

# THE Freethinker

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To-day the majority of educated people look upon "belief in a personal devil" as a mediæval superstition, while "belief in God" (that is, the personal, good and loving God) is retained as an indispensable element of religion. Yet the one belief is just as much (or as little) justified as the other.—HÆCKEL.

## Bernard Shaw in the Pulpit.

MR. BERNARD SHAW has not actually stood in a pulpit yet, but he has taken to preaching. Some time ago we noticed his appearance at the City Temple, where he had the Rev. R. J. Campbell for chairman, and received that gentleman's blessing before the end of the proceedings. Mr. Shaw has quite recently been discoursing at Kensington on "The New Theology." Our friend and colleague, Mr. J. T. Lloyd, went to hear him, and wrote some paragraphs on the lecture, which appeared in that week's "Sugar Plums." Mr. Lloyd's paragraphs were rather laudatory, although they ended with some reservations. He was probably captivated by the lecturer's Irish sprightliness, and was apparently more flattering than the occasion warranted. We have seen what purports to be a verbatim report of Mr. Shaw's address. True, it appears in the *Christian Commonwealth*, and may possibly have been a little doctored. But not much, we imagine, even if at all; for our contemporary expresses approval of most of the things that Mr. Shaw said, and hails him as "a genuinely religious man" and "no mean theologian." This is on the same lines as Mr. Campbell's benediction. Immediately upon the close of Mr. Shaw's lecture at the City Temple, Mr. Campbell announced that "he was absolutely at one with him in nearly all that he had said." Without knowing it (Mr. Campbell said on the following Sunday) Mr. Shaw was "preaching the Gospel of Christ." "The one thing that struck me," the reverend gentleman went on even more fervently, "and thrilled my heart, in that lecture, was that here was a man who, without calling himself a Christian, could grasp the very central principle of the Gospel itself and hold it with a firm hand." Evidently, then, if Mr. Shaw has not yet entered a pulpit, he is fully qualified to fill one; and since he has played many parts in the past, who shall set bounds to his future versatility?

### II.

Mr. Shaw seems to take compliments without returning them. The subject of his lecture at Kensington Town Hall was "The New Theology," but he never mentioned Mr. Campbell or alluded to his book. The new theology is his theology. The "Shavian philosophy" is assuming a religious color. Mr. Shaw is going to play the oracle himself. He will therefore accept interpreters but no rivals. "I am myself alone." Shall there be anything new knocking about unless it emanates from "G. B. S."? Perish the thought! Mr. Shaw has taught modern England most of what it knows. And if a new religion is wanted, he is quite able to supply it, without the slightest assistance.

### III.

Perhaps we had better pause here to say that it is no part of our intention to join in the baiting of Mr.

Shaw which is going on in *Blackwood*, and will probably go on in other quarters in the early future. For some time he has been a sort of idol, and it is natural that an idol should, sooner or later, be attacked and trampled upon. What real worth there is in him will survive this performance. Certainly no good can be done by railing at Mr. Shaw and calling it satire. He is a human being; like all the rest of us, he has his qualities, and the defects of his qualities; and he is not the first person by countless millions who has exemplified the truth of Dr. Johnson's saying that two contradictions cannot both be true, but may both inhere in the same individual. It is said that Mr. Shaw is never in earnest. But this is nonsense. He can be perfectly serious; he can be really witty; and he can easily play the fool. It is the business of a sagacious reader to discriminate. The different Mr. Shaws, all inhabiting the same Mr. Shaw (this is Hibernian, but Mr. Shaw, being an Irishman, will forgive us), may be disentangled from each other. Mr. Shaw, the serious reformer, is one person; Mr. Shaw, the natural wit, is another person; and Mr. Shaw, the amateur buffoon, is another person. And yet there are not three Mr. Shaws, but one Mr. Shaw. Which things are a mystery—to the superficial.

### IV.

Seriously, it may be said that Mr. Shaw has been a good deal spoilt by his admirers. The mercurial Irishman tickles the more saturnine Britishers. His very accent is a part of the joke. He quickly found out what made them laugh, and worked the vein for all it was worth. He won a reputation and lived up to it. He was expected to be funny. His hearers did not even wait for their cue. They laughed before he opened his lips. Their hilarity was a lively sense of witticisms to come. And if the witticisms did not always come, and paradox and extravagance had to take their place, the fault was mainly in the audience, and the misfortune rested with Mr. Shaw.

### V.

Mr. Shaw's is a great talent. Nature gave him many bright qualities. Had she given him one or two more she would have made him a genius. He may recognise this himself; or does it unconsciously prompt his curious criticisms of Shakespeare? We mean as far as those criticisms are serious. For we can hardly believe that they are always so. It has been said that Mr. Shaw's motto is: "When business is dull, go for Shakespeare"—and assuredly the Master is a splendid advertisement-boarding. Varying the metaphor, we may call him a magnificent chopping-block, that will be found as large and firm as ever after any number of operations. All the choppers in the world will not wear him away. And we daresay Mr. Shaw knows it. He has sense enough to smile at the laborious futilities of Tolstoy, who appears to think that he has settled Shakespeare by showing that *Macbeth*, *Lear*, *Othello*, and *Hamlet* are bloody melodramas—which, of course, they are if you take no account of the poetry and characterisation. Mr. Shaw rather follows the fashion of Byron in this matter. Byron knew very well the colossal greatness of Shakespeare, though he had the impudence to refer to "his plays so doting." And we daresay Mr. Shaw is pretty

nearly as wideawake. Perhaps not quite so; for he has not Byron's emotional force, or poetical insight, and probably does despise Shakespeare (as he says) through sheer defect of perception. Common men and women thrill at some of Shakespeare's utterances that leave Mr. Shaw cold. These common men and women have not a tithe of Mr. Shaw's intellect, but they have emotional experiences which are apparently beyond his ken. Nothing, perhaps, could illustrate this better than a reference to Don Juan's indictment of mankind in *Man and Superman* (pp. 130-131). It is a capital piece of writing—in its way; it is superbly comprehensive, and it leaves mankind without a rag of virtue to cover their vicious nakedness. But, after all, it is only a literary exercise; it leaves you cold at the finish; you say "Excellent!" and never stir a hair as one of the parties in the indictment. But just read the terrible tirades that Shakespeare puts into the mouth of Timon. They bite, they burn; you blench under the awful impeachment; you feel that this indeed is nature—that it is the voice of a real passion of indignation under the stings of ingratitude—that it is not the whole truth, but true as far as it goes, and perfectly in keeping with the character and the situation. Such is the difference between intellect without passion, and passion using the intellect as the medium of its expression. And one is tempted to say that we have Mr. Shaw on Shakespeare, but what a companion picture it would be if we had Shakespeare on Mr. Shaw!

## VI.

George Eliot said, in one of her early novels, that the first thing human beings require is something to love, and the second thing something to reverence. We don't presume to discuss Mr. Shaw as a lover; but we are bound to say that we never could discover that he had any reverence in his composition until he was obliged to fix up some Supermen by way of illustrating the Gospel he started preaching four years ago—which is totally different from the Gospel he is preaching now. This want of reverence, in all probability, accounts for Mr. Shaw's cavalier treatment of Shakespeare; and we really hope it also accounts for his still more cavalier treatment of Darwin. We should be sorry to think that he "goes" for the great biologist on business principles—as it has been suggested that he "goes" for Shakespeare.

We want to clear this question of Darwin out of the way before we begin discussing Mr. Shaw's "New Theology." The great biologist was soundly denounced at the City Temple. Mr. Shaw said that Darwin "did not discover or even popularise evolution; on the contrary, he drove evolution out of men's minds for half a century, and we have only just got it back again." This was an utterance to lift brows and shrug shoulders. It is expanded in the Kensington lecture. "Darwin," we are told, "was really the man who completely turned the attention of mankind from the doctrine of evolution." "I don't believe," he adds, "that Charles Darwin knew anything about evolution." Huxley, Romanes, Büchner, Haeckel, Wallace, and all the rest of them, were entirely wrong. Charles Darwin was an impostor. Mr. Shaw, musical and dramatic critic and writer of plays, sets the world right on this matter. Were we not justified in alluding to his boundless versatility? But how did he become such a high authority on this subject? What he says about giraffes' necks, and how they came to be so long, strikes us as side-splitting. Mr. Shaw's theory is that giraffes wanted long necks and went on stretching, and stretching, until they got them; while the amazingly ignorant and desperately pretentious Darwin taught that it was all a question of natural selection operating, through the struggle for existence, upon the infinite variety of nature—in which no two giraffe's necks are any more exactly alike than any two blades of grass. But where did Mr. Shaw pick up the biology that enables him to expose Darwin? He lets the cat out of the bag

by referring to Samuel Butler. Now the author of *Erewhon* was a brilliant and powerful satirist; that was his forte; but his foible was writing about evolution, and refuting Darwinism in book after book, which he complained that nobody would answer. We suspect that Mr. Shaw's acquaintance with Samuel Butler's biological recreations is confined to the essay on "The Deadlock in Darwinism" in the posthumous *Essays on Art, Life, and Science*. Samuel Butler's expressions of dissent from Darwinism in that essay are echoed by Mr. Shaw. Darwin left no room for God in biology, just as La Place left no room for God in astronomy. Samuel Butler, however, wanted room for God—therefore Darwin was wrong; and now Mr. Shaw wants room for God—therefore Darwin is wrong again. But how Darwin would have smiled at the comedy!

## VII.

Samuel Butler's *Essays* was published in 1904. Mr. Shaw's *Man and Superman* was published in 1903. He was a Darwinian then. This is another reason for believing that he has been converted by the "Deadlock" essay. But where is the proof (it may be asked) that Mr. Shaw was a Darwinian four years ago? It is to be found in the book just mentioned. Mr. Shaw is the father of John Tanner's opinions in "The Revolutionist's Handbook." To deny responsibility for them would be to write himself down a trifler. His argument was that "man as he exists" is not "capable of net progress"—that he will never alter "until his nature is changed." "Movements" and revolutions are useless—progress is an illusion: drag man along as you will for a while, he will always "return to his idols and his cupidities."

G. W. FOOTE.

(To be concluded.)

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**Wisdom While You Wait.**


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SEVERAL of the religious weeklies give over a portion of their columns, week by week, to replying to the doubts and perplexities of their readers. These are not exactly the familiar "Answers to Correspondents," but more in the line of an informal confessional. Readers submit their problems, and the man in charge, doubtless after a due selection, propounds the answers. In the case of a paper like the *British Weekly*, these answers are of the painful and ponderous "unco' guid" type; the religious papers controlled by the Harmsworth group are sloppily and erotically religious, being chiefly concerned with how to fall in love, and out of it; while the *Christian Commonwealth* section, under the charge of the Rev. J. Warschauer, M.A., D.Phil., assumes a jaunty and yet profound philosophic air—as is only proper in a paper that champions the abstruse philosophy of the Rev. R. J. Campbell. If I had any hopes that my questions would meet with answers, I should be pleased to submit a few to Mr. Warschauer; but I am mightily afraid that they would be consigned to the ever-ready W.P.B., and so refrain. Besides, it might be said that I am not eligible as a questioner. I have no doubts about religious teaching. My state of mind concerning it is one of certainty, while my only perplexity is that of accounting for the persistence of beliefs that have no more scientific warrant than has *Jack and the Beanstalk* or *Old Mother Hubbard*.

