up hymns of thanksgiving to Him that had prosperously brought to pass the cleansing of his own place."

The two passages cited from Zechariah and 2 Maccabees are the only foundation for the Gospel story of Jesus riding into Jerusalem as a king (and on an ass), of the acclamation of the populace, and of the "cleansing" of the temple. The following is the Gospel-maker's fabricated narrative:—

John xii. 12-13.—"On the morrow a great multitude that had come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, took the branches of the palm trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried out, Hosanna: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."

Matt. xxi. 8-13.—"And the most part of the multitude spread their garments in the way; and others cut branches from the trees.....And the multitudes.....cried, saying, Hosanna to the son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.....And Jesus entered into the temple, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of them that sold doves; and he saith unto them, It is written, My house shall be called a house of prayer: but ye make it a den of robbers."

In the days of Judas Maccabæus the temple had been polluted by idolatrous worship and the sacrifice of swine, and it was considered necessary to purify it for the worship of Yahveh. In the time of Jesus there was nothing in connection with it that required "cleansing," so that individual was represented as overthrowing tables of money, driving out people who sold doves, and upsetting all existing arrangements for sacrifice with impunity.

The words put in the mouths of the imaginary people who shouted on the way—"Hosanna" (save now), etc.—were copied from Psalm cxviii. 25-26. The words placed in the mouth of Jesus when ejecting the people from the temple (Matt. xxi. 13; Mark xi. 17; Luke xix. 46) were taken from the books of Isaiah and Jeremiah.

Isaiah lvi. 7.—"For mine house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples."

Jer. vii. 11.—"Is this house, which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your eyes? Behold I, even I, have seen it, saith the Lord."

The first passage Jesus is made to cite as a quotation; the second is given as his own words. It was, doubtless, the statement that the Lord had "seen it" which caused the Gospel-maker to put the saying in the mouth of his own Lord.

The reply of Jesus to the Pharisees, when asked to stop the shouting of his disciples who headed the procession, was suggested by a passage from Habakkuk.

Hab. ii. 11.—"For the stone shall cry out of the wall, and the beam out of the timber shall answer it."

Luke xix. 40.—"And he answered and said, I tell you that if these shall hold their peace, the stones will cry out."

Only the words italicised in the latter passage were derived from the former. It was the Gospel-maker's method, as we have already seen, to select a few words without any regard to the context. From his point of view anything ascribed to the Lord in the Old Testament Scriptures might legitimately be attributed to the Lord Jesus in the Gospels.

ABRACADABRA.

(To be continued.)

Acid Drops.

"I want to be forgotten, even by God," says the hero of one of Browning's poems. And we fancy Paul must be feeling like that now. He who suffered not a woman to teach, he who said that the man was not made for the woman but the woman for the man, he who told wives to obey their husbands, he who said that the husband was the head of the wife as Christ was the head of the Church—what must he feel when he reads (say in the *New Jerusalem Times*) that nineteen women have been elected to the now Finnish Parliament? "They will be bossing it in heaven soon," he must be saying, "and this will be no place for me."

Those nineteen Finnish legislators are divided up as follows:—One journalist, one dressmaker, five school-teachers, one weaver, one Woman's Rights agitator, one restaurant-keeper, one clergyman's wife, and eight non-descripts—in the sense of not being described. We can guess how Paul would describe the lot of them. We can also guess how, after he had done, they would describe him. For ladies can generally hold their own in that line.

We like the bold and dazzling originality of the religious papers. There is a great run in all of them upon Robert Browning. We stopped counting the number of times they quoted

"Oh, to be in England
Now that April's there."

It almost made us wish for May. Not that the fault is Browning's. He was a great poet—and he deserved a better fate than to fall into the hands of the Philistines.

Liverpool Catholics are said to be contemplating a bold stroke against Mr. McKenna's Education Bill. Should the Bill pass the second reading, it is stated that the Executive of the Liverpool Catholic School Managers' Association will withdraw from school the whole of the forty thousand Catholic children of the city. It is thought that this policy will paralyse the administration and compel concessions to Catholic claims. Anyhow, we hope it will come off; for the more the Churches fight over religious education the sooner the victory of Secular Education will be achieved.

In this particular matter our sympathy is rather with the Catholics. It is intolerable that Catholics should have to pay for religious teaching in their schools, over and above what they pay in rates, while Nonconformist religious teaching is to be paid for at the public expense. This is really the whole question in a nutshell.

The Lord Chief Justice, Mr. Justice Phillimore and Mr. Justice Darling, have reversed convictions by the West Riding magistrates, under the Education Acts, of two parents for sending their children to church instead of to school on Ascension Day. The law as laid down in the Court of Appeal is that a parent has the right to withdraw

a child from school on a day which is "exclusively" set apart for religious observances by the religious body to which he belongs. This was thought to apply only to Jews and Catholics, but it is difficult to see why they should be specially favored, to the disadvantage of Churchmen. We suggest to local authorities—even if they happen to be rabid Dissenters—that a little give and take is a good thing in the practical affairs of this life.

Eleven missionary societies are combining to hold a great demonstration at the Albert Hall on October 31. The one subject to be talked about is the position and prospects of Christian missions in China. "The Chinese," according to an advance puff of this gathering, "have suddenly resolved to change their ancient system of education, and to adopt the arts and sciences of the Western nations. Will China also embrace Christianity? The opportunity to present the Gospel to her enormous population was never so great, and may never again recur." Well now, that is rich; narrowing God Almighty's opportunities of converting China to the true faith down to this one chance! But the object of the missionary societies, of course, is to stir up pious imaginations with a view to raking in the shekels. We believe the leaders of those societies know very well that China is not in the least likely to accept Christianity. She wants Western science. So did Japan—and took it; but she would not take Western religion. Neither will China.

According to the *Methodist Recorder* there is a considerable leakage in the Wesleyan Methodist Connexion. Instead of a gain, as was believed, there is a net loss of 1,982 full members, 6,152 members on trial, and 1,989 junior members. Altogether the class-books show 10,123 fewer names than they did twelve months ago. Large decreases are shown by the West London and South London Missions, and the large sums of money spent on those enterprises have been practically wasted—for the result is admitted to be "disappointing." On the other hand, there is a revival of missionary zeal. The Wesleyan Church is losing Englishmen, but it means to do or die in converting the Heathen.

American papers are beginning business already on the Rev. C. F. Aked, late of Liverpool, now of the (John D. Rockefeller) Fifth Avenue Baptist Church, New York. We expect to see some lively quotations from them in one or other of our American exchanges. Before the reverend gentleman arrived, the press commented on the fact that after two months' work he would enjoy three months' holiday. That is one advantage of preaching to millionaires. They don't overwork you. They give you a long rest—and themselves too.

Rev. John Watson ("Ian M'Laron"), who also hailed from Liverpool, has been telling New York interviewers that "Aked is a man quite above monetary considerations." So is Dr. Watson, who had a fine salary (besides the profits of his literary work) for preaching the Gospel of the "Master" who taught, "Blessed be ye poor."

