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PRICE TWOPENCE

*Come forth into the light of things,
Let Nature be your teacher.*

—WORDSWORTH.

SIR OLIVER LODGE ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Your criticisms are usually interesting and sometimes helpful, so I ask permission to acknowledge them.

I perceive that you object to a combination of "morals, manners, and æsthetics" being called a branch of religion. Well, it is a question of nomenclature. They are not theology, most certainly; but I am not so sure that they do not contribute to, and form part of, religion. Many have held that conduct is a large part, not only of life, but of "religion" itself. I understand that term to signify, or at any rate to include, *our practical response to all that we know of Cosmic Law*; it must include the practical outcome of our beliefs, as well as a statement of the beliefs themselves. In that sense you have a religion, like other people, and doubtless are devout therein; even though an exceptionally large part of it consists at present of negations, owing to what you consider the foolish or the pernicious superstition of others.

From this point of view, it may be held that the educational question before us is not whether children ought to be taught religion, but what sort of religion they are to be taught. I am anxious that they should be imbued with a true and sensible and helpful kind; and so are you;—so, indeed, are we all. In this we agree, however much our beliefs or theories differ.

My beliefs go much further than yours towards recognising a non-sensuous world, and its influence on human lives. I suppose that, rightly or wrongly, I realise a more comprehensive and complex universe than you do—not limited by our few and meagre sense-perceptions. But neither your beliefs nor mine go far enough for many Ecclesiastics: these try to make definite, and doctrinal, things which I am constrained to regard as doubtful or even mistaken. I go further with them than you do, but I do not go all the way; indeed they, at a certain point, begin to go different ways among themselves. I go practically up to this point, and then either stop or go a way of my own. We all stop somewhere; we differ as to where to proceed and where to stop most wisely and consistently.

Those of us who have time and inclination to brood over ultimate problems are all groping our way towards truth—both positive and negative truth. Some there are who do not think very deeply; we cannot all do everything; and I am certain of this, that the knowledge of the universe attained by a common-sense man of business of the present century is far from exhausting the complexity of the whole. Even I know of things beyond his range. I am also very sure that my

own knowledge and perception are likewise excessively and even absurdly inadequate; but inasmuch as my whole life has been devoted to exploring the universe from several points of view,—beginning with the purely physical side,—I am bound to suppose that I see into it rather more deeply than those who have artificially limited their attention to one or two of its aspects; whether those aspects be on the common sense, wideawake, terrestrial side alone, or on the super-sensuous, imaginative, and immaterial side alone. That is why I am presuming to pose as somewhat of an instructor in matters which, in their completeness, are really beyond us all.

I suggest, as one advantage of this course, that my teaching, being enforced by no kind of authority, cannot do much harm. It is there, thrown out, as it were, for those to use who wish to be assisted in teaching some elements of orthodox religion to children; and it can be ignored by those who wish for nothing of the kind,—who feel, in fact, that they are already fully informed on the topic, whether it be on the positive or the negative side.

It would seem easy to hold my tongue and stick to pure Physics; but somehow human beings are constrained to the utterance of such truth as they are conscious of possessing. You and your contributors do not escape this constraint—as witness many militant articles in your columns,—nor does the most advanced theologian. I expect that the real truth is far larger than we any of us perceive, and that all who feel this Divine pressure towards utterance have grasped a portion of truth; though it may often be an extremely small and not very significant fragment. There is room for all earnest, truth-seeking people; and we need not spend time in controverting each other because we are working on different sides of the great sphere.

I am, Sir,

Yours faithfully,

OLIVER LODGE.

Remarks on the Foregoing.

SIR OLIVER LODGE'S letter is very courteous and temperate. It is also courageous. It requires some boldness and superiority to conventionalism, in hypocritical England, to treat the editor of the *Freethinker* with common civility.

Let me assure Sir Oliver Lodge that I have nothing but the highest respect for him as a man of science. I cheerfully acknowledge my vast inferiority to him in that respect. Let me also assure him that I was never foolish enough to suggest that he should hold his tongue on other subjects and stick to pure Physics. He has the same right that I have to speak on subjects that concern us all. I have only suggested that his authority should not go beyond his special province. Orthodox people tell me that the great Sir Oliver Lodge teaches this, that, and the other on religious questions. I reply that this is very interesting, but it is no more; and that his teachings on such questions are just as authoritative as mine or any other man's.

Sir Oliver Lodge has certainly looked "rather more deeply" than most of us, including myself,

into the universe; but I am not at all sure that he realises "a more comprehensive and complex universe" than I do. Even if he does, he admits that his "own knowledge and perception are excessively and even absurdly inadequate," and I do not see how my own could be much worse. I mean no offence, but I conceive that, in relation to the infinite universe, the difference between Sir Oliver Lodge and myself is infinitesimal, and that he is no more likely than I am to fathom its ultimate mystery. Moreover, I have noticed that he rarely, if ever, champions religion on his own territory. I have not met with his "proofs from physics." He and Lord Kelvin both leave physics, and make a raid upon biology, or sometimes upon psychology, when they wage war against "materialism" and "atheism." Sir Oliver Lodge's reply to Haeckel is a signal illustration of this curious fact.

In what way does electricity, for instance, lead to God, or to Christianity? I really wish Sir Oliver Lodge would tell us. For my part, I am quite open to learn. I have no prejudices. I am an Atheist simply because I see no evidences of the existence of God.

Even if physical science suggested some intelligent power behind phenomena, which I cannot see that it does, the question whether that intelligent power is moral and personal would have to be decided on other grounds.

The world has swarmed with religions, but not one of them was ever founded upon science. They have all been founded upon speculation, tradition, revelation, or some other form of faith. Christianity always boasted that it was "foolishness" to the wisdom of this world; its first apostles were ignorant fishermen, and this was designed in order to pour contempt on the pride of human intellect. If a different spirit obtains now, it is only because of the fear which follows weakness.

Sir Oliver Lodge says that his own teaching cannot do much harm, because it is not enforced by authority; but all teaching does harm or good according to its falsity or truth; and grave differences of opinion inevitably lead to controversy.

With regard to the teaching of religion, I understand that Sir Oliver Lodge wishes it to continue in the State schools. On that point I am entirely opposed to him, and I am pleased to note that the strife of the Churches is leading to Secular Education. With the teaching of religion in private institutions I have no wish to interfere. But I shall exercise my right to oppose religion itself. Sir Oliver Lodge tells me that I have a religion like other people. I deny it—in his meaning of the word. My religion, if I had to profess one, would not concern itself with Cosmic Law; it would be the religion of Humanity.

It was astute of Sir Oliver Lodge to claim me as a religionist, and I admire cleverness even in an adversary. But as I decline to be folded in, for the reason already given, it is *not* a question of nomenclature when I object to "morals, manners, and æsthetics" being called a branch of religion. My objection is not verbal, but substantial. I consider that ethics and art arose independently of religion, and should always exist independently; and that both of them, and especially ethics, suffer incalculably from enforced association with an essentially alien power. Morality cannot benefit by "commerce with the skies." It relates to man as a citizen of earth, not to man as a candidate for heaven. Religion never taught man a new duty, and never gave him a new right; it has often perverted his sense of duty and trampled his rights under foot. Sir Oliver Lodge himself is apprehensive of the Ecclesiastics. I look upon them as the worst enemies of mankind. Where they flourish man decays. And, on the other hand, civilisation always means the secularisation of life.

I will conclude on a note of agreement. Sir Oliver Lodge and I both believe in free inquiry and free discussion. Let us keep that freedom at all cost.

G. W. FOOTE.

Christianity in Japan.

OUR relations with Japan would have been neither complete nor satisfactory without a visit from that champion showman and past master in the art of bluff, General Booth. The readiness of the Japanese to give a welcome to any English visitor who holds a public position, the serious manner in which the General is taken by the English press—since his interview with the King—together with the Salvation Army leader's keen scent for an advertisement, all made the visit inevitable. He went, he saw, he "processed"; and his triumphs, real or imaginary, were duly chronicled by the English papers. Among these reports, those written by Salvation Army officials are, of course, the most jubilant in tone. Commissioner Railton, for example, who has spent some time in Japan, declares that "as surely as the sun rises and sets, Japan is turning from all that (*i.e.*, ancestor-worship and general wickedness) to serve the living and true God, and Jesus Christ, His son and our Lord"; and wonders which will be first in the rush for Christ, Japan or Korea. Both, it seems, have "seen the star in the east, and await the call of the simple, enthusiastic shepherd worshipers to hurry to His fold."

The picture of Japanese and Koreans in a race of rivalry as to which shall first claim the honor of wearing Salvation Army jerseys—at store prices—while patiently awaiting a call, has its humorous side; nor is the humor of the picture likely to be spoilt by any alteration in the actual situation. Years ago, the Japanese were awaiting a call and running to embrace Christianity, and fifty years hence, they will still be running—like an oriental version of *Charley's Aunt*. Christian missions have the very convenient knack of seeing what they wish to see, or what their subscribers at home would like to see. When Commissioner Railton can point to solid facts in the shape of conversions, we shall be able to see good grounds for his jubilation. Meanwhile, those who know how utterly misleading Salvation Army statements are, will judge accordingly. And those who know anything of the Japanese, will also estimate the General's visit at its proper value. A Christian preacher lands in Japan to convert the people, and the Japanese, with a tolerance unknown to Christians, bid him welcome and tell him to go ahead. Had a Buddhist or Shintoist priest landed publicly in England for a similar purpose, a Christian public would have thrown bricks at him.

I have no actual figures of Salvation Army work in Japan, and do not think that any are published. But I have before me the report of the Church Missionary Society for 1906, and one may fairly take their work as a specimen of what is being done. The comparison will, I imagine, be, on the whole, favorable to missionary work in general, since the C. M. S. is the largest and wealthiest body of all. As I intend later analysing the whole of this report, probably with others, at length, my present summary will be of the briefest possible description.

As is usual, the annual report holds out many promises of victory and converts, which are only poorly supported—when they are not contradicted—by the actual figures furnished. The Rev. G. H. Pole declares that *Bushido*, as a moral guide for the Japanese, is doomed; an opinion quite at variance with all that Japanese writers have had to say on the subject. The Rev. W. P. Buncombe writes of the impetus given by the war to the spread of Christianity in Japan; an opinion that is answered by Bishop Fyson in the following sentences from his report:—

"I was told more than once that, as a result of the war, there would be a more decided turning of the minds of the people towards religion in general, and towards Christianity in particular.....It was what I myself hoped would be the case, but I cannot say that I have observed any such result so far. There has been no influx of outsiders at the regular church services, nor

have the audiences at the mission-rooms grown any larger, nor has there been any increase in the number of inquirers; and just now there appears to be a general spirit of apathy and indifference."

