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Nothing is so much to be feared as fear. Atheism may comparatively be popular with God himself.—THOREAU.

The Spanish Baby.

FLATTERY is poured into the ears of the living—and powerful. It is never poured into the ears of the dead. And for the simple reason that flattery is self-interest appealing to vanity.

Kings and princes, queens and princesses, are fed with flattery from the cradle to the grave. They are treated as belonging to a different species from the people, and must be more than human if they do not fancy themselves to be so.

Death is the great leveller. Only the most striking personalities and the most powerful geniuses affect us from their tombs. A dead lord ranks with commoners; the ashes of a prince mingle with the dust of a pauper. Death cancels the bonds of professed allegiance and concealed interest; dead kings are seen as they were—and the spectacle is sometimes monstrous and often ridiculous.

George the Third was the pattern of all the virtues while he lived; he was an obstinate old fool when he was dead. George the Fourth was the first gentleman in Europe while he walked the earth; he was a dirty scoundrel when he had lain a few years in his coffin.

Monarchism of every kind is an inherited superstition. It has been supposed that strong and shining qualities first won power in the world, but this was certainly not always true, and the latest researches of Dr. Frazer—which are to be incorporated in the third edition of his great *Golden Bough*—seem to show that the rulership of mankind has generally rested upon a superstitious basis. That basis is reflected in the inscription on our coinage, where we still read that the King reigns by the grace of God.

With the purely political aspect of kingship we have nothing to do in the *Freethinker*. Those who prefer the head of the State, for political reasons, to belong to one family, shall go uncriticised as far as we are concerned. What we deny is that there is anything sacred in the family. They are of common (sometimes very common) flesh and blood. If you tickle them they laugh, if you poison them they die; they sweat in the summer and shiver in the winter; they eat, drink, sleep, and procreate, just like ordinary mortals. Pull them from their positions, strip them of their finery, and what is there left to mark them out from the reeking multitude?

The superstitious aspect of royalty is traded upon by the newspapers. These so-called organs of public opinion are usually the parasites of human weakness. They serve up sensationalism on the one side, and sentimentalism on the other. When they get hold of a Thaw case, which combines both elements, they rejoice with an exceeding great joy. But such cases are not frequent. The newspapers have, therefore, to fall back upon the stock business; and one of its chief items is the "movements of royalty." Columns of gush are poured over a little boy going to his first school, or a young wife expecting her first confinement. No respect is paid even to the most private

affairs of "the great." The public must have its news of them—steaming hot with the breakfast rolls.

King Edward's movements are carefully chronicled. He is said to be going round Europe as the very Prince of Peace. But all that remains to be seen. There are those who whisper that the key to his international policy is hatred of the Kaiser. They add that a game of this kind may very easily bring about a bloody war. Such things, however, are "outside our beat."

One of King Edward's fine strokes of statecraft was the Spanish marriage. King Alfonso being old enough (as royalty goes) to be mated, a wife was found for him in England. He was a Catholic and she was a Protestant. But she was practical. She was not going to lose a crown. So she said to King Alfonso, "Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God." And the whole world smiled. Religion, as a serious thing, was only meant for the multitude.

Now the enterprising princess has borne King Alfonso a baby. It is of the right sex. That was settled by going to church frequently and asking God to see to it. The whole of Spain is said to be in raptures. The day after the baby's birth the English newspapers said that she was going to suckle her child. They did not say suckle. That would have been too gross—in the case of a Queen. They merely *hinted* it. And they added that the Spanish nation was profoundly affected by this resolution of hers. Of course, the fact, if it were a fact, could not have been known so soon. The newspapers were simply gushing. It was a part of the good old game.

We wish that baby well—as we wish every other baby well. It would be canting to say more. We conceive that this "new birth" will not bring Spain the millennium. Seventy per cent. of the people are illiterate; in the schools that do exist, and are State-aided, the Catholic religion is taught compulsorily. The average salary of schoolmasters is £10 a year. The best schools are owned by the Jesuits. The government is under clerical control, and freedom of opinion does not exist. There is nothing to exult over in the present condition, or immediate future prospects, of Spain.

We turn in imagination from the festive Palace, where the King and Queen of Spain rejoice over their first-born, to the prison cell where Francisco Ferrer Guardia is wondering what justice is left in the world. Twelve months ago a madman threw a bomb at the King and Queen on their wedding day. Four days afterwards Ferrer was arrested on suspicion of complicity in the crime. Not a scrap of evidence was forthcoming except the fact that Morral had applied to Ferrer, as he might have applied to anyone else, for employment. Ferrer was conducting an organised movement of Secular Education. That was his crime. They wanted to get hold of him, and this was their opportunity. They seized his property and closed his schools. Himself they kept in prison. His trial has been postponed again and again. He is in prison still. He is no nearer trial than ever. Probably they hope that he will put an end to all their difficulties by dying. Such an infamous spectacle as this treatment of Ferrer calls for more attention than the Birth of the Spanish Baby.

G. W. FOOTE.

Living Statues.

MACAULAY'S statement about the ridiculous aspect of the British public in one of its periodic attacks of morality is at present being illustrated by the attack on "Living Statues" in music-halls. The self-elected moral guardians of the nation have discovered that an exhibition of partly-draped men and women disguised as statuary must be subversive of the morality of all concerned. The conclusion has been reached by introspection, apparently, since most of those who complain disown ever having seen any of the representations. For my own part, I must also confess to not being a regular attendant at music-halls, my experience being that one has to sit through a deal that is very poor in order to reach a little that is otherwise. Yet the two or three exhibitions of living pictures I have seen struck me as being the least wearisome and least objectionable portion of the entertainment, while the general bearing of the audience was far more decorous during this "turn" than during many others on the program. Still, this is only a personal impression, and may be dismissed for what it is worth. Or it may be retorted that I was fortunate in not seeing anything as bad as the critics imagine may be seen, or that I am too far gone, morally, to be conscious of my own degradation. The matter is best discussed, therefore, from a more general point of view.

There are, I think, several reasons why the clergy have been taking so prominent a part in this discussion. In the first place, it is a *safe* question. One need only label a thing indecent, and the lack of moral courage in this country is so pronounced that the majority of the people will decline being in any way associated with its defence. Whether it is properly so labelled is a question few will ask; it is enough that it has received the label, and that to defend it opens one to the charge of championing an alleged indecency; while to announce oneself as a champion of morality gives one a comfortable feeling of superiority, as well as a position of importance with a certain section of the public. Freethinkers, at least, who know how freely the clergy apply such terms as "indecent" and "immoral" to anything they have an objection to, will take such charges for what they are worth.

It is a safe question from another point of view. It gives the clergy power to stand forward as social benefactors without the risk of attacking interests that might prove dangerous. To make a united attack upon, say, the ground landlords of London, and show how these are responsible for overcrowding and its consequent ill-health and immorality, might rob Church and Chapel of many liberal supporters. So, too, of many other questions one might name. But music-hall managers and artistes are, presumably, not great supporters of the clergy, and here is something that can be attacked without serious loss. It is an occupation that offers the minimum of cost with a maximum of profit. If not a case of "Hit him hard; he's got no friends," it is a case of "Hit him hard; he's no friend of mine." And, as music-hall proprietors are dependent upon public feeling for a renewal of their licenses, a carefully worked-up agitation is likely to have the effect its promoters desire.

In the next place, the discussion of this topic appeals strongly to the unhealthy feelings of the true Christian and to the unclean instinct of the average clergyman. I use these expressions deliberately; not as metaphors, but as what I believe to be a plain statement of fact. Not that I mean that either Christians or clergymen are more guilty of unclean actions than are other people. In this respect they are probably as good as their neighbors. But in other respects, I do believe their feelings to be less healthy and their instincts less cleanly than they might be. There is a type of man that runs to uncleanness in action, and that is bad enough; but there is another type that runs to uncleanness in imagination—that is ready to see obscenity where

none need be seen, or to make harmful that which but for them would be harmless—and that is far worse. The first is marked off by his conduct as one to be avoided; the latter is difficult to shun, and so, under the guise of a super-sensitive purity, casts a glamor of impurity over the whole of life. People of this class would discover suggestions of indecency in the Venus de Milo, and would, if they could, hide every piece of nude statuary beneath a pair of trousers or a skirt—even though these were products of sweated labor, and the women who made them were driven on the streets in order to eke out a livelihood. The Christian—layman and cleric—is peculiarly subject to this form of mental uncleanness, and for an historical reason which I will deal with presently.

After seeing La Milo, Mr. W. T. Stead said that the exhibition was indecent as statuary was indecent. The matter could not have been better put. For statuary *is* indecent to some; but that is the fault of neither the sculptor nor the statue. It is almost wholly a question of the spectator—of the kind of mind he brings to bear upon it. And there is hardly anything under the sun that cannot be made to carry a suggestion of lewdness—to some people. A naked child, a lifted skirt on a woman crossing a street, an undraped statue, a painting of a sleeping girl—anything and everything may be made indecent if the spectator so wishes it. There can be no protection for such people, nor is there any against them. None for them, because it is their own minds that need cleansing; and none against them, because they cannot avoid making uncleanness for other people.

I emphasise the last point because this is the final outcome of the agitation. Some people may have gone to see these exhibitions for the sake of indulging their prurient imagination. That cannot be avoided; but it is fairly certain that the majority saw in them merely a clever reproduction of a beautiful figure or group of figures. But how stands the case now? The clergy, by their crusade, have not cleansed a single foul mind; they have simply made impure for all what at first carried an unclean suggestion for a miserable few. For it may be taken for granted that, where these exhibitions continue, hardly one, while the agitation is fresh, can see them without the cry of this impure puritanism being uppermost in their minds. Several of the clerical dignitaries who have headed this outcry have concurred in saying that, while nude statuary is one thing (as though they do not object equally to that, for other people to see), the exhibition of "warm human flesh" on the stage is quite another. But, as a matter of fact, the "warm human flesh" is a product of the salacious clerical mind. For all practical purposes it is *not* human flesh that is being exhibited. The flesh tints are toned down, and, with the aid of lights and other accessories, the performers are made to resemble the actual statuary they represent. A child would not know whether they were living figures or not, nor would most adults if they had come across the group accidentally, without previous knowledge of such things. Practically, the performers are statues; it is the unclean mind that sees the flesh beneath, and the same mind would as easily create it in the actual statue, or beneath the outer case of an Egyptian mummy. Pity it is that such people should exist; a greater pity still that they should possess the power of making things equally unclean to others.