In the issue for May 30, Mr. Warschauer leads off with a reply to a student who has been converted from Agnosticism by the preaching of Mr. Campbell. One feels a certain curiosity concerning the quality of the Agnosticism that crumpled up so readily, and also as to which were the arguments of Mr. Campbell that brought about the conversion. To me his preaching seems about as well adapted for the work of meeting and destroying the Freethought position as it is for solving the problem of perpetual motion.

Still, the case is there, and one must take it for what it is worth. This correspondent, however, is still in trouble about the efficacy of prayer. He has got to the point of believing in a God; and, having caught his Deity, he is puzzled as to what use he can put him to. Probably as a reminiscence of his earlier state, he asks: "Are not the laws of Nature God's laws? And are we not, in praying for either physical or moral benefits, asking God to break his laws in our favor?" Mr. Warschauer's reply—occupying about a column—is a first-rate example in the art of wandering round a question without ever coming within striking distance of it. The question, he says, is one worth answering as clearly as possible; and straightway proceeds *not* to do so. To begin with, there is a play upon the word "break." We are not, we are told, breaking the great natural forces in subduing them to our service, our prayers may simply set into motion "spiritual forces" which may bring about the desired end. This is reasonable "when we consider that everything in the physical sphere is ultimately brought about by something quite non-physical, viz., thought."

Now, this is not only not making the answer as clear as possible; it is adding, quite unnecessarily, a piece of downright dogmatism. To say that everything in the physical sphere is brought about by something non-physical is a mere metaphysical statement unsupported, because incapable, of any proof. It is not even good metaphysics either. It may be a reasonable position that both physical and non-physical are merely convenient distinctions, forms of thought useful to us for classificatory purposes; but to dismiss the physical as an efficient cause and hang on to the non-physical is an exhibition one ought not to witness in one who writes Master of Arts and Doctor of Philosophy after his name. In any case, it does not face the question. The very essence of the question is, Are things altered by our prayers or are they not? If they are not, prayer is obviously useless, and our converted Agnostic is right in jibbing—although, after swallowing the rest of Mr. Campbell's philosophy, it is rather fastidious to strain at this piece. The question would not be answered, be it noted, by making the action of prayer a purely subjective one; for no reasonable person doubts that anyone who believes that praying will make him a better man will fail to derive a feeling of benefit from it. So he would, from standing on his head, swallowing bread pills, or shouting "Mesopotamia!" at five-minute intervals, if his faith took a turn in any of these directions. The consequences of prayer, whether objective or subjective, must be external to the petitioner to be of any evidential value whatever.

Things, then, must be altered by our prayers from the course they would otherwise have taken, or why pray? And if they are altered it is either verbal trickery or mental confusion that leads apologists to deny that prayer affects material things, but that it does not affect psychical ones. "We misconstrue prayer," says Mr. Warschauer, "when we regard it merely as petition, especially as petition for material blessings." But why? What is there in prayer originally but petition—for blessings to be given or punishments to be withheld? Would people ever have prayed at all but for this reason? And is not the later view of prayer—that of communion only—merely an attempt to retain a practice that educated people cannot avoid seeing has no scientific justification? Besides, will Mr. Warschauer, or anyone else, explain what is the essential difference between praying for moral or spiritual blessings and praying for physical ones? What is the difference between praying for an increase in wages and praying for the moral improvement of Jack Jones or Tom Smith? Really, the one may on occasion be quite as important as the other. A rise in wages, that may mean a better house, a healthier neighborhood, more food, greater ease of mind and serenity of temper, is quite as important as praying that someone may be led to give up his evil life and become a virtuous citizen. Material blessings are very often the condition of

moral and spiritual ones, and in the complete absence of the former the latter would be impossible.

Why, then, is it absurd to pray for the one, and not absurd to pray for the other? Well, we know that any amount of prayer to God will not bring a rise in wages—unless one's employer knows of the praying. It is absurd to pray for material blessings, because our knowledge is sufficiently exact to show us how ridiculous it is to expect an answer. It is not absurd to pray for moral improvement in ourselves or others, because here our ignorance is tolerably comprehensive concerning the conditions of change. People's characters do undergo modification—not suddenly, as they should, if it is in answer to prayer, but gradually, as is to be expected by all who have any general conception of the true nature of the human animal—and as we cannot trace all the steps by which the modification is brought about, the religionist, as usual, trades on the general ignorance by finding here a sphere for the operation of prayer. I do not think Mr. Warschauer will have done much to clear up the ex-Agnostic's difficulty, although I still marvel at the quality of the Agnosticism shattered by the City Temple philosophy.

Mr. Warschauer's other answers are concerned with Free Will and the nature of God, with each of which I must deal briefly. One questioner asks how is it, if our nature is only a portion of God's nature, that we have any evil in us? The reply is the old-fashioned, and quite stupid, one that if God had made us perfect we should be simply automatons, and not moral agents. To this I fancy Huxley's reply, that so long as we always went correctly there would be nothing to complain about, seems to be the best reply to such a position, and a quite adequate one. A moral agent must have the faculty of choice, we are told; as though that settles the matter. In reality the question has not been faced, the statement concerning "choice" merely pointing to a confusion of thought on the writer's part. The *fact* of choice no one disputes. That we are capable of choice is as plain as it is that we have a nose on our face. It is the determination of choice that is the crux of the question. Why do we choose one thing rather than another? Why do some people choose differently to others, and why, with the best desire to choose rightly, do we often choose wrongly? Perhaps Mr. Warschauer will answer these queries instead of laboriously proving what no one denies.

The last question dealt with is concerned with the nature of God. A correspondent writes that if there is evil, and also an omnipotent Deity, then God is responsible for the existence of evil; and, as he believes in God, he denies the existence of evil. Mr. Warschauer replies that the questioner's error is due to a wrong use of the word "omnipotent." The divine omnipotence is bounded, he says, in all sorts of ways. A number of illustrations are given, by all of which is apparently meant that God cannot outstep the laws of his own being. Well, I am no authority on what God can or cannot do; but, if Mr. Warschauer is correct, he has demonstrated that man is omnipotent exactly as God is, for he, too, is determined by the laws of his being. The truth is that omnipotence, except as a figure of speech, is mere moonshine, although Mr. Warschauer either does not, or will not, see it. But the further reason for an omnipotent God, who is also all-good, permitting evil, is that his omnipotence must include the power to inhibit his own will and allow the wills of other people to be exerted. Thus we have evil without it proving any difficulty to the right-thinking Theist. Now, again, I must plead ignorance as to why God—if there be a God—permits evil, only I cannot for the life of me see how this makes the case any better. God Almighty, rather than prevent a man's will working evil, permits that man to so act as to bring disease, or misery, or degradation to others. Plain, common sense would say that if God could have prevented that evil he should have done so. Mr. Warschauer retorts, that would convert the man into an automaton. Perhaps so; but what of the

people who are injured by the apathy, or delicacy, or God's conduct? Have they no claim to consideration? And how on earth can this display of useless word-juggling get over the fact that, at bottom, everyone feels God should have prevented the innocent suffering if he had the power? Any ordinary human being would, if he had the ability. No one would permit evil to be worked merely because it afforded exercise for someone else's moral development. Mr. Warschauer himself would not permit it, and this alone is sufficient proof of the unsoundness of his apology.

C. COHEN.

### "Nature's Insurgent Son."

I THANK Mr. J. A. Reid for his interesting letter in the *Freethinker*, May 26, because the subject is of first-class importance to all students of evolution. Between Mr. Reid and myself there is, I imagine, no essential difference. We are both thorough-going evolutionists. On one point, however, Mr. Reid unintentionally misrepresents me. I do not think, and certainly I have never asserted, that "Nature is always beneficent," although I admit that in man, her noblest product, she is capable of beneficent activity, and often indulges in it. It is quite true that "Natural Selection is frequently cruel"; but that admission does not imply that cruelty is an essential feature of it. "Natural Selection," as employed by Darwin, means precisely the same thing as Spencer's "Survival of the Fittest." When Mr. Reid says, "I hope we will rise above the law of Natural Selection," I am confident we are not to infer that he is in favor of the survival of the unfit. Nature selects for survival only those organisms which, as the result of successful struggle, have adapted themselves to their environment. Is it not clear, therefore, that the survival of the unfit or unadapted, if possible, would involve much greater cruelty than their destruction does? To rebel against this law would be equivalent to rebelling against what some people call the royal law of love. But does man ever succeed in setting this law aside?

Mr. Reid says: "Nature sometimes decrees that a man is to die, but man may determine to live; and, by sheer determination over physical pain, he may succeed in living—maimed, perhaps, but still a thinking being." Let us remember that, according to Professor Ray Lankester's own definition, man is a product and part of Nature; and in that recollection we shall understand that man's determinations are, of necessity, identical with Nature's. Under certain conditions, death is inevitable; but change the conditions and it may become impossible. The man imagined by Mr. Reid was losing correspondence with his environment, but at a critical moment he exerted himself sufficiently to regain the amount of fitness requisite to survival. Instead of cheating Nature of her prey he fulfilled her law of selection and recovered.

Nature's laws are unbreakable; but there are various ways of obeying them. They are rigid, absolutely immutable, and cannot be held in abeyance even for a moment. The law of the survival of the fit has never yet been set at defiance with success. I repeat, that whenever the law of life says "Die," man has no choice but to obey. I once knew a peer's son who found his way to a rough mining-camp. The surroundings were all new to him. He had never done a stroke of work in his life; and now he was among strangers, and penniless. The law said to him, "Adapt thyself, or perish with hunger and exposure." He adapted himself, though at a stupendous cost, and flourished. There is no survival without adaptation, by whatever means acquired. Even while nominally stating the case for "Nature's rebel," Professor Ray Lankester is really showing what wonderful skill man displays in devising means of *quickly* adapting himself to new conditions. Listen:—

"Man's wits and his will have enabled him to cross rivers and oceans by rafts and boats, to clothe himself

against cold, to shelter himself from heat and rain, to prepare an endless variety of food by fire, and to 'increase and multiply' as no other animal without change of form, without submitting to the terrible axe of selection wielded by ruthless Nature over all other living things on this globe" (*Kingdom of Man*, p. 26).

Now, this "terrible axe of selection wielded by ruthless Nature" cuts off only the unfit: *fitness, in whatever manner won, invariably insures survival*. Man is able to live and prosper in an entirely changed environment simply because he has discovered new and superior methods of adaptation, which to the lower animals are, as yet, impossible. But the law of selection remains unaltered and inexorable. The edge of the axe has lost none of its ancient sharpness. If an Englishman goes to the tropics, Nature says to him: "Observe the law of selection, or be snuffed out by it." In one of his books, the late Sir H. M. Stanley tells of a fine young fellow who one hot day defied the axe of selection, and who, twenty-four hours later, lay in his tent a corpse. He had not risen above the law of natural selection, and the moment he openly disregarded its command it struck him down dead. Nature never overlooks, never forgives, never shows pity.