The living of St. Lawrence, New Brentford, is nominally worth £300 a year, but is actually worth £120 a year at present. It has been offered to six clergymen who have all declined it. They can't preach "Blessed be ye poor" on so small a salary. But how Judas would have jumped at it when he was going to sell his Boss for thirty pieces of silver (probably about £3 15s.)! There is more money in the business now than there was then. By millions!

Rev. J. W. Patrick, pastor of one of the U.F. churches, at Alva, has resigned his pulpit, on the ground that he is going into business. He should have said *another* business. This time it is to be shawl manufacturing, which will probably pay him better than soul saving.

"Providence" has been going it strong in Mexico, where an earthquake has destroyed five cities and killed hundreds of people. "For his mercy endureth for ever."

New craters have opened in the volcano of Puychue, in the Chilean province of Valdivia, and enormous damage has been wrought in the vicinity. Manila telegrams report the destruction of Iloulo, with 20,000 people rendered homeless. A severe typhoon (on Good Friday!) swept over the Ulusi Islands, north-east of the North Caroline group, killing 230 out of the 800 natives. "He doeth all things well."

During the week ending April 13 no less than 75,000 deaths from plague occurred in India. "For his tender mercies are over all his works."

We wonder what writer was referred to in last week's *Academy*. "Labor M.P.s," it said, "in the first flush of their success at the polls last year were very chary of giving anything for nothing, and the majority absolutely declined to sign articles unless paid a substantial fee. One reply from a militant member was written in an ignorant hand and misspelt, although a prominent monthly review contained an extremely learned article on socialism from the same pen!" Fortunately nothing of this sort could ever be said about leading "militant" Freethinkers.

Mr. H. R. P. Gamon was selected by the Toynbee Trustees to write a book on London police-court life and administration, which is now published by Dent and Co. under the title of *The London Police Court To-Day and To-Morrow*. Mr. Gamon seems to be a very sensible man. He advocates the total abolition of the oath, which is out of keeping with the times, and does not prevent perjury. He thinks there should be a "Police Court Friend" to take the place of the present missionary; who, with all other workers in this field, should be entirely separate from any Church or religious organisation.

Father Adderley, as he calls himself, or is called, is a Church of England parson. Having imbibed his Christianity through those ancient works of fiction, the Four Gospels, he naturally seeks to promote Christianity by a work of fiction from his own pen. It is entitled *Behold the Days Come—A Fancy in Christian Politics*. We haven't read it, and don't intend to. But we see from a press notice that he begins by converting the son of an Atheist lecturer in Hyde Park. We believe this is the only Atheist that Father Adderley has converted.

How these men of God know the Freethought movement. Most of them, apparently, believe that all the Atheist lecturers of any distinction hold forth in Hyde Park.

"Leasehold marriages" appear to have an advocate in Mrs. Elsie Clews Parsons, Ph.D., of U. S. A., in her new book for the use of college lecturers and students of physiology—*The Family*. Listen to the lady:—

"As a matter of fact, truly monogamous relations seem to be those most conducive to emotional or intellectual development and to health, so that, quite apart from the question of prostitution, promiscuity is not desirable or even tolerable. It would, therefore, seem well, from this point of view, to encourage early trial marriage, the relation to be entered into with a view to permanency, but with the privilege of breaking it if proved unsuccessful, and in the absence of offspring, without suffering any great degree of public condemnation."

There is something delicious about that "absence of offspring." Offspring is such an unusual result of marriage! But perhaps the "leasehold marriage" will be a new means of keeping down the population.

"Early trial marriage" is an expression that could only come from a profound humorist or a person with no humor at all. We wonder which Mrs. Parsons is. She might have added a section on the number of times it might be judicious or permissible for a young lady to practise the "trial" system before settling down into "truly monogamous relations." Also, whether it would be the right thing to do if a young man who contemplated a "trial" arrangement with one of these young ladies were to consult his predecessors in the same experiment—or compare notes with them afterwards.

There is no end to the questions that might arise out of this delicate proposal. But we will ask no more. We merely wish to point out that the American lady sociologist has overlooked one important fact. There is still such a thing as love in the world. And when it appears upon the scene it plays the devil with the "trial" ideas of the newest sociology. That is really the moral of the Thaw case.

The Catholic idea that marriage is a sacrament is no doubt a superstition, but even an Atheist like the great Auguste Comte, the founder of the Religion of Humanity, not unnaturally preferred it to the anarchic suggestions of many "reformers" of his day—who are now mostly forgotten. Of the two extremes the cleaner seems the more eligible. Besides, the one is at least consistent with real love, while the other isn't.

It is a relief to turn from suggestions rather too reminiscent of dogs than even of the higher apes to the old story of Disraeli's marriage with the woman who made his career possible. She adored him, and he learnt to recognise something in her which was better than all the world's prizes. Her virtues were not so visible to careless eyes, and one day

a friend told Disraeli of the remark of another friend's as to the oddness of his being faithful to such a plain wife. "Ah," said Disraeli, "he doesn't understand the meaning of gratitude." It was a withering answer, and a noble one too.

Mr. T. E. Kebbel, in his book just published, tells another story of that devoted couple:—

"'You know I married you for your money,' Disraeli would say to her. 'Oh, yes; but if you were to marry me again, you'd marry me for love, wouldn't you?' was the regular reply. 'Oh, yes!' her husband would exclaim, and the little nuptial comedy ended."

How delightful that is after the American lady lecturer's new sociology!

"One thing befalleth them. Yea, they have all one breath." So the Bible says of men and animals, and so we may say of pious men and profane men. It is announced that the Wesleyan Methodist Trust Assurance Company has decided to issue policies under the Workmen's Compensation Acts, and is "prepared to insure organists, chapel-keepers, ministers' servants, etc." Pious persons are no safer than other persons, even in the very House of God. One thing befalleth them—when accidents are about. Yea, they have all one breath—when death hovers round their respiratory apparatus.

Zion Church, situate in the suburbs of Waterbury, Connecticut, has lately been short of funds. A few weeks ago, the Rev. J. M. Whilted endeavored to rectify this in a sensational manner. After the sermon all lights were extinguished, and then appeared a young lady in the garb of the "Angel of Light" and another as the "Angel of Darkness." After these came twelve elder women got up to represent the twelve apostles. All carried lighted candles and a hundred more blazed around the pulpit. Then the clerk called over the roll of church members and one of the apostles approached each with the demand, "One dollar, please. The church needs money." If the dollar was given, the apostle went and presented it to the Angel of Light, who smiled on the giver; if not, she reported to the Angel of Darkness, who frowned and blew out her candle. Of course, the enterprising parson has at once become famous, but we can imagine what the newspapers would say if such a method of raising church funds were adopted in this old-fashioned country of ours.—*Liverpool Daily Post*.