Bishop Fyson's report fairly covers the ground of possible gains, so that one wonders on what the other optimistic opinions are based. When we add to this the opinion of another worker that "the missionary is not at present in such high favor as formerly," the case seems complete. Of course, the statement of one of the Japanese agents that of the men who came under his influence, while confessing that he could not point to actual results, "We trust that some time, somewhere, some of them will become followers of Christ" may bring comfort to some subscribers, and they clearly have a right to this much for their money.

Very little consolation, I imagine, can be derived from the facts—that is, as given in the report; what the actual facts are I have no means of ascertaining. Taken altogether, the C. M. S. has in Japan 264 workers, of whom 110 are Europeans. The total cost of the Japanese work—for, in spite of the talk, the sympathy of the Japanese with the work, their eagerness to embrace Christianity, etc., the native contributions are small—is £22,505 4s. 7d. In 1905, these 264 agents succeeded in baptising 496 adults—not a tremendous haul, even though it were all profit. But against these gains one has to put losses. In 1904, the native Christians belonging to the C. M. S. were returned 6,446. Adding to this number the 496 baptised during 1905, the number should now be 6,942. Instead of this, the number of native Christians is returned at 6,489—an actual loss of 7 on the year's working. Or, to put it in another way, 264 propagandists, working for twelve months at a cost to the home funds of over £22,000, baptised 496 adults and lost 503. Truly a proof that Japan is running a race with Korea as to which shall be the first to embrace Christianity!

Commenting on General Booth's visit to Japan, one of the religious weeklies referred to the Japanese as a nation of thinkers. If the comment be a just one, one wonders from what class the converts are drawn, judging from the specimens given. One lad informed a missionary that he became an "inquirer" through wondering why it was that Westerners were more trustworthy than the Japanese. Perhaps the boy was a bit of a humorist. At any rate, a better acquaintance with Westerners would show him that in lands blessed by the religion of Jesus untrustworthiness is not quite unknown. Mr. Knight reports the miraculous conversion of a convict through reading the story of the Prodigal Son. An old lady of sixty put away her idols and embraced Christianity. Miss Cox writes of the power of the Gospel over another old lady, who had ceased to worry since believing. Yet another old lady of eighty-four came into the fold. In fact, the older ones seem to have been better material than the younger ones. Of one place we read, "some had reverted to heathenism." At Sapporo there was a decrease of 122 from this cause. At Fukuyama, "Three of the Christians had to be put under discipline for marrying heathen wives, and one for collecting subscriptions in aid of a heathen festival"; while "the unfaithfulness of some of the converts, notably of a man once the mainstay of the evangelistic work, who divorced five wives in rather quick succession, and proceeded to take a sixth, militated against advance." Still, the report professes hope of some of the children who came to the schools. An expression of opinion from a Japanese concerning the missionaries is also worth noting. Questioned on the point, he said: "While we greatly admire the evangelistic spirit of the missionaries, we feel that they are not able to help us solve the intellectual problems that are confronting us." For neatness this would be hard to beat.

People less thin-skinned than those who make up the missionary societies of Great Britain, might realise the impertinence of going to a people like the Japanese to teach them morals or otherwise elevate them. To thrust oneself upon a strange people with the loud announcement that one hopes to bring them

up to one's own level of moral and mental excellence, is a piece of sanctimonious impudence that only Christian custom can make decent. Without doubt, the Japanese realise the impertinence, but they are probably too polite to do more than smile. The real opinion of the Japanese on Christian efforts is expressed by Count Kiruchi in the *Nineteenth Century*. He tells us that when the Japanese remodelled their education on Western lines, they took it for granted that "education" included moral training. They soon discovered the mistake, and the gap had to be filled. Then it was, he says, that some "talked wildly about a new religion"; others who did not not believe in Christianity thought that it might be adopted as a basis of moral teaching. Then came the Imperial Rescript of 1890, and "thenceforth there was a firm basis for our moral teaching." "We felt that the whole question was settled." And those who really know Japan appear to agree with Count Kiruchi. The question was settled. Christianity has never yet established itself as a ruling force in any country by mere moral suasion, it is hardly likely that it will establish a new record among the Japanese.

C. COHEN.

Lucian and Christianity.

THE consensus is complete that Lucian was the greatest Greek writer of the Christian era. He was born at Samosata, on the Euphrates, somewhere about the year 120. His parents wished him to become a sculptor, and he was apprenticed to an uncle; but he soon got tired of this art, and abandoned it for literature. He tells us that he had a vision of two women, representing Statuary and Literature. The fascinations of the latter enchained him, and the pursuit of learning was his only possible choice. Enamored of Demosthenes, he earned his living for some time as a rhetorician. In this capacity he travelled extensively, visiting Greece and Italy, and even Gaul, where he served for a period as a professor of rhetoric. In 160, we find him at Antioch, soon thereafter at Athens, where he met with great success. Then he gave himself to authorship. Between 160 and 180, he seems to have produced an exceptionally large number of treatises, 124 of which, now extant, are considered genuine. As a writer, he is both elegant and correct, standing high among the best classical models. In style and spirit he is more classical than any other writer of the later age, his being the best Attic prose that had been written for at least four centuries. In short, he may accurately be described as one of the principal representatives of the silver age of Greek literature. A writer in the *Encyclopædia Britannica* says that, "as a satirist and a wit, Lucian stands without a rival. In these respects he may be said to occupy, in prose literature, the unique position which Aristophanes holds in Greek poetry."

Some critics regard him as a misanthrope, whose derision roots itself in hatred; while others pronounce him a mere satirist. That he is sometimes bitter, and employs extremely acrimonious and contemptuous epithets, is undeniable; but it must not be forgotten that he indulges in such spirit and language only when exposing imposture and chicanery as displayed by prototypes of Thomas Lake Harris and Dr. Dowie. On the whole, Lucian is neither acrimonious nor contemptuous, but simply satirical. His business in life was to laugh at the follies and weaknesses of mankind.

It is as a Freethinker, however, that he most strongly appeals to the readers of this journal. As is well known, he was the last of the great Sceptics of the Greek world. Renan refers to him as a man "entirely exempt from supernatural beliefs." He flourished in an age when Freethought was seriously on the decline. Science was in the "rueful throes" of death. The scientific spirit, "which is the negation of the supernatural," had but few exemplifiers. Practically, Lucian stood alone in his attitude of

opposition to all religions alike. To him they were all but different embodiments of the same central superstition, and he would have none of them. And yet he was a man of sterling character. So thoroughly trusted and respected was he at Court, that Marcus Aurelius appointed him to a post of high honor and authority in Egypt.

Now, some one may desire to know what is the explanation of Lucian's popularity in Christendom throughout the centuries. That he has always been in great favor is proved by the numerous editions of his works that have been, and are, in circulation, the best modern ones being those of Dindorf (1858), Jacobitz (1874), and Sommerbrodt (1886-93). There are also many English translations, in whole or in part, by Franklin (1781), by William Tooke (1820); a complete one (Athens, 1895), by Irwin (1894) of six dialogues, by Campbell Davidson (1902) of several others, and by H. W. and F. G. Fowler (1905) of all his extant works. This amazing popularity of a Freethinking author in Christendom is probably to be accounted for by the fact that the main objects of his ridicule are Pagan religions and Pagan philosophies. His bantering attacks on these are generally approved of, and enjoyed, by Christians. Pagan religions deserved all they got from him. They were all false, and to pelt them with sharp satire was an eminently entertaining occupation; and, consequently, Lucian lives on as one of the mighty sons of genius.

It is a noteworthy fact that, in relation to all religions other than their own, Christians are thorough-going Freethinkers. And yet they resent with the utmost ferocity all Freethinking exercises upon Christianity. Lucian's *Dialogues of the Gods*, and of the *Marine Deities*, and, above all, his *Dialogues of the Dead*, are said to be "models of witty, polished, and accurate Greek composition." "The sarcasms on the popular mythology, the conversations of Pluto, Hermes, Charon, and others of the powers in Hades," are declared to be superlatively brilliant, their beauty of style and sparkling repartee being unsurpassed in all literature. But when his biting wit and keen satire are directed against the Christian religion he falls from grace at once, and degenerates into a silly and blasphemous buffoon. Even Professor Harnack says of him (*The Expansion of Christianity*, vol. ii., p. 128): "Lucian merely trifled with the question of Christianity. He was but a reckless, though an acute, journalist." Dr. Harnack does not condescend to inform us wherein Lucian's trifling consisted. We admit at once that we do not turn to Lucian for arguments, finely-formed syllogisms, or profound propositions; but we are positively convinced that he never plays the fool when he pours ridicule upon the Christians. For one thing, he is never spiteful, or malicious, or unmerciful. In the *Pasimj of Peregrinus* we have a beautiful example of his conscientious fairness. He depicts Peregrinus as a nefarious impostor, a man who sacrificed everything for his love of fame. For a while he pretended to be a Christian, and as an eloquent apologist of the Faith he won great renown among the saints. When he was cast into prison his Christian admirers did not forsake him, and this is how Lucian describes their devotion to him:—

"There came certain Christians, too, from some of the cities in Asia, deputed by their community to bring him aid, and to counsel and encourage him. For they are wonderfully ready whenever their public interest is concerned; in short, they grudge nothing, and so much money came in to Peregrinus at that time, by reason of his imprisonment, that he made a considerable income by it. For these poor wretches persuade themselves that they shall be immortal, and live for everlasting; so that they despise death, and some of them offer themselves to it voluntarily. Again, their first Lawgiver taught them that they were all brothers, when once they had committed themselves so far as to renounce the gods of the Greeks, and to worship that crucified sophist, and live according to his laws. So they hold all things alike in contempt, and consider all property common, trusting each other in such matters without any valid security. If, therefore, any clever impostor came among them who knew how to manage matters, he very soon made

himself a rich man by practising upon the credulity of these simple people" (Lucian, vol. i., pp. 570, 571).

Can you discover any sign of trifling in that extract? Dr. Harnack himself admits the truthfulness of the characterisation; and he makes this further admission: "'Those miserable people,' says Lucian, 'have got it into their heads that they are perfectly immortal.' He would certainly have made a jest upon it had any occurred to his mind; but whenever this nimble scoffer is depicting the faith of Christians, there is a remarkable absence of anything like jesting" (*The Expansion of Christianity*, vol. i., p. 188). How are we to reconcile this observation with the subsequent charge of trifling brought against our author? Lucian was a whole-hearted unbeliever, to whom Christians were "a despicable sect of fanatical enthusiasts"; and we must remember that his denunciation of them was nothing more than genial banter, while their condemnation of the Pagans was bitter and cruel in the extreme.