Let me make another quotation from Lankester's *Kingdom of Man* (p. 7):—

"The consensus is complete: man is held to be part of Nature, a product of the definite and orderly evolution which is universal; a being resulting from, and driven by, the one great nexus of mechanism which we call Nature. He stands alone, face to face with that relentless mechanism. It is his destiny to understand and control it."

I agree with every word in that passage except the verb *control*. Surely a "relentless mechanism" cannot be controlled. It is undeniable that the mental qualities which man possesses and practices are unprecedentedly powerful; but it is not true to say that "they have, to a very large extent, if not entirely, cut him off from the general operation of that process of Natural Selection and survival of the fittest which, up to their appearance, had been the law of the living world." Man's emergence as a gregarious and intelligent animal did not in the least check the cosmic process; it merely raised the cosmic process to a higher level by giving it an ethical character. In other words, human life represents the cosmic process at the highest and best it has yet attained. It is easy to characterise the cosmic process as selfish and cruel and unmoral; and I grant that such a representation of it is true so far as the lower ranges of its operation are concerned; but no sooner do we turn our thoughts to its later and more complex developments than we perceive that it has become moral and beneficent. And surely we ought to judge Nature, not by her lowest and worst, but by her highest and best. The wolf, the tiger, and the bear are Nature's offspring, we admit; but why should *they* give her her character rather than man, the noblest and best of all her children? We judge the poet by his masterpiece, the artist by his maturest picture, and the architect by his most perfect design; but many of us persist in forming our estimate of Nature from her crudest and most imperfect products. Is it fair and just to Nature to treat her thus? Would it not be much truer, as well as wiser, to declare that the ethical life of man is "the predestined outcome of an orderly—and, to a large extent, 'perceptible'—mechanism"?

Professor Huxley asserted that "cosmic nature is no school of virtue, but the headquarters of the enemy of ethical nature." He had much to say about the revolt of the conscience of man against what he called the "moral indifference of Nature," and about the microcosmic atom finding the macrocosm guilty. "Brought before the tribunal of ethics," he said, "the cosmos might well stand condemned." He wrote that indictment of Nature in 1893; but a year later he testified thus:—

"I do not know that anyone has taken more pains than I have, during the last thirty years, to insist upon the doctrine, so much reviled in the early part of that

period, that man, physical, intellectual, and moral, is as much a part of Nature, as purely a product of the cosmic process, as the humblest weed" (*Essays, Ethical and Political*, p. 25).

Now, if man's moral activity is "as purely a product of the cosmic process as the humblest weed," does it not logically follow that man is not "Nature's Insurgent Son," but, so far, her noblest expression, her masterpiece? In the same volume (p. 40) Professor Huxley observes that "whatever differences of opinion may exist among experts, there is a general consensus that the ape and tiger methods for the struggle for existence are not reconcilable with sound ethical principles." True; but the ape and tiger methods are reprehensible only when adopted by man. When the ape and the tiger were produced, Nature had not evolved her "sound ethical principles"; and certainly to charge her with "moral indifference" before she became moral is to be guilty of bearing false witness against her.

This leads me to my concluding remark on Natural Selection. Is it advisable that we should ever transcend such a law? Among the lower animals it is not the law that is at fault, but its administration. It is a good law in the hands of unintelligence. Even in the case of man, intelligence is seldom, if ever, on the throne. In other words, man is still, to a large extent, an unadapted being. Disease, for example, is caused by defective physical adaptation. Individual selfishness is an evidence of inadequate social adaptation. All existing evils with which society is so sadly afflicted are but symptoms of imperfect correspondence with environment. Fitness to survive, we must remember, is not absolute fitness: absolute fitness does not exist. Is it not a fact that practically every human being dies prematurely? Are there not innumerable moral wrecks round about us? Is not the incorrigibly bad man excluded from social life, his inevitable doom being ethical extinction? And is not this the teaching of Science? Speaking of Science in relation to this point, Huxley well says:—

"She knows that the safety of morality lies neither in the adoption of this or that philosophical speculation, nor this or that theological creed, but in a real and living belief in that fixed order of Nature which sends social disorganisation upon the track of immorality, as surely as it sends physical disease after physical trespasses. And of that firm and lively faith it is her high mission to be the priestess" (*Essays, Ethical and Political*, p. 72).

What do we see in that passage but a revised edition of the old cosmic process, or the law of Natural Selection in the hands of human intelligence? The administration is still imperfect, and attended by no little cruelty and suffering; but the trend is towards greater perfection and less suffering. And if Science gets her way, the improvement in the immediate future will be much more rapid than at any period in the past. Man shall cease from his insurgency, and learn obedience to Nature as expressed in the laws of his own being.

P.S.—In a letter inspired by my recent article on Christian Science, Mr. R. Slanden, of Dover, encloses statistics which appeared, five years ago, in the *Boston Traveller*, according to which, it would seem that "in a total membership of 27,000 in the Mother Church of that city," the death rate during the previous year was "only 2.32 per 1,000," while during the same period, the death rate in Boston amounted to 19.7 per 1,000. On the face of it, this statistical comparison is utterly worthless. As has been rightly pointed out, Christian Scientists belong, almost exclusively, to the well-to-do, prosperous classes, and, naturally, the death rate among such people is much lower than among the poor, dissipated, and badly housed classes. The only valuable comparison of death rates would be between a specific number of Christian Scientists and a corresponding number of similarly placed people who are not Christian Scientists. I dare say there are churches in Boston in which the average death rate is quite as low as in the Christian Science Mother Church.

Mr. Slanden asks if it is not "the part of wisdom for a man to choose the curative agency which he has proved to be most efficacious, whether it be allopathy, hydropathy, homoeopathy, or Christian Science." Of course it is; but that is not the point. The point is, that, according to Christian Science, if a man studies the Bible in the proper manner he will get well, whatever the disease may be from which he imagines he is suffering, and that, to common sense, that teaching is sheer nonsense. Only the other day, the following telegram was published in the *Tribune*: "A Christian Scientist of Newhaven died on Monday from gangrene in the hand. Some time ago, she burned her hand with a flat-iron. She refused to have a doctor called in, and the wound was treated by Christian Science methods." There may be a few nervous or imaginary complaints which are cured by such methods; but organic disorders, such as heart disease, consumption, cancer, blindness, deafness, and insanity, cannot be removed merely by thinking that ideally they do not exist; and before alleged recoveries from such complaints, accomplished by such methods, can be accepted as actual occurrences, they must be adequately attested by competent and impartial judges. The fact remains, and cannot be contested, that people do die continually of these dreadful maladies, *although some of them are treated by Christian Science methods*. This is a fact from which Mr. Slanden cannot escape.

To conclude. The statistics I asked for in my article are still wanting. Is it not true that Christian Scientists, like the rest of us, die of disease? Is it not a fact that natural death, in the physiological sense, is practically unknown? If there were any truth in the Christian Scientist claim, either every death would be perfectly natural or there would be no death at all.

J. T. LLOYD.

#### END WITH CHRISTIANITY.

[A message from Professor William Kingdon Clifford to the Congress of Liberal Thinkers in London, June 13-14, 1878. Printed in M. D. Conway's *Autobiography*, vol. ii., p. 354. Clifford was professor of applied mathematics at University College, London. He was reckoned, even at the age of twenty-seven, one of the first mathematicians in Europe. Professor Huxley said he was "the finest scientific mind born in England for fifty years."]

Catholics are fond of saying that an age of atheism is approaching, in which we shall throw over all moral obligations, and society will go to ruin. Then we shall see what is the true effect of all our liberal and scientific teaching. As a matter of fact, however, even themselves admit that the public conscience is growing in strength and straightness, while the Catholic dogmas and organism are more and more repudiated. We may see reason to believe that the former of those facts is the cause of the latter. Part of modern unbelief is no doubt due to the wider knowledge of criticism of the so-called "evidence of Christianity," but in all ages sensible men have seen through that flimsy structure. Intellectual scepticism is not really more rife than it has been in many past periods. The main ground of hope for the masses is the moral basis of scepticism—(1) its revolt against mythology; (2) its revolt against the priestly organisation of churches.

As to the mythology, the dogma of eternal damnation is being quietly dropped, as not in the Jewish part of the New Testament; but it has been practically taught by the Christian organisation for sixteen centuries. Therefore, the Christian organisation ought to be thrown away with it, for it is not "an opinion like another," but a wicked thing to believe.

As to the priestly organisation, the practical effect of the Christian organisation, "the Church," has always been adverse to morality, and is now. The clergy is everywhere making more pronounced its revolt from the great principles which underlie the modern social structure. There is a strong antagonism between the Christian organisation and the Jewish ethical literature, which our moral sense approves. And I believe that, so far as the Christian organisation is concerned, the time has come for heeding again the ancient warning: "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not her plagues."

## Acid Drops.

Pastor F. E. Cable, of 2 Bridge-road West, Battersea-park, London, S.W., appears to be like a good many other prophets—more honored abroad than at home. We are informed that he has been addressing meetings daily on the Brighton beach. The other evening he "thanked the gent. who had sent him the book, *Bible Romances*, by Mr. Foote, the Atheist, but he thought the gent. couldn't have read it, or he would not pay for such stuff. The first page was enough to show what the book was. It said 'The Christians believe that God made the world out of nothing.' He challenged anyone to show him a passage in the Bible saying that God made the world out of nothing." Now, as a matter of fact, there is no such statement on the first page of *Bible Romances*, or on any other page. Mr. Foote does not know what the Christians believe the world was made from. For his own part, he inclines to think that if God made the world at all, he must have made most of it out of nothing. No other raw material seems to explain the existence of men like Pastor Cable.

What is done on page two of *Bible Romances* is simply this. Mr. Foote quotes Christian authorities, like Mosheim and Burton, to the effect that the ancient Jews (from whom Christians borrowed the book of Genesis) all believed that God created the world out of nothing. He quotes the famous Bishop Pearson as saying that "there was at first nothing but God, who produced most part of the world merely out of nothing, and the rest out of that which was formerly made of nothing." He quotes the Westminster Confession of Faith as declaring that it pleased the Trinity "in the beginning to create, or make out of nothing, the world and all things therein." He quotes the famous Dr. Adam Clarke as teaching the same doctrine. And having stated what these distinguished Christians have said on the subject, Mr. Foote advises his readers not to addle their brains with such learned nonsense.

Pastor Cable is evidently as accurate as the generality of his tribe. But if he has any brains at all—which we admit is somewhat doubtful—he might set them to work on the problem, and tell us what the world was made out of. If he says it was made out of pre-existing matter, he will then have to tell us whether the matter was made out of nothing, or out of God, or whether it always existed. If he says it always existed, he has two infinite and eternal existences, God and matter. If he says it was made by God out of himself, he makes God a material as well as a spiritual being. And if he says neither of these things, he must say it was made out of nothing. We invite Pastor Cable to state his own opinion. But if it would injure his poor head to deal with such problems, we will excuse him. We do not wish to increase his mental affliction.