Mr. R. W. Perks, M.P., the well-known Wesleyan, speaking at a missionary meeting at Bristol, had something special to say about the New Theology. He said that the new Gospeller was a curious product of the twentieth century. "Look at him," Mr. Perks said; "he starts on Sunday morning from his luxurious suburban home. He reaches his church in a thousand-guinea Panhard motor-car, he is clad luxuriously in furs, and he preaches the new Gospel; and as he describes in harrowing language the wretchedness and the misery and the wants and sorrows of the poor he waves his jewelled fingers in the air." We suppose this is meant for Campbell.

Mr. Perks, M.P., the famous Wesleyan layman, has had his house "burgled." While the family were at dinner the burglars entered by means of a long ladder. Breaking open the drawers in Mrs. Perks's room, they scoured a pearl necklace worth £1,000, two diamond brooches, and other jewels. Had the lady been married to a real Christian—that is to say, a Gospel Christian, a Christ-like Christian, one who practised what Jesus taught—she would never have had such things to lose. We fancy a good many Christian ladies expect to wear their jewels in heaven. It will be a poor place otherwise for some of them.

Even the gay and festive Unitarians "leave a bit" now and then. We see that Mrs. Elizabeth Anne Todd Vance-Smith (we pause to take breath), widow of the late Rev. George Vance-Smith, D.D., is in the "Wills Proved" list for £50,163. A smaller sum of £11,844 is against the name of Mrs. Eliza Chippindall, of Holy Trinity Vicarage, Bromley, Kent, widow of the late Rev. John Chippindall, rector of St. Luke's, Cheet-ham, Manchester.

"Thou shalt not kill," the Bible says—and the book is full of slaughter. What wonder, then, that the colors of the 4th Battalion of the Manchester Regiment have just been taken by a military escort to the Manchester Cathedral?

"Don't talk like that," said Sir R. Littler to a prisoner at the Middlesex Sessions who exclaimed, "As God is my witness, I am innocent." Judges, if they speak out, know the value of these pious ejaculations.

A curious announcement appeared in *The Leopard*, a journal published at Tunbridge Wells, for Old Skinners' Schoolboys. "Owing to lack of space," it said, "a number of births and deaths are postponed." How was it arranged with "Providence"?

Dr. J. H. Moulton, of Didsbury College, has been telling the Manchester Evangelical Free Church Council (as if it were news to them!) that "the deity of Jesus Christ is the pivot of all truth." But suppose the pivot is worn out? Ay, there's the rub.

The Prophet of Nazareth manufactured a tremendous lot of booze on a certain festive occasion. We express no surprise, therefore, at reading that Sir Frederick Wigan, who was a trustee for the debenture-holders in Bass's, Allsopp's, Worthington's, and other brewing concerns, and left £530,560, was for many years a munificent donor to the Cathedral funds of the diocese of Southwark. Maybe he is now in heaven (unless he has missed the way) singing that ancient classical song, "Beer, beer, glorious beer."

Where is the Heavenly City, the New Jerusalem? According to the Rev. G. Berry, of Emmanuel Church, Plymouth, who has given the subject "long and careful thought," it is "situated on the side of the moon which we do not see." He has submitted his theory to Sir Robert Ball, who is probably glad of a little jocularity now and then as a relief to his astronomical studies. For our part, we believe that the New Jerusalem is as likely to be on the other side of the moon as anywhere else. But several "authorities"—including Bailey, the author of *Pestus*, and Faber, of *Many Mansions*—have assigned the moon as the locality of Hell. The only certain thing is that *luna* is the Latin name of the moon, and is the parent of the English word *lunatic*. We hope the Rev. G. Berry will see the point.

Liverpool bigots are on the job again. "Indignant Ratepayer" writes to the *Daily Post* protesting against the Picton Hall being let for lectures by Mr. G. W. Foote. He accuses Secularists in general of "shocking blasphemy," but he says that Mr. Foote is the author of an "inexpressibly blasphemous production" entitled *Was Jesus Insane?* This anonymous bundle of indignation declares that "the use of Picton Hall on a Sunday, or any other day, for the airing of infidel nostrums is an outrage and a disgrace to Liverpool." It does not occur to him that some citizens may regard "Indignant Ratepayer" as a disgrace to Liverpool. He forgets that Picton Hall belongs to all the ratepayers of Liverpool—Secularists as well as Christians, and that the monopoly of it by one set of ratepayers would undoubtedly be "an outrage and a disgrace."

The Jonah and whale story still furnishes spiritual food for the Rev. A. C. Dixon and the people who like the kind of sermons he preaches. The other day, this enlightener of the populace took the noted fish incident for a text at the Moody Church in Chicago. The narrative furnished no obstacles to the Rev. Dr. Dixon's belief in its inspiration and truth. He said that he had seen a submarine boat in which men go down and remain as long as they please. "And these scientists," he said with scorn—"these scientists, who can almost do what God did, will not allow God to do more than they can do!" He believed that God could have made the fish and given Jonah a stateroom with two or three men to wait on him, and all the accommodations of modern ocean travel; or that God could have created a monster big enough to swallow the ship and all on board, or the globe itself, for that matter, and carried the whole business to the farthest fixed star. A small miracle compared with swallowing Dixon.—*Truthseeker* (New York).

The Rev. A. C. Dixon, in the foregoing paragraph, is the person who libelled Ingersoll. Evidently his intellect is worthy of his character.

MISUNDERSTOOD HIM.

One day an army chaplain saw a soldier, by the name of McDonnell, making for the back door of a saloon.

"McDonnell!" the chaplain shouted; "McDonnell! Oh, McDonnell!"

McDonnell turned, gave him a hasty look, frowned, and darted into the bar.

The chaplain loitered outside the door till McDonnell came forth again.

"McDonnell," he said, reproachfully, "didn't you hear me calling you?"

"Yes, sir," McDonnell answered, "I did; but—but I only had the price of one drink."—*Harper's Weekly*.

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, April 28, Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, Manchester; at 3, "Mr. Bernard Shaw and God"; at 6.30, "Rev. R. J. Campbell's Spring Cleaning."

May 5, Liverpool; 19, N. S. S. Conference.

To Correspondents.