The subject can only be properly understood by a consideration of its historical bearing. In his book on *Woman*, the Rev. Principal Donaldson repeats the well-known story of Phryne, whose lawyer won her case before an Athenian jury by suddenly exhibiting her nude body to them. But he warns his readers against jumping to the conclusion that there was in the action any appeal to the sensual instincts of the jury. It was, on the contrary, an appeal to their best artistic instincts. Instead of seeing the "warm human flesh" of the modern clergyman, the Athenian

jury saw a perfection of form to which they did instant and cleanly homage. The story gives us, in a small compass, the whole difference between the Pagan and the Christian conception of things. The Greeks were alive to natural beauty, whether human or non-human. The Christian was equally determined on ignoring and, if possible, suppressing. The common Christian phrase, "this vile body," would have conveyed no meaning to an educated Pagan. It summed up the Christian's whole attitude. The body was vile, nature was evil, man's natural instincts damnable. The great literature of Christianity is full of this, and its influence for evil is writ large on the history of the last fifteen centuries. Celibacy on the one side, and gross immorality on the other, periods of repression alternating with periods of brutal licence, and human nature made foul by a false purity, have been the inevitable outcome of the Christian attitude on this question. That people cannot be moralised by dwelling upon immoral things, or made cleanly by dwelling upon unclean ones, is a lesson that all the centuries have not yet succeeded in teaching our Christian leaders.

The outcry against "living statues" is thus an inevitable outcome of the Christian fondness for dwelling upon prurient matters, and of making things prurient that are not so. Christian teaching has not only failed to improve human nature, it has demoralised it. Lacking balance and self-control, the Christian mind riots in depicting the sensualism it publicly deprecates. Nothing else than this will explain the avidity with which a Christian public seizes upon and discusses a topic that carries with it a suggestion of indecency. "To the pure all things are pure" ought not to be a Christian teaching, for it is the furthest removed from Christian practice and Christian sentiment. To meet the case it should read, "To the pure all things are impure," for that would marry theory with fact. I am not, I may add, very much concerned whether these "living statues" are suppressed or not; but I am concerned with the state of mind that can seize upon them as an outlet for its own unhealthy tendencies. Nor am I concerned to defend them upon grounds of artistic merit, although here I should be inclined to say that if the people cannot take them upon that footing the sooner they are taught to do so the better. But I am certain that if a people that has been in Christian leading-strings for nearly half a hundred generations cannot gaze at such exhibitions without being demoralised thereby, the fact alone demonstrates the radically unclean tendency of Christian education.

C. COHEN.

Religion and Disease.

RELIGION treats bodily ailments, disorders, or sickness as if they were so many chastisements, visitations, or disciplinary scourges deliberately employed or sent by the Lord, who has recourse to them whenever he thinks they will produce specific results. We are assured that "whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth," and that if we are "without chastening, whereof all have been made partakers, then are we bastards, and not sons." In the Book of Common Prayer, the clergyman is instructed, on visiting the sick, to pray: "Sanctify, we beseech thee, this thy fatherly correction to him (thy servant), that the sense of his weakness may add strength to his faith, and seriousness to his repentance"; and to say to the afflicted one: "Whatsoever your sickness is, know you certainly that it is God's visitation." There is no ambiguity whatever in that language, and the whole religious position is most lucidly expressed in the following words:—

"For what cause soever this sickness is sent unto you; whether it be to try your patience for the example of others, and that your faith may be found in the day

of the Lord laudable, glorious, and honorable, to the increase of glory and endless felicity; or else it be sent unto you to correct and amend in you whatsoever doth offend the eyes of your Heavenly Father; know you certainly, that if you truly repent you of your sins, and bear your sickness patiently, trusting in God's mercy, for his dear Son Jesus Christ's sake, and render unto him humble thanks for his fatherly visitation, submitting yourself wholly to his will, it shall turn to your profit, and help you forward in the right way that leadeth unto everlasting life."

Sickness is the Lord's rod of correction, and those beaten with it are exhorted to turn round and gratefully kiss it. Scarlet fever entered the home and took away two of the charming children; and, stricken with grief, the parents were offered the cold comfort that probably they had lavished too much affection on their offspring, and that, in his infinite mercy, the Lord had taken these two to himself in order to teach them to give him their supreme devotion. Such language may be characterised as nonsensical, but it is to be frequently heard, even to-day, at funeral services, and as a sound doctrine from Christian pulpits. In times of sickness, and in the presence of death, the Christian thing to say is, "Thy will, O God, not mine, be done."

Now, the question comes, Is the teaching of religion on this subject true? Does illness come at the bidding of the will of a personal deity? Is it sent for the specific purpose of correcting certain faults of character? Do our children ever die because we love them too much? Merely to ask such questions to-day is to answer them with a most emphatic negative. And yet, only the other day, a believer ventured to defend the teaching of religion by calling attention to the most remarkable fact that disease is a distinctively human affliction. He maintained that outside the world of man ill-health is practically unknown. There is no epidemic disease among swallows, or lions, or panthers; nor are mosquitoes ever destroyed by malarial fever. Why is this? our friend triumphantly asked, and then answered his own question thus: "It is because God has entered into peculiar personal relations with man, with the object of developing in him, by the ministry of a many-folded discipline, a god-like character, and thus qualify him for a life of sweet fellowship with himself." The argument is highly ingenious, in that it is based on a firmly established scientific fact. But though the argument rests upon an undeniable fact, it ignores other facts, the effect of which is to entirely overthrow it. It is true that, generally speaking, there is no disease outside the human race; but it is also true that the diseases to which man is subject are shared by the animals that have come under his sway. Why is this? Is it because God has entered into peculiar personal relations with such animals? Are dogs and cats under training for a life of communion with heaven? In the face of all the facts, the believer's argument utterly breaks down. Whatever is true of disease as endured by man is of necessity true of it as experienced by domesticated animals. But can any proof be adduced that the teaching of religion on the subject of sickness is false? Let us see.

Even the most superficial student of biology must be aware that the researches of naturalists, during the last twenty-five years, have resulted in an enormously increased knowledge of the nature and causes of disease. The condition of survival is adaptation to environment. As part and parcel of the environment, we find innumerable parasites; and these parasites either kill, or are brought into adjustment to, the species upon which they fasten themselves. Now, the wild animals that have survived in any country are those which have succeeded in adapting themselves to their environment, or in coming to an understanding with their indwelling parasites. In its origin, disease is either congenital (inherited) or parasitic. "The congenitally diseased are destroyed before they can reproduce: the attacks of parasites, great and small, either serve only to carry off the congenitally weak, and thus strengthen the race, or

become harmless by the survival of those animals which, owing to peculiar qualities in their tissues, can tolerate such attacks without injury, resulting in the establishment of immune races." As a matter of fact, "the adjustment of organisms to their surroundings is so severely complete in Nature, apart from man, that diseases are unknown as constant and normal phenomena under those conditions." Professor Ray Lankester goes so far as to say that "it seems to be a legitimate view that every disease to which animals (and probably plants also) are liable, excepting as a transient and very exceptional occurrence, is due to man's interference, the diseases of cattle, sheep, pigs, and horses being unknown except in domesticated herds and those wild creatures to which man's domesticated productions have communicated them." For example, in south-east Africa there is a small parasite that lives in the blood of big game, infused thereinto by a blood-sucking fly called the Tsetse fly. This tiny parasite is practically harmless to the native big game, but proves terribly deadly to horses and cattle taken there by Europeans. In America, the parasitic bug, known as Phylloxera, lives in comfort on the vine without doing it any serious harm; but when it was brought to Europe it utterly destroyed every vineyard it entered, and it proved equally deadly when it found its way to the Cape Colony. In time, no doubt, the European and African vines will learn to entertain it without ill-effects.

It appears, at first sight, that man's emergence has, to some extent, upset the balance which had been established in Nature prior to his arrival, and that, so far, his presence has done more harm than good. But it must not be forgotten that this is due, in a large measure, to his comparatively recent origin, and to his greatness. He is at once Nature's youngest and noblest son. As yet he is only feeling his way about in his Mother's vast domains. His superior intelligence has made him exceptionally venturesome; and venturesomeness generally lands its inexperienced possessor in lamentable mistakes. But nothing venture nothing win; and already man's sublime venturesomeness is gaining for him rich rewards. He has suffered greatly in the past, he suffers still; but he has made the discovery that he can so study his very suffering as to convert it into an instrument of release and victory. Before they won their immunity from the ravages of disease the animals perished by the million: only the very strongest became immune and survived. But man is learning the art of checking the destructiveness of disease, of holding active disease itself in abeyance, and of rescuing the diseased from the death penalty. As Professor Lankester says, "he 'treats' disease, he staves off the adjustment by death," and the first apparent result is that he "thus accumulates vast populations of unadjusted human beings, animals, and plants, which from time to time are ravaged by disease—producing uncertainty and dismay in human society." At the same time, it is a demonstrated fact that at such terrific cost he is actually nearing victory. Metschnikoff, Koch, Dr. Wright, Durham, Laveran, Major Ross, Colonel David Bruce, Lieutenant Tulloch, and Fritz Schaudinn have done, and most of them are still doing, magnificent experimental work, the success of which has been on the grandest scale. The parasitic germs of most of the deadliest diseases have been discovered within the last few years. Less than two years ago the germ of Syphilis was clearly identified, and some nine months ago that of Phthisis was declared. Speaking of these marvellous discoveries of modern science, Professor Ray Lankester solemnly declares:—

"Within the past few years the knowledge of the causes of disease has become so far advanced that it is a matter of practical certainty that, by the unstinted application of known methods of investigation and consequent controlling action, all epidemic disease could be abolished within so short a period as fifty years. It is merely a question of the employment of the means at our command."

Now, is it not clear to everybody that disease is a natural defect to be stamped out by natural means, not a visitation of God to be patiently endured and turned to spiritual profit and enhancement of everlasting bliss? Microbes are not means of grace to be made the most of, but enemies to be fought with all our might. Parasitic germs are not angels of light to be hospitably entertained, but fiends of the pit to be caught and slain without mercy. Our only hope of deliverance, therefore, is not in God, but in Science, in knowledge which alone is power, in making intelligent and unbroken efforts to understand and adjust ourselves to all our surroundings.

J. T. LLOYD.

Spontaneous Generation.

MR. LLOYD'S recent article on Archebiosis seems to me to attach far too great importance to experiments and arguments which are not accepted by leading scientific authorities. That varied kinds of organisms, such as "Bacteria, Torulæ, certain Fungi and Monads" should be produced spontaneously without having "proceeded directly from living matter," appears to me almost as improbable as that still more highly evolved organisms, such as birds, beasts, and fishes, should arise spontaneously from the dust. Fungi live upon organic matter, and their spontaneous appearance, together with other organisms, seems like the simultaneous production of animals and the vegetables on which they feed. Such differentiated organisms as Mr. Lloyd mentions could only arise, I take it, by a long process of evolution from some simpler and common form of living matter. Even the simplest monads, or single-celled organisms, I cannot regard as originals, but only as a product of evolution from simple and probably jelly-like forms of protoplasm, which, it seems to me, must in its turn have evolved by gradational stages from living or semi-living matter, which did not at first possess all the properties of present-day protoplasm. The sudden appearance of a number of specialised forms of life would point to the existence and continued activity of a *creative principle* rather than to natural evolution by successive stages.

The organisms observed by Dr. Bastian probably resulted from the introduction or preservation of living substance through imperfections in the experiments rather than from direct and abrupt formation from non-living matter. If such forms really do appear spontaneously, the method of preserving provisions for years in tins would be of little use.