As we have seen, Lucian's weapon against religion was ridicule; and there are times and occasions when ridicule, skilfully handled, is infinitely more effective than the strongest argument would be. Indeed, you cannot argue with fanatics. Fanatics are people who have given the reins to their emotions, which have run away with them, with the inevitable result that they are no longer amenable to reason. All you can do is to genially laugh at them, while in your heart cherishing deep pity for them. There are people of whom Pope's lines are true—

"Safe from the bar, the pulpit, and the throne,
Yet touched and shamed by ridicule alone."

There are Freethinkers among us to-day in whose hands satire does excellent work, and under the lash of it some are enabled to realise the utter groundlessness and absurdity of supernatural beliefs. These jovial satirists, however, are generally dubbed triflers by Christian apologists. Of course, it would be a sad calamity if all Freethought advocates were wits and satirists. There are types of mind which are only shocked and alienated by playful, good-humored raillery, but to which a well-conceived, logically-arranged, and earnestly-delivered argument would make a telling appeal. Dr. Harnack does not consider Lucian a formidable opponent, while he thinks still less, if possible, of Aristides and Hierocles; but he frankly acknowledges that Celsus and Porphyry were foes worthy of the best theologian's steel, because they were reasoners. Celsus was an Agnostic, and he called Christianity "this bastard progeny of Judaism," which was nothing but an "absurd and sorry tragedy" all through its history. Porphyry was a deeply religious man after the Pagan fashion, but he wrote fifteen books "against the Christians," which form the "most ample and thoroughgoing treatise which has ever been written against Christianity"; "and even at this time of day Porphyry remains unanswered." Argument appeals to the Berlin scholar, and so it did to Augustine, who called Porphyry "the noble philosopher, although the keenest foe to Christians." But to the bulk of the saints he was "the most malicious and hostile of all," "God's enemy, a foe to truth, a master of accursed arts," "fool, impious, blasphemous, mad, shameless, a sycophant, a calumniator of the Church, a mad dog attacking Christ."

Lucian, Aristides, and Hierocles are with us to-day, wielding their ancient weapon of sarcasm, irony, satire, ridicule, and so are Celsus and Porphyry, swinging their sledge-hammer arguments, and between them they are at last taking the mighty fortress of superstition. The inmates are clearing out of it by the thousand, and from those still within comes the cry of despair. The Church is falling, its power in the land being already a thing of the past, while Science is as steadily mounting to its legitimate throne, whereon it shall soon sit and bear righteous rule over all departments of life.

J. T. LLOYD.

What we pray to ourselves for is always granted.—Emerson.

The Utility of Prayer.—II.

(Concluded from p. 380.)

WHEN one comes to think of it, if Christ's words respecting prayer were literally to be depended upon it would never do at all. Of course, we have no guarantee whatever that Christ said anything of the sort; and even if he did, it really does not matter from a certain point of view. But if we were to take for granted the statement ascribed to Christ that God accedes to everything that is requested in Christ's name, what a condition of things would arise! People in the waterproof line would be praying for constant rain; the man with wheat to ripen would be praying for sunshine; the man with bicycles to sell would also be petitioning for good weather; the dispensing chemist would not be averse to securing a substantial increase in the number of small ailments; while those who thrive on ship-building could be doing with frequent storms at sea for the improvement of business. Other industries might be expected to demand *their* share of "Protection," and the possibilities are obviously endless. Between them all God the Father would have a highly complicated time in the effort to satisfy their demands, and would probably heartily wish that his Son had made no such rash promise to mankind. As it is, Christ's pledge regarding prayer is in the nature of a promissory note that has not been met. Innumerable petitions are presented at the throne of grace, but God pays not the slightest attention to them.

It should be pointed out in fairness to the Catholic Church that she cautions her children from asking in prayer anything contrary to the will of God. Prayer with such a restriction—when you examine it—looks very like asking God to do what he intends to do in any case. If the omniscient God has willed anything, no possible intervention or remonstrance on the part of man can change his purpose. What God has willed must happen despite all the prayers that were ever offered. The Catholic Church recognises this, when she warns her adherents to bring their prayerful desires into harmony with the Divine purpose. What is this if not equivalent to an admission that events happen quite irrespective of the rosaries and litanies of the faithful? In point of fact, all the so-called answers to prayer resolve themselves into this—that something has happened which would have occurred just the same without prayer. No one can indicate a single incident that ever happened in response to prayer that would not have occurred quite as a matter of course if no one had ever prayed to heaven at all. Sickness comes and goes, famine comes and goes, drought comes and goes, floods come and go; earthquakes, cyclones, volcanic eruptions, all kinds of accidents occur, and finally death arrives, quite irrespective of whether we pray or not.

However, intelligent people are slowly growing out of the impression that a statement is true merely because it is found in the Bible, or because Christ is reported to have made it; and with the spread of education and general enlightenment they are beginning to grasp the fact that prayer is *not* a force in nature, is *not* a form of physical energy, and indeed has no objective value whatever. Nevertheless they adhere to the opinion that prayer is of a certain value because they feel it does them good to pray, whether their prayers receive any tangible or direct answer or not. To what are we to ascribe the undoubted fascination exercised by prayer over many minds, and the faith numberless individuals have in its power? There is always a natural explanation for everything, though religious people elect to reject the natural explanation and grasp at the supernatural. Faith in the efficacy of prayer persists in the more intellectual section of the Christian community—amongst the people who have given up the old idea of what prayer can achieve—because of its subjective effect. I remember reading a passage in

justification of belief in prayer written by a clergyman. He declared that whenever we rose from our knees feeling strengthened and comforted, *there* we had an answer to our prayer. Which is perfectly true; and this, indeed, is the only answer anyone ever gets to prayer. But what religious people fail to observe is, that this is not a case of God answering prayer, but of the person who prays answering himself. It is simply a proof of the subjective influence of prayer, of the effect of prayer on the individual himself—an effect which varies with the individual temperament. Some people are continually receiving answers to prayer, or so they assert. Others who pray just as constantly and as conscientiously have to confess that *they* get no reply. Differences of temperament and intellectual constitution sufficiently account for this. The latter individuals have not the knack of supplying their own answers in the degree possessed by the former class.

A man like Tyndall recognised the subjective function performed by prayer more cordially perhaps than we would do, but it is a function which none of us can deny. The daily, or even intermittent, practice of prayer *has* a certain subjective effect. How far such is entirely good or wholly evil, or a mixture of both, is legitimate matter for discussion. The phenomenon is there, and the explanation is simple. We all know what a relief it is when we can unbosom ourselves of some grief or worry in the ear of a sympathetic friend. Indeed, the mere getting a burden off your mind in such a fashion is wonderfully helpful, whether the party we choose as our confidant can assist us materially or not. It is enough that we have let loose our pent-up feelings, the suppression of which causes us so much discomfort or pain. This is precisely what happens when the religious person brings his troubles and griefs to the feet of his imaginary God. The Christian casts himself on his knees by his bedside and pours forth all his woes and lamentations to that all-pervading presence which he imagines hears him and sympathises with him, and is both able and willing to help him; with the result that he rises up refreshed and consoled, and goes forth to battle with his fate renewed in strength and resolution. Lo! says the Christian, Behold an answer to prayer! But there is nothing supernatural in it. It is a purely natural effect. Men have derived as much comfort and strength from the love and sympathy of a woman or a friend as anyone has from this imaginary God. Experience shows that it is usually when human love and sympathy are lacking that recourse is had to heaven for succor and comfort. It is the man or woman who leads a solitary, lonely life who feels the need of prayer. The individual who leads a full life, who has a sufficiency of human interests and affections, will seldom experience any overwhelming need or desire for prayer.

In relation to sickness, again: while, of course, prayer by others for the invalid cannot have the least effect on the course of the disease, what is called a prayerful and resigned state of mind on the part of the patient may be conducive to recovery. This phenomenon is also susceptible of a natural explication. Any doctor knows how enormously important it is in numerous cases of illness that the mind of the patient should be in a tranquil, and a hopeful, condition. We are only beginning to understand the various ways in which the mind and the body in man act and react on one another, and how dependent they are upon one another for the healthy functioning of each. Our backwardness in this department of knowledge is another of the debts we owe to the insane folly of religion. But we do know now that mind and matter are indissolubly connected. At all events, there is not a shade of evidence that they can exist apart. And we know that the structure of the brain and the condition of the mental functions are of immense consequence in relation to physical disease.

Now it is perfectly clear that the sick man who possesses the placid religious temperament, who prays to God in his affliction with cheerful confidence and

resigns himself entirely to what he calls the Divine Will, stands a much better chance of recovery than the man who frets and fumes at his evil state and curses or bemoans his unhappy plight. Every pathologist will bear this out. The sick man of equable temper gets well rapidly, and the religious person cries out exultingly "See the effect of prayer and faith!" But in reality it is nothing of the kind. It is really the result of a specific condition of mind. And for the bringing about of this condition of mind—that is, so far as it is not inborn in the individual, but has been superinduced—a strong dose of the Pagan Stoic philosophy would serve equally well with the Christian faith.

It may be asked if—having admitted the subjective utility of prayer in particular circumstances—we are not committed to the conclusion that belief in prayer has, on the whole, been beneficial to the race. Such a conclusion is far from the purpose of this article. In individual cases, belief in the efficacious nature of prayer may have a soothing and beneficent effect. With the race at large belief in prayer has had a harmful effect and has retarded progress. For one thing, prayer has never brought about the wonderful things that are ascribed to its power, and it is always a mistake to attempt to build human happiness on a lie. Secondly, cultivation of the "prayerful, resigned" disposition, either under affliction or under social abuses, has not helped progress. Evil of all kinds must be fought with and conquered, not timidly acquiesced in. Longanimity is a slave virtue, and it is meet that a slave religion should regard it as one of the leading attributes of its Deity. Rebellion is the note of progress. All the great thinkers and workers have been rebels—at least against convention. And it is certain that the religious-minded persons who hold that any existing state of things is in accordance with God's will, and who have been reared in an atmosphere of "simple faith and trust," are not likely to improve the conditions of their time in any radical or permanent degree.

GEO. SCOTT.

THE STATE AND RELIGION.

Whence, it seems to me, we may gather one of two things: either that there is nothing in any European form of religion so reasonable or ascertained, as that it can be taught securely to our youth, or fastened in their minds by any rivets of proof which they shall not be able to loosen the moment they begin to think; or else, that no means are taken to train them in such demonstrable creeds.

It seems to me the duty of a rational nation to ascertain (and to be at some pains in the matter) which of these suppositions is true; and, if indeed no proof can be given of any supernatural fact, or Divine doctrine, stronger than a youth just out of his teens can overthrow in the first stirrings of serious thought, to confess this boldly; to get rid of the expense of an Establishment, and the hypocrisy of a Liturgy; to exhibit its cathedrals as curious memorials of a bygone superstition, and, abandoning all thoughts of the next world, to set itself to make the best it can of this.—*John Ruskin.*

REQUIEM.