- C. COHEN'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—April 28, a. Victoria Park, e. Workman's Hall, Stratford.
- G. S. STEARMAN.—What you suggest was agreed to at the Liverpool Conference, but it had to wait for other things in view of the calls upon the N. S. S. finances. Perhaps it may take its turn in the new year. You need not apologise for writing. We are always glad to receive suggestions from "saints."
- M. BARNARD.—Mr. Joseph McCabe's pamphlet on *Secular Education* might help you (price 6d.), but an up-to-date history of the "Education Difficulty" from the very beginning has yet to be written as you (and others) wish it. John Morley's book is good in its way.
- G. JACOB.—We thank you for your friendly and informing letter. It may be, as you say, that the ostrich does not bury its head in the sand deliberately, but merely falls in that way when it drops exhausted in its flight. When we refer to "ostrich tactics" we are not committing ourselves to the opposite view, but simply using a proverbial expression, which is far more common than you fancy. We noticed it in two newspaper articles this morning.
- W. P. BALL.—Very much pleased to receive your weekly batch of cuttings again, and hope you are now completely recovered from your attack of influenza—a hope in which, we are sure, many of our older readers will heartily join.
- G. GARRETT.—We don't believe the Mountain Ash Free Church Council will help to bring about a public debate between a representative of their side and a representative of the N. S. S.; still, we should be glad to be disappointed. With regard to Mr. Lee's figures as to the number of Buddhists, we had better print the figures given by Professor T. W. Rhys Davids, in his book on *Buddhism*, which is actually published by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge: "Parsees 150,000; Sikhs 1,200,000; Jews 7,000,000; Greek Catholics 75,000,000; Roman Catholics 152,000,000; Other Christians 100,000,000; Mohammedans 155,000,000; Buddhists 500,000,000; Not included in the above 100,000,000." These figures, from such a source, will be more valuable to you than anything we could say.
- T. H. ELSTON.—See paragraph. Yes, Mr. Foote is in good fighting trim again. Glad to hear the past year's work of the Newcastle Branch has been the best you recollect.
- P. M. WELLS.—*Bible Heroes* has lately run out of print. A new popular cheap edition is all in type, and we are passing the sheets for the press as rapidly as possible. As soon as it is ready, your copy shall be sent, with the tracts. We are sorry to hear of the death of the lady you mention as one of our recent accessions at Aberdeen, but glad to know that her fortitude impressed her Christian friends.
- J. LUCAS.—Glad to know of the pleasure you have derived from reading the last few numbers of the *Freethinker*, and that you thought the April 11 number so "splendid" that you bought half-a-dozen copies for distribution.
- H. COWELL.—Sorry that you and your wife and three friends were kept from hearing Mr. Foote on Sunday by the weather. According to all appearances, Queen's Hall would have been crowded out if the weather had been favorable.
- J. PARTRIDGE.—It arrived safely, and is really a curious and striking production.
- HAROLD ELLIOTT.—Thanks for your efforts to promote our circulation. Poster forwarded.
- J. BROUGH.—We note your hope for "overflowing audiences" at Manchester. Thanks for cuttings.
- G. ROLEFF.—Your Conference suggestion has been passed on to the secretary for the Executive. See "Acid Drops" for the other matter. Thanks.
- A. WEBBER.—See paragraph. Glad you were "delighted with *Adam's Breeches*."
- J. ROBERTS.—We appreciate your humorous letter. Seriously, we hope to tackle that long-promised book on Shakespeare during the present year. It is pleasant (in its way) to know that you and others are "longing for the day of its publication."
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Sugar Plums.

Mr. Foote delivers two lectures to-day (April 28), afternoon and evening, in the Secular Hall, Manchester. He had to disappoint his friends there some time ago, in consequence of indisposition; but he is once more "fit" for platform work, and the Manchester and district "saints" will be glad to welcome him in their midst again. On the following Sunday (May 5) Mr. Foote delivers two lectures in the big Picton Hall, Liverpool.

Sunday was a miserably wet day in London, but in spite of the weather Mr. Foote's lecture on Shakespeare drew an exceptionally good audience at Queen's Hall. And never was an audience more appreciative. For an hour and a quarter, often amid breathless silence, the lecturer's remarks on the mind of the greatest of poets was followed; and the applause at the end was particularly enthusiastic. Some questions were asked and answered afterwards, but there was no formal discussion. Mr. Schaller occupied the chair.

April 23 was the death-day of William Shakespeare—as it also appears to have been his birthday. We have written many articles on that great date in the Calendar of Humanity, and may write many more—for the subject is inexhaustible. We are otherwise engaged, however, for the present; but we shall have something to say, perhaps next week, on the long-promised book on Shakespeare by Professor Walter Raleigh, which was announced for April 23, the day this number of the *Freethinker* leaves our hands for the press.

Mr. Cohen, who is engaged in expelling a beastly cold, and, we understand, successfully, lectures again this evening (April 28) at the Workman's Hall, Romford-road, not far from the Stratford Town Hall. He had a good audience last Sunday, in spite of the wet weather.

There was no N. S. S. lecture in Victoria Park on Sunday in consequence of the rain. The season will therefore begin there this afternoon (April 28) with a lecture by Mr. Cohen. Local "saints" will please note.

Mr. Cohen's recent visit to Scotland was a successful one. He had capital meetings at Glasgow and two excellent meetings at Falkirk and Paisley.

The time has passed for notices of motion to be sent in to the National Secular Society's general secretary (Miss E. M. Vance) for the Conference Agenda. All the notices will be laid before the Executive on Thursday evening, April 25, after this number of the *Freethinker* goes to press. They will pass over into the hands of the Agenda committee and be first printed in next week's issue of this journal, in accordance with the standing rule of practice.

We repeat our hope that Branches of the N. S. S. will make a special effort to be represented at this Conference. A good many individual members might also make it convenient to visit London during the Whitsun holidays. As far as travelling is concerned, it is generally easier to reach London than elsewhere; and provincial friends may rely upon being well "looked after" by the N. S. S. officials and other metropolitan "saints."

The Lord Mayor of Newcastle-on-Tyne, in response to a clerical requisition, has called a Town's Meeting on the question of "Sunday Observance" for Monday, April 29. As there are several sections of Newcastle citizens—including, of course, the Secularists—who have been hampered of late by the restrictions of municipal Sabbatarians, their fate will probably be bound up with the effect of this meeting. It behoves all friends of a Rational Sunday to attend this meeting, in order to defend their rights. We are assured that it is already arranged to give any retrograde clerical resolutions determined opposition. The meeting is announced to commence at 8 o'clock, but, in view of previous experiences, Secularists will be well advised to put in an appearance much earlier.

Tankerton.

TANKERTON is a small English town and quite unimportant, but its inhabitants consider it the hub of the universe. Unlike the frivolous dwellers in London, the people of Tankerton take themselves very seriously. Indeed, it is a tacit assumption of theirs that the earth was created because it was imperatively necessary that Tankerton should exist.

In formation, Tankerton very much resembles a herring-bone—it has one long, wide street with a number of very short, narrow streets at right angles to it on either side. It possesses a single line of tramway, and it has a one-horse car which slowly perambulates the length of the town at hourly intervals. The main street of Tankerton runs east and west; hence it follows that its side streets are opposite the north and south respectively; but this fact has no special significance.

Tankerton is very respectable. It says hard things of men and ideas when the rest of the world has set the example, and it condescends to patronise men and ideas when the rest of the world has done so. In Tankerton, unbounded respect is shown for a lie supported by a majority, whereas utter contempt is shown for a truth which has the adherence of but a few earnest, brain-using men.