The argument that the lower organisms must have disappeared long ago by their own progressive evolution, if they were not continually produced anew, is worthless. It is akin to the extremely superficial, but by no means uncommon, objection, in which the Evolutionist is asked: "If monkeys evolved into men, why are there any monkeys left; why have they not all become men?" Questions of this kind involve a fundamental misconception of the work of Natural Selection, which is supremely indifferent as to whether it keeps an organism stationary or evolves it downwards (or towards simplicity of structure or degeneration, as in parasites), or whether it brings about progressive advance in complexity and specialisation. Fitness for survival, or obtaining victory in the struggle for existence, is the determining condition. The lower and minuter organisms maintain themselves comparatively unchanged because there are huge fields of existence, or supplies of food, that cannot be directly utilised by the higher animals, which only live by feeding on lower organisms, including vegetables. While these supplies of food exist, Natural Selection will continue to adapt the lowly organisms to their lowly form of life, while, at the same time, it evolves higher forms which prey upon the lower.

W. P. BALL.

The Making of the Gospels.—XI.

(Concluded from p. 299.)

THE RESURRECTION AND ASCENSION.

LIKE all the main events of Gospel "history," the stories of the alleged resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ were based, not upon fact, but upon "prophecy": this and nothing more. The so called predictions of these fictitious events are the following:—

Psalm xvi. 10.—"For thou wilt not leave my soul in Sheol; neither wilt thou suffer thine holy one to see corruption."

Psalm cx. 1.—"The Lord saith unto my lord, Sit thou at my right hand."

The first of these passages was regarded by the early Christians as an incontrovertible proof of the resurrection of their Lord and Master. Had not the Lord God, who could not lie, declared through his servant David that he would not suffer his "holy one" to see corruption? Jesus was his "holy one"; consequently God, in fulfilment of his promise, had raised Jesus from the dead before his body could "see corruption." Furthermore, the prophet Jonah was a "type" of Jesus; it followed, then, that "as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the sea-monster, so should the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth" (Matt. xii. 40). Could anything be plainer?

In accordance with these ideas the apostles Peter and Paul were each represented as making a long speech to imaginary Jews, in which, of course, the passage in Psalm xvi. was specially referred to (Acts ii. 24-32; xiii. 34-37). In the first of these addresses Peter is reported as saying of Jesus:—

"Whom God raised up, having loosed the pangs of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden by it. For David saith concerning him.....

Because thou wilt not leave my soul in Hades, neither wilt thou give thy Holy One to see corruption," etc.

In the foregoing passage attention is called to the words italicised. It was impossible that the body of Jesus should remain in the grave, because the inspired Psalmist had said that God would not allow it to see corruption. Reading between the lines, the statement ascribed to the reputed Psalmist David was the only foundation for the Gospel stories of the resurrection of Jesus.

In the same fabricated speech put in the mouth of Peter the second passage in the Psalms is also referred to.

Acts ii. 34.—"For David ascended not into the heavens: but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand," etc.

Thus, the Lord God, having invited Jesus to come and sit beside him upon his throne, that favored individual had ascended to heaven "and sat down at the right hand of God" (Mark xvi. 19). The Gospel stories of Jesus rising from the dead and appearing in the flesh to his disciples are, it is needless to say, pure fiction. In the latter case the Gospel-makers had no "prophecies" to guide them, so the narratives of the alleged appearances differ in each Gospel. Anyone who takes the trouble to compare them will soon perceive that they flatly contradict each other, and that, like all the other incidents of the Gospel "history," they are nothing more or less than pious fabrications.

THE HISTORICAL JESUS.

In bringing these papers to a close it may not be out of place to briefly refer to a matter respecting which opinions are very much divided. This is—the identity of the historical Jesus. The Gospel Jesus is, of course, from beginning to end, a purely imaginary personage, founded only on "prophecy." Was there, then, anyone—that is, one who rejoiced in the name of "Jesus"—to whom, at a later day, the fictitious Gospel events were falsely attributed? Well, taking all the known facts into consideration, there can, I think, be no reasonable doubt that there really was a Jesus who had done something to cause

his name to be remembered by the Jewish people of his time. Assuming such to be the case, we might naturally expect to find some mention of him by the Jewish historian Josephus. Now, after looking carefully into the accounts of all the historical Jesuses named by this historian—and these number no less than thirteen—I can discover only one that is at all likely to have been the individual we are in search of. This is the crack-brained fanatic whom Josephus calls "Jesus, the son of Ananus, a plebian, and a husbandman" (War., vi., v., 3). The Gospels, it must be borne in mind, were written many years after the death of Jesus, when nothing was known respecting him. Still, a few notable facts may have come down to posterity, such, for instance, as his bearing no rank or position in the world, but being merely one of the "common people."

According to Josephus, this Jesus, impelled by "a sort of divine fury," came to Jerusalem about A.D. 62, when Albinus was procurator. He then "began on a sudden to cry aloud: 'A voice from the east, a voice from the west, a voice from the four winds, a voice against Jerusalem and the holy house..... and a voice against this whole people.'" This was his cry "as he went about by day and by night, in all the lanes of the city," and for seven and a half years he kept it up "without growing hoarse or being tired therewith." Often he was commanded to desist and was severely beaten, but he "went on with the same words which he cried before," and nothing had power to stop him. He was brought before the Roman governor, who asked him who he was? whence he came? and why he predicted disasters upon his nation?—just as Pilate is represented as questioning the Gospel Jesus—but to all such questions he made no answer—like the fictitious Jesus. He was then scourged—like the imaginary Jesus—but still continued to cry "Woe, woe, to Jerusalem," and being at length dismissed as a madman, he went again through the city uttering the same doleful cry.

Such a harbinger of evil must have made a deep impression upon the superstitious people of the time. After the capture of Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple by the Romans, the long and persistent cry of this monomaniac would be remembered, and the man himself would be regarded by many as a prophet. We can easily imagine the words which are put in the mouth of the centurion in the Gospels being applied to him—"Certainly this was a righteous man," or "Truly this was a son of God" (Luke xxiii. 47; Matt. xxvii. 54).

According to the account of Josephus, this plebian Jesus was within the holy city, and cried against it, during the siege, and was slain by a stone from one of the Roman engines; but upon this point that historian must, I think, have been misinformed. It is not at all likely that the Jewish cut-throats who had gained the upper hand in the beleaguered city, and did little else than slaughter the most rational, religious, and peaceable of the citizens, would allow this fanatic to continue his woeful vaticinations until nearly the end of the siege, as recorded. It is far more probable that he, like hundreds of the other besieged Jews, attempted to escape from the city, and, being caught by the Roman soldiers, suffered the same fate as his captured countrymen. We know that all caught when thus trying to escape were nailed to crosses round the city in the sight of their friends and fellow-citizens within the walls.

We learn, further, from Josephus, that about the time of the death of this Jesus "the eastern gate of the inner court of the temple" was "opened of its own accord about the sixth hour of the night," and that on another night the priests when entering this inner court "felt a quaking and heard a great noise." Similarly, at the death of the Gospel Jesus it is recorded that "the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake" (Matt. xxvii. 51). Clearly, then, the death of Jesus the fanatic and that of his Gospel namesake are in some way connected. Furthermore, both are described as of the plebian class; both were religious enthusiasts; both wandered about the country penni-

less, and were fed by people charitably disposed; both took upon themselves to predict the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple. The latter is, in fact, the one great prediction of the Gospel Jesus (written many years after the event), and it occupies a whole chapter in each of the Synoptic Gospels.

The Jewish author of the Book of Revelation, who never saw any of the Gospels, calls his Jesus "the faithful witness," and says that "the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." This may fairly be regarded as applying to Jesus the fanatic, who, having for seven long years done nothing else than cry "Woe to Jerusalem," was certainly a "faithful witness," and his "testimony," such as it was, may be called "the spirit of prophecy." Josephus does not say to which of the three Jewish sects this Jesus belonged; but it is more probable that he was an Essene than a Pharisee or a Sadducee. Moreover, only members of the first-named sect are recorded as having set themselves up as prophets (Antiq., xv., x., 5; xvii., xiii., 3; War, i., iii., 5).

The historical Jesus here suggested did not, it is true, live in the times mentioned in the Gospels; but this matters nothing, for those books can be proved to be works of fiction. The original Gospel-maker did not know when his Jesus lived; he knew nothing of his birth, and he made him make his first appearance on the scene as a preacher "in those days" (Mark i. 9). Again, assuming the Epistle to the Galatians to be authentic, James, John, and Cephas, who had been companions of Jesus, were contemporaries of Paul; but there is nothing in any of the Epistles to show when any of the four lived. Setting aside the unhistorical Gospels and Acts of the Apostles, the Jesus named in the other New Testament books might have appeared as a teacher at any time prior to about A.D. 70.

ABRACADABRA.

Acid Drops.

Mr. William Tallack wrote to the *Daily Chronicle* the other day in favor of the Bible as an educator. Bible-loving nations, he said, were specially free from crime and misery. Well, if he includes England, the statement is not true. Mr. Tallack, we believe, is the late secretary of the Howard Society; and has, curiously enough, defended the treadmill, solitary confinement, and flogging. We can quite understand that he is a Bible-lover himself.

Most clergymen were caned in their youth, but some of them forget what it was like when they grow older. This happened to the Rev. W. P. Ward, vicar of St. Ann's, Willenhall. He therefore got the headmaster of the Council school at that place to give him half-a-dozen strokes on the hand with the official cane. The result is described as "not at all pleasant." "The blood," the reverend gentleman said, "was extravasated under the skin, and I experienced great difficulty in using my hands for such purposes as buttoning my gloves." He is "not opposed to corporal punishment in moderation when necessary," but he thinks six strokes, such as he had, are "too much for a thin-skinned boy"—while girls should be "exempt from such punishment altogether." Now all this simply shows that Parson Ward is in a muddle. There is really no way of hitting a boy with a cane pleasantly, nor without the risk of serious injury, unless he is stripped and caned indecently. But even if no physical injury were ever caused by caning, it would still be objectionable. It is a mere display of brute force, and is to be condemned for that very reason. This is well understood in Japan, where a teacher who struck a child would be instantly dismissed. We daresay it would be understood in England too, if this were not a Christian country.

Christians spoil whatever they get hold of. They cannot even oppose Vivisection and general Cruelty to Animals without lugging in all sorts of sectarian silliness. We noticed a pious advertisement in the *Daily News* lately, addressed to "Dear Fellow Christians," and requesting them to pray "that the Savior who hung for three hours on the Cross will pity and succour His tortured creatures, victimised for scientific purposes!" Could anything be more imbecile? According to Christian doctrine, the Savior hung upon that Cross in agony, in order to satisfy his Father's justice, and let the sufferings of his own innocence atone for

their pardoned guilt. Now a doctrine like that leads to Vivisection instead of away from it; for if Christ was tortured for man's sake, why may not the lower animals be tortured for man's sake too?

Sir Oliver Lodge is hopeless. Having drawn up a pious Catechism for adults, which he has the coolness to call scientific as well as religious, and amplified and explained the same in a book, he is now attempting to perform a similar work for children. He says he is "not yet satisfied with the result." We dare say the children will be better satisfied if he proceeds no further in this business. They have enough worries already, poor little things, without being set upon by the Birmingham sheep dog of religion.