The London Society for Promoting Christianity amongst the Jews spends, we believe, nearly £40,000 a year. But it boasts extremely few converts. Which is rather odd. One would fancy that a good number of Jews could be bought with the money. You could buy a lot of Christians with it. Perhaps the explanation is that when the Society's officials and employees have done with the £40,000 there isn't much left to purchase Jews with.

The "Jew" Society has Branches in the provinces. It has one at Bristol. And this Branch held its annual meeting recently in the Victoria Rooms. A portion of Scripture was read by Canon Head, a prayer was offered by Canon Caple, and the chair was occupied by Canon Everingham. There were Canons enough. But there doesn't appear to have been enough artillery practice. Canon Everingham's speech, as reported in the local *Evening Times*, hit everything but the target. Some of the things he said ought to have been unsaid. If the speaker were on our side, we should muzzle him. Listen to this:—

"Another mystery was that Jerusalem, once the centre of civilisation and worship and belief in God, was in the hands of the unbelievers."

Fancy a man of university education, and at this time of day, speaking of Jerusalem as "the centre of civilisation"! It is enough to "make the angels weep"—if they have any tears left. Nevertheless, it is true that Jerusalem is in the hands of the unbelievers. And the Canon might have added that a file of Mohammedan soldiers stands in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre there, between the Greek and Latin Christians, to prevent their flying at each others' throats.

Canon Everingham did say something in that direction. Listen again:—

"He believed, and he believed from experience, because he had lived for a little time in Jerusalem, that there was no

other city in the world that could be compared with the Holy City of Jerusalem for schism, wrangling, hatred, and contention."

That is what the Christians are like in the very Holy City of their faith. And, after telling the Bristol people so, Canon Everingham asks them to subscribe towards converting the Jews to Christianity.

William Burton, a Kilburn costermonger, was brought before the "beak" and charged with threatening his wife. That was wrong on William Burton's part. Of course it was. But he had his own side of the case—for what it was worth. He said that his wife had never been the same to him "since the Church party got hold of her." "There's no harm in her going to church," observed the magistrate, who probably goes to church himself. "But they have been trying to get hold of me, too!" exclaimed the indignant costermonger; and the magistrate retorted, "It might do you good." But the indignant costermonger thought otherwise. "I prefer to do an honest day's work on Sunday," he said, "when I get the chance." Evidently his best day for business was Sunday, and the "Church party" were trying to spoil it for him. They wanted to wheel him to heaven, as it were, on his own empty barrow.

Edinburgh Town Council has resolved to put down Sunday concerts. It has also restricted liquor-drinking facilities at the theatres. But what is good for the city is not good for the city fathers. We see by the local *Evening Dispatch*, that the Edinburgh Town Council attended divine service at St. Giles's on Sunday morning, May 26, and afterwards adjourned to the Council Chambers for luncheon. In due course, coffee and liqueurs were handed round, and champagne glasses were replenished, and the Lord Provost rose to propose the toast of "The King." This was duly honored, and his Lordship then proposed the "Church of Scotland," to which the Moderator replied. The luncheon occupied fully an hour, and was greatly enjoyed by all who took part in it. Such is Sabbatarianism as understood by the Sabbatarians themselves. But it is not every doctor that takes his own physic.

It is perhaps curious, but it is true, that Chief Constables are nearly always pious. No doubt their calling may incline them to a pathological view of things—if they did not possess it to begin with. Anyhow, they commonly look upon themselves as appointed by Providence to dragon the people who pay them their wages into the paths of "respectability." When they walk abroad on Sunday, for instance, they like to see everything quiet and solemn. An open shop of any kind annoys them, and they try to shut it up. In small towns, especially, the Chief Constable is apt to develop into a monomaniac in this direction. Instead of giving his attention to the thieves and scoundrels of the town, he watches a sweetstuff shop or a small tobacconist's, to see whether a child is supplied with lollipops or a working man with an ounce of bird's-eye. Sometimes he casts a jaundiced eye on bottles of ginger-beer. And the zeal of the Lord fills his soul, and he goes bald-headed for the sinners under the Lord's Day Observance Act. In some places, the magistrates play the part of chorus to his solo, and the harrying of small tradesmen goes on merrily. In some places, however, he receives a wholesome check. We are glad to see the breakdown of a prosecution at Poole. A tobacconist sold a packet of cigarettes to a man, who probably wanted to smoke some of them before Monday. Thereupon he was charged—of course, by the Chief Constable's order—with having exercised certain worldly labor, business, and work, which was not of necessity or charity, on the Lord's Day; in other words, with trying to earn his living on the day when he was most likely to get it. Happily, the magistrates at Branksome Sessions dismissed the case. There is a little sense left in England still.

Puritanism is steadily engaged, as usual, on the "purity" policy of interference with other people's amusements. The zeal of the Puritan is kindled by the burning suspicion that what he foregoes and tries to detest is extremely agreeable. This torturing thought gives a passionate edge to his protests against "impure" recreations. If he were wiser, and more disinterested, and less of an egotist, he would have an eye for evils which he now overlooks. He might even learn a lesson or two from "infidel France." Take divorce cases, for instance. French newspapers are not allowed to publish details of evidence; they can only publish the names of the parties, and other formal matter, together with the decision of the court. Surely such a restriction is badly needed in England. The way in which "respectable" newspapers print the nastiest details of divorce cases for family reading is perfectly scandalous. The French law is a wise one. It ought to be adapted on this side of the Channel—as it would be if we were not so infernally "Christian."

John Thomas Cumberland, of Holbeach Marsh, Lincolnshire, was struck dead in a thunderstorm, and the coroner's jury returned a verdict of "killed by the act of God." We do not hear of any warrant being issued against the murderer.

The new Workhouse at Hammersmith cost £261,526, or £335 per inmate. Did the Lord Jesus Christ have this in his mind when he said, "Blessed be ye poor"?

There was a very important telegram in the *Daily News* on Wednesday, May 29. It came from "our own correspondent" at Paris. It is so important, indeed, that we reproduce it *in extenso* :—

"The Bishops and priests of the Paris region have met in congress and in numbers far exceeding the expectations of the faithful. They have held their first meeting under the presidency of Mgr. Amette, Coadjutor Archbishop of Paris, and they are full of hope—and full of fight.

'We want more parishes in the capital of France,' says the curé of St. Sulpice. And so several of the large parishes are to be split up in accordance with the density of the population. Under the Concordat, the clergy were, of course, powerless to effect any such change.

The militant party—the majority—hold that every priest should henceforth exercise his 'full rights as a French citizen.' 'The priest is no longer a State functionary. He should take part in elections and in organising local political committees.'

And that is what the French clergy are going to do. The Separation Law has given them a 'free hand.'

The dear *Daily News* never foresaw this. But it is precisely what we foretold. We pointed out the danger that would arise from an unfettered Catholic Church, stimulated by persecution, nerved by a sense of injustice, and fired with the spirit of martyrdom. Those who think the Catholic Church is done for in France are silly. Those who thought they were going to do for it by the Separation Law were worse than silly. The "priest in politics" may be much worse than ever in France. Here in England, where we have a State Church, we find the most liberal theologians within its fold. Of course, the State Church acts in the political field, first for its own interests, and secondly for the interests of its friends. But it does that because it is a Church, not because it is a State Church. The so-called Free Churches are even more active and zealous in the political field. They boast that they control the policy of the Liberal party. As far as State Education is concerned, the Churches have controlled it for thirty-seven years; that is, ever since it began. In the long run, there is only one way to fight any Church. The war must be carried on with intellectual and moral weapons. Even in France, the Catholic Church need fear nothing from statesmen; what it has to fear is the thinkers. Not the men now in Government offices, but the men of thought now in their graves, have humbled the pride of the Catholic Church. "Behold I make all things new" is a great text. It may sound proudly on the lips of earth's rulers, but only of ideas is it true. No man ever reshaped the world; but a new idea does it, in spite of all opposition.

Dr. Clifford foams at the mouth whenever he sees a Catholic acting as a politician. He positively screams against "the priest in politics." But what is he himself? Catholic priests are not the only priests. There are priests of every denomination. They are all in the same business, and would all exploit and rule the world if they could. Dr. Clifford's party pretend to be citizens. But we know what is nearest their hearts. As a matter of fact, there is only one section of members of parliament organised on a religious (even an ecclesiastical) basis, and that is the Nonconformists. After listening to Dr. Clifford's diatribes against "Romanism" and "Popery" and the "priest in politics," it is amusing to read of "an important meeting of Nonconformist members" being held in "Committee Room No. 10 at the House of Commons," and calling upon the Prime Minister to note "the pressing need of taking prompt measures to meet the growing anxiety of its Nonconformist supporters." These men are Nonconformists first, and citizens afterwards; they sit as Nonconformists, talk as Nonconformists, and vote as Nonconformists. And these are the men who howl whenever Catholics sit, speak, and vote as Catholics. A plague on both their houses!

Dr. Clifford is home again. His long holiday has, we hope, done him good. But it does not appear to have clarified his intellect. On Sunday afternoon he discoursed on "The Future of France." He rejoiced that Frenchmen "had differentiated between the powers of the Church as a Church, and the powers of the State as a State"—and he "forecasted a bright and blessed future for humanity largely

through the French." Either he doesn't understand the French situation or he does not mean what he says. Dr. Clifford fights for religious teaching based upon the Bible in English public schools. No religious teaching of any kind is allowed in the French public schools. If he is so much in love with the French method, why doesn't he practise it—over here?

Rev. Dr. Pierson, the American preacher who nearly managed to succeed Spurgeon at the famous Tabernacle, is a very orthodox gentleman. We have heard that he swallows everything in the Bible, including the whale that swallowed Jonah. Naturally, he is wild with the advocates of the New Theology. Speaking at the annual meeting of the Bible League in Exeter Hall, he said: "It is quite impossible to speak of it with patience or forbearance. It is the most diabolical movement that the Church has seen since the Lord Jesus Christ ascended. Not only is it not new, it is not theology. It desecrates God that it may deify man." All that Mr. Campbell has to do now is to crawl into a dishonorable grave. Pierson has spoken.

Rev. Dr. Hanson, speaking at the same Bible League meeting, also referred to Mr. Campbell's "attacks" as of a "diabolical character." These gentlemen may not be good at arguing, but they are good at calling names—which is one of the most characteristic marks of a true Christian controversialist.

How the Christians love one another!—even in Godly Scotland! We take the following from a recent issue of the *Daily News* :—

"Transference of the Elder Memorial United Free Church, Leith, to the Free Church, under the allocation scheme, was arranged for to take place on Tuesday. When offering to hand over the keys, the United Free congregation made certain reservations and conditions which the Free Church lawyers could not accept, and, after negotiations, the church keys were given up later in the day to the Free Church without conditions.

The Free Church representatives, on entering the Elder Memorial Church on Tuesday night, found that several of the church furnishings had been removed. Among them was the Communion plate. The articles were found in a house on the opposite side of the street.

Mr. Ivan Hay Thorburn, Clerk of the Free Church, said that the articles taken away must be returned in accordance with the terms of the allocation.

The electric wires in the church have been displaced, and the building cannot be lighted until they are repaired."