A short time ago the Chief Charlatan of the Blood-and-Fire Army paid Tankerton a visit, and was carried there in one of those latest inventions of the Devil—namely, a motor-car. Had he followed the example of his Blessed Lord, he would have tramped to Tankerton; or, at most, have ridden there on an ass. Again, considering his age, he might have gone there in a litter borne on the shoulders of relays of his followers—for surely there is a sufficiency of mules among so many abstainers from thinking. But no, he would use none of these means; he must go there in a motor-car, which, as Father Ignatius will tell you, is anything but a godly contrivance. And on the arrival of the Chief of Blood-and-Blazesism, the Tankertonites, headed by their highly-respectable and Nonconformist Mayor, turned out and gave the yell of welcome which it is the custom to give to those who have dined with royalty—that is to say, have partaken of the Sacrament of the Highest Respectability. There was a time when the Tankertonites would have thrown mud at him. But now he was wearing the glamor of royal approval, and the Tankertonites, with dutiful and simian-like obedience, bowed down and worshiped him.

But that hawk-faced old man was under no delusion respecting Tankerton. He had already calculated its cash value to him. Such a highly-respectable and Nonconformist town was not easily to be persuaded to relax its tenacious grip on its money. The collection was much less than the amount anticipated, however, and for the following reason. The Mayor, of whom better behavior was expected, gave only £1, and invoked God's blessing. The Tankertonites, slow to follow their Mayor in other things, now followed him enthusiastically, at the deductive distance of 99 per cent. In revenge, the Chief Charlatan gave them a good, old-fashioned, Spurgeon-like, hell-fire, farewell sermon, telling them what howling sinners they were, and that it was a tremendously good job for them he had come out of his way to save them, for they had been dangerously near to toppling over into the Bottomless Pit.

As I have said, Tankerton is a highly-respectable and Nonconformist town, and it has, amongst its few and precious institutions, a free library. Into this library only books reeking with Christianity are quite free to enter. Of course, there are other works of fiction, but they are perfectly innocuous, being written, for the most part, by Nonconformist ministers. To give you an idea of how Christianly and Nonconformingly correct is the attitude observed at the Tankerton free library, I quote the following from the Tankerton *Free Press*:—

"Our librarian, who has been very ill lately, having, apparently, received a sort of stroke, is now slowly

recovering. Some young ruffian, evidently the offspring of freethinking parents, dared to ask him for a copy of Bishop Colenso's *Manual of Arithmetic*."

That incident occurred about two years ago, and has no bearing whatever upon the present raving, revival condition of Tankerton. The newspapers say that the present amazing state of mind of the people of Tankerton is quite unaccountable; but I know better.

A fortnight ago, Scotland Yard was waked into a terrible state of excitement by the Mayor of Tankerton asking, by telegram, how many policemen could be spared from the metropolis. The Mayor's wife, who presides over the Tankerton Mothers' Meeting and Bible Class, had six fits in six minutes. The five constables of Tankerton became temporarily cross-eyed, the librarian utterly collapsed, and all that could be got from him was babble about the day of judgment. The local J.P.'s looked up their books for methods of unusual punishment still permissible under English law. The Mayor, who was Colonel of the Tankerton Volunteers, assembled his men and served out ball cartridge to them. One unfortunate Nonconformist minister—a dauntless participator in the Conscience—was so overcome that he put an old sack round his shoulders, dirtied his bald head with ashes, then went staggering through the principal street of Tankerton shouting that the Day of Repentance was at hand. The conduct of some of the Tankerton tradesmen was astounding. The milkman swore, with tears in his eyes, that he would never again adulterate his milk. The chemist and druggist declared he would never again imperil his immortal soul by charging half-a-crown for a bottle of stuff worth only twopence. The cycle repairer decided to cease strewing the roads with tintacks. The landlord of the "Red Lion" inn swore, with alcoholic solemnity, that he would never again increase the adulteration of the beer his brewers supplied him with. To wind up, the Tankerton salvationists became almost corybantic in their prayers and antics when they heard the dreadful news. But, you will ask, what was the cause of all this terror and commotion. I will tell you. A copy of the *Freethinker* had been found on a reading-table in the Free Library.

JAMES H. WATERS.

Christianity and Torture.

WHILE the boy Stephanus, in the late Mr. Wilson Barrett's play *the Sign of the Cross*, was being lashed in front of the curtain, and racked behind it—while his shrieks rang through the theatre—I am quite sure the Christian spectators were saying to themselves—"Ah! that is Paganism!" Few of them are conversant with the records of the past. History begins for them at the time when they first read the newspapers. They do not know, therefore, that it is not so very long since their Christian forefathers left off perpetrating the very same atrocities that were inflicted on the boy Stephanus—not to mention others of a still deeper damnability. Stephanus was not lashed and racked as a Christian, but as a refractory witness; and this method of treating witnesses and accused persons was afterwards universal in Christendom. Joseph de Maistre, indeed, in his apology for the Spanish Inquisition—the most terrible tribunal that ever existed on earth—argues that in inflicting torture it was only conforming to the usage of all modern nations. No one who values his sanity, unless he is particularly strong-minded, should dive too deeply into the horrors of torture inflicted by Christians, and principally ecclesiastics, on persons accused of witchcraft or suspected of favoring them. It cannot be denied that Christianity added new and most ingenious horrors to the torture-system of antiquity, especially in its treatment of heretics. This infamous system only declined as science and free-thought slowly permeated the mind of Europe. From the days of Montaigne to those of Voltaire, the

voices of great and good men were raised against it. But it did not die in a hurry. Calas was broken alive as late as 1761. Frederic the Great, the free-thinking monarch, issued a Cabinet order abolishing torture in 1740, though its use was still reserved in Prussia for treason, rebellion and some other crimes. It was swept away in Saxony, Switzerland and Austria between 1770 and 1783. Catherine the Great restricted its use in Russia, where it was finally abolished in 1801. It lingered in some parts of Germany until it was abolished by Napoleon, after whose fall it was actually restored. George IV. consented to its abolition in Hanover in 1819, but it existed in Baden until 1831. It was in 1777 that Voltaire begged Louis XVI. to abolish torture in France; in 1780 it was very greatly restricted by a royal edict; but as late as 1788, at Rouen, Marie Tison was crushed with thumbscrews and was allowed to hang in the stappado for an hour after the executioner had reported that both her shoulders were out of joint. As a matter of fact, torture was finally swept out of French jurisprudence by the tempest of the Revolution. It was not legally abolished in Spain until 1812. Being inimical to the spirit of the common law, it was very little used in England before the days of Tudor and Stuart absolutism. Racking warrants were executed under Elizabeth, and were sanctioned by Coke and Bacon under James I., but were almost swept away by the Great Rebellion. The *press*, however, was still reserved for prisoners refusing to plead guilty or not guilty; weights being placed upon their chests until they were crushed to death. Giles Cory was pressed to death in this way in America in 1692, and it was not until 1722 that this relic of barbarism was abolished by Act of Parliament.