One of our readers at Swindon gave a copy of Mr. Cohen's "Salvation Army" Tract to a Salvationist shopmate, who sent it up to headquarters with a request to know "whether it was true." A long reply came back from James Hay, Chief Secretary—a long, whining, canting letter, containing no sort of answer to specific criticisms, but talking about "jealousy" and "malice," and adding that "it would never have done for the S. A. to have attempted to answer its critics"—which we can very well believe. Chief Secretary Hay quotes some anonymous "authority" as saying that the accounts of the London Stock Bank are "well ordered"—which again may be perfectly true. "There is abundant evidence," he asserts, "that we are all characterised by the spirit of self-sacrifice." And when people say that of themselves, who can deny it? As the judge in "Black Justice" says, the prisoner says he is "Not guilty," and he ought to know.

At the Liberation Society's meeting the other day Mr. McCullum, M.P., roused some dissent by declaring that the secular solution in education was the only possible one. This was endorsed by Mr. Halley Stewart, M.P., who said that it was not the function of the State to teach any religion—not even the common religion of the Free Churches. Further support was given by Professor Paterson; and finally, in spite of dissenters, some of whom protested against "putting the good old Bible out of the schools," etc., a resolution that State education should be based on the common rights of citizenship, and should leave "to the parents and the Churches the entire responsibility for religious instruction," was carried.

So far, good. A word, however, with those who objected to the resolution. These were members of a Society aiming at the separation of Church and State, and which can only rest upon one principle—that of the illegitimacy of the State taking to itself the function of a religious teacher. The disestablishment of the State Church therefore is, or ought to be, only part of a policy of the disestablishment of religion, and confining the State to purely secular functions. Either, then, the Liberation Society stands for this or it is a purely sectarian campaign carried on against one Church in the interests of another. As a mere matter of fact this is about all that the cry of Disestablishment conveys to the average Dissenter. His opposition to the State Church is based on the fact that it is not their Church. Where their own Churches stand to gain none are greedier for State aid than are Nonconformists. Were there any conscious following of a principle, there would be the same opposition on their part to the State teaching religion to children as there is to its teaching religion to adults. That there is not, proves that the quarrel is in the main one of sects, with a few better-minded men to give the movement an air of intellectual respectability. And sect for sect, as matters stand, we must confess to a preference for the Episcopalian over the Nonconformist.

Mr. Arthur Henderson, M.P., believes there will never be a proper distribution of wealth until all are made Christians. If Mr. Henderson is correct in his forecast, the vested interests of the country may rest easy; but it is rather a gloomy outlook for the "have-nots."

The Conway Free Library has declined to place a copy of Mr. Campbell's *New Theology* on its shelves, although Mr. Allanson Picton offered to supply the institution with a copy. We wonder whether any of the religious papers would have held up the action of the Library Committee to reprobation had a Freethought work been involved instead of a Christian one. We are, of course, far from justifying bigotry, but it is a little comforting to find Christians suffering from a use of their favorite weapon. That is the worst of encouraging a cowardly, dishonest spirit—one never knows against whom it may be used.

Bishop Gore stated the other day that "we are living under a re-action from Puritanism." So far as the country

as a whole is concerned, that is doubtless true. We read that Edinburgh, of all cities religiously the most conservative, has just determined to throw open the National Gallery and the National Portrait Gallery at the foot of the Mound on Sunday afternoons from two to five o'clock, and a similar liberalising action has recently been taken in most other British cities. But in the majority of Churches, especially in those called Free, there is a decided re-action in favor of Puritanism. They are crying out for legislation against everything that militates against their supremacy. They would like to compel all the people to attend church or chapel on Sundays, and to put down all innocent and health-giving recreations. In spirit, they are as intolerant as ever; but, fortunately, they now lack the power, and shall lack it more and more in the future.

For a while, practically ever minister in the kingdom either attacked or defended Mr. Campbell's teaching. The majority uncompromisingly denounced it. But the Churches soon grew weary of the oft-repeated condemnation. We read that a certain vacant pulpit was occupied by six preachers in succession, each of whom effectually demolished the City Temple oracle; but so surfeited were the people with such murderous onslaughts that "the seventh was specially besought not to touch on the New Theology lest he might have Bibles and hymn-books flying about his ears." As a matter of fact, the Churches are getting to distrust all theologies, because they are so numerous and so irreconcilable one with another.

The Rev. Dr. Robertson Nicoll regards himself as an oracle to whom all Nonconformity should reverently and obediently give heed. From the editorial chair of the *British Weekly* he issues mandates to all the Free Churches, confidently expecting that they will be carried into effect. He is the sworn enemy of the New Theology, and has nothing but evil to say of Mr. Campbell, its chief exponent. At first, he poured vitriolic abuse upon the minister of the City Temple by name. Seeing that personal vituperation was not hailed with delight by his readers he fell back on anonymous invective, which is meant to be more stinging than personal attack. In his last philippic, this servant of the Lord calls upon all the faithful to put the Christian boycott in full force against the New Theologians, saying, "It is as impossible for us to work on the same ground as these men as it is for us to work with Mr. Blatchford." Outsiders smile ominously, and whisper, "After all, how fervently these ministers of the Gospel do love one another."

Poor Mr. Blatchford! Perhaps it would be more appropriate to congratulate him on his marvellous promotion. Not so long ago, the *British Weekly* hired Mr. Frank Ballard to lacerate him with "slashing diatribes." Then, the editor of the *Clarion* was a nobody; he could not think; he was a vile slanderer of the Christian religion, a man void of understanding; and all he could put forth was "this verbal sound and fury." Now, he is a wise, discerning critic, columns from whose pen have been appearing in the *British Weekly*. What accounts for this changed treatment? The simple fact that any stick is good enough to beat a dog with. Mr. Blatchford claims Mr. Campbell as an Agnostic or Atheist, and so delighted is the editor of the *British Weekly* at this that he makes extended quotations from the *Clarion's* criticism of the *New Theology*. O consistency, thou art a jewel, and Christian editors do honor thee!

Preaching the annual sermon of the London Missionary Society, the Rev. J. D. Jones, of Bournemouth, made two significant admissions. The first was that there has taken place a marked decay of interest in missions, and the second, that this decay of interest is due to a corresponding decline of faith. Ministers do know that Christianity is being steadily abandoned by the people, though it is very rarely they are frank enough to own up to it. They would deny it on Christian Evidence platforms!

The sufferings of Jamaica did not end with the earthquake. The attentions of "Providence" were far more prolonged. The earthquake was followed by a drought. Six months elapsed before any rain fell, and the damage to the crops may be imagined. The drought, indeed, was more destructive than the earthquake.

Mr. Arthur Waugh, reviewing Mr. Frederick Harrison's new book in the *Daily Chronicle*, said one thing, and one thing only, worth quoting, namely, that "no one who looks out sincerely upon the field of human thought can deny that Christianity is losing its hold upon the hearts of the people of England." We rejoice over the fact. Mr. Waugh con-

siders it a misfortune. That makes his testimony all the more valuable.

Another minister announced at this year's meeting of the Congregational Union that Congregationalism is a deplorable failure in the large towns, "especially among the artisans who make up the great trade union organisations." He was very sorry to say that they did not succeed in "getting at men in great towns." And this confession implies that the majority of men in large towns are lost to Christianity, for surely the Congregationalists would not attempt to "get at them" if they were associated with other Churches.

Mr. J. Compton Rickett, M.P., has been this year elected to the chairmanship of the Congregational Union. His address to that body was considerably above the average of such deliverances, which we acknowledge without considering it to be an extravagant compliment. In the kingdom of the blind the one-eyed man is king, and a layman with only a moderate amount of ability may easily outdistance the average professional preacher. Even though cramped by his religious beliefs, he is still able to take a broader view of matters than one whose lot is cast in the pulpit. Mr. Rickett's address was couched in a good spirit, although there were, of course, many things with which we disagree; but it contained one passage that many preachers would do well to ponder over. Dealing with the present position of Christianity, he warned ministers not to be deceived as to the real nature of the fight before them. It is not, he said, a quarrel between Sacerdotalism and Evangelicism, nor whether a part of the cargo should be thrown overboard to lighten the ship, nor of old theologies *versus* new, but the retention of the very idea of God itself. This has been pointed out often enough in these columns, and we are pleased to find the teaching of this journal echoed, although, as usual, without acknowledgment. Discussions as to the value of this or that doctrine, or as to the comparative value of rival sects, are interesting enough to sectarians themselves, but they are of no interest to others. The man in the street cares little which is the better of the two, for the reason that he is beginning to realise that both are bad. And while Church and Chapel meetings spend their time discussing the value of doctrines, the world outside is steadily losing interest in all.

Mr. Rickett thinks the insistence of the working class upon a better distribution of the good things of this life "is largely provoked by the loss of spiritual ideals." If Mr. Rickett means by "spiritual ideals" Christian doctrines, we agree with him, for the reason that these have been the great instruments used for keeping the mass of the people in a state of servile submission. The attractive power of Christianity is fundamentally dependent upon human weakness and helplessness, and it has, in a sheer spirit of self-preservation, striven to perpetuate the conditions of its own well-being. But if by "spiritual ideals" is meant higher ideals, then we beg to remind Mr. Rickett that those who have been instrumental in rousing the working classes from a "let-us-be-thankful-in-the-position-in-which-God-and-the-landlord-has-been-pleased-to-place-us" condition have been animated by ideals of the highest and noblest description. Moreover, it is really time—particularly for members of Parliament—to leave off talking of the endeavor after better homes, more wages, pleasanter conditions of employment, and a more equitable share of the good things of life, as low ideals. These, after all, are the conditions of the "higher" life about which preachers are so fond of talking. And, even on the lowest ground, the man who is only looking for a fuller supply of the things he loves is quite the equal of the average self-centred religionist priding himself upon the superiority of his own pitiful personality, and, in the interests of an imaginary hereafter, neglecting his duty to the social body of which he is a part—even though a useless one.

But, says Mr. Rickett, we live in a world that cares for theology. But do we? Of course, one can get up a row about theology, as can be done with most things if they are properly worked. Thanks to the press, there is hardly a subject under the sun over which a row cannot be made. A thousand people have only to read in their favorite journal that the public mind is deeply agitated over a matter that not one of them thought about before, and half the number will begin to feel that their eternal welfare depends upon getting that question ventilated or settled. How many people, for instance, would have worn black when Queen Victoria died if they had not read in the papers how grief-stricken the nation was? So with theology. A certain number of the people imagine they care for theology because thousands of professionals are always telling them they do. But let them alone, and then see how much interest the general public will take in religious questions. Why, even

as it is, with all the advertising, the lack of interest is one of the stock themes for the pulpit.