Under the wide and starry sky,
Dig the grave and let me lie.
Glad did I live and gladly die,
And I laid me down with a will.

This be the verse you grave for me:
Here he lies where he longed to be;
Home is the sailor, home from the sea,
And the hunter home from the hill.

—R. L. Stevenson.

Let us build altars to the Beautiful Necessity. If we thought men were free in the sense that, in a single exception one fantastical will could prevail over the law of things, it were all one as if a child's hand could pull down the sun. If, in the least particular, one could derange the order of nature,—who would accept the gift of life?—*Emerson.*

"Is this man one of us, or is he a stranger?" This is what narrow-minded men say. To those of liberal disposition the whole earth is but one family.—*The Hitopadesa.*

Correspondence.

"NATURE'S INSURGENT SON."

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I have to thank Mr. J. T. Lloyd for his further remarks dealing with man and his relation to Nature. When I said in my letter—published in the *Freethinker* of May 26—that "I hope we will rise above the law of Natural Selection," I was not referring to any particular aspect of the subject. Mr. Lloyd remarks that "I am confident we are not to infer that he (Mr. Reid) is in favor of the survival of the unfit." This involves some rather complex considerations, including a definition of the word "unfit" as applied to the human species. A man may be unfit for some purposes, but, in a sense, fit for others. The "survival of the fittest" may mean, and frequently does mean, the survival of the cunningest or the imposter, religious or otherwise. A paper like the *Freethinker*, for instance, might easily be snuffed out if it were not for the indomitable courage of its indefatigable editor and the assistance rendered by his able colleagues. Philosophic writing is not the easiest of writing. In this country, many people consider philosophic speculation a species of lunacy. They prefer to purchase the religious publications for which Lord Northcliffe (formerly Alfred Harmsworth), the proprietor of the *Daily Mail*, is responsible, which are a disgrace to journalism and to civilisation. Are we to infer from that that the *Freethinker* does not deserve to survive? Some people have an idea that it is a gutter paper, and should be extinguished. In reality, it is one of the cleanest papers published. Its able editor is probably as proud of it as the proprietor of the *Daily Mail* is of his money-bags. The editor of the *Daily Mail* (which, to be fair, is remarkable from an organising point of view) has recognised that the *Freethinker* is not a paper to be ignored, despite the fact that it is never directly referred to. This may seem a digression. Who is to define the word "unfit"? Is it to be a question of popularity? Is it to be a question of profit? Is the successful money-grabber to reign supreme? Are men like the Bishop of London, with his £10,000 a year, to be considered the essence of fitness? Are ignorant kings to control human thought? Is the champion cricketer or footballer, whose exploits may appeal to the crowd, to be regarded as the model of perfection?

Is the unscrupulous multi-millionaire to be the model for humanity to imitate? Is Napoleon, who seems to be Lord Rosebery's ideal, to be regarded as a human god? Some people would call him a bloodthirsty beast. Is unscrupulousness to be defended in high places? Lord Rosebery seems to think so. If it is right in a big man, why not for all? Is a doctor of divinity to be regarded as the highest type of man? Is a headmaster who talks like a curate to be regarded as the embodiment of culture? This seems to be the age of the successful tradesman and the effete politician. No doubt the former is "fit" enough, but is the successful tradesman necessarily a broad-minded politician? What is to be our definition of fitness? Is our working code to be "Each man for himself and the Devil take the hindmost"? People who are more or less commercial failures are frequently more interesting than the successful man.

Mr. Lloyd objects to the word "control." What does "obedience to Nature" mean? In my letter, when I said "man may defy nature," I did not infer that he was to do anything injurious to himself. But "obedience to Nature" may be injurious. "Is it obedience to Nature" for poor people to have more children than they can afford to keep? The sensualist may think that he is obeying Nature. Genius is frequently erratic. Byron, Burns, and Shelley, for instance, did things which the normal mind would hesitate to do, though people who know nothing about pathology should leave the consideration of such types alone. Poor Shelley! Some aristocratic people would make a fuss of him now. Some of them did not think much of him when he was alive.

Mr. Lloyd is an optimist, and for leadership optimism is desirable; but it is the business of the sociologist to come to close quarters with unpleasant facts. Lecky, who knew as much about morality as most men, wrote "that vice has often proved an emancipator of the mind is one of the most humiliating, but also one of the most unquestionable facts in history." That is not a pleasant thing to have to admit. The sinner may be regarded as a social outcast, but we want definitions of sin. When a man who I have good reason to believe is a Freethinker, can make a fortune from religious newspapers propagating lies and legends as though they were facts, and at the same time derive thousands from fraudulent advertisements, and another man receive an annual fortune for bolstering up a mediæval system, why should the starving man be imprisoned for stealing a loaf? Who is the bigger criminal? Who is the fit or the unfit?

J. A. REID.

Acid Drops.

"Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you," said Jesus Christ; and he added, "Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven." That sort of thing was all right, of course, down in Judæa, but it won't do in China. Christian missionaries in that country don't want to be persecuted, and are in no sort of hurry to get their "reward in heaven." They much prefer a decent salary paid regularly from London. That is why such a fuss has been made about the "outrage" on the Rev. S. Pollard, a Bible Christian missionary, who was "badly beaten" by a mob in a market town in the Miao country, north-west of Chao Tong. There were fifty or sixty heathen Chinese who had a go at him, and they left him on the ground unable to move. You would suppose, after all that ill-treatment, that he was pretty well dead and done for. He was conveyed to the hospital on a stretcher, but it was found that no bones were broken. Serious internal injuries were feared, but the fear proved groundless. All that he really suffered, therefore, was some bruises. Several ring-leaders of the mob, however, are in custody, and we daresay they will experience the full force of Christian charity before the missionaries have done with them.

This terrible outrage has been reported at considerable length in the English papers, and an official report has been issued from the missionary office in London. We hope it won't lead to a war, or anything like that, but missionaries (and their friends) are tetchy cattle.

The Grand Old Showman of the Salvation Army is coming home from the conquest of Japan, and they are going to give him a royal welcome at the Albert Hall on Thursday, June 27. At least they are arranging for it, and it is to be hoped that "Providence" will not spoil the happy function. Albert Hall, we read, is to be transformed into a Japanese Wonderland; the arena will be turned into a typical Japanese street scene on a large scale; and the audience will be supplied with banners and flags, and invited to take part in the color exercises. In the middle of all the display will be the old blood-and-fire Mikado. And this sort of thing—in the land of Shakespeare and Darwin—is a bit of the business of "saving the world."

There is a Paris City Mission. It has just held its annual meeting in London. Its object is to make the French people Protestants. It has been at work (that's what they call it) for seventy-four years, but it hasn't made much headway yet. Still, it lives in hopes, and Lord Kinnaid says that the prospect is improving. All they want is more money. Of course!

The newspapers gravely report that Mr. George Grossmith, junior, has joined the Catholic Church. What does it matter to anybody?

Lord Rosebery, in his recent address at Oxford, said that Cecil Rhodes had a strong idea of posthumous fame. He might have added that this was the only "posthumous" thing that Rhodes believed in. He was an unbeliever. Mr. Stead called him an Agnostic.

The Methodist New Connexion Conference at Huddersfield passed a resolution aimed indirectly at the "New Theology"—setting forth that it "declared its adherence to the evangelical faith which it believes to be cherished amongst us with unabated affection." Soon afterwards, the Conference suspended the session to attend a midday sermon in the Town Hall by the Rev. R. J. Campbell.

Even a Primitive Methodist Conference has its humors. The Mayor of Leicester (Alderman Sir Edward Wood, J.P.) entertained the delegates and representatives to luncheon in the Mayor's rooms, Museum Buildings. In proposing the toast, "To the Primitive Methodist Church," he said it was impossible to estimate what the nation owed to this denomination—which is very likely true. In replying to the toast, the President of the Conference said that the Primitive Methodist Church was delighted to associate itself with the Baptist Church—and "they were willing to marshal their forces under the banner of Dr. Clifford, whom they regarded as their Joshua, and to whom they confidently looked to lead them into the Promised Land." We suppose leading them into the Promised Land means getting their religion established at the State's expense in the elementary schools. Well now, as one prophesy is as good as another, we venture to predict that Dr. Clifford will never lead them over Jordan. He is more likely to drown them in it.

Dr. Clifford used to be the "Cromwell" of the Passive Resisters. He is now the Nonconformist "Joshua." The next move will be to acclaim him as "Holy Moses." But we are afraid that General Booth looks the part a great deal better than Dr. Clifford could. He has the long beard—and the nose!

When the Primitive Methodists got back from luncheon, they had a bit of a row over "immortality." Some of them strongly objected to the views on that subject expressed by the Rev. J. D. Thompson, the previous evening, in his Hartley Lecture. They said that it might be the "New Theology," but it wasn't the Old Methodism. Evidently this Church is infected like all the others with the new spirit of disintegration. The Churches are breaking up from within.

Naturally, the Primitive Methodist Conference had to deal with the Education Question. A resolution was proposed expressing profound dissatisfaction with the apparent inactivity, indifference, and neglect of the Government to do justice to the Nonconformists. This resolution was supported by the Rev. A. T. Guttery, who declared that, at bottom, the education agitation was a conflict between Romanism and Protestantism. Well, there is *some* truth in that declaration. It is a religious squabble, anyway; and that's all there is in it. All the rest that is said on both sides is *blague*.

Rev. J. T. Scruby, who seconded this resolution, remarked that the only logical solution of the education problem was secular teaching, and it was the duty of the Christian Churches to provide the religious teaching. Subsequently, an addendum to the resolution was proposed by Mr. Joseph Longstaffe, of Newcastle-on-Tyne, but it was lost, and the resolution was then adopted unanimously. This means, of course, that it is *not* the duty of the Christian Churches to provide the religious teaching. The State must do that, and prepare the children for the men of God to operate upon afterwards. In some grill-rooms they have chops and steaks partly cooked, in readiness to be finished off quickly according to customers' tastes. Nonconformists want something like this in the State schools. The State must half cook the children, as it were, so that a Nonconformist man of God may have the same chance as an Anglican man of God, when they have the children served up for clerical consumption. An underdone piece of meat may be cooked better, but an overcooked piece cannot be cooked back to "underdone." See?

These Christians will *not* obey Christ. He said, "Give to every one that asketh." But the Rev. C. Harrison, vicar of Selston, got into trouble by refusing to give anything to two men who came to the vicarage begging. Instead of giving them something, he stated his opinion of them, which led to a row. One of the men was afterwards arrested, charged with begging, and sentenced to fourteen days' hard labor. Which is an awful way off the Sermon on the Mount.

The Church of the Sacred Heart, the largest in Ottawa, has been destroyed by fire. God's Houses burn like other buildings. "One thing befalleth them, yea, they have all one"—insurance policy.