It is perfectly true that modern Europe inherited the torture-system from Greece and Rome, but Christianity aggravated, instead of mitigating, the iniquity. "It is curious to observe," says Mr. Lea, "that Christian communities, where the truths of the Gospel were received with unquestioning veneration, systematised the administration of torture with a cold-blooded ferocity unknown to the legislation of the heathen nations whence they derived it. The careful restrictions and safeguards, with which the Roman jurisprudence sought to protect the interests of the accused, contrast strangely with the reckless disregard of every principle of justice which sullies the criminal procedure of Europe from the thirteenth to the nineteenth century."

Christianity has never, *in practice*, been an enemy to cruelty. During the Dark Ages, when Christianity was entirely supreme, two things disappeared together—Freethought and Humanity. Modern humanitarianism is a very recent growth. It came in with the revival of scepticism. A hundred years ago Christian society was inexpressibly callous. The jurisprudence of England itself was simply shocking. Men and women were hung for trifling offences, and mutilations were frightfully common. Historians are too apt to hide the real facts with abstract declamation; I propose, therefore, to give my readers a sample of the tender jurisprudence of England two hundred and thirty-six years ago.

I have in my library a rare volume published in 1690. It is a full report of the indictment, arraignment, trial and judgment (according to law) of "nine and twenty Regicides, the murderers of his late Sacred Majesty," Charles the First. The volume was published "for the information of posterity." The Church and State party evidently thought the condemned Regicides were treated with proper justice, according to the best principles of morality and religion. Historians tell us that these unfortunate men, who had tried and condemned to death "the man Charles Stuart" in 1649, were cruelly executed. But they do not tell us *how*; they do not give us the facts. Now the volume I refer to gives (with full approval) the details of the execution of Major-General Harrison, and states that the others were "disposed of in like manner." Harrison was hanged

on the spot where Charles the First was beheaded; while only "half-dead" he was "cut down by the common executioner, his privy members cut off before his eyes, his bowels burned, his head severed from his body, and his body divided into quarters, which were returned back to Newgate upon the same hurdle that carried it." The head was set on a pole on the top of the south-east end of Westminster Hall, and the quarters of the body were exposed on four of the city gates.

This brutal act was done deliberately and judicially; not in a moment of excitement, but in cold blood. Its perpetrators were not ashamed of it; they were proud of it; and they put it carefully on record for "posterity." And they were Christians, and it was only a little over two hundred years ago.

G. W. FOOTE.

Vivisection.

A letter written to Philip G. Peabody. May 27, 1890.

By COLONEL R. G. INGERSOLL.

VIVISECTION is the Inquisition—the Hell—of Science. All the cruelty which the human—or rather the inhuman—heart is capable of inflicting, is in this one word. Below this there is no depth. This word lies like a coiled serpent at the bottom of the abyss.

We can excuse, in part, the crimes of passion. We take into consideration the fact that man is liable to be caught by the whirlwind, and that from a brain on fire the soul rushes to a crime. But what excuse can ingenuity form for a man who deliberately—with an unaccelerated pulse—with the calmness of John Calvin at the murder of Servetus—seeks, with curious and cunning knives, in the living, quivering flesh of a dog, for all the throbbing nerves of pain? The wretches who commit these infamous crimes pretend that they are working for the good of man; that they are actuated by philanthropy; and that their pity for the sufferings of the human race drives out all pity for the animals they slowly torture to death. But those who are incapable of pitying animals are, as a matter of fact, incapable of pitying men. A physician who would cut a living rabbit in pieces—laying bare the nerves, denuding them with knives, pulling them out with forceps—would not hesitate to try experiments with men and women for the gratification of his curiosity.

To settle some theory, he would trifle with the life of any patient in his power. By the same reasoning he will justify the vivisection of animals and patients. He will say that it is better that a few animals should suffer than that one human being should die; and that it is far better that one patient should die, if through the sacrifice of that one, several may be saved.

Brain without heart is far more dangerous than heart without brain.

Have those scientific assassins discovered anything of value? They may have settled some disputes as to the action of some organ, but have they added to the useful knowledge of the race?

It is not necessary for a man to be a specialist in order to have and express his opinion as to the right or wrong of vivisection. It is not necessary to be a scientist or a naturalist to detest cruelty and to love mercy. Above all the discoveries of the thinkers, above all the inventions of the ingenious, above all the victories won on fields of intellectual conflict, rise human sympathy and a sense of justice.

I know that good for the human race can never be accomplished by torture. I also know that all that has been ascertained by vivisection could have been done by the dissection of the dead. I know that all the torture has been useless. All the agony inflicted has simply hardened the hearts of the criminals without enlightening their minds.

It may be that the human race might be physically improved if all the sickly and deformed babes were killed, and if all the paupers, liars, drunkards, thieves, villains and vivisectionists were murdered. All this might, in a few ages, result in the production of a generation of physically perfect men and women; but what would such beings be worth—men and women healthy and heartless, muscular and cruel—that is to say, intelligent wild beasts?

Never can I be the friend of one who vivisects his fellow-creatures. I do not wish to touch his hand.

When the angel of pity is driven from the heart; when the fountain of tears is dry—the soul becomes a serpent crawling in the dust of a desert.

Laou-tsze and the Taou-teh King.

BY THE LATE J. M. WHEELER.

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

In China, three religions exist side by side; Confucianism, which is the religion of the State and the educated classes; Buddhism, which was introduced into China from India in the century before the Christian era; and Taoism, which claims as its founder Laou-tsze, author of the Taou-teh King. The doctrines of Laou-tsze, however, are no more to be gathered from the practices of the Taoists than those of Jesus from the Jesuits. It is with the sage and his thought we have to do, and not with the corruptions of those who call themselves his followers.

The name Laou-tsze signifies either "the old son" or "the old philosopher." The former is derived from a fabulous account of the sage, which makes him to have remained seventy-two years before birth in his mother's womb. He is said to have been born from her side and to have had white hair at birth. "The old or venerable philosopher," however, is the more reasonable account of the designation. According to the great Chinese historian, Sze-ma-Tszen, Laou-tsze's name was Uhr (an ear) and his surname Le (a plum-tree). From this have arisen myths of his having large ears and being born under a plum-tree. The date of his birth is usually given as 604 B.C., and as he lived to a great age, he was probably contemporary with Pythagoras, Ezekiel, Jeremiah and Gautama, as he certainly was with his fellow countryman Confucius, though the latter was his junior by fifty years.

Apart from legends, but little is known of the life of Laou-tsze beyond the fact that, although born of peasant parents, he attained the dignity of keeper of the archives at the Court of Chow. China, at that time, was a feudal empire in a state of almost chronic misrule, comparable to the condition of Europe when each baron did what was right in his own eyes. Torn by dissensions, its petty states were always warring with each other. In such a time only two courses were open to the patriot and philosopher—to reprove the self-seeking of the princes, or to retire and possess one's soul in patience in unenvied obscurity. Confucius chose the former plan and had a life of continued disappointment. Laou-tsze chose the latter.