One more word with Mr. Rickett, and we have done. Mr. Rickett thinks that "Evolution is a natural process, directed by intelligence to a long foreseen and purposed end." The first clause in the sentence is a truism, the last is the wildest of assumptions. There is no more logical reason for Mr. Rickett asserting that evolution is directed by intelligence than there is for saying it is run by the Free Church Council. Intelligence is not at the beginning of evolution, but at the end. The only intelligence man finds in it is his own, distorted often beyond recognition, but his own for all that. And when Mr. Rickett adds that "the earth, and the system to which we belong, are yet travelling a rough road to perfection," we would remind him that, so far as science has anything to say on this point, it is that our system is travelling along a road that ends in annihilation so far as life and sentience is concerned.

Rev. Henry Mills, Pillerton, Kineton, Warwick, left £51,966. Rev. Bruce Dudley Ryder Baxter, missionary at Haifa, Mount Carmel, left £13,664. We would drop a tear over them but it would evaporate before it reached them in their present abode. Even the Rev. Charles Williams, the well-known Baptist minister, of Accrington, who died the other day from the effects of falling off a platform, is in a very doubtful position, for he left £4,637. This is not much of a fortune in these days, but it seems enough to prevent the possessor from going through that needle's eye.

Rev. John Gorell Haworth, of Walshaw, Colwyn Bay, North Wales, has left £90,771. Jesus said "Blessed be ye poor" and "Woe unto you rich." If the Gospels be true, the Rev. John Gorell Haworth will never need to pray for warm weather.

Mr. C. F. Aked is getting to work in America. A reporter interviewed him on the question of how to get people to church—which sounds like a "How's business?" kind of an interview. Mr. Aked replied that to do this one had to "satisfy the thinking man or woman that you know what you are talking about." That is all! And all we can say is, that if Mr. Aked keeps to religion, and the American people try him by his own test, his church will be a first-class place in which to get a fine roomy seat on a Sunday evening.

An educated man who is a whole-hearted believer, says the Rev. Dr. Horton, is a rarity. Which is exactly what we have been saying for a long while. They carry round the Christian badge with them because it is part of their social outfit. Get at their real thoughts, and you will find their belief in Christianity to be about as genuine as their belief in Mother Shipton's prophecies.

"By command of His Majesty the King," the newspapers report, "a gift of cast linen has been forwarded to the Great Northern Central Hospital for the use of the patients." Why do the newspapers make such a fuss about these things? Are they so very generous? Would the King sell his cast linen if there were no Hospitals?

The Rev. W. L. Watkinson is not lacking in—well, cheek; there is no other word for it. The Bible, says this gentleman, "is antecedent to all our civilisation." That settles it. There is none of your New Theology here, it is simple and emphatic. All that we possess, all that we derive from Greek philosophy and ethics, from Roman law and government, from Chaldean science and Mohammedan medicine, all that we derive from the whole of modern science, all comes from the Bible. This is really superb. We raise our hat to Mr. Watkinson. In these days of theological trimmers, such determination is worthy of admiration. He stands alone, unapproachable in his solitude, and impervious to attack. Against such a mind the waves of modern criticism beat in vain. The Bible is all. Everything dates from the Bible. Beside the Bible there is nothing. Even Mr. Watkinson would not be where he is, or what he is, but for the Bible.

Otley Agricultural Show was ruined by a gale of wind. According to the Rev. W. Hooton, senior curate at Otley Church, this was owing to the tents being erected on a Sunday. We suggest that the next Otley show should include Mr. Hooton. He ought to draw, if only as an antiquity.

The jury were unable to agree as to whether Mr. Christopher Townsend had slandered the Rev. James Masters

Carrack, chaplain of the Lambeth Cemetery at Tooting, or whether the reverend gentleman had taken indecent liberties with Mr. Townsend's wife. The one thing certain is that Mr. Townsend gave the reverend gentleman a thrashing. That stands, anyhow.

The *Daily Chronicle* went to the expense of a long special telegram from its "own correspondent" at New York, setting forth the fact that "The police believe that the Rev. J. K. Cooke, rector of the Church of Our Savior, at Hempstead, Long Island, who deserted his wife and eloped, some days ago, with his seventeen-year-old ward, Miss Floretta Whaley, is still not far from this city." We should have thought that these ministerial exploits were too common for newspapers to incur much expense in recording them. Perhaps we owe the long expensive telegram to the fact that the reverend gentleman in this case has control of £25,000 belonging to his ward, and also that he has victimised several wealthy members of his congregation, who "had no suspicion of his intentions, and regarded him as a zealous Christian minister."

Dr. Stanton Coit, we observe by his advertisements in the *Christian Commonwealth*, no longer lectures. He preaches.

A speaker at one of the May Meetings asked, What sort of an impression would be made on a missionary who returned to England after a thirty-five years' absence? We cannot say how it would strike a missionary, their opinion of things not being governed by ordinary standards, but we do know how things are apt to strike people who are not missionaries. Some years ago, for instance, the Japanese government sent agents to enquire into the condition of several of the leading European nations. The report brought back was that the Christian nations were inferior to the Japanese in point of morality, and that the less they had of the Christian religion the better. And all question of adopting Christianity was at an end. The Jap was "cute" enough to realise the value of Western science, but religion was quite another thing. The principal lesson gained by the heathen Japanese from the Christian European was greater skill in the art of warfare.

The *Christian World* says that, so far as it can see, the "only chance for multitudes of the coming generation of obtaining any knowledge of the Bible or of Christianity is that offered by the teaching in the public schools." This may be true enough; but if so, it says little for either the desire of the people for religious instruction, or the zeal of the clergy in imparting it. The truth is, that the *Christian World* is well aware that the regular training of children in religious teachings is a work that the clergy will not undertake. All of them recognise that the only way to make people Christian is to catch them while they are young, but nearly all of them want the catching to be done by proxy. They are content to reap the credit, and draw the profit in later years in the shape of hard cash. And, after all, the clergy are the only people who really want religious instruction in the schools. The bulk of the parents, if let alone, do not want it, and the bulk of the teachers have no desire to impart it. How long the teachers will continue to be made a catspaw by the clergy—established and dissenting—in this cowardly attack upon a child's ignorance and helplessness, remains to be seen.

The *Glasgow Weekly Mail*, answering a correspondent, states that what Atheists say about the Bible is due to "rancorous spite." It also alleges that Atheists would let a man "drink, act like a beast to wife and children, gamble, cheat, lie, vomit oaths and foul talk till his mere presence pollutes the atmosphere." The writer evidently judges Atheists by what he knows of himself. That is how he would act if he thought there was no Infinite Policeman.

The *New Age*, which is now a definitely Socialist organ, referred last week to a forthcoming lecture on "The New Theology" by Mr. Bernard Shaw. "The lecture," it said, "is important in the light of the recent theological controversy, and something in the nature of a definite statement of a Socialist's creed may be anticipated." This is bad English and bad sense. "Anticipated" should have been "expected." If the writer doesn't believe it, let him look at a good dictionary. And what on earth is meant by "a Socialist's creed"? How can there be such a thing, according to any accepted definition of Socialism? Perhaps the writer only means "the creed that a Socialist happens to entertain." That, of course, may be Catholicism, Protestantism, Judaism, Brahminism, Buddhism, Mormonism, Theosophy, or Christian Science. In conclusion, whoever expects a "definite statement" from Mr. Shaw must be miraculously sanguine.

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

May 19, N. S. S. Conference.

To Correspondents.

JAMES CROSS (Maghull) writes: "I attended your Sunday night meeting at Picton Hall and was rather surprised at the large attendance. I enjoyed the lecture very much, but was surprised to see the enclosed report published in the *Liverpool Evening Express* of May 6. It is a pity that a faithful report of such lectures was not published in our press." The enclosed report mentions the activity of some people calling themselves the Anti-Infidel League in distributing "hundreds of leaflets" to persons going into the Picton Hall to hear "a Secularist lecturer." It is also stated that certain gentlemen "effectually exposed the sophistries of the Secular lecturer." Which is news—for the audience nearly cried with laughing at Mr. Foote's wonderful critics. Of course, the *Express* gives no sort of report of Mr. Foote's lectures, and does not even mention his name. Not a word about the big meeting inside; thirty-four lines about the leaflet distributors outside. Such is our "glorious free press"—the greatest fraud on earth! Fortunately the Freethought movement owes it nothing, and flourishes in spite of it. It does not make us and it cannot mar us. There's consolation in that.

R. J. HENDERSON.—Glad you have found our "Campbellism" articles "instructive" as well as interesting. It is evident that Mr. J. E. Roberts, the American Freethinker, owes a good deal to Ingersoll, though he is not exactly a plagiarist, for what he has borrowed has passed through his own mind.

CHARLES MOUNTAIN (Natal).—It is impossible to answer your question in a few lines. We have lectured on the subject, and we hope to write upon it at some length. Taking the passage in Josephus as a demonstrated forgery, there is only one historian who mentions Christ as a man, and that is Tacitus, who belongs to the second century. But the passage in the *Annals* was unknown till the fifteenth century, when the extant books of that work were discovered; moreover, it came to the modern world through Christian hands, and the famous Christ passage was probably amplified from a similar passage in the Christian historian, Sulpicius Severus, who wrote about A.D. 400. It is very curious that the Tacitus passage relates the butchery of the Christians by Nero, and that this horrid fact was utterly unknown to the early Christian writers.

A. SALDHANA (Madras).—You say that you have never witnessed "one single such phenomenon" yourself; and, while you are in your right senses, we don't believe you will. Stories of Bibles jumping off tables and striking people on the head, and of milk-jugs upset by invisible hands, are worthy of Bedlam. People may as well keep to the Old Book as believe such things—and on hearsay too! The comfort is that yarns of this kind disappear with the progress of science. Ghosts used to be plentiful; now they only appear in "the silly season" when the newspapers are short of copy.

A. JENNETT.—We referred last week to the matter of your enclosure, and the person concerned is not worth further attention. We don't think of reprinting our "Campbellism" articles. No outside publisher would venture to issue our criticism of the "New Theology," and our own readers have already seen it.

G. T. LAWSON.—Thanks for the pamphlet, which we will look into at our earliest leisure.

K. M. SCHWEIZER.—You say "so much for the free press" in relation to the Picton Hall meetings. We suppose, however, that every nation has the press it deserves; and England's "glorious free press" reflects her hypocritical character—which is mainly the product of Protestant Christianity.

GERALD GREY.—Sorry to hear it, but the Christians were always a trouble to sensible people; and they always will be so—we mean as long as there are any Christians.

SIDNEY REED.—You can hardly expect a first attempt to approach perfection. There are ideas in your little paper, but the art of composition has to be acquired. Thanks for your good wishes.

ANNIE THOMPSON.—See "Acid Drops." Delighted to learn that you and your husband "have been readers of the *Freethinker* for some years, and would not think of going without it." We value our lady readers; indeed, we have no great hope for the world until women become Freethinkers. Many things will be set right then which cannot be set right before.

A. L. FERNWOOD.—Paritans, prudes, and "respectable" people of all sorts may roll up their eyes at Byron's *Don Juan* as much as they please; they will not affect its place in English literature. Shelley's judgment on the poem while it was being written still stands, and is likely to stand. Persons of impure imagination may gloat or howl, according as they are merely dirty or also pious, over certain passages, notably the most audaciously witty of the seraglio scenes; they do not understand the immense scope of the poem, the great and various power it displays, and the grand sincerity of political, social, and religious criticism which underlies its surface frivolity. *Don Juan* is the splendid work of a splendid Freethinker. Byron, like every great satirist, was savagely serious at bottom.