Religious people *are* funny. At a final meeting of the Convention of the Welsh Free Church Councils at Aberystwyth, the Rev. T. Nightingale said that—"Protestantism stood on three pillars—the right of man to think for himself in matters religious, the open road to the heart of the eternal, and the Bible as the great guide in matters of faith and human conduct." Of course, the first and third pillars are mutually destructive. The Protestant, with his Bible guide, no more thinks for himself than the Catholic, with his Church guide. All that is left, therefore, is the open road to the heart of the eternal—which suggests a way to the cemetery, or perhaps a pedestrian excursion in the Gobi desert.

Religion is the source of all good, they tell us, but history tells a different story. All over the world it has been connected with the dark and brutal side of human nature; and it often keeps alive revolting practices which would otherwise have died out and been forgotten. Here is a case pointed out by Mr. Joseph Collinson, of the Humanitarian League, in a letter to Mr. John Morley:—

"In many Indian villages the paraih jujari (priest), after the head of the victim has been cut off, sucks the blood from the neck of the carcass, and during the night of the sacrifice will suck the blood of as many as a hundred sheep, or, as frequently happens, one of the priests, who is painted to represent a leopard, lies at the sheep like a wild beast, seizes it by the throat with his teeth, and kills it by biting through the jugular vein. The burying of a sow up to the neck while

a number of oxen are compelled to walk over the head of the victim, which is thus slowly trampled to death, is another atrocity. In the Telugu country, a more cruel custom prevails. It is common, at the end of a sacrifice, to bring a car fitted with four, five, or more pointed stakes in front of the village deity. Pigs, lambs, and fowls are impaled alive upon the stakes, and the vehicle is dragged in procession to the boundary of the village. The unhappy victims die in agonies on the way, and are taken off the stakes when the car reaches its destination."

Mr. Morley can throw Hindu "agitators" (who have committed no crime) into prison for reasons of State. Will he do anything to stop these religious brutalities? We shall see.

The Wesleyan Methodist Church's "Twentieth Century Fund" of a million guineas has produced a curious, though not surprising, result. "An unprecedentedly large number of young ministers are coming up for ordination at the ensuing Conference, when it meets in London." The jam has attracted the flies.

It is proposed to cut up the Arch-diocese of York, and create two fresh dioceses with Sheffield and Hull as their respective centres. This will require at least £100,000. There are people who want bread to eat, both in Sheffield and in Hull; but what does that matter? The money will be found for this "spiritual" luxury—and two more right reverend Fathers-in-God will walk to heaven in gaiters.

Christian Churches smell a common danger. They are closing up their ranks. The Presbyterian General Assembly at Montreal has carried a resolution, by 137 votes to 11, in favor of the union of the Presbyterian, Methodist, and Congregational Churches.

The Socialist Sunday-schools in London are done for—as we expected. The County Council shut them up by a majority of 66 to 40. The "Moderate" leader, who brought the matter forward as urgent, said that the "Marseillaise" was sung; worse still, "England Arise" was sung; and, worst of all, there was a song about "there being no Savior from Heaven." Well, there isn't. If there is, let Mr. Robinson produce him. We should all be glad to make his acquaintance.

A British soldier in South Africa posted a letter to his mother in February, 1900, informing her that he had lost his left leg at Ladysmith. On Tuesday, June 11, 1907, that letter was delivered at Mitcham. The crippled soldier opened the door and took it in himself. Good old Post Office!

The Bishop of Exeter is declaring the benefice of Luffincott void. The Rectory, though furnished, has been unoccupied for several years. According to report, the present rector left it on seeing the ghost of his predecessor. Since then, the place has been considered "haunted." But the ghost seems to be wonderfully retiring. Five officers from Plymouth spent a night there, hoping to interview it, but it did not put in an appearance. Neither have the Spiritualists and Theosophists been any luckier. Perhaps the ghost has shot the moon.

We should like to get hold of a nice commodious haunted house, eligibly situated, rent free. The owner wouldn't derive much profit from our occupation. That must be admitted. But he would lose nothing, and that is a consideration—for we should keep the place warm as a going concern. Are there any offers?

A correspondent writes to tell us that a Jewish mother, who visited a Soho school one day last week to apologise for the absence of her little girl through illness, brought a medicine bottle with her to prove the truth of her statement. Attached to the bottle were two labels in English— which the woman, of course, could not understand. The labels read:

Society for the Propagation of the Gospel among the Jews.
One teaspoonful to be taken four times a day.

—Morning Leader.

"Religion and Disease" was a headline in a recent *Freethinker*, and a correspondent asks "What's the difference?"

Father Bernard Vaughan still preaches to fashionable congregations against fashionable sins. They look upon him as a first-rate entertainer.

One thing that Father Vaughan said in a recent sermon was delightfully ingenuous. He declared that he cared more for what Peter, James, and John thought of Christ than for

what Mr. Campbell thought. Yes, but he knows what Mr. Campbell thinks; and how does he know what Peter, James, and John thought? How does he know that there were any Peter, James, and John at all? No doubt he would point triumphantly to the New Testament—and that is where the delightful ingenuousness comes in. Father Vaughan is evidently not up in Biblical criticism. His knowledge is limited. He preaches from his head—as the nigger made his wooden doll.

"Onlooker," in the *Islington Gazette*, ironically sympathises with a correspondent who wants to see the "infidel" lectures in Finsbury Park put down. Unfortunately, he says, the law doesn't permit you to burn the "infidels" now, and imprisoning them for "blasphemy" doesn't seem to answer, as it was tried on the *Freethinker*, and "the paper never missed an issue since the editor's arrest." The only thing "Onlooker" can suggest is that those who don't like "infidel" lectures shouldn't go to hear them. He thinks that would be the most effective protection.

Announcing the Bishop of London's open-air address in Finsbury Park, the *Daily News* said that he would be sure to draw a great audience of "outsiders," for he was "an 'old hand' at these open-air gatherings since his Bethnal Green days, when he used to address the Secularists in Victoria Park." The scribe who wrote that is a fictionist. The Bishop of London never "used" to address the Secularists in Victoria Park. When he spoke there he addressed his own orthodox audience. The Secularists have always held their own meetings.

We believe it was Haydon, the painter, who was told by a friend that the Prince Regent, afterwards George IV., had been speaking of him in complimentary language. Haydon, who was "advanced" in thought and politics, said that he had no knowledge of the Prince. His friend said, "No? Why, he spoke as though he knew you well." "Ah," said Haydon, "that's only his brag." If the Bishop of London says that he used to address the Secularists in Victoria Park—that's his brag.

"In the opinion of many who are intimate with the facts of the case," the *Christian World* says, "the position of religious affairs in Wales is at the present time critical. The Churches are feeling the inevitable reaction after the revival, and, unless some decisive action is taken, competent critics allege that there will be a tremendous falling away amongst the newly-converted." This is what we always predicted.

The Admiralty has been dealing with the spirituous and spiritual interests of the handy-men. Those who don't drink rum are to be allowed a penny a day henceforth as "grog-money," and ten new cruisers are to have organs for use at religious services. Rum and religion went together in Byron's days, and they seem to have a certain connection still.

The London press acted disgracefully in respect to the Ferrer case; but this, we regret to say, is perfectly natural, for nearly all the newspapers belong to the Church-and-Tory party or the Chapel-and-Liberal party—and to expect justice to Freethinkers from such papers is like expecting benevolence from sharks to shipwrecked sailors. Last week's *Justice* contained an admirable letter on the Ferrer case from the brilliant pen of Mr. R. B. Cunninghame Graham. Mr. Graham said that he had sent it to "the two chief Liberal papers," and both had refused it insertion. Had it been one of his fascinating prose-sketches they would have jumped at it, and smothered him with praise to the bargain. But when he pleads for fair-play to a Freethinker, they have no room for it. Very well. We shall all remember these things.

The Rector of Holsworthy, Devon, won the first prize at the Holsworthy Agricultural Show, for guessing the correct weight of a fat bullock. But was it fair to the other competitors? The reverend gentleman is a professional in the guessing business.

My heart leaps up when I behold

A rainbow in the sky;

So was it when my life began;

So is it now I am a man;

So be it when I shall grow old,

Or let me die!

The Child is father of the Man;

And I could wish my days to be

Bound each to each by natural piety.

—Wordsworth.

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

(Suspended during June, July, and August).

To Correspondents.

- A. KELLER.—It is impossible to tell you the actual income of the Church of England, because the clergy have always resisted every attempt at accurate investigation. Nothing but a Parliamentary Commission, with full legal powers, will ever get at the real facts. Meanwhile, there are various estimates (including Sir Theodore Martin's, made for the Liberation Society), ranging from five to ten millions a year. The late Mr. Gladstone reckoned the capitalised value of the Church revenues to be £200,000,000.
- M.—Glad you thought our article on "The Spanish Baby" "immense." It was translated into some of the continental newspapers. We don't consider the cutting you enclose worth troubling about. The writer's views on the subject of religion are not of the slightest importance to anyone but himself.
- J. RUSHTON.—We are still prepared to send a gratuitous copy of the *Freethinker*, post-free, for six consecutive weeks, to the address of any person likely to become a subscriber if the paper were introduced to him in that way. Thanks.
- G. SCOTT writes: "I am glad to note of late your remarks regarding the improved circulation of the *Freethinker*. I am satisfied if newsagents placed it on the same footing as other papers it would be eagerly bought."
- Mac (Edinburgh).—Thanks.
- W. S. SOUTHGATE.—No doubt Ferrer's acquittal was really secured by the protests against his infamous ill-treatment made throughout the civilised world. International Freethought has won this victory. You do right to say "Do not let us forget who were the persecutors." But we should disgrace our own principles if we ever retaliated. We must act more wisely and nobly than those we condemn. With regard to the London press generally, it has been "rotten" on the Ferrer case.
- J. TULLIN.—Contents of your letter noted. Thanks.
- A. R.—Pleased to hear you have read the *Freethinker* for some time and "appreciate it very much." A lot of capital would be required to reduce the price of this journal and wait for a trebled circulation to cover the cost. Besides, we don't write for the mob, never did, and never shall. We write for thoughtful people, and these are not as numerous as is sometimes imagined. We used to issue a weekly contents-sheet, but it was rarely displayed, and we cut off the expense. We issue a standing *Freethinker* bill, if you could show one—double crown.
- J. BROUGH.—Thanks for cuttings and letter.
- C. H. WREN.—Glad you "like the *Freethinker* immensely."
- R. W.—Pleased to hear you have got us some new subscribers. The ways of some wholesale agents are, as you say, peculiar—Wymans amongst them.
- W. P. BALL.—Much obliged for cuttings.
- H. CHEETHAM.—We have read your letter with much interest. We quite understand that many poor workers never have a farthing to give to any cause however precious, which is one of the worst miseries of their situation. Thanks for your good wishes. You will find what you enquire about in our pamphlet, *What Is Agnosticism?*
- THE COHEN "SALVATION ARMY" TRACT FUND.—W. Robertson, 5s.
- ARTHUR BROOKE.—No man's place is ever filled again, for the simple reason that nature never makes two men alike. Glad to have your high opinion, without any disparagement to Bradlaugh. He was the greatest man we ever knew.
- W. H. SQUIRES.—We refer you to our pamphlet, *What Is Agnosticism?* which contains our views on Atheism.
- T. D.—Thanks for the Mackenzie book, which looks likely to prove interesting.
- G. LUNN (Liverpool) says: "I don't think you know the full extent of appreciation of the *Freethinker* and your other writings. You know the difficulties, of course, but the young are being impressed gradually and surely."
- G. ROLEFFS.—We quite believe that you'd do what you say if you had Carnegie's money. But the "philanthropists" generally give in showy ways; they buy advertisements for themselves, and every donation must be a good investment.
- A. T. BATES.—To be "a fearless opponent of supernaturalism," as you call us, is to be something more than a coward and a self-seeker. Whatever else we may have been, or not been, we have always been a loyal soldier of Freethought, and that will be enough for our epitaph.
- 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.
- ORDERS for literature should be sent to the Freethought Publishing Company, Limited, 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., and not to the Editor.
- PERSONS remitting for literature by stamps are specially requested to send halfpenny stamps.
- THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months, 2s. 8d.