Confucius has been Boswellised for us by his followers. We know his personal appearance, what he ate with his rice, and the position in which he lay in bed. No such particulars are given concerning Laou-tsze, who cannot be said to have had followers in his lifetime. Indeed, the religion which worships him, and is said to be founded on his doctrine, did not take shape till 500 years after his death. Only one detail of his life has been preserved, and that is an account of an interview with Confucius, which took place in 517 B.C. There was little in common between the meditative recluse and the practical sociologist. The interview might be compared to a talk between Comte and Carlyle. Confucius had been expatiating on the wisdom of the ancients. Laou-tsze said: "Those whom you talk about are dead and their bones mouldered to dust; only their words remain. When the superior man gets his opportunity he mounts aloft; but when the time is against him he moves as if his feet were entangled. I have heard that a good merchant, though he has rich treasures, appears as if he were poor, and that the superior man, whose virtue is complete, is yet, to outward seeming, stupid. Put away your proud air and many desires, your insinuating habit and wild will. These are of no advantage to you. This is what I have to tell you." Confucius, when he left him, said to his disciples: "I know how birds can fly, how fishes can swim and how beasts can run. And the runner may be snared, the swimmer may be hooked, and the flyer may be shot by the arrow. But there is the dragon. I cannot tell how he mounts on the wind through the clouds and rises to heaven. To-day I have seen Laou-tsze, and can only compare him to the dragon." The dragon being the Chinese symbol of power, this was intended as a compliment.

The Taou-teh King, the only writing of the old philosopher, is a short but very noticeable product of ancient philosophy. It is not half the size of the Gospel of Mark, yet is full of pithy though often obscure utterances. Laou-tsze is a mystic in the sense that his thought goes deeper than his language. Essentially he is a Quietist, with the Quietist's disregard of aught save equanimity. "There is nothing like keeping the inner man," he declares (chap. 5, Rev. J. Chalmers's translation). "He who knows others is wise. He who knows himself is enlightened. He who conquers others is strong. He who conquers himself is mighty. He who knows when he has enough is rich" (chap. 33).

Of a personal God, Laou-tsze knew nothing. The supreme thing with him is Taou, the right way or course of nature.

The title of his book may be compared to the Buddhist Dhammapada, or Footsteps of Virtue. The word Taou is not the invention of Laou-tsze. It was often in the mouth of Confucius, and with him it meant the "way." Buddhists also used it in the sense of "intelligence" and "reason." The Logos of John's Gospel is translated in Chinese by the word Taou. "The great Taou is exceedingly plain, but the people like the footpaths," said Laou-tsze (chap. 53). It is the eternal course of things, but no being made it, for it is being itself. It is the nature whence all come and to which all return.

Conformity with nature is the philosophy of Laou-tsze. To him nature taught silent work and patient self-abnegation. His favorite emblem is water. "The highest style of goodness is like water. Water is good to benefit all things; while it does not strive, but runs to the place which all men disdain" (chap. 8). All his teachings aim at making man a better individual and a better member of society. In all the operations of nature he finds a lesson. The hard and strong parts of a tree, he points out, are below, supporting the weaker parts; so should it be in human society (chap. 76). "Of all the weak things in the world nothing exceeds water; and yet of those who attack hard and strong things I know not what is superior to it. The fact that the weak can conquer the strong, and the tender the hard, is known to all the world, yet none can carry it out in practice" (chap. 78).

Many Christians are under the delusion that humility, forbearance and forgiveness, are peculiarly Christian virtues, though they were taught both by Chinese and Indian moralists ages before Christ. The doctrine of returning good for evil, so distinctly enunciated by Gautama (Dhammapada 5, 197, 223), is as certainly enforced by Laou-tsze. He says: "The good I would meet with goodness. The not good I would also meet with goodness. Virtue is good. The faithful I would meet with faith. The not faithful I would also meet with faith. Virtue is faithful. "Recompense injury with kindness" (49 and 63). Upon this doctrine being mentioned to Confucius, that practical-minded philosopher remarked: "With what, then, will you recompense kindness? Recompense injury with justice, and recompense kindness with kindness" (Lau-Yu xiv. 36). Dr. Legge, the missionary translator of the Chinese classics, who takes every opportunity of disparaging Confucius, makes a deal of this as showing how far his ethics fall below the Christian standard. But whatever may be thought of the difference between the Chinese sages, it must be allowed that the doctrine of the older one anticipated the teaching of Jesus.

Very similar to the Christian gospel, too, are his exhortations to humility. "The Taou of heaven may be compared to the extending of a bow. It brings down the high and exalts the low." "He that humbles himself shall be preserved entire. He that bends himself shall be straightened. He that is low shall be filled. He that is worn out shall be renewed. He that is diminished shall succeed. He that is increased shall be misled" (76, 22). "I have three precious things which I hold fast and prize. The first is called compassion, the second is called economy, and the third is called not daring to take the precedence of the world. Being compassionate, I can therefore be brave. Being economical, I can therefore be liberal. Not daring to take the precedence of the world, I can therefore become the chief of all the perfect ones" (67).

Telling rebukes of pride are given in the sentence "A man on tiptoe cannot stand still; nor can he who takes long strides continue to walk" (24). To do good without making a show of it is constantly the theme of Laou-tsze. In short, his ethics may be summed up in that sentence of Sir Thomas Browne's, "Be substantially great in thyself, and more than thou appearest to others; let the world be deceived in thee as they are in the stars of heaven."

Like Jesus, Laou-tsze deprecated riches, and even more strongly denounced war. He says, "To wear fine clothes and carry sharp swords—to eat and drink to satiety and lay up superfluous wealth—this I call magnificent robbery. This is not Taou sure enough" (53). Nations fond of military display may note the saying, "As the fish cannot leave the deep and live, so the warlike weapons of a nation cannot be displayed before the people without deadly peril" (36). "When the world has Taou, horses are only used for agriculture. When Taou does not rule, war horses are bred on the waste common" (46). "Peace is the highest aim of the superior man. When he conquers he is not elated. To be elated is to rejoice at the destruction of human life. He who rejoices at the destruction of human life is not fit to be entrusted with power in the world" (31). Laou-tsze opposes capital punishment and denounces exorbitant taxation as the cause of famine. His word is given against over-legislation. "When the world has many prohibitory enactments the people become more and more poor" (57). "The state is a spiritual vessel and cannot be manufactured. The meddler

mas; the grasper loses" (chap. 29). "Make the upright rule the nation" (57). "When the government is liberal, the people are rich and noble. When the government is pryingly strict, the people are needy and miserable" (58). His hope is in individual reform. He cries out as one may cry still. "Happiness has been too long built on misery. Therefore the sage is himself strictly upright, but does not cut and carve other people" (58). "A wise man takes care of his own part and exacts nothing of others." "The sage," says he, "is ever the good savior of men. He rejects none. He is ever the good savior of things. He rejects nothing. His I call comprehensive intelligence" (27). "The sage dwells in the world with a timid reserve; but his mind blends in sympathy with all. The people all turn their ears and eyes to him; and the sage thinks of them all as his children" (49).