G. S. STRARMAN.—Thanks for cuttings.

J. BROUGH.—What you say is perfectly sound. Our interest in the *Clarion* matter ends with our letter.

W. P. BALL.—Your cuttings are always very welcome.

R. STEVENSON.—Accept our thanks; but owing to the Editor's absence until press-day your cuttings cannot be dealt with till next week.

J. H. SIMPSON.—Shall be glad to see a report of the result on the Town Council. It is natural that the Halifax Free Churchmen should object to the proceedings of the Sunday Lecture Society. Mere business!

A. WEBBER.—Send whenever the spirit moves.

E. J. JONES.—We are obliged.

C. D. THOMSON.—We have never said, and it is not true, that you wrote to us asking to write and lecture for the N. S. S. just before your "recantation." We say this as an act of justice, since you tell us it is necessary. The rest of your letter hardly concerns us.

A. G. LYE.—See paragraph. Thanks.

H. OUTRAM.—We wish you better luck. Charles Bradlaugh was not imprisoned for publishing any book. You are misinformed.

THE COHEN "SALVATION ARMY" TRACT FUND.—Previously acknowledged, £19 4s. 9d. Since received: Mr. Savill, 2s.; Edinburgh Branch Members, 5s.; J. McAra, 3s.

H. E. DODSON asks us to announce that the Camberwell Branch's open-air lectures at Brockwell-park and Station-road will be suspended to-day (Whit-Sunday), as so many of the members desire to attend the N. S. S. Conference and the Queen's Hall Meeting.

L. B. GALLAGHER.—The *Catholic Herald* cutting will be useful. See also "Acid Drops." Thanks.

J. McARA.—Booth's final triumph dates from his visit to Buckingham Palace. He is as "respectable" now as the Archbishop of Canterbury or the Pope—and can do no wrong. But the "Army's" day of reckoning will come, for all that.

THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED, office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

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

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LECTURE NOTICES must reach 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

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

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

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Sugar Plums.

Mr. Cohen and Mr. Lloyd have both contributed to this week's "Acid Drops." They did so cheerfully in order to let Mr. Foote get the nearest possible approach to a complete holiday for six days on the south coast of England, where he went to refresh himself a little before the Whit-Sunday Conference, which entails a good deal of work upon him, including the preparation of the Annual Report. Ever since the end of January, when the Symes subscription was to have closed, Mr. Foote has been intending to go away for a while, but he has never been able to manage it until now; nor has the weather been very favorable for any number of days together.

This is the last time we shall be able to call attention to the National Secular Society's Annual Conference, which takes place in London to-day (Whit-Sunday). The business sittings of the Conference are to be held at the Chandos Hall, Maiden-lane, Charing-cross. The President will open the proceedings promptly at 10.30 in the morning, and it is requested that all delegates and visitors will be seated by then, instead of dropping in one by one afterwards. At 12.30 the Conference will adjourn until 2.30. In the interim, at 1 o'clock, there will be a luncheon for delegates and visitors (with the President in the chair) at the Ship Restaurant, Charing-cross. No doubt a number of London members will wish to join this function. They should apply to Miss Vance for tickets (price 2s.) immediately, if they have not already done so. It will be absolutely necessary to know how many to provide for by Saturday noon at the very latest.

Chandos Hall will be open as a Reception Room on Saturday afternoon and evening. The secretary and various stewards will be in attendance to supply delegates and visitors with any necessary information, or to assist them in any other

way. The President will probably look in some time during the evening. He is shutting up his home and bringing all his family up to London on this particular Whitsuntide.

London "saints" will doubtless rally in strong force at the evening public meeting in the Queen's (Minor) Hall, if only to give their provincial brethren a hearty greeting. There will be "free admission" to all parts of the hall, with the exception of two or three rows of front seats that will be reserved for country friends and such London friends as (for age or other reasons) would rather pay a shilling than run the risk of failing to find accommodation. Of course there will be the usual collection, and it is to be hoped that the "saints" will come prepared to be generous, for the expenses are naturally heavy, and the N. S. S. has no Carnegie.

The first part of the Queen's Hall program will open at 7 o'clock. It will consist of musical selections. In this part of the program two of the President's daughters will participate. Speechmaking will begin at 7.40. Addresses are to be delivered by Messrs. Foote, Cohen, Lloyd, Davies, etc. The proceedings will close in good time, so that all may be able to get home in good time likewise. We hope to see the place crowded.

Gerald Grey wrote feelingly in our last issue on "Church Bells." He had just taken up a fresh residence in a delightful old Devonshire town, but the church bells right opposite his windows nearly drove him mad, and he has been obliged to go back to his former residence in a larger Devonshire town, where he can place himself at a greater distance from these licensed instruments of torture. Strange, that churches should be allowed to make themselves a nuisance to the citizens of earth in the name of an incredible heaven! We hope our old contributor has found peace again.

Torrey has been brought to his knees. He would not apologise for his libels on Thomas Paine and Colonel Ingersoll; they were dead men, and could not make it hot for him in a court of law. But he has had to apologise to Mr. Norman Murray, at Montreal. Mr. Murray, who is a local Freethinker, asked Torrey a question, and Torrey said something about his having been "arrested for selling obscene literature on the street." Mr. Murray instructed his attorney to bring an action against the sweet-tongued soul-saver. That was enough. Torrey went down on his marrow-bones at once. We see by the *Montreal Daily Star* of May 3, Torrey said, at the previous night's revival meeting in St. James's Methodist Church: "I am very sorry that I said it. I had no right to say it." "I don't make this apology," he added, "because I am afraid of a law-suit." What an inveterate liar the man is! We congratulate Mr. Murray on bringing him down.

The newspapers report that Mr. Basil McCrea, the well-known Ulster contractor, who has just died, has left a quarter of a million sterling to Magee Presbyterian College, Londonderry, for the promotion of secular education. So far so good. But he had better have left the money to the Secular Society, Limited, or to the N. S. S., or even to the new Secular Education League.

Coventry Town Council has not yet done discussing whether the Public Baths Assembly Hall shall be let to Secularists and Socialists as well as to Christians on Sunday. Meanwhile we are glad to see an article in the local *Herald* saying that: "When once a public hall has been provided, we may expect to find it used, or claimed, by all sorts of people. Public halls are provided for the general convenience, and the general convenience is identified with letting, and not with closing, them."

A FUNCTION OF INTELLECT.

The intellect is a consoler, which delights in detaching or putting an interval between a man and his fortune, and so converts the sufferer into a spectator and his pain into poetry. It yields the joys of conversation, of letters and of science. Hence also the torments of life become tuneful tragedy, solemn and soft with music, and garnished with rich dark pictures. But higher still than the activities of art, the intellect in its purity and the moral sense in its purity are not distinguished from each other, and both ravish us into a region whereunto these passionate clouds of sorrow cannot rise.—*Emerson*.

Some Real and Alleged Atheists.—I.

BY THE LATE J. M. WHEELER,

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

In days when Christianity was triumphant no charge was attended with more opprobrium than that of Atheism. To be even suspected of the "crime" was to be condemned and suppressed with horror and indignation. Atheism was thought the *ne plus ultra* of Satanic wickedness, and its supposed apostles were execrated as monsters doomed to eternal torments. The world branded and banished, and the Church burnt them. Of the heretics who were burnt as Atheists it is not easy to say how many were really deserving the name.

The Manicheans, Bogomiles, and other heretics who were relentlessly pursued to death during the Middle Ages, were commonly charged with Atheism. The disciples of Amaury de Chartres, who were burnt for Atheism at Paris in 1209, were probably only early philosophic reformers. Sagarel, who was burnt alive in 1300, held the heresy of the Everlasting Gospel, and probably in holding that the Father and Son would give place to the Holy Ghost, meant that the reign of spiritual love would supersede dogmatism. Francis of Poitou, a Franciscan, who was also burnt for this heresy, was rather a mystic than an Atheist. Marguerite Porrete, burnt at Paris in 1300, was an Antinomian mystic. Lollard Walter, or Gauthier, burnt at Cologne in 1322, was apparently an Epicurean Deist. He asserted that God did not know of the evil done on earth, and denied all the distinctive dogmas of the Church. Many of his followers were also burnt. Herman de Ryswick, burnt at Hague in 1512, was a Deist and disbeliever in hell. The Anabaptists were commonly charged with Atheism even while they were most religiously striving to emulate the primitive simplicity and community of the first Christians. Louis Berquin, the friend of Erasmus, who was burnt in 1530, was only a monk-hater. Quintin of Picardy, the chief of the Libertines, who was burnt at Tournay in the same year, probably gave color to the charge of Atheism by declaring the falsity of the Gospel. Gruet was burnt in 1549, more probably for his enmity to Calvin than for any distinct opinions. Etienne Dolet, who was burnt at Paris in 1546, was probably a sceptic of the type of his friend Rabelais. As a friend of heretics he was suspected, as a printer he was hated, as a satirist he was feared, and he was burnt for having wrongly translated Plato, whom he had made to say "after death *tu ne seras plus rien du tout*—you will be nothing at all." The last three words were declared a damnable addition to the text, and cost him his life. Geoffroy Vallée, who was put to death in 1574, was not an Atheist, but an Epicurean Deist. He wished men to believe in God without fearing him. Had the dialogues for which he was condemned appeared in our own time they would have been considered but mildly heretical.

Giordano Bruno, burnt at Rome, February 17, 1600, has been placed in all catalogues of Atheists down to modern times, and there are still many who hold with the Church and Lord Beaconsfield that Pantheism is only Atheism in disguise. Lucilio Vanini, burnt at Toulouse, February 19, 1619, wrote in favor of the existence of God; but then Atheism has had no more powerful auxiliary than certain demonstrations of the existence of God. Father Mersenne, who shared in the *rabies* common to Atheographers, declared that Vanini set out with twelve apostles to convert the world to Atheism, and that in 1623 there were fifty thousand Atheist followers of Vanini in Paris alone!

Manzoli, a marquis of Florence, was burnt for Atheism in 1637. But the real cause was probably his having spoken and written against the Pope. Renault de Poitou and Jacques Dupain, of Sens, also burnt at Paris, 1646, may have only blasphemed the Trinity, the Virgin, or the saints. Kuhlmann, burnt

at Moscow in 1689, was, according to the Christian accounts, rather a fanatic than an Atheist.

One of the last cases of capital punishment for Atheism is also one of the most dubious. In 1688, a Polish knight named Casimir Liszinski was cited for Atheism by the Bishops of Wilna and Posnovia. He was excommunicated and condemned to be burnt alive. According to his defence, his only crime was having made a compilation of arguments for Atheism in order to refute them, and having written in the margin of a theological work that the arguments were inconclusive. Unfortunately for Liszinski, he had not commenced the second part of his work. By grace of the king, he was decapitated before being burnt at Grodno, March 30, 1689. His ashes were placed into a cannon and scattered to the winds.