Sugar Plums.

We are glad to report that the *Freethinker* which, like other papers, begins to drop a little in circulation as the summer (pardon the joke, this year) advances, is now breaking the rule and continuing to go forward. It must not be imagined, however, that it progresses by leaps and bounds; it progresses slowly but steadily, and, even if the present rate be maintained, a considerable time must elapse before our own modest salary can be secured—to say nothing of ordering a swell motor-car like "New Theology" Campbell's. We may, therefore, ask our friends to push the *Freethinker* along all they can this summer. Let them put bashfulness aside, start business as missionaries, and introduce this journal to others on every possible occasion.

A new subscriber, remitting for six months, writes as follows:—"I take this opportunity of thanking you for the specimen copies of the *Freethinker* you have been good enough to send me for the last five or six weeks. I am delighted with the boldness you display in attacking the great enemy of liberty of thought and human advancement." This should encourage the "saints" everywhere to send us along fresh names and addresses.

Ferrer has been acquitted. Not even the carefully-arranged Court that tried him could possibly find him guilty. There was not one particle of evidence against him. No doubt this was perfectly well known to the Spanish authorities at the time of his arrest. They thought it an excellent opportunity to crush the obnoxious Secular Educationist. For twelve months they played their villainous game, under clerical instigation, but happily they have lost in the end. Ferrer is once more a free man—thanks to the loud protests raised on his behalf in every civilised country. International public opinion has once more proved its power. It saved Maxim Gorke, and now it has saved Ferrer. We congratulate him on his noble bearing in the hour of peril.

Maxim Gorke took part in the international symposium on religion in the *Mercure de France*. The question was whether we are "assisting" at a dissolution or an evolution of religious thought and feeling. "If you mean by the religious idea the idea of God," Gorke said, "that is, a supernatural being ruling the destinies of the universe and of men, that idea, I believe, is dying gradually, and ought to die. Religion separates men.....Atheism, so far as it is the negation of the belief in the existence of a personal God, seems to me desirable, because it delivers humanity from a dangerous error."

The annual meeting of the South Shields friends took place last Sunday. The financial statement, with a small balance in hand, was accepted as satisfactory. The officials (Messrs. J. Hannan, chairman; R. Chapman, 30 Madras-street, Sunnyside, secretary; J. Fothergill, treasurer, and others) were re-elected. The announcement from the London Conference delegates that Mr. Foote had promised, personally, to visit the borough early in the autumn was highly appreciated.

La Pensée, the weekly journal of the Belgian Federation of Freethought Societies, is very capably and brightly edited by Eugène Hins, who seems to have an excellent knowledge of English. Sometimes he does us the honor of translating one of our articles for his readers. Frequently he translates some of our "Acid Drops." When we have written them in English, and read them in proof, they are dead and done with, as far as we are concerned; we feel no sort of interest in them; but when we read them in our Belgian comrade's vivid French they seem to us new again, and we are able to get into something like the position of our own readers.

A man may enjoy his own joke when he cracks it. It is as new to him as to anyone else. But he can't enjoy it twice—except in the novelty of a translation. A warm joke is all right, but a cold joke is worse than cold mutton.

The New York *Truthseeker* comes up smiling every week, and we hope its prosperity equals its cheerfulness. Mr. Macdonald is a "sticker." He is not a Scotchman for nothing. It was a good thing for American Freethought that the *Truthseeker* fell into his hands after the death of Mr. Bennett. But where is brother George? We miss his contributions—even though the last number to hand reproduces our own article on "The Spanish Baby."

Mr. Cohen pays his customary visit to Newcastle to-day, when he lectures on the Town Moor, on the occasion locally

known as "Race Sunday." At 11 o'clock he will speak near the entrance to the Moor from the North road, and at 7, from a platform near the Military Sports Stand. Should the weather be very unfavorable, an evening meeting at 7.30 p.m. will be held in the Cordwainers' Hall, Nelson-street.

During the recent Primitive Methodist Conference at Leicester, Mr. F. J. Gould had a hundred bills posted on the walls. The bill was so excellent that we reproduce it in its entirety—being sure that most of our readers will be glad to see it, and hoping that it produced some good effect (though that, perhaps, is sanguine) on those to whom it was addressed:—

**"TO PRIMITIVE METHODISTS NOW ASSEMBLED
IN LEICESTER.**

THE EDUCATION DIFFICULTY.

You think, and I think, it is not just to support Church methods of teaching out of the rates.

You think, and I think, it is not just to support Roman Catholic methods of teaching out of the rates.

I think, and I hope you think, it is not just to support Nonconformist methods of teaching out of the rates, that is, the method of 'Bible-reading' (otherwise 'Unsectarian' teaching, or 'Undenominational' instruction) which is specially approved by Nonconformists.

Therefore, support the Secular Solution.

F. J. GOULD

(Member of the Leicester Education Committee.)
Secular Hall, Leicester, June, 1907."

Those who may still wish to respond to Mr. J. W. de Caux's letter, which appeared in our last issue, should note that his address is 92 St. Peter's-road, Great Yarmouth, and that Mr. Foote's address is 2 Newcastle-street, London, E.C. The matter will not be mentioned again in these columns.

We may as well print a few more extracts from letters from subscribers, by way of balancing the detraction which always attends a man in Mr. Foote's position.

"F. S.," a veteran and generous subscriber to Freethought objects, says:—

"I have much pleasure in sending cheque. I hope a good round sum may be subscribed this time—which I am sure you richly deserve."

M. Barnard says:—

"You present the most profound subjects in such a simple, clear manner, that they are readily understood. To read the *Freethinker* is a thorough education. There is no man I respect for courage and ability as much as you."

W. Dodd "has been an admirer of Mr. Foote for more than twenty years." Miss Alice Baker, daughter of the ever-remembered Daniel Baker, of Birmingham, sends "best wishes," J. D. Stones says:—

"Considering the distinguished services rendered by Mr. Foote to the Freethought party so long and so ably, I trust the amount will be substantial, for he deserves it."

J. Brough says:—

"I look on this as part payment of the debt I owe for many hours' instructive and humorous reading."

Elizabeth Lechmere says:—

"It gives me great pleasure to subscribe to Mr. Foote's fund. I only wish I could send ten pounds instead of ten shillings."

A. W. B. Shaw, an Irish subscriber, says:—

"I deeply regret I cannot send a much larger amount. If ever a man deserved a good holiday, with perfect freedom from all worry, it is Mr. Foote."

Sarah Burgon says:—

"In sending one pound I wish it were twenty. I also endorse all the good things that are said of Mr. Foote."

J. H. Gartrell says:—

"I take several papers, but the *Freethinker*, with its fearless reasoning, is the most appreciated."

J. Henson says:—

"May you lead the cause of Freethought for many years to come as fearlessly as you have done in the past."

A. J. Fincken says:—

"I am pleased that many of your admirers are not afraid to sing your praises. Your enemies haven't spared their denunciations."

G. F. H. McCluskey says:—

"Our leader's task is no mean one, and that he performs it with so much energy and ability, not to say freshness, after so many years, in face of such tremendous obstacles, speaks eloquently of his determination, courage, and strength of principle."

W. Tipper says:—

"It is a mystery to me—besides the spirit he has—how his brains keep in such good working order."

These are samples from bulk.

Bernard Shaw in the Pulpit.—III.

XIII.

MR. ALBERT DAWSON, who dealt with Mr. Shaw's lecture in the *Christian Commonwealth*, and heard it delivered, assures us that he is "a genuinely religious man," and that he was in dead earnest from beginning to end. "He expended a good deal of nervous force," Mr. Dawson says, "literally, delivering his soul, in the course of the evening, and when he sat down he appeared to be white and exhausted." But he seems to have regained some of the old levity during question-time. He had said that God ought to go on producing things superior to himself, and he was asked: "Can any one being create another being higher than itself? Can the effect be greater than the cause? Can water rise above its own level?" Mr. Shaw replied with what Mr. Dawson describes as "a brilliant retort" and "dazzling repartee"—though it was not "in any sense an answer." "Yes," Mr. Shaw said, "my father was nothing like so clever a man as I am!" And the audience laughed. But it was not Mr. Shaw the serious reformer, speaking, neither was it Mr. Shaw the natural wit—it was Mr. Shaw the amateur buffoon. Probably he saw the trap, and slipped round it—which rather discounts his dead-earnestness; but if he meant what he said, or half meant it, as an answer to the question, he is not worth listening to against Darwin, and as little worth listening to on behalf of God.

XIV.

Mr. Shaw began by telling the audience an anecdote about himself. Of course! It was to show his absent-mindedness—so natural in such a stupendous thinker. "I have a great deal to think about," he said, "including the New Theology." His mind is busy about so many things, and God is one of them; and we hope the Deity is properly grateful for being one of Mr. Shaw's intellectual interests.