These passages from this ancient manual of conduct are commended to the attention of those who deem no good can come out of anywhere but Nazareth. "Conduct," says Matthew Arnold, "is three-fourths of life." It is more. It is the basis of society and makes civilised society possible. The influence of such a teacher as Laou-tsze for twenty-five centuries is incalculable. His maxims must have done much to form the solid and imperturbable character of the Chinese. Much that he inculcated has been left aside as impracticable in this work-a-day world.

In this he only shares the fate of other teachers. Like them he has suffered from the corruptions and additions of his disciples. Upon his simple politico-ethical treatise has been reared a huge fabric of superstition. Yet, as with Gautama, Aristotle and Confucius, his moral principles are based on nature and without any reference to supernaturalism. There is rather every indication that he would have agreed with Confucius, who, when asked by Ke-Loo about serving the spirits of the dead, said: "While you are not able to serve men how can you serve their spirits" (Lun-Yu, xi. 11).

Correspondence.

INGERSOLL'S KINDNESS.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Your "Acid Drop" in last week's *Freethinker*, re Ingersoll's kindness, recalls a story I heard of him many years ago. I was going to the West Indies from Halifax, Nova Scotia, and among my fellow-passengers was a Colonel Smith, of the United States Army. I asked him if he knew Colonel Ingersoll. "Why, certainly," said he; "there is not a man or woman in the United States who does not know of Colonel Ingersoll, and he might be President of the United States any time if he would only suppress his opinions about religion. I not only know of him, but I have the honor of his personal friendship. And now let me tell you a true story of his greatness and kindness of heart. Two years ago, a fashionable doctor in New York died quite suddenly, and left a widow and two daughters very poorly provided for. They sold off everything, went into lodgings in a cheap neighborhood, and tried hard to make a living by painting Christmas cards. The eyesight of one of the girls, however, began to fail from too close attention to her work, and things got so bad that her sister, in despair, applied for assistance to the pastor of the fashionable church they had attended in their days of prosperity. This worthy Christian minister told her that, as they were not now living in his parish, he could not possibly assist them, as his own poor had the first call on his charity. The poor girl went home, and after a few days of semi-starvation, she determined to visit Colonel Ingersoll at his office in Wall-street and tell him her pitiful story. The Colonel was very busy with his numerous clients, but after some delay, the young lady was shown into his private office. He at once drew forward a chair and told her to be seated. He then begged her to tell him just what she wanted as shortly as possible, as he was a very busy man. When she had told him, he said: "My dear young lady, I believe every word you say; I have heard of your poor father's death, and my eyes convince me that you are in great distress. There is \$50 to go on with, and when that is done, do not hesitate to come here again should you want further help."

(MAJOR) G. O. WARREN,
Army Ordnance Dept. (Retired).

Are you in earnest? Seize this very minute;
What you can do, or dream you can, begin it;
Boldness has genius, power and magic in it.
Only engage and then the mind grows heated,
Begin, and the work will be completed.

—Goethe.

RESENTMENT.

It behoves us, therefore, in general, to praise those who do not allow themselves to be offended with impunity. They keep up among us an idea of extra-legal justice by which we all profit and which would soon become exhausted without their aid. Let us rather deplore that they are not more numerous. If there were not quite so many good-natured souls, capable of chastising, but too ready to forgive, we should find far fewer evil-doers too ready to do wrong; for three-fourths of the wrong that is committed springs from the certainty of impunity. In order to maintain the vague fear and respect that allow the unfortunate unarmed to live and breathe almost freely in a society teeming with knaves and dastards, it is the strict duty of all who are able to resist unpunishable justice by means of an act of violence never to fail to do so. They thus restore the level of immanent justice. Thinking that they are defending only themselves, they defend in the aggregate the most precious heritage of mankind.—Maeterlinck.

REVELATION.

Thomas Paine well said that what is revelation to the man who receives it, is only hearsay to the man who gets it at second-hand. If anyone comes to you with a message from God, first button your pockets, and then ask him for his credentials. You will find that he has none. He can only tell you what someone else told him. If you meet the original messenger, he can only cry "thus saith the Lord," and bid you believe or be damned. To such a haughty prophet one might well reply, "My dear sir, what you say may be true, but it is very strange. Return to the being who sent you and ask him to give you better credentials. His word may be proof to you, but yours is no proof to me; and it seems reasonable to suppose that, if God had anything to tell me, he could communicate personally to me as well as to you."—G. W. Foote, "Flowers of Freethought."

TIME, THE CONSOLER.

Time, the consoler, Time, the rich carrier of all changes, dries the freshest tears by obtruding new figures, new costumes, new roads, on our eye, new voices on our ear. As the west wind lifts up again the heads of the wheat which were bent down and lodged in the storm, and combs out the matted and dishevelled grass as it lay in night-locks on the ground, so we let in Time as a drying wind into the seed-fields of thought which are dark and wet and low bent. Time restores to them temper and elasticity. How fast we forget the blow that threatened to cripple us. Nature will not sit still; the faculties will do somewhat; new hopes spring, new affections twine, and the broken is whole again.—Emerson.

Behold yon servitor of God and Mammon,
Who, binding up his Bible with his Ledger,
Blends Gospel texts with trading gammon,
A black-leg saint, a spiritual hedger,
Who backs his rigid Sabbath, so to speak,
Against the wicked remnant of the week,
A saving bet against his sinful bias—
"Rogue that I am," he whispers to himself,
"I lie—I cheat—do anything for pelf,
But who on earth can say I am not pious?"

—Tom Hood.

I cannot feel interested in Christianity; it seems deplorable that there should be a tendency to creeds that would take men back to the chimpanzee.—Emerson (to M. D. Conway).

A COMPLAINT.

There is a change—and I am poor;
Your love hath been, not long ago,
A fountain at my fond heart's door,
Whose only business was to flow;
And flow it did: not taking heed
Of its own bounty, or my need.
What happy moments did I count!
Blest was I then all bliss above!
Now, for that consecrated fount
Of murmuring, sparkling, living love,
What have I? Shall I dare to tell?
A comfortless and hidden well.
A well of love—it may be deep—
I trust it is,—and never dry:
What matter? if the waters sleep
In silence and obscurity.
—Such change, and at the very door
Of my fond heart, hath made me poor.

—Wordsworth.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, etc.

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

LONDON.

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S. (North Camberwell Hall, New Church-road): 6.30, Business Meeting; 7.30, Conversazione.

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

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Fountain): 3.30, C. Cohen.

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): 3.15, a Lecture.

COUNTRY.

HUDDERSFIELD BRANCH N. S. S. (No. 9 Room, Trade and Friendly Hall): Tuesday, April 30, at 8, Annual Meeting.

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Secular Hall, Rusholme-road): G. W. Foote, 3, "Mr. Bernard Shaw and God"; 6.30, "Rev. R. J. Campbell's Spring Cleaning." Tea at 5.

OUTDOOR.

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

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