When so many suffered the extremest penalty of the law for alleged Atheism, it cannot be wondered if many real Atheists carefully concealed their opinions. It is not entirely without reason that the charge has been made at least against five popes—viz., Sylvester (999-1003), Boniface VIII. (1294-1308), John XXII. (1410-1416), Alexander VI. (1492-1503), and Leo X. (1513-1522). Sylvester probably incurred the charge for his patronage of learning. Against Boniface and Leo X. there is some evidence, while John and Alexander were denounced for their crimes.

Atheism is by no means the abnormal state of mind that some theologians would have us believe, and there can be little doubt that thinking men in all ages have often been troubled with doubts as to the religious opinions of those around them. Practical Atheism, or living without God in the world, has indeed been the unacknowledged creed of most of those who, concerning themselves with the things of the world, have helped forward its progress. The name, however, can only philosophically be applied to those who deny a personal intelligent first cause, and it is best restricted to those only who willingly accept it.

With many zealous Christians, the charge of Atheism has been used in a most indiscriminate manner. Of course, there is a certain sense in which every man is an Atheist to every other, since no two men's gods are exactly alike. To the Swedenborgian, who believes not only that Jesus Christ was God, but that he was Jehovah the one only God, every Jew, every rejecter of Christ, must be strictly an Atheist. Unitarians may be said to be Atheists to the Trinitarian God, nor have the orthodox hesitated to press the charge even against fervent believers in Theism. Berkeley and Bentley both called Anthony Collins an Atheist, and even at the present day we occasionally find Paine and Voltaire termed Atheists in the religious press.

Christians should, however, bear in mind that the charge of Atheism was one of the commonest that was brought against the early Christians by the Pagans. The Emperor Julian charged the "Gallileans" with borrowing their Atheism from the absurd religion of the Jews. Father Arnobius complains to the Gentiles, "you call us impious, irreligious, and Atheists." The same charge of Atheism against the Christians is put into the mouth of Cocillius in Minucius Felix; and in Eusebius's *Evangelical Preparation* a Pagan is introduced, speaking as follows:—

"Ought not those men to be considered altogether irreligious and atheistical who desert the customs of their forefathers, by which every nation and every city hath been preserved? What good can reasonably be expected from those who oppose our Saviors and reject our Benefactors, and thus make themselves enemies of our Gods? And can they deserve pardon who adopt whatever is impious and atheistical among men, having turned away from the worship of beings honored everywhere, from time immemorial, both by Greeks and barbarians, with all sorts of sacrifices, rites and mysteries, by all kings, legislators, and philosophers?"

Clement of Alexandria even claims many of the so-called Atheists of Paganism as being rather Christians in advance of their times. Yet there is

little reason to doubt that Diagoras, Theodorus, Bion, Nicagoras, and Hippo, and even Pliny the Elder, rejected all idea of God. Euhemerus was called an Atheist for assigning a human origin to the gods. The opinions of Leucippus and Democritus were materialistic rather than strictly atheistic. There are materialistic Theists like Priestly, just as there are deniers of a personal God who yet believe in a future life, like Hudson Tuttle, G. Barlow, A. P. Sinnett, and G. St. Clair. Epicurus and his followers relegated the gods to a remote sphere without influence on the conduct of men. Yet the atheistic poem of Lucretius opens with an invocation to Venus. The real gods of Horace were Mæcænus and Augustus. The atheistic character of Buddhism has often been contested, yet Max Müller says "the fact cannot be disputed away that the religion of Buddha was from the beginning purely atheistic." The Southern Buddhists have most closely kept the teachings of Gautama, and they neither worship any god nor seek for a personal continued existence. Gautama, however, does not seem from his discourses to have challenged the existence of the Vedic gods, but simply to have contended that they must be subject to the universal law of *Karma*.

Confucius spoke of Heaven (*Tien*), but did not use the name of the personal God (*Shang-te*). When asked about serving the spirits of the dead, he answered, "While you are not able to serve men, how can you serve their spirits?" Ke-Loo added, "I venture to ask about death." He was answered, "While you do not know life, how can you know about death?"

Julius Cæsar was almost certainly an Atheist. He questioned a future life even before the Senate. Augustus and Tiberius were sceptics. Pyrrho was so complete a sceptic that he would have doubted the truth of Atheism had he known he would be classed as an Atheist.

Among moderns, the Atheism of the sceptics Hobbes, Bayle, and Hume may be questioned. Hobbes's principles may lead to Atheism. His questioning the existence of Satan may be applied to Satan's antagonist; but Hobbes himself professed to be of the religion of the State, whatever that religion might be. Bayle's articles tend to scepticism and Manicheism. Hume refutes the theistic positions only in dialogue. The fact that his posthumous essays are more decidedly sceptical than those published within his own lifetime, confirms the view that Professor Blackie is right in classing him with real Atheists. It must not be forgotten that in Hume's time Woolston, Ilive, and Aunet were imprisoned for milder heresies than Atheism.

(To be concluded.)

A Sabbatarian Set-Back.

THE Town's Meeting in Newcastle-on-Tyne was noteworthy in more ways than one. The result of it is admittedly sensational, whilst the resolution submitted, and carried almost unanimously, was a remarkable one:—

"That this Meeting is of the opinion that it is absolutely necessary to ensure to the people one day in seven for adequate opportunity for worship, rest, and recreation, and that Sunday being obviously the day on which these purposes can best be achieved by the large majority of the people, this Meeting further expresses the opinion that all good citizens should unite in maintaining Sunday as the weekly day of rest, and pledges itself to use its influence to secure this inestimable boon for the people, unrestricted by law."

How this resolution ever came to be put forward by the clerical conveners of the Meeting, in their endeavor to carry out the intentions of the ecclesiastical dignitaries responsible for the "Message to the Nation," would require too much space adequately to explain. Suffice to say that the words "and recreation" and "unrestricted by law" were submitted to the conveners of the Meeting as being absolutely essential to the Resolution if they wished to meet with the acceptance of the "advanced" bodies of the town. It was never considered within the realm of probability that they would agree to these suggestions. But strange things occur,

and whether it was owing to the fear of losing their battle altogether if faced with vigorous opposition or the presence of real liberal tendencies amongst themselves, the fact remains that they agreed to put forward a resolution robbed of every shred of harmfulness.

It was, however, still thought advisable by the "advanced" parties to exercise their rights as citizens and speak in support of the Resolution in order to correct, if necessary, any ingenious interpretations of its terms. This plan succeeded admirably, and the unique spectacle was witnessed of representatives of all the Churches, the Labor Organisations, the Sunday Societies, and the Secular Society, all speaking from one platform to one Resolution. An amendment that was moved, seconded and supported by Nonconformity, the Champions of Religious Freedom, that "recreation" and "unrestricted by law" be omitted, met with ignominious failure, and the Resolution was carried by a well-filled Town Hall with much enthusiasm.

Was there ever a "Sunday Observance" Meeting with such a result? It is doubtful whether many of the religious speakers properly realised the situation until too late. They found themselves pleading for a resolution, the only parts the audience really cared for being the parts they most disliked. The effect of the Meeting can be well gauged by the following press paragraphs:—

"When the Archbishops of Canterbury and of Westminster and the appointed representatives of Nonconformity set a-going the movement for the preservation of the English Sunday, it is not for a moment to be believed that they ever intended it should take the turn that it took in the Newcastle Town Hall on Monday evening. The Socialists, who make Sunday their head meeting-day for political agitation, the Sunday-lecture men, the Sunday park-music men, the Sunday excursionists—the very people, in fact, who are the most opposed to the historical and traditional English Sunday, had the Meeting in hand. It was their resolution that was moved, their way of keeping Sunday that was in evidence. It was like the meeting in the fable—the sheep-dog's meeting that was taken possession of by the wolves."—*Newcastle Daily Chronicle*.

"In the Town Hall on Monday, when an appeal was made for one day in seven for worship, rest, and recreation, we were faced with the strange spectacle of Christians and Secularists on one common platform, subscribing to a form of recreation for the 'keeping holy' of the Sabbath day. The old order changeth!

The Meeting almost unanimously passed a resolution in favor of a day of rest, in which people should take their worship, rest, and recreation according to the dictates of their conscience. The pretty panic over, one might fairly ask, 'Where are we?' If the dictates of the conscience of Monday's Meeting are consulted, it is easy to see what form of the trinity of 'worship, rest, and recreation' will be worshiped. The wonder was the ministers did not rise in a body for a Sabbatarian Sabbath. An individual effort or two were almost crushed in ridicule. Picture-galleries, museums, music, and even golf and other exercises appealed to the enthusiasm of the audience. It was asked that the Churches should be more attractive, and the pulpits mentally above the pews. The denominations got small solace from the Meeting. They learned, on the other hand, from a demonstrative audience, that, be it pitiful or no, the modern Sabbath is far from being to the taste of the modern mind."—*Newcastle Daily Chronicle*.

And the Vicar of All Saints', writing in the same paper, says:—

"From a Christian standpoint, it (the Meeting) was infinitely sad, and the reflection was forced upon one's mind, 'Am I in a Christian country?' It was designed by its promoters to focus the public opinion of our own community with regard to the growing secularisation of the Lord's Day, and to pledge Christian people to do their utmost to ensure its better observance. There is grave danger that a directly opposite result will ensue."

This, then, is Newcastle's reply to the "Message to the Nation."

Sad End of the Latest Jonah Story.

SOMETHING over ten years ago, it became our duty as reporters of current thought to chronicle a story that was being taken seriously by journals in Europe, to the effect that a sailor named James Bartley had been swallowed by a whale and found alive two days later when his mates cut the leviathan open. We remarked at that time that, "without pronouncing judgment on the question of its probability," the story was "certainly interesting." The tale was transcribed into our columns from *Cosmos*, a serious French scientific journal, which took it from the English press. It also appeared in the *Neue Lutherische Kirchenzeitung*, whence it was quoted into *Hasting's Dictionary of the Bible* by Professor Koenig, author of the article on Jonah. Ever since the story appeared in our columns (April 4, 1906) we have received inquiries for it every few months. Now it is all pronounced a hoax, and the fame of Bartley seems likely to rest henceforth rather on his success as a romancer than on his being a second

Jonah. Bartley is exposed by *The Expository Times* (Edinburgh). The original story ran as follows:—

"In the month of February, 1891, the whaler *Star of the East*.....launched two whale-boats with an equipment of men to pursue a superb whale that was observed at some distance. The huge creature was harpooned and wounded to death. While it was writhing in its last agonies, one of the whale-boats was struck by its tail and shattered in pieces. The sailors who were in it were thrown into the water; all but two were saved shortly afterward by the other boats. The body of one was recovered, but the other, a man named James Bartley, could not be found.

When the monster had ceased moving and its death was quite certain, it was hoisted alongside the ship and the work of cutting it up began. A day and a night were devoted to this task. When it was ended, the stomach of the whale was opened. What was the surprise of the whalers to find in it their lost comrade, James Bartley, unconscious, but alive! They had much trouble in reviving him. For several days he was delirious and could not speak an intelligent word. Not till three weeks had elapsed did he recover his reason and was he able to narrate his impressions.