The prophet of the "New Theology" number two—or is it number one?—went on to say that it was "very important we should have a religion of some kind." He used religion and theology as interchangeable terms. "By theology," he said, "I really do mean the science of Godhead." Then he remarked that it was advisable to have the right kind of God. The God who sent a couple of bears out of a wood to eat up the children who laughed at Elisha's bald head, was a monster. Shelley was right in calling such a God an Almighty Fiend. Mr. Shaw had once taken out his watch and challenged that God to strike him dead in five minutes. This, he said, was legitimate and logical—quite forgetting that the God so challenged, if he existed, might prefer his own time and opportunity for giving his challenger beans. "It was the preaching of that kind of tribal god," he said, "that accounted for Charles Bradlaugh calling himself an Atheist." Which shows that he is as competent to deal with Bradlaugh as he is with Darwin. Bradlaugh was not simply an Atheist to the God of the bear story, or to the God of the Old Testament generally, or even to the God of the New Testament; he was an Atheist on philosophical grounds, calling himself a Monist, and largely resting on the metaphysics of Spinoza; and if Mr. Shaw does not know this, or disputes it, we refer him to Bradlaugh's *Plea for Atheism*, and other writings of his which are still extant. Mr. Shaw wants to requisition Bradlaugh. He has also another object; he wants to minimise his own former heterodoxy. "Disbelieving with my whole soul," he said, "in such a being, I always did what Charles Bradlaugh did—made myself intelligible to those people who worship such a monster by saying that I was an atheist; and in that sense I am still an atheist, as it seems to me every humane person must be." This again sounds well, but it is all finessing. Mr. Shaw was not simply a relative Atheist of that kind; or, if he was, he misled his

hearers. He was an Atheist *sans phrase*—a pure and simple Atheist—an Atheist to all the gods that had ever been defined or imagined. Why does he seek to deny it now?

XV.

The answer to that question is not very pleasant. Mr. Shaw's marriage did for him what his clever brain could not do—it made him respectable. English society, and the English press, respect no man who has not, directly or indirectly, the command of money. From the moment of his marriage, Mr. Shaw has been stepping forward briskly to his present position. He is no longer a needy journalist; instead of constantly working for bread and cheese, he can take his time and write plays that bring him in a big income. This gives him a further command of money, and so his importance increases. He has become a sort of society pet, the newspapers flatter him and reckon him good copy, they provide him with a platform and a sounding-board, and he delivers himself on all questions all day long. He has grown too fond of listening to his own voice, though he tries to hide the fondness by smart and flippant egotisms. And all these causes together are producing a Mr. Shaw who, while retaining and exercising his old cynical wit, is nevertheless approximating substantially to the orthodox standards. The revolutionist is tamed and socialised. Even the West-end ladies have lost all dread of his teeth and claws. They enjoy the sight of them, as they enjoy the antics of a kitten, for they know he will not bite or scratch. Society has captured him. That is the whole case in a nutshell. He will understand us, if those who have captured him cannot, when we say that he is less a Chamfort than a Rivarol. And his advocacy of theology as a good thing, in spite of the fact that he once saw it as a false thing, is just a part of the historic parallel.

XVI.

We have said that Mr. Shaw used to be more of an Atheist than he now represents, and perhaps fancies, he has been. In the *Quintessence of Ibsenism* (1891) he sneered at "man's duty to God, with the priest as assessor." He said that man at first "personifies all that he abstractly fears as God" and afterwards "personifies what he loves as God." In each case, a duty to God was recognised; but, finally, man understands his duty to himself, and then the tyranny of duty is broken; for "now the man is God himself, and he, self-satisfied at last, ceases to be selfish." *Man is God himself!* If that is not Atheism, the word has no meaning. But there is a more explicit declaration on the following page:—

"God was once the most sacred of our conceptions; and he had to be denied. Then Reason became the Infallible Pope, only to be deposed in turn. Is Duty more sacred than God or Reason?"

Surely that is stark Atheism. And even if the *Quintessence of Ibsenism* has long been out of print, it is idle for Mr. Shaw to profess unacquaintance with the position he held when he wrote it.

We go further than this. We say that Mr. Shaw was an Atheist when he wrote *Man and Superman*. Listen to this from the "Revolutionist's Handbook":—

"If there were no God, said the eighteenth century Deist, it would be necessary to invent Him. Now this eighteenth century god was *deus ex machina*, the god who helped those who could not help themselves; the god of the lazy and incapable. The nineteenth century decided that there is indeed no such god; and now Man must take in hand all the work that he used to shirk with an idle prayer. He must, in effect, change himself into the political Providence which he formerly conceived as god; and such change is not only possible, but the only sort of change that is real."

Listen again to this:—

"Man's political capacity and magnanimity are clearly beaten by the vastness and complexity of the problems forced on him. And it is at this anxious moment that he finds, when he looks upward for a mightier mind to help him, that the heavens are empty."

Is not that clear enough? *The heavens are empty!* Could any Atheist in the world say more?

If the author of *Man and Superman* disclaims absolute personal responsibility for the "Revolutionist's Handbook"—absurd as the disclaimer would be—he cannot disown responsibility for his "Epistle Dedicatory to Arthur Bingham Walkley." In that really brilliant piece of writing—the finest thing Mr. Shaw ever did—there is the following serious and forthright passage:—

"This is the true joy of life, the being used for a purpose recognised by yourself as a mighty one; the being thoroughly worn out before you are thrown on the scrap heap; the being a force of Nature instead of a feverish, selfish, little clod of ailments and grievances, complaining that the world will not devote itself to making you happy. And also the only real tragedy in life is the being used by personally minded men for purposes which you recognise to be base. All the rest is, at worst, mere misfortune or mortality; this alone is misery, slavery, hell on earth."

Noble in conception and expression, this is poles asunder from the ethics of the book on Ibsen; and its language is not theological or religious, but naturalistic; man's true life consisting in being a force of Nature—not, as Mr. Shaw now says, in being an instrument of God.

XVII.

Just as Mr. Shaw ended with God, so he now begins again with God. He has, apparently, no use for the Bible; some people say that will come in time. He will have nothing to do, as yet, with personal immortality. But he seems to feel much force in the Design Argument, and talks like any country curate about the impossibility of the universe being "the result of blind chance." He appears to approve the fatuous argument that there is "purpose and will in the universe," because men are "conscious themselves of having purpose and will"—as though it were legitimate to argue from the particular to the universal in that fashion. Finally, after some astonishing nonsense about "the necessity for consciousness," which he says the theory of natural selection destroyed, Mr. Shaw makes this declaration of faith:—

"There is, behind the universe, an intelligent and driving force of which we ourselves are a part—a divine spark."

"The object of the whole evolutionary process," we are told, "is to realise God." "In a sense," Mr. Shaw gaily adds, "there is no God as yet achieved, but there is that force at work making God." This is as good as the fifteen puzzle, but the preacher (we mean the lecturer) is perfectly serious. How, then, is this God being achieved? Through us. "That force" is "struggling through us to become an actual organised existence." "That is what we are working to," Mr. Shaw says; and he bids us, when we are asked "Where is God? Who is God?" to stand up and say "I am God, and here is God."

What sublime egotism! What a supreme illustration of the old saying that man's most incurable vice is vanity! Mr. Shaw is helping God into existence, and he calls on his fellow-citizens to lend a hand. Heine ended a superb passage by exclaiming: "Hear ye not the bells resounding? Kneel down. They are bringing the sacraments to a dying god!" Mr. Shaw calls us to a birth and a baptism. It is really touching. It is like the old Bethlehem story again—without the poetry.

XVIII.

Having got his new God safely cradled, Mr. Shaw recollects that there are questioners standing around. How, for instance, are we to believe in Design without believing in a cruel Designer? There is a terrible amount of evil and misery in the world; how is it consistent with the divine benevolence? The explanation is, that God is not omnipotent. He does all the good he can in the circumstances.

"In that way we get rid of the old contradiction, we begin to perceive that the evil of the world is a thing that will finally be evolved out of the world; that it was not brought into the world by malice and cruelty, but by an entirely benevolent Designer that had not yet

discovered how to carry out its benevolent intention. In that way I think we may turn towards the future with greater hope."

This is really perfect—even to the consecrated pulpit twang in the last sentence. Mr. Shaw sees that the character of his Deity is damned by the existing evidence; history up-to-date is dead against his reputation; but the illimitable future remains, and Mr. Shaw saves the character of his Deity with a prophecy. Now a prophecy does not admit of an express contradiction. But there is always one way of answering a prophet, and that is by prophesying the opposite.

XIX.

Mr. Shaw is simply treading a weary old round. There is nothing new in what he says—and it was all answered long before he was born. The theory of the limited power of the Deity was the chief feature of Mill's posthumous Essays on "Nature" and "The Utility of Religion." But it was not new then. It was a speciality of Plato's. God was entirely good, but he was hindered in effecting his benevolent designs by the intractable nature of matter. Yes, said Bentham—and it is wonderful that Mill did not notice it—that is all very well, but how do you know that the truth is not exactly the reverse? Why may not God be absolutely wicked, and only prevented from doing worse mischief by the inherent beneficence of matter? What reply is there to that? And as to evil being finally evolved out of the world, even if it should be so—which is only a dream—the evil that *had* existed would still be a fact. This will only sound odd to unimaginative minds. In a philosophical survey, the facts of existence are independent of time and space. The crushing of a woman's heart, the blighting of a child's life, the ruin of a man's hopes, are not really the worse for being under our eyes, or the better for being removed to other countries or other ages. What will be, will be—the proverb says. Yes, and what has been, has been. There is no escape from that—for gods or men.

XX.

The God that Mr. Shaw preaches is hardly worth discussing. His "evolution" seems to be confined to this little planet, without respect to the rest of the infinite universe—probably because Mr. Shaw happens to live here. Moreover, he is incapable of doing anything for himself. We are his hands and feet, Mr. Shaw says; with our hands he works, with our feet he moves, with our brains he thinks. He is the sleeping partner in the business, but our consolation is that he has taken us into the firm. Mr. Shaw wants this Deity, we gather, in order that he may feel that he is "working for the purpose of the universe," and "working for the good of the whole of society and the whole world," instead of "merely looking after his personal ends." We have no concern with the purpose of the universe; but is it necessary to manufacture a God for the sake of the other objects? Is not Humanity enough? Is there any need to look beyond the world for the good of the world? Was not Mr. Shaw, when an Atheist, as zealous a servant of Humanity as he is now with his "New Theology"? In what way is he improved, elevated, purified, inspired? We hope this pulpit episode will be a brief one in Mr. Shaw's career. But it may be otherwise, and in that case, we should deplore the decadence of a brilliant and trenchant intellect.

G. W. FOOTE.

"Those Confounded Bells."

It is scarcely possible to determine the precise date when bells were first used, but it is certain they are of ancient origin, for we find the word "tintinnabula," which means bells, used by the earliest writers.

The Romans were called to their baths and business by sounding bells. Bible-priests had bells on

their skirts, and Flavius Josephus informs us that the Jews used trumpets for bells.

There is no doubt that bells were useful to announce the time of day before the invention of clocks, which the word "bell" properly signifies. "Clock" is the old German word for bell, and hence the French call a bell *une cloche*.

But what concerns us most is the *abuse* of bells and the superstitious designs of their clanging that—

"When church bells begin to toll,
Lord have mercy on the soul."