We make no comment. The facts tell their own story.

Another disciple of the poor Carpenter of Nazareth gone to his last home! We don't say his last rest. Rev. Oliver Edmund Slocock, of Goldwell House, Speen Hill, Newbury, Berks, left £41,116.

Paul was very much concerned about the hair question, especially in regard to the ladies, who sometimes "cut it short." But he was not so deeply concerned, after all, as Marcos Cockalaras, a Greek priest, who drowned himself at Cardiff because his long hair had been shortened by an accident, and he dared not go home with it in that condition. It seems a small matter to commit suicide about, but the religious mind is peculiar.

The Dean of Manchester has some originality. He says that no one has the right to shelter behind the cowardly stronghold of agnosticism. This is a new rendering of "the coward's castle of the pulpit."

The Free Church of Scotland is pitching into the United Free Church of Scotland. One of its weapons is a Tract headed "Bible or no Bible?" This little publication contains "Higher Criticism" extracts from Professor Dods, Professor Denney, and Professor Smith—the last of whom has the shocking audacity to say that the "dogma of inspiration has paralysed intellect," and that the God of Israel was "a tribal god." In view of such awful utterances, the Free Church tract jeremiahs in this way :—

"Thus, under the attacks of these destructive critics, the Word of God is lowered to the level of *Æsop's Fables* or a manual of Grecian mythology. It is a book of myths, self-contradictions, forgeries, and pious frauds, yet it professes to be the Holy Scriptures! A similar deceptive and contradictory book, found in any of the schools, would be expelled at once, and withdrawn instantly from every publisher's catalogue. In presence of these assertions of the critics, if true, the admiration of the Scriptures by the 'Confession of Faith'—the heavenliness of the matter, the consent of all the parts, and the scope of the whole which is to give all glory to God!

—is the sheerest burlesque. Let honest men cut the imposture into pieces and cast it into the flames."

To all which we beg respectfully to say "Hear, hear!"

Rev. E. J. G. Forse, of Dulwich, was speaking in favor of vivisection. He was declaring that vivisection of animals was justifiable because the Bible recognised that "man is of much more value than a sheep" (though we don't remember that text), when a fashionably-dressed lady in the audience remarked "not much"—and all the ladies present applauded. They must have been judging the other sex from the sample before them. At least we hope so. It would be sad to think they were all disillusioned through general experience.

"Prayers were offered up in all the garrison churches at Aldershot yesterday for the safety of the officers." This appeared in Monday morning's *Chronicle*. Could anything be sillier? The two officers who went up in the balloon *Thrasher* were then either dead or rescued by some passing vessel. Prayer couldn't affect it one way or the other. Praying for the future is foolish enough, but praying for the past is imbecility.

"Father" Ignatius is on the warpath against the "nude"—and he goes the whole hog, as usual. The reverend gentleman, unlike the Higher Critics, whom he damns to the deepest hell, believes everything he finds in the Bible. He reads that God made Adam and Eve clothes to hide their nakedness—and he exclaims, "Woe to those who take off the clothes which He put on." We hope, however, that "Father" Ignatius takes his own clothes off sometimes. Anyhow, he is wild with the nude in art and calls it "pagan." He declares that "nude art ought to be swept away from the walls of the Academy, and out of the country." Why not make a beginning with naked Christs on crosses? Many of them have a loin-cloth no bigger than a figleaf.

With regard to the Woolwich Workhouse matter which we referred to last week, the following letter has reached us from a Freethinker of long standing:—

"LEGALISED HYPOCRISY."

TO THE EDITOR OF 'THE FREETHINKER.'

SIR,—Referring to a paragraph in this week's issue, will you permit me to say that, in my opinion, Mr. Clarke ought not to have used the term 'legalised hypocrisy' in his answers as a visiting Guardian to the Woolwich Workhouse? No good object could be attained by doing so, and the expression was needlessly offensive and essentially unjust, there being no reason for doubting that the bulk of the community are sincere in their conviction of the value and necessity of religious ordinances.—Yours truly,

GEORGE PAYNE.

Manchester, June 2, 1907."

We rather reported than discussed this matter last week, and, before expressing any definite opinion upon it, we should like to hear what Mr. Clarke has to say. It may be that he used the expression "legalised hypocrisy" in a special sense. Perhaps he will kindly state the real circumstances of the case. We should be pleased to hear from him.

The *Christian World* prints further absurdity about John Stuart Mill. The following paragraph appeared in its last issue:—

"We quoted last week Bishop Moule's recent remark that Dr. Gurney, the physician who attended John Stuart Mill in his last illness, was convinced that he died a Christian. A correspondent now writes to us pointing out that, thirty years earlier, Mill had already shown signs of emerging from his early Agnosticism. For in 1840 (when he was thirty-four) Caroline Fox, of Falmouth, records a conversation with him in which 'he expatiated on the delights of John Woolman (whose *Autobiography* he is reading) and of spiritual religion—which he feels to be deepest and truest.'"

We wish to make some observations on this wonderful paragraph.

The previous week, the *C. W.* described Bishop Moule's "authority" for stating that Mill "died a believer" as "mere hearsay evidence." Now it quietly assumes that Dr. Gurney, who attended Mill in his last illness, was convinced that he died a Christian. We beg to challenge this in the name of logic and decency. There is not the slightest evidence—we mean evidence that would be accepted as such in a court of law—that Dr. Gurney ever said anything of the kind to anyone. Bishop Moule's assertion, thirty-four years afterwards, that Dr. Gurney told some nameless persons, who told some nameless members of the Moule family, who at some unspecified time later on told the Bishop himself—this assertion, we say, is of such a character that it would be treated with contempt in any other

investigation. It is only where the wish is father to the thought that "evidence" of this kind is deemed worthy of a moment's consideration.

Now let us see what is meant by Mill's showing signs, as early as 1840, of emerging from his early Agnosticism. If our contemporary had taken the trouble to look into the facts of the case it could hardly have printed such nonsense. We will deal with those facts presently. Meanwhile, we desire to note the utter silliness of the idea that because Mill read John Woolman, the old Quaker, with delight, and spoke of "spiritual religion" as the "deepest and truest," he was therefore becoming a Christian or ceasing to be an Atheist. Charles Lamb was not a Christian, yet he recommended everyone to read John Woolman and the rest of the early Quakers. Shelley was an Atheist, yet the Bible was one of his favorite books. And, to compare small things with great, the present writer, who is a notorious, militant Atheist, has read John Woolman with pleasure, and often dips into George Fox. Some time ago, we remarked to a Positivist friend, after a railway journey, that, if we had been smashed in an accident, they would have put us down as a devout Christian, as the only book we had in our pockets was a copy of Henry Vaughan's poems. We have a well-marked copy of the *Imitation of Christ* by us. We have just been reading the *Spiritual Guide* of Michael de Molinos. There are beautiful and true things in it, in spite of its theological language. We say this unhesitatingly. Yet we are as much an Atheist now as we were before reading the book. The *Christian World* simply does not understand.

A reference to Caroline Fox's *Journals and Letters*, vol. i., p. 157, shows that Mill's "conversation" was not with her, but with Dr. Calvert, who was attending Henry Mill, the brother who died, and of whom John speaks so lovingly in the *Autobiography*. Dr. Calvert was himself in bed with a racking headache, and Mill sat at the foot of the bed "for hours" talking to him; and as Dr. Calvert delighted in John Woolman, it was natural that Mill should, on such an occasion, express only points of agreement. There are times and seasons for everything—and that was not the time and season for explanations and reservations. But perhaps the *Christian World* would not understand this either.

And now for the facts of the case already referred to. Mill is said to have been "emerging from his early Agnosticism" in 1840. Well, if the *C. W.* will turn to Miss Helen Taylor's "Introductory Notice" to the *Three Essays on Religion*, it will find that the two essays on "Nature" and the "Utility of Religion" were "written between the years 1850 and 1858," and also that Mill "intended to publish the Essay on Nature in 1873." Miss Taylor observes that the other essays were to be withheld for a time, but the publication of this one would have shown that he was not animated by "reluctance to encounter whatever odium might result from the free expression of his opinions on religion"—which is a reflection, by the way, that would be quite meaningless if Mill were gravitating towards orthodoxy.

Mill intended to publish the essay on Nature in 1873, and it was written between 1850 and 1858. Now it is this very essay which contains the famous impeachment of Nature from a moral point of view, and in which Mill declared that—"Not even on the most distorted and contracted theory of good which ever was framed by religious or philosophical fanaticism, can the government of Nature be made to resemble the work of a being at once good and omnipotent."

The essay on the Utility of Religion was also written between 1850 and 1858—and was to have been published after the essay on Nature. This was from ten to fifteen years after Mill was "emerging from his early Agnosticism." Well, it was in this essay on the Utility of Religion that Mill argued that supernatural religion, when it did any good, did so by using natural means. Anyone who could read his criticism of Christianity in this essay, and still believe that he was becoming a Christian, must be devoid of common intelligence. Mill advocated the non-supernatural Religion of Humanity in this essay. That was his "religion" to the very end. And let it be noted that he denounced the doctrine of hell as enormously wicked, that he declared that "man-kind can perfectly well do without the belief in heaven," and that he concluded by arguing the probability that "in a higher, and, above all, a happier condition of human life, not annihilation, but immortality, may be the burdensome idea." If this is Christianity, Mill was a Christian; if it is not, the Christians are simply at their old tricks in trying to claim him as one of them. *Que le diable allait-il faire dans cette galère!*



**Mr. Foote's Engagements.**

(Suspended during June, July, and August).