'I remember very well,' said he, 'the moment when the whale threw me into the air. Then I was swallowed and found myself enclosed in a firm, slippery channel whose contractions forced me continually downward. This lasted only an instant. Then I found myself in a very large sack, and by feeling about, I realised that I had been swallowed by a whale, and that I was in his stomach. I could still breathe, though with much difficulty. I had a feeling of insupportable heat, and it seemed as if I were being boiled alive.

The horrible thought that I was doomed to perish in the whale's belly tortured me, and my anguish was intensified by the calm and silence that reigned about me. Finally, I lost the consciousness of my frightful situation.'

James Bartley, the English papers add, is known to be one of the most hardy of whalers. But his experience in the whale's stomach was so terrible that he was obliged to undergo treatment in a London hospital on his return.

Nevertheless, his general state of health was not seriously affected by this accident. The only effect was that his skin was, as it were, tanned by the action of the gastric juice."

The narrator went on to quote the captain as corroborating the story. Now *The Expository Times* has found that the *Star of the East*, which, under the British flag, sailed from Auckland, N. Z., on December 27, 1890, for New York, was commanded by Captain Killam. Under November 27, 1906, the captain's wife writes from Yarmouth (Nova Scotia):—

"My husband asked me to write. There is not one word of truth in the whole whale story. I was with my husband all the years he was in the *Star of the East*. There was never a man lost overboard while my husband was in her. The sailor has told a great sea-yarn. I wish, if it is not too much trouble, to send us one of the papers with the yarn in."

—*Literary Digest* (New York).

"Sowing and Reaping."

BY THE LATE COLONEL R. G. INGERSOLL.

I HAVE read the sermon on "Sowing and Reaping," and I now understand Mr. Moody better than I did before. The other day in New York, Mr. Moody said that he implicitly believed the story of Jonah and really thought that he was in the fish for three days.

When I read it I was surprised that a man living in the century of Humboldt, Darwin, Huxley, Spencer, and Haeckel should believe such an absurd and idiotic story.

Now I understand the whole thing. I can account for the amazing credulity of this man. Mr. Moody never read one of my lectures. That accounts for it all, and no wonder that he is a hundred years behind the times. He never read one of my lectures; that is a perfect explanation.

Poor man! He has no idea of what he has lost. He has been living on miracles and mistakes, on falsehood and foolishness, stuffing his mind with absurdities when he could have had truth, facts, and good, sound sense.

Poor man!

Probably Mr. Moody has never read one word of Darwin and so he still believes in the Garden of Eden and the talking snake and really thinks that Jehovah took some mud, moulded the form of a man, breathed in its nostrils, stood it up and called it Adam, and that he then took one of Adam's ribs and some more mud and manufactured Eve. Probably he has never read a word written by any great geologist and consequently still believes in the story of the flood. Knowing nothing of astronomy, he still thinks that Joshua stopped the sun.

Poor man! He has neglected Spencer and has no idea of evolution. He thinks that man has, through all the ages, degenerated, the first pair having been perfect. He does not believe that man came from lower forms and has gradually journeyed upward.

He really thinks that the Devil outwitted God and vaccinated the human race with the virus of total depravity.

Poor man!

He knows nothing of the great scientists—of the great thinkers, of the emancipators of the human race; knows nothing of Spinoza, of Voltaire, of Draper, Buckle, of Paine or Renan.

Mr. Moody ought to read something besides the Bible—ought to find out what the really intelligent have thought. He ought to get some new ideas—a few facts—and I think that, after he did so, he would be astonished to find how ignorant and foolish he had been. He is a good man. His heart is fairly good, but his head is almost useless.

The trouble with this sermon "Sowing and Reaping," is that he contradicts it. I believe that a man must reap what he sows, that every human being must bear the natural consequences of his acts. Actions are good or bad according to their consequences. That is my doctrine.

There is no forgiveness in nature. But Mr. Moody tells us that a man may sow thistles and gather figs, that having acted like a fiend for seventy years, he can, between his last dose of medicine and his last breath, repent; that he can be washed clean by the blood of the lamb and that myriads of angels will carry his soul to heaven—in other words that this man will not reap what he sowed, but what Christ sowed, that this man's thistles will be changed to figs.

This doctrine, to my mind, is not only absurd but dishonest and corrupting.

This is one of the absurdities in Mr. Moody's theology. The other is that a man can justly be damned for the sin of another.

Nothing can exceed the foolishness of these two ideas—first: "Man can be justly punished forever for the sin of Adam." Second: "Man can be justly rewarded with eternal joy for the goodness of Christ."

Yet the man who believes this, preaches a sermon in which he says that a man must reap what he sows. Orthodox Christians teach exactly the opposite. They teach that no matter what a man sows, no matter how wicked his life has been, that he can by repentance change the crop. That all his sins shall be forgotten and that only the goodness of Christ will be remembered.

Let us see how this works:

Mr. A. has lived a good and useful life, kept his contracts, paid his debts, educated his children, loved his wife and made his home a heaven, but he did not believe in the inspiration of Mr. Moody's Bible. He died and his soul was sent to hell. Mr. Moody says that as a man sows so shall he reap.

Mr. B. lived a useless and wicked life. By his cruelty he drove his wife to insanity, his children became vagrants and beggars, his home was a perfect hell, he committed many crimes, he was a thief, a burglar, a murderer. A few minutes before he was hanged he got religion and his soul went from the scaffold to heaven. And yet Mr. Moody says that as a man sows so shall he reap.

Mr. Moody ought to have a little philosophy—a little good sense.

So Mr. Moody says that only in this life can a man secure the reward of repentance.

Just before a man dies, God loves him—loves him as a mother loves her babe—but a moment after he dies, he sends his soul to hell. In the other world nothing can be done to reform him. The society of God and the angels can have no good effect. Nobody can be made better in heaven. This world is the only place where reform is possible. Here, surrounded by the wicked, in the midst of temptations, in the darkness of ignorance, a human being may reform if he is fortunate enough to hear the words of some revival preacher, but when he goes before his Maker—before the Trinity—he has no chance. God can do nothing for his soul except to send it to hell.

This shows that the power for good is confined to people in this world, and that in the next world God can do nothing to reform his children. This is theology. This is what they call "Tidings of great joy."

Every orthodox creed is savage, ignorant, and idiotic. In the orthodox heaven there is no mercy, no pity. In the orthodox hell there is no hope, no reform. God is an eternal gaoler, an everlasting turnkey.

And yet Christians now say that while there may be no fire in hell—no actual flames—yet the lost souls will feel forever the tortures of conscience.

What will conscience trouble the people in hell about? They tell us that they will remember their sins.

Well, what about the souls in heaven? They committed awful sins, they made their fellow-men unhappy. They took the lives of others—sent many to eternal torment. Will they have no conscience? Is hell the only place where souls regret the evil they have done? Have the angels no regret, no remorse, no conscience?

If this be so, heaven must be somewhat worse than hell. In old times, if people wanted to know anything they asked the preacher. Now they do if they don't.

The Bible has, with intelligent men, lost its authority.

The miracles are now regarded by sensible people as the spawn of ignorance and credulity. On every hand people are looking for facts—for truth—and all religions are taking their places in the museum of myths.

Yes, the people are becoming civilised, and so they are putting out the fires of hell. They are ceasing to believe in a God who seeks eternal revenge.

The people are becoming sensible. They are asking for evidence. They care but little for the winged phantoms of the air—for the ghosts and devils and supposed gods. The people are anxious to be happy here and they want a little heaven in this life.

Theology is a curse. Science is a blessing. We do not need preachers, but teachers; not priests, but thinkers; not churches, but schools; not steeples, but observatories. We want knowledge.

Let us hope that Mr. Moody will read some really useful books.

Secular Education at Melbourne.

A SECULAR Education Defence League has been formed at Melbourne. Its object is to resist the efforts of the Protestant bodies to introduce Bible teaching in the State schools. The first meeting of the League was held on March 6, with a well-known banker in the chair. Many of our readers will be glad to have the full program of the Secular Education Defence League:—

"1. The object of the League is the defence of the present system of free, compulsory, and secular education. It is not formed in the interest of, or in antagonism to, any creed or denomination, but in the interest of the people.

2. The propagation of any religion should be conducted by its adherents at their own expense, and not by the State at the expense of the community. The endorsement and subsidy by the State of any religious teaching is inconsistent with true religious liberty.

3. Religious beliefs, being matters of conscience, ought not to be forced upon any State institution by any majority, however great.

4. The State should not assist any denomination, but if it assists one or more the people will justly demand that it should assist all proportionately; consequently, the introduction of Scripture lessons would soon pervert our national system of education into a denominational system.

5. The generous facilities given by our Education Act (whereby religious instructors may enter State schools and give full religious instruction to children of their own denomination) together with our churches, Sunday-schools, and Christian homes, afford abundant opportunities for teaching Scripture, without encroaching upon the present system of secular education.

6. The chief aim of education should be formation of character; attainment of this end must depend upon the personality of the teacher. State education is in the hands of capable and conscientious teachers, who are now, throughout the whole routine of school-work, forming in the children habits of punctuality, diligence, honesty, loyalty, truthfulness, kindness, obedience, and clean living in body and mind.

7. Our public service system of appointment and transfer is fair and just to all teachers in their order of merit, without regard to their religious beliefs. The introduction of Scripture lessons would lead to attempts to break down this system in order to procure appointment to particular schools of teachers holding pronounced religious beliefs.

8. Many teachers hold strong sectarian views themselves, which do not now influence their school work. Scripture lessons would necessarily lead to expression or indication in school-work of those views, and would thus tend to promote sectarian conflict."

We believe that the "Bible-teaching" zealots will be soundly beaten again.

Protestants, as well as Freethinkers, laugh at Catholic relics. Were we to quote from some of the old English "Reformers," who carried on a vigorous polemic against Catholic "idolatry," we should be reproached for soiling our pages unnecessarily. John Calvin himself, the Genevan pope, declared that so many samples of the Virgin Mary's milk were exhibited in Europe that "one might suppose she was a wet nurse or a cow." Freethinkers, however, laugh at the miracles of Protestantism, as well as those of the Catholic Church. They are all of a piece, in the ultimate analysis. It is just as credible that Christ's Coat would work miracles, as that Elisha's bones restored a corpse to life, or that Paul's handkerchiefs cured the sick and diseased. All such things belong to the same realm of pious imagination. Thus, while the Protestant laughs at the Catholic, the Freethinker laughs at both.—G. W. Foote. "Flowers of Freethought."

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, etc.

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

LONDON.

QUEEN'S (MINOR) HALL, Langham-place, London, W.: 7, Public Meeting in connection with N. S. S. Conference; speakers—Messrs. Foote, Cohen, Lloyd, Davies, etc.

OUTDOOR.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N. S. S.: Hyde Park (near Marble Arch), 11.30, H. B. Samuels and F. Schaller.

COUNTRY.

OUTDOOR.

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

HUDDERSFIELD BRANCH N. S. S.: Market Cross, on Saturday, at 8, George Whitehead, a Lecture.

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