There's money in the nonsensical custom, and that is why the churches keep it going. They ring for births, they toll for deaths, clang for weddings, and the Lord knows what—payment.

"Ye passing bell that towles departing sowles" was intended to drive away the Devil, that he might not take possession of the soul of the deceased. For this performance the clergy claimed "iiij pence for a manne, viij pence for a womanne, and for a childe vj pence." But if, as the Protestants assert, the death-knell means a request for prayers, then they are as superstitious as Roman Catholics, whom they charge with obtaining fraudulent prayer taxes for departed souls.

Certainly, "theyr belles ryngyng be folyshe to ease the payne, and neede be mocked at for the deade," said a gentleman "lying sicke abed." "Tell me, Maister Physition, is yonder musicke for my dancing?" We might say that that gentleman, "sicke abed," was a Freethinker.

Bells were also rung for women "laboring of child."

"Make me a straine speake groaning like a bell
That towles until the womanne's well."

Afterwards, "at the berth of a manne-child, 3 bellis shulde be ronge viid., and of a womanne-childe, 2 bellis be rungen vid."—a penny less.

The more modern nuisance of church bells is the hammering noise (which even the Turks do not permit) at festivals. In Spain, to this day, wooden boxes with wooden clappers, in the church spires, keep up an infernal noise during the last three days of the week preceding Easter.

Then there is the tomfoolery of christening church bells in the name of the Father, etc., holy water being sprinkled upon them by the priest, who receives money offerings afterwards. Thus blessed, the bells are endowed with "supernatural powers" to allay storms, purify the air, or to divert thunderbolts.

Vestiges of this baptismal buffoonery may yet be traced in "Tom" of Lincoln, and "Great Paul," London.

These "consecrated" bells are always engraved with names, and often an inscription is added:—

"Men's deaths I tell by doleful knell."

"Lightning and Thunder I break asunder."

"Men's awful rage I do assuage."

"On Sabbath all to Church I call."

To those who are inconvenienced by these "licensed instruments of torture" we proffer deepest sympathy, and are inclined to agree with the tourist whose peace was disturbed by "those confounded church bells," and who wanted to wring the necks of the ringers.

W. A. V.

Japan's Great Moral Code.

On January 25, 1901, a great man died in Japan; one who contributed, perhaps, more than anyone else, to the intellectual and moral moulding of his nation. His name was Yukichi Fukuzawa. He was born at Osaka in 1834—just a year after Bradlaugh and Ingersoll, who were both born in 1833. His parents were Samurai. His father was a devotee of Confucius—the great Secularist of Asia. Fukuzawa saw that Japan would have to be westernised in some respects. To learn English, he had first to learn Dutch; having acquired that language, he taught himself English by the aid of a Dutch-English dictionary. In 1859, he visited the United States as an attendant to the Japanese envoys sent there. On returning home, he set about spreading abroad a knowledge of western civilisation. This he did by means

of books and pamphlets, and by founding the *Jiji Shimpō*, the most influential newspaper in Japan. In 1871, he founded the Keio Gijuku University, which is the largest and most influential private institution in Japan, having nearly two thousand students. Most of the great men who have made the Japan of to-day, passed under his influence. Finally, he resolved to do a great stroke for the ethical life of the people. He drew up a great moral code for them, couched in the simple language of an elevated materialism. The twenty-nine precepts of this remarkable document, present morality without a tincture of religion or an allusion to a future life. The author was a pure Secularist himself, believing in no religion, but being the enemy of none. His Moral Code was given to the Japanese as "a guide to life" in 1900. During the past seven years, it has penetrated to every part of the country, and has exercised an immense influence over the people. We are able to reproduce an English translation of this Moral Code from the pages of the *Open Court*, an excellent monthly magazine, edited by Dr. Paul Carus, and published at Chicago.

"All those who are living in Japan, irrespective of sex or age, must obey the Imperial Court of uninterrupted lineage, for there is none who has not participated in its unbounded benevolence. This is a point about which there is perfect unanimity of opinion throughout the realm. Coming to another question of how the men and women of to-day should behave themselves, I must say that diverse as have been from ancient times codes of morals, it is evident that a code must conform itself to the progress of the times, and that a society like the present, characterised as it is by ever-advancing civilisation, there must be a code specially suited to it. Hence, it follows, that the tenets of personal morals and living must undergo more or less of a change.

1. Everybody must make it his duty to act as a man, and must endeavor to elevate his dignity and to enhance his virtue. Men and women of our fraternity must regard the principles of independence and self-respect as the cardinal tenet of personal morals and living, and by inscribing it deeply on their hearts, must strive to discharge the duties proper to man.

2. He is called a man of independence and self-respect who preserves the independence of both mind and body, and who pays respect to his person in a way calculated to maintain the dignity proper to man.

3. Working with an independent will and subsisting without the help of others, is the essence of the independence of life; hence it follows, that a person of independence and self-respect must be an independent worker besides being his own bread-winner.

4. Taking care of the body and keeping it healthy, is a duty incumbent on us all by reason of the rules that govern human existence; both body and mind must be kept in activity and in health, and anything calculated to impair their health, even in the least degree, must be rigidly avoided.

5. To complete the natural span of life is to discharge a duty incumbent upon man. Therefore, any person who, be the cause what it may, or be the circumstances what they may, deprives himself by violence of his own life, must be said to be guilty of an act inexcusable and cowardly, as well as mean, and entirely opposed to the principles of independence and self-respect.

6. Unless pursued with a daring, active, and indomitable spirit, independence and self-respect cannot be secured; a man must have the courage of progress constantly.

7. A person of independence and self-respect must not depend upon others in disposing of a question relating to his own personal affairs, but he must possess the ability with which to deliberate and decide upon it.

8. The custom of regarding women as the inferior of men is a vicious relic of barbarism. Men and women of any enlightened country must treat and love each other on a basis of equality, so that each may develop his or her own independence or self-respect.

9. Marriage being a most important affair in the life of man, the utmost care must be exercised in selecting a partner. It is the first essential of humanity for man and wife to cohabit till death separates them, and to entertain towards each other feelings of love and respect, in such a way that neither of them shall lose his or her independence and self-respect.

10. Children born of man and wife know no other parents but their own. The affection existing between parents and their children is of the purest kind of affection, and the preliminary of domestic felicity consists in not interfering with the free play of this sentiment.

11. Children are also persons of independence and self-respect, but while in their infancy, their parents must take care of their education. The children, on their part, must, in obedience to the instructions of their parents, diligently attend to their work, to the end that may get well grounded in the knowledge of getting on in society, after they have

grown up into men and women of independence and self-respect.

12. In order to act up to the ideal of independence and self-respect, men and women must continue, even after they have grown up, to attend to their studies, and should not neglect to develop their knowledge and to cultivate their virtue.

13. At first, a single house appears, and then several others gradually cluster round it, and a human community is formed. The foundation of a sound society must, therefore, be said to consist in the independence and self-respect of a single person and a single family.

14. The only way to preserve a social community, consists in respecting, and not violating, even in the least, the rights and the happiness of others, while maintaining, at the same time, one's own rights and one's own share of happiness.

15. It is vulgar custom and unmanly practice, unworthy of civilised people, to entertain enmity towards others and to wreak vengeance upon them. In repairing one's honor and maintaining it, fair means must always be employed.

16. Every person must be faithful to his business, and anybody who neglects his duties of his state in life, irrespective of the relative gravity and importance of such duties, cannot be regarded as a person of independence and self-respect.

17. Every one must behave towards others with candor; for it is by reposing confidence in others that one renders it possible for them to confide in him, while it is only by means of this mutual confidence that the reality of independence and native dignity can be attained.

18. Courtesy and etiquette being important social means for expressing the sense of respect, they should not be ignored even in the least degree; the only caution to be given in this connection that both an excess and a deficiency of courtesy and etiquette should be avoided.

19. It is a philanthropic act which may be regarded as a beautiful virtue of man, to hold the sentiment of sympathy and affection towards others, and so to endeavor not only to alleviate their pains, but also to further their welfare.

20. The sentiment of kindness must not be confined to men alone, and any practice that involves cruelty to animals or any wanton slaughter of them must be guarded against.

21. Culture elevates man's character while it delights his mind, and as, taken in a wide sense, it promotes the peace of society and enhances human happiness, therefore it must be regarded as an essential requisite of man.

22. Whenever a nation exists there is inevitably a government which attends to the business of enacting laws and organising armaments, with the object of giving protection to the men and women of the country and of guarding their persons, property, honor, and freedom. In return for this, the people are under the obligation to undergo military service and to meet the national expenditures.

23. It is a natural consequence, that persons who undergo military service and pay the national expenditure, should enjoy the right of sitting in the national legislature, with the view of supervising the appropriation for the national expenditures. This may also be considered as their duty.

24. The Japanese people of both sexes must ever keep in view their duty of fighting with an enemy even at the risk of their life and property, for the sake of maintaining the independence and dignity of their country.

25. It is the duty of the people to obey the laws of the country. They should go further and should attend to the duty of helping to enforce the enactments, with the object of maintaining order and peace in the community.

26. Many are the nations existing on the earth with different religions, languages, manners, and customs, the people constituting those nations are brethren, and hence no discrimination should be made in dealing with them. It is against the principles of independence and self-respect to bear oneself with arrogance and to look down on people of a different nationality.

27. The people of our generation must fulfil the duty of handing down to posterity, and in an ameliorated form, the national civilisation and welfare which we have inherited from our forefathers.

28. There must be more or less difference in the ability and physical strength of men born into this world. It depends upon the power of education to minimise the number of the incompetent and the weak; for education, by teaching men the principles of independence and self-respect, enables them to find out and to develop the means to put those principles into practice and to act up to them.

29. Men and women of our fraternity must not be contented with inscribing upon their own hearts these moral tenets, but endeavor to diffuse them widely among the people at large, to the end that they may attain the greatest possible happiness—they with all their brethren all over the wide world."

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), 3.30, H. Wishart, "The New Theology a Red Herring."

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N.S.S.: Station-road, 11.30, F. A. Davies. Brockwell Park, 3.15, Debate—Joseph McCabe and Rev. A. J. Waldron—"The Independence of Ethics."

KINGSLAND BRANCH N.S.S.: Ridley-road, 11.30, F. Schaller, "Christianity Opposed to Science."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S.: Parliament Hill, 3.30, F. A. Davies, "The Devil Retired from Business."

WEST HAM BRANCH N.S.S.: Outside Maryland Point Station (G.E.R.), 7, W. J. Ramsey, "What Think Ye of Christ?"

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, Guy Aldred, a Lecture.

COUNTRY.

HETTON-LE-HOLE BRANCH N.S.S. (Miners' Hall): Saturday, June 22, at 7.30, C. Cohen, "The Significance of the New Theology."

OUTDOOR.

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

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