**To Correspondents.**

- J. TULLIN.—You have done good service to the cause by getting that letter inserted in the *Sunderland Echo*. You have well presented the principal points of the case from our reply to Bishop Moule's nonsense about John Stuart Mill; and it is pleasant to see the *Freethinker* fairly mentioned, and not tabooed, as it is by so many newspapers. We wish our readers (as you suggest) would send letters to their local papers all over the country on this matter. Of course, they are perfectly free to lay us under contribution. We want to see the lie refuted, and the truth established. This is our only aim.
- G. W. STEARMAN.—Thanks for the little book of verses by J. S. Fletcher called *Ballads of Revolt*, which shall have our attention. It always pleases us when our readers show a taste for poetry.
- EDINBURGH FREETHINKER.—See "Acid Drops." Thanks. Always glad to receive useful cuttings.
- OLD READER.—You will see we have noticed both matters in "Acid Drops."
- J. DE B.—Thanks for batch of cuttings.
- M. B.—No, we were not alluding to the person called Taylor, neither can we devote space to that person's platform antics. It is the business of the chairman, in Brockwell Park or elsewhere, to keep him to the subject—not ours.
- G. ROLEFFS.—We hope you will long enjoy the honor of being an N. S. S. vice-president.
- C. W. STYRING.—Glad you were able to make such good use of our paragraphs on the Mill-and-Moule matter. Freethinkers all over the country, wherever Bishop Moule's nonsense has been printed, should address letters to the local press on the subject. We have supplied all the requisite material; let them make use of it to the greatest advantage.
- R. H. ROSETTI.—See "Acid Drops." Thanks.
- W. P. BALL.—Much obliged for cuttings.
- L. BROUGHTON.—Yes, the *Freethinker* is doing better, but its progress is slow, if sure.
- W. GREGORY.—Pleased to hear the Kingsland Branch is becoming a success. We are sure it deserves to be.
- A. A.—Pleased to hear you say that Socialists do not—at any rate, now—refer to the Post Office as a model institution. But the "model" we meant is evidently not the "model" you mean. What we meant was that the Post Office is slow, old-fashioned, careless, and wasteful of public property entrusted to it for transmission. You have "sweating" and "profit-mongering" in mind as its great sins—and that is an aspect of the matter which did not come under our purview. Let us agree, then, that the Post Office is *not* a model institution in any sense of the word.
- J. THACKRAY.—The book is of no value from any point of view.
- H. J. G. F.—The answer is this—that to compare the universe to a chain, which, link after link, must finally hang from something, is sheer foolishness. There is no analogy whatever between the universe and a chain. Men who talk in that way use words, but have no definite ideas.
- We regret that Mr. W. C. Schweizer's name was accidentally omitted from the list of N. S. S. vice-presidents in last week's *Freethinker*.
- F. HILL.—Thanks for the extract; though we already knew of it, and alluded to it in one of our Mill paragraphs. Of course it is not of very much importance to the argument, from a logical point of view.
- THE COHEN "SALVATION ARMY" TRACT FUND.—D. McCullum, 2s. 9d.; C. J. Peacock, 5s.; G. F. H. McCluskey 2s. 6d.
- G. DAVIES.—Will deal with the cutting next week, having no room left this week. Pleased to have your report of the freethinking movement amongst the young men in Wales.
- S. B. SAVILL.—Will be useful when we are writing on the subject. Thanks.
- ELECTICUS.—We note your view that the Irish clergy were *not* the chief moving agents in the rejection of Mr. Birrell's Bill. As an Irish Freethinker, you say the Bill would have been rejected if there were no priests in Ireland. That is very likely. But does it really explain all that evidently went on behind the scenes before the Convention met? Don't misunderstand us. Personally—though this has nothing to do with the policy of the *Freethinker*—our Editor has always been a Home Ruler. He happens to think that the right of people to govern themselves is not politics at all, but bed-rock morality.
- 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.
- LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.
- LECTURE NOTICES must reach 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.
- FRIENDS who send us newspapers would enhance the favor by marking the passages to which they wish us to call attention.

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**Sugar Plums.**

One of our readers made good use of our "Acid Drops" on the Bishop of Durham's amazing statement that John Stuart Mill "died a believer" and the more amazing justification which the Bishop sent to the newspapers. "J. T." got a telling letter, based upon our paragraphs, into the *Sunderland Echo*, which must be congratulated on the spirit of fair-play it showed in this matter. The letter marshals all the facts most admirably—and they look even more crushing in another paper than they looked in our own—which is a curious phenomenon that journalists will understand. "J. T." ends by asking, "What has Dr. Moule to say now?" Ay, *what?*

Writing on Garibaldi in last week's *Christian Commonwealth*, J. Macartney Wilson frankly admitted that—"He was a Republican, and named himself an Atheist." We do not follow Mr. Wilson, however, when he says that "Garibaldi was made an Atheist by the hateful tyranny of the priest." The great Liberator took a wider view than that. His eye swept over all the injustice and suffering in the world. Even if it were otherwise, the hateful tyranny of the priest would alone be a very good reason for Atheism. Priests speak and rule in the name of God, and the fact that he never stops them telling lies and doing villainies shows that he does not know or does not care. We venture to think that Garibaldi had a stronger mind than the Christian critic.

Garibaldi, the Atheist, gave the lie to Christian croakers. He was the very embodiment of chivalry: heroic, unselfish, and stainless. And the charm of the man was irresistible. It captured everybody who came near him. Gladstone admits how wonderfully Garibaldi bore himself in England, moving about serenely as an equal with the greatest.

Mr. Eden Phillpotts, the eminent novelist, writes to the *Daily Chronicle* with reference to the failure of its "effort to secure some public recognition and memorial of the life and work of Herbert Spencer." After quoting an apt passage from Spencer on the inability of the public to understand a man too far in advance of them, Mr. Phillpotts says:—

"So the memory of the apostle of evolution must be left in partial eclipse until evolution advances its work, and our betters, the unborn, from their clearer seeing, wider learning, and more perfect emancipation, right this national wrong. His memorial is a question of time alone, and must be among the first to rise when man has won to freedom."

This is true and sound in spirit. Yet, after all, the really important memorial of Herbert Spencer is his works. So long as they are read he is held in the best of memory. And the fact that he is not read as extensively as he should be is largely owing to the unwisdom of his publishers or representatives. His principal works, on which his fame must rest, are, after all these years, only purchasable by millionaires. We repeat that the best memorial of Herbert Spencer, at present, would be a really cheap edition of his writings.

Karl Blind, the German revolutionary, who has just died at South Hampstead, after living in England for some fifty years, was always a friend of freedom everywhere. This fact is recognised in the English newspapers. What they do not choose to recognise is the fact that he was a pronounced Freethinker. Mathilde Blind, his daughter, was also a pronounced Freethinker, and the author of a remarkable poem on *The Ascent of Man*.

The Newcastle-on-Tyne men of God were sure to recognise how they had been "dished" over the Town's Meeting on "Sunday Observance." A crowd of them have signed a protest against the sensible resolution that was carried, and an assertion of the necessity of a Christian Sunday. The names of these reverend gentlemen are all printed—and a tremendous list it is—in the local *Daily Chronicle*. It shows that "when they do agree their unanimity is wonderful." We are pleased to state, however, that the same paper prints

a smaller list of sixteen ministers of religion who stand by the sensible resolution "without any reservation whatever." As far as we can make out, these sixteen are all Churchmen. We do not recognise a single Nonconformist amongst them. And this fact should be an eye-opener to those Freethinkers—if there are any left now—who have been taken in by Nonconformist fine-talk about "freedom" and "equal citizenship."

The Secular Education League has issued a leaflet on Mr. McKenna's Education Bill. This Bill, which the Nonconformists are so anxious to see passed, is declared to be "no settlement" of the question. It is pointed out that the Bill establishes simple Bible teaching at the public expense in "provided" schools, and makes Churchmen, Catholics, Jews, etc., contribute one-fifteenth of the total cost of education as the cost of their denominational religious teaching. Thus they have all to pay for the religious teaching that Nonconformists approve, and then for the religious teaching they approve themselves afterwards. "It is obvious," the leaflet says, "that a Bill which is based upon such a fundamental injustice as this offers no prospect even of a temporary, much less a final solution of the religious difficulty in national education." The only solution is the policy of the Secular Education League. We may add that copies of this excellent leaflet can be obtained at the rate of 3s. per 1,000, carriage paid, from the League secretary, Mr. H. Snell, 12 Leighton-grove, London, N.W.

The June number of the *Humanitarian Review* contains the following very interesting letter:—

"1 Hyde Park Mansions, W.  
May 13th, 1907.

GENTLEMEN,—I approve of the views expressed in the pamphlet on 'Snake-Feeding at the Zoo,' which you have sent; though I consider snake-feeding to be but an infinitesimal part of the general blameworthiness of man in dealing with the weaker animals; e.g., in killing them for food or as vermin with unnecessary barbarity, in making them work too laboriously; killing them for sport, keeping them in cages and hutches as so-called pets, making them perform at public exhibitions, etc., all which practices I should like to see prohibited, except the two first, which can only be mitigated. These, unfortunately, the defects of the terrestrial scheme prevent our stopping—at any rate at present.—Yours very truly,

THOMAS HARDY."

We note in the same paper that the Rev. J. Stratton, one of the most zealous and active members of the Humanitarian League, thinks that "the clergy require to be aroused to a sense of duty about sporting sins almost more than any other body of men. As a class, they are quite in the rear, and are fast becoming the objects of contempt." "Humanitarian freethinkers," Mr. Stratton concludes, "must educate them about these matters."

The Pilgrim Fathers landed on Plymouth Rock. This event is celebrated by American Protestants. But an American humorist has said that it might have been better for America if Plymouth Rock had landed on the Pilgrim Fathers. The same idea seems to be entertained by a writer in last week's *Academy*, from whom we make the following extract:—

"It will do nothing of the kind. Every man who knows anything, knows that the Puritan rule in New England was, without exception, the most intolerant, superstitious, cruel, soul-and-body-destroying tyranny that has ever cursed the earth. The horror of it has been distilled by Hawthorne in that most beautiful and terrible romance *The Scarlet Letter*; the facts and details of that rule have long been common property—and what child is not taught that the Pilgrim Fathers were prophets of freedom, apostles of all liberties civil and religious, men good and great, enlightened in the midst of thick darkness, worthy of a place beside the great seers and saints of the Old and New Testaments? These hangers and floggers of Quakers, these executioners of harmless old women as witches, these persecutors of every man who dared to deviate by so much as a hair's breadth from their wretched shibboleths, these creators of the horrible fetish of 'the Sabbath,' a festival (a devil's day, rather) that more hideously blasphemes the goodness of God, and more vilely degrades its observers, than the worst medicine-feast in the worst swamp in Africa—these were the Pilgrims of the *Mayflower*, these the canonised heroes of the Anglo-Saxon race."

This is as strong as anything we have said about the subject in the *Freethinker*.

Mr. Cohen had two good audiences at Parliament Hill on Sunday last. The opposition at the afternoon meeting was somewhat shortened by a storm, but many of the audience took shelter until the evening meeting commenced, when the "saints" held the field absolutely. Some opposition, offered by a particularly earnest Christian lady, was courteously dealt with, and the announcement that Mr. Cohen would speak there again this Sunday (June 9) was received with applause.

## Pain and Piety.—II.

(Concluded from p. 348.)

WE now come to that class of apologists who, perceiving that it is useless to ignore the presence of pain, suddenly discover that it is a very good thing. They say, "Oh, but if it were not for the presence of pain, we might be terribly burned, scalded, or otherwise injured without our being aware of it." But, to cite Miss Bodington again:—

"Nature shows the same utter indifference as to the good or bad effects of pain as she does about all other things which affect sentient beings. Sometimes pain is beneficial, as when it warns us to drop a piece of hot metal. Oftener its warnings come too late to be of any benefit, or they could under no circumstances have been a benefit. If the onset of cancer, for instance, were attended with such sharp pain as to lead to its prompt extirpation, it might be beneficial. But some cases of cancer, and of another ordinarily acutely painful disease—peritonitis—run to their fatal end almost without pain. Other examples might also be cited did space permit. The excruciating pain attending incurable diseases can hardly be called beneficial. It may be said, and is said, that pain has a remarkably elevating and ennobling effect when it is borne in submission to the 'will of God.' In the first place, it will be found, as usual, that the diseases from which pain arises owe their origin to natural causes. In the second place, in a case of tumor of the brain or of degeneration of the spinal cord, where raving madness or idiocy follow the progress of the malady, where is the elevating, ennobling effect of the frightful pain attending the progress of these maladies? Where is the elevating, ennobling effect of malformations in infants, arising from arrests of development, and leading often to a death of lingering torture? We will not have pain called a 'good' in certain picked instances and not in all."

Even the redoubtable Max Nordau, who has thundered against so many "Conventional lies of Civilisation," falls into this ditch. "Without pain," he says, "our lives would not endure an hour, for we should be unable to recognise dangerous symptoms and guard against them." But, replies Professor Metchnikoff—

"Quite insignificant causes and unimportant illnesses, such as certain forms of neuralgia, give rise to unbearable agony. A physiological phenomenon such as childbirth is often attended by extremely violent pain, which is absolutely useless as a danger-signal. On the other hand, some of the most dangerous diseases, such as cancer or kidney disease, may exist for a long time without causing any sensation of pain, with the result that the sufferer knows nothing of the presence of the disease until it is too late. Were pain to play the part assigned to it by Nordau, it would appear in all cases of danger, and yet would never become almost unbearably acute."

Most of the apologists of God's dealings with man plead for the moral effect of pain—that it creates character. Dr. Momerie is a representative of a legion of such writers, all—through poverty of ideas—using the same argument. In a sermon, entitled "The Origin of Evil," he argues that "Suffering is necessary for the development in us of pity, mercy, and self-sacrifice." But many diseases have a directly opposite effect—anæmia, for instance. The sufferers in this distressing complaint gradually sink into a profound melancholy, often ending in suicide or the lunatic asylum. "Affliction produces resignation," says the same apologist. It certainly does not in those cases of nervous disease which transform a bright and cheerful person into an unsympathetic, querulous, and irritable creature whom it is impossible to please or amuse, leading a miserable existence and causing misery to all with whom he comes in contact. Here the suffering involves an actual deterioration of character. Dr. Momerie not only places himself in opposition to well-known facts, but, in the development of his argument, he involves himself in a flagrant contradiction; for, after arriving at the somewhat Gilbertian—or shall we say Chester-tonian?—conclusion that "the prevention of evil

\* Elie Metchnikoff, *The Nature of Man* (1903), p. 193.

would have made our world not better than it is, but infinitely worse,"—he goes on to say that when men were created it was not for God—it was for them—to decide whether there should be evil in the world or no. "Alas! they have decided that there should."

If the Professor really believed that the prevention of evil would have made our world "infinitely worse," he would have said "Thank God, they have decided there should," and not "Alas!" And if a clever and accomplished man like Dr. Momerie, a Master of Arts and Professor of Logic in King's College, London, lives in this confused state of mind, what of the rank and file of the army of the religious!

John Stuart Mill pricked this bubble of the goodness of evil in his Essay on Nature, where he pursues the defenders of God into all the caves and corners into which they had retreated. He says:—

"Whatever may be said of evil turning into good, the general tendency of evil is towards further evil. Bodily illness renders the body more susceptible of disease; it produces incapacity of exertion, sometimes debility of mind, and often the loss of means of subsistence. All severe pain, either bodily or mental, tends to increase the susceptibilities of pain for ever after. Poverty is the parent of a thousand mental and moral evils. What is still worse, to be injured or oppressed, when habitual, lowers the whole tone of the character."

Further, Mill points out, if we believe that evil was ordained by Providence for our good, "then everything done by mankind which tends to chain up these natural agencies, or to restrict their mischievous operation, from draining a pestilential marsh down to curing the toothache, or putting up an umbrella, ought to be accounted impious....if we really believed what most people profess to believe, we should cherish (them) as medicines provided for our earthly state by infinite wisdom." These writers, he says, have entirely lost their way. "They have exhausted the resources of sophistry to make it appear that all the suffering in the world exists to prevent greater; that misery exists for fear lest there should be misery—a thesis which, if ever so well maintained, could only avail to explain and justify the works of limited beings compelled to labor under conditions independent of their own will, but can have no application to a Creator assumed to be omnipotent; who, if he bends to a supposed necessity, himself makes the necessity which he bends to. If the maker of the world can all that he will, he wills misery, and there is no escape from the conclusion."

It is a singular fact—again illustrating the chronic confusion of mind and morals produced by belief in a benevolent God—that many of the same men who defend the existence of evil in the world, on the ground that it is productive of good, are the very men who can find no words sufficiently severe to denounce the Jesuitical maxim that "the end justifies the means."

Then we are asked to view with admiration the laws by which "One revolution of the wheel of organisation evolved the living vegetable world, another culminated in the creation of sentient beings. Higher and higher has arisen the type, finer and finer has grown the product, till brain has become the ruling force, and man has emerged from that darkness which hitherto had never permitted Nature to contemplate herself."

But the laws by which all this was brought about were the laws of Natural Selection and the Survival of the Fittest, by which the weakest and those unadapted to their environment were remorselessly crushed out. Dr. Maudsley does not overstate the case when he says:—

"A whole creation groaning and travailing through countless ages of pain and death in order at the end to issue in such a being as primeval man; then, after his coming, countless ages more of human savagery and infinite waste of life, marked by suffering so great that it might fairly be questioned whether all those that had gone before would fill up their measure."

Mr. Arthur Balfour, in his *Foundations of Belief*, admits that, so far as science can teach us, "Famine, Disease, and Mutual Slaughter, fit nurses for the future lord of creation, have gradually evolved, after infinite travail, a race with conscience enough to know that it is vile, and intelligence enough to know that it is insignificant. We survey the past and see its history is of blood and tears, of helpless blundering, of wild revolt, of stupid acquiescence, of empty aspirations."

The incentive to civilisation has not come from within. Primitive man did not suddenly rise up and say "I will civilise myself." Civilisation has been forced upon him from without, and it has not been an affair of "rose-water and politeness." Famine, war, and slavery have been the spurs most potent in the process.

Civilisation first arose in the East—in Babylonia and Egypt. Thomas Henry Buckle, in his magnificent *History of Civilisation*, has shown that civilisation can only arise where food is to be had in abundance without much labor being expended upon it. Both these conditions were fulfilled in Egypt. Every year the land is inundated by the Nile. This inundation leaves behind a rich alluvial deposit. In this fruitful soil the natives cast their seeds; then their labors are completed. As Winwood Reade observes, "the natives were able to obtain a year's food in return for a few days' toil." There was no country in the ancient world where food was so abundant and so cheap. Moreover, in a hot country like this, men have few necessities. They do not require an expensive flesh diet. No fire is needed, except to cook the handful of rice. Clothes, even for adults, are few and slight; the children wear none at all. Naturally, under these favorable conditions, the valley of the Nile—the average width of which is only seven miles—soon became populated up to the extreme limit. To cite Winwood Reade again: "The valley was filled with people to the brim. When it was a good Nile every ear of corn, every branch of dates, every papyrus stalk and lotus root was pro-engaged. There was no waste and no surplus store. But sometimes a bad Nile came. "The plenty of ordinary years, like a baited trap, had produced a luxuriance of human life, and the massacre was proportionally severe. Encompassed by the wilderness, the unfortunate natives were unable to escape; they died in heaps; the valley resembled a field of battle; each village became a charnel house; skeletons sat grinning at street corners, and the winds chattered among dead men's bones."

Among those who survived, through the law of Natural Selection and the Survival of the Fittest, it is easily conceivable that there would be some who, stimulated by the memory of the past and by fear of its recurrence in the future, would strain to the utmost their ingenuity to prevent this catastrophe. Hence the science of hydraulics was gradually mastered by the ancient Egyptians, and they devised that system of dikes, reservoirs, and lock-canals, by which the precious fluid was stored up and distributed over the whole valley, so that each lot received an equal share. Simultaneously, the art of surveying became necessary to settle the yearly disputes caused by the inundation destroying the landmarks. Then it was observed that the rising of the waters coincided with certain aspects of the stars, and this led to the study of astronomy.

After famine—war and slavery. Those who dwell on the rich banks of a river, flowing through desert lands, are always liable to be attacked by the fierce, wandering hordes of the desert. There is nothing such tribes desire better than to levy tribute on the peaceful, corn-growing people of the river lands. So soon as the Egyptians had gathered their harvests, they were obliged to defend them from the robbers of the desert. Out of these wars arose a military caste, who allied themselves with the intellectual or inventive class—which was also the priestly caste in

\* *The Martyrdom of Man*. The following account of the rise of civilisation in Egypt is condensed from this remarkable work.

Egypt, and included the whole civil service and the liberal professions—and the nation was divided into two great classes, the rulers and the ruled. "Then," says Winwood Reade, "oppression continued the work which war and famine had begun. The priest announced, and the armies executed the divine decrees. The people were reduced to servitude." And what that servitude was, we may learn from ancient historians and the existing monuments.

"We are startled," says Buckle—

"By the reckless prodigality with which, in Egypt, the upper class squandered away the labor and the lives of the people..... We may form some idea of the almost incredible waste, when we hear that two thousand men were occupied for three years in carrying a single stone from Elephantine to Sais; that the Canal of the Red Sea alone, cost the lives of a hundred and twenty thousand Egyptians; and that to build one of the pyramids required the labor of three hundred and sixty thousand men for twenty years."

Of the Pyramids, which were merely tombs for the kings, he says:—

"To raise structures so stupendous, and yet so useless, there must have been tyranny on the part of the rulers, and slavery on the part of the people."\*

Babylonian civilisation—for which modern research seems to establish a higher antiquity than Egyptian—evolved under precisely similar conditions. The country was isolated by deserts. The soil, which was remarkably fruitful, depended for its harvest upon the yearly inundation of the Euphrates, and was irrigated by a system of canals. The people, also, had to defend the fruit of their labor from desert tribes. "Indeed," says Mr. St. Chad Boscawen, "among the agricultural Babylonians the word enemy was synonymous for a 'nomad of the desert.'"† That the same slavery ensued is testified by the remains of their temples and palaces.‡

The whole process has been summed up by Winwood Reade, as follows:—

"Thus, when Nature selects a people to endow them with glory and with wealth, her first proceeding is to massacre their bodies; her second, to debauch their minds. She begins with famine, pestilence, and war; next, force and rapacity above, chains and slavery below. She uses evil as the raw material of good; though her aim is always noble, her earliest means are base and cruel. But, as soon as a certain point is reached, she washes her black and bloody hands, and uses agents of a higher kind."§

We live under somewhat better conditions to-day, but the agonies endured by the myriads whose sufferings have formed the foundation for better conditions to come remains unrecompensed and unrewarded. As Professor Huxley remarked, in another connection:—

"On the evolutionist side we are told to take comfort from the reflection that the terrible struggle for existence tends to final good, and that the suffering of the ancestor is paid for by the increased perfection of the progeny. There would be something in this argument if, in Chinese fashion, the present generation could pay its debts to its ancestors; otherwise it is not clear what compensation the *Eohippus* gets for his sorrows in the fact that, some millions of years afterwards, one of his descendants wins the Derby."

Moreover, many good, but foolish, people seem to imagine that progress will continue until we reach perfection. But as Huxley pointed out:—

"If our globe is proceeding from a condition in which it was too hot to support any but the lowest living thing to a condition in which it will be too cold to permit of the existence of any others, the course of life upon its

surface must describe a trajectory like that of a ball fired from a mortar; and the sinking half of that course is as much a part of the general process of evolution as the rising."\*

Then consider the vast amount of sorrow and suffering caused by the defective moral nature of mankind. St. Paul complained, "the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do."† He placed the blame for this upon Adam for eating an apple. We were taught to believe that evil thoughts were the promptings of Satan, but science now gives us the true interpretation of the facts. Criminologists recognise among our criminal classes a large proportion of what they term Atavists—that is, people who have inherited a nature adapted to a lower and more savage state than that in which they are actually living. "Tailed minds" Winwood Reade terms them; a human body with a bestial nature. As Professor Huxley puts it:—

"For his successful progress throughout the savage state man has been largely indebted to those qualities which he shares with the ape and the tiger; his exceptional physical organisation; his cunning, his sociability, his curiosity, and his imitiveness; his ruthless and ferocious distinctiveness when his anger is roused by opposition..... After the manner of successful persons, civilised man would gladly kick down the ladder by which he has climbed. He would be only too pleased to see 'the ape and tiger die.' But they decline to suit his convenience; and the unwelcome intrusion of these boon companions of his hot youth into the ranged existence of civil life adds pains and griefs, innumerable and immeasurably great, to those which the cosmic process necessarily brings on the more animal."‡

So that thousands of men undergo punishment for doing that which their nature compelled them to do. Their organisation was determined for them before they were born. All sections of the Christian Church—and Chapel—have opposed, and are opposing, this fundamental truth, and adding another chapter to that great history, "The Warfare of Science with Superstition."

The pious attempt to meet this distressing problem by the assertion that all this will be adjusted in a future life, that the misery endured here will be turned to happiness "over there"—wherever that may be. But even admitting, for the sake of argument, this vague "over there," this explanation does not meet the case; it does not explain the origin, nor justify the existence, of evil. To quote Winwood Reade again:—

"A poor helpless infant is thrust into the world by a higher force; it has done no one any harm, yet it is tortured in the most dreadful manner; it is nourished in vice, and crime, and disease; it is allowed to suffer a certain time and then it is murdered. It is all very well to say that afterwards it was taken to everlasting bliss; but why was it not taken there direct? If a man has a child and beats that child for no reason whatever, is it any palliation of the crime to say that he afterwards gave it cake and wine?"§

We cannot see why, says Professor Huxley, "among the endless possibilities open to Omnipotence—that of sinless, happy existence among the rest—the actuality in which sin and misery abound should be that selected."

The theologians tell us that if God had created us incapable of sinning we should have been mere brutes and automata; that we should never develop character. There would be more in this argument if evil and sin always *did* develop good character; but, unfortunately, it very often has the opposite effect. Moreover, there is said to be no sin, evil, or pain in heaven. Are the heavenly inhabitants, then, mere brutes, automata, and without character? God and Jesus Christ are said to be incapable of sinning. Are they in the same category?

Of course, it would be as easy for an Omnipotent Being to create sinless beings with good characters as to do anything else. "For," as Schopenhauer

\* *History of Civilisation*, 1904, pp. 52-53.

† *The Bible and the Monuments*, 1895, p. 92.

‡ Since writing the above, I have seen the review of a book recently published, *The Nemesis of Nations*, by Mr. W. Romaine Paterson (Dent and Co.), in which the author probes the abysses of misery and degradation which supported these mighty and glittering empires. "Civilisation," says Mr. Paterson, "begins with the crack of the slave-whip. It was the first frantic effort of the human race to organise itself." He shows the magnificence of the Babylonian temples and palaces—all the work of the slaves—and he observes: "Among the fallen walls of these Assyrian palaces, we discover a kind of sculptured dirge, and hear the echo of human cries."

§ *The Martyrdom of Man*, p. 10.

\* *The Struggle for Existence in Human Society*.

† Romans vii. 9.

‡ *Evolution and Ethics*.

§ *The Martyrdom of Man*, p. 517.

¶ *Evolution and Ethics*.

remarks, "he is the Creator not of the world only, but of possibility itself; and, therefore, he ought to have so ordered possibility as that it would admit of something better." Or, as an American evolutionist put it, in more homely fashion: "We cannot so load a gun as that it will hit a bear but miss a calf. This is just what is to be expected from one with whom 'all things are possible.'"

I can see no sign of a guiding intelligence in the history of mankind. It has been remarked—by Herbert Spencer, I think—that "man has found the right road after trying every conceivable wrong one." He has received no help from any God in his battle with the forces of nature. "There are no secret springs," says Professor G. D. Brinton, "no occult forces, in the historic development of culture. Whatever seems hidden or mysterious is so only because our knowledge of the facts is imperfect. No magic and no miracle has aided man in his long conflict with the material forces around him. No ghost has come from the grave, no God from on high, to help him in the bitter struggle" (*An Ethnologist's View of History*). If there had been a Heavenly Father watching over us, surely he would have helped us on the way. Then we are told that the very fact that we have progressed so far from savagery towards civilisation proves a guiding intelligence; but, as Winwood Reade remarks:—

"The good in this world predominates over the bad; the good is ever increasing, the bad is ever diminishing. But, if God is Love, why is there any bad at all? Is the world like a novel in which the villains are put in to make it more dramatic, and in which virtue only triumphs in the third volume?"†

If, indeed, there were a judgment day, says this writer, "it would be for man to appear at the bar, not as a criminal, but as an accuser." At the conclusion of his book, he sums up his survey of the history of mankind as follows:—

"I give to universal history a strange but true title—*The Martyrdom of Man*. In each generation, the human race has been tortured that their children might profit by their woes. Our own prosperity is founded on the agonies of the past."

Are we pessimists, then? Is this the worst of all possible worlds? By no means; we are neither pessimists nor optimists. It is when we are told that there is a Being who created the universe, who is also a loving, heavenly Father, who watches over us and cares for us, that we bring forward facts, which absolutely and definitely, give the lie to the existence of any such Being. It is an unpleasant and a thankless task, but as the late Professor Huxley observed, in his *Autobiography*:—

"There is no alleviation for the sufferings of mankind except veracity of thought and of action, and the resolute facing of the world as it is, when the garment of make-believe, by which pious hands have hidden its uglier features, is stripped off."

W. MANN.

#### IS MARRIAGE A FAILURE?

My story is now told as faithfully as I am able to tell it. So far as my personal life is concerned, I have gathered mostly the flowers that have bloomed along my path, and said little of the thorns; but, despite the sharpest of these, I would gladly go over my pilgrimage again. Yes—yes! Were it only for the forty years of happy wedlock.—*Dr. M. D. Conway, "Autobiography"* (last paragraph).

One lesson, Shepherd, let us two divide,  
Taught both by what she shows, and what conceals;  
Never to blend our pleasure or our pride  
With sorrow of the meanest thing that feels.

—Wordsworth.

#### GODS.

Mere phantoms of man's self-tormenting heart,  
Which on the sweets that woo it dare not feed:  
Vain dreams, that quench our pleasures, then depart,  
When the dup'd soul, self-master'd, claims its meed:  
When on the strenuous just man, Heaven bestows,  
Crown of his struggling life, an unjust close.

Seems it so light a thing, then, austere Powers,  
To spurn man's common lure, life's pleasant things?  
Seems there no joy in dances crown'd with flowers,  
Love, free to range, and regal banquetings?  
Bend ye on these, indeed, an unmov'd eye,  
Not gods but ghosts, in frozen apathy?

Or is it that some Power, too wise, too strong,  
Even for yourselves to conquer or beguile,  
Whirls earth, and heaven, and men, and gods along,  
Like the broad rushing of the insurged Nile?  
And the great powers we serve, themselves may be  
Slaves of a tyrannous Necessity.

Or in mid-heaven, perhaps, your golden cars,  
Where earthly voice climbs never, wing their flight,  
And in wild hunt, through mazy tracts of stars,  
Sweep in the sounding stillness of the night?  
Or in deaf ease, on thrones of dazzling sheen,  
Drinking deep draughts of joy, ye dwell serene?

Oh wherefore cheat our youth, if thus it be,  
Of one short joy, one lust, one pleasant dream?  
Stringing vain words of powers we cannot see,  
Blind divinations of a will supreme;  
Lost labor; when the circumambient gloom  
But hides, if Gods, Gods careless of our doom?

—Matthew Arnold, "*Mycerinus*."

#### DEATH'S FINAL CONQUEST.

The glories of our blood and state  
Are shadows, not substantial things:  
There is no armor against fate;  
Death lays his icy hand on kings:  
Sceptre and crown  
Must tumble down  
And in the dust be equal made  
With the poor crooked scythe and spade.

Some men with swords may reap the field  
And plant fresh laurels where they kill;  
But their strong nerves at last must yield,  
They tame but one another still.  
Early or late  
They stoop to fate  
And must give up their murmuring breath  
When they, pale captives, creep to death.

The garlands wither on your brow,  
Then boast no more your mighty deeds;  
Upon death's purple altar now  
See where the victor-victim bleeds:  
All heads must come  
To the cold tomb:  
Only the actions of the just  
Smell sweet and blossom in the dust.

—James Shirley.

#### TRUE DEATH.

It is not death, that sometimes in a sigh  
This eloquent breath shall take its speechless flight;  
That sometime these bright stars, that now reply  
In sunlight to the sun, shall set in night;  
That this warm conscious flesh shall perish quite,  
And all life's ruddy springs forget to flow;  
That thoughts shall cease, and the immortal spright  
Be lapp'd in alien clay and laid below;  
It is not death to know this—but to know  
That pious thoughts, which visit at new graves  
In tender pilgrimage, will cease to go  
So duly and so oft,—and when grass waves  
Over the past-away, there may be then  
No resurrection in the minds of men.

—Thomas Hood.

When the pursuit of truth has been the habitual study of any man's life, the love of truth will be his ruling passion.

—Hazlitt.

\* Professor Garrison, *The Absence of Design in Nature*, p. 15.  
† *The Martyrdom of Man*, p. 519.

**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.****OUTDOOR.**

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S.: Victoria Park (near the Fountain), 3.15 and 6.15, James Marshall, a Lecture.

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S.: Station-road, 11.30, F. A. Davies, a Lecture. Brockwell Park, 3.15, J. Kellard, a Lecture; 6.15, F. A. Davies, a Lecture.

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S.: Ridley-road, 11.30, W. J. Ramsey, "Where Angels Dwell."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S.: Parliament Hill, C. Cohen, 3.30, "Why I Am Not a Christian"; 6.30, "Christianity and Morality."

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S.: Outside Maryland Point Station (G.E.R.), 7, W. J. Ramsey, a Lecture.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N. S. S.: Hyde Park (near Marble Arch), 11.30, H. B. Samuels, a Lecture.

WOOLWICH BRANCH N. S. S.: Beresford-square, 11.30, Debate—Mr. Baker, U. C. E. B., and Mr. Allison, N. S. S.—on "Christian Evidences."

**COUNTRY.****OUTDOOR.**

EDINBURGH BRANCH N. S. S.: The Meadows, 3, a Lecture; The Mound, 7, a Lecture.

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

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