

THE Freethinker

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PRICE TWOPENCE

The love of power in ourselves and the admiration of it in others are both natural to man: the one makes him a tyrant, the other a slave.—WILLIAM HAZLITT.

That Cup.

And let me the canakin clink, clink;
And let me the canakin clink.

—“OTHELLO.”

JESUS had a last supper with his twelve apostles, including Judas; and there was evidently a big dish in the middle of the table, into which each of the thirteen dipped his hand, as the spirit of hunger moved him, and fished out what suited his appetite. There was also bread to the supper—and wine; and both these parts of the repast have given rise to bitter and endless discussion.

Let us take “Matthew’s” account of the bread and wine portion of the menu:—

“26 And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body.

27 And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it:

28 For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.”

This is my body—This is my blood. On these two sentences the Catholic Church bases its doctrine of transubstantiation. When a Catholic takes the holy wafer into his mouth, his Church teaches him that, by an invisible miracle, it has been transformed into the very body of Christ; so that in Catholic countries, as Browning puts it, they “see God made and eaten every day.” Similarly, the eucharistic wine is miraculously transformed into the very blood of Christ; but this holy fluid is too precious to be wasted on laymen, and is entirely monopolised by the priests. Thus the laymen eat Christ’s body, and the priests both eat his body and drink his blood. Protestants, however, refuse to take Christ’s words literally; they say that the bread and wine are *symbolic* of the body and blood of Christ—which is a perfectly foolish attempt to rationalise an ancient superstition.

Considering the poverty of Jesus and his apostles—a poverty so great that the fish trick had to be resorted to in order to raise half-a-crown for the Roman tax-gatherer, and the “Master” was “sold” to his enemies by Cashier Judas for the inclusive price of three-pounds fifteen-shillings—it is probable that the cup in which the wine was handed round to that last-supper party was a cheap, plebeian article. It might have been metal, it might have been horn, it might have been glass; but we may be sure that it was worth extremely little. A Scotch second-hand dealer would want half-a-dozen of them for the proverbial “saxpunce.”

According to the Glastonbury legend, that cup was brought to Britain after the Crucifixion. This is a monstrous absurdity, and the legend was clearly an afterthought; for there were no Christians in Britain then, nor for long ages afterwards. Of course the story of the cup was part of the general story of Christian relics. During the Dark Ages all sorts of impostures were palmed off upon the silly “sheep” of the flock of Christ. Splinters of his cross were

numerous enough to build a ship with, if they had been solid wood; his swaddling clothes were exhibited, with a bottle of his mother’s milk, and the portion of his anatomy amputated at his circumcision. And doubtless the holy cup was as authentic as the holy baby-linen, the holy suckling-mixture, and the holy prepuce.

Will it be believed, then, that the holy cup of the Last Supper has turned up in Protestant England? Such, we are assured, is the fact. A certain Mr. Tudor Pole (significant name!) has got possession of the identical article, which he keeps in a room set apart for it in his house. According to a long report of the affair in the *Daily Express*, the room is draped in white, and the cup “reposes in a casket on the table, and lighted candles are kept in the room.” So that, if it is not the real cup, it ought to be.

Mr. Tudor Pole (oh that name!) found it in the well at Glastonbury, where it was placed ten years ago by Dr. Goodchild, who bought it for £6 in a second-hand shop at Bordigherra in 1885. Dr. Goodchild and Mr. Tudor Pole know each other, but they never had any conversation about that cup. Never! Strange voices told Dr. Goodchild to place it in the Glastonbury well, and Mr. Tudor Pole was informed of its whereabouts in a trance. And this sweet, pretty story is actually engaging the attention of persons like Lord Halifax, Lord Hugh Cecil, the American Ambassador, and the Rev. R. J. Campbell. Of course the great Professor Crookes is in the inquiry—he is never out of any “occult” adventure, and the great Sir Oliver Lodge is also hanging round.

Mr. Tudor Pole (we wish he would change his name!) stands up for his cup. He once saw it fill a dim room with glorious light. The “mysterious vessel” is predominantly blue, but there ought to be some green in it—and there is. It is beautifully and cunningly inlaid with silver leaf, and is altogether a fascinating and valuable curio. The wonder is that Judas did not make off with it when he transacted his last bit of business in connection with the first Salvation Army. We hope Mr. Tudor Pole (that name again!) will keep it safely. When it is certified by Professor Crookes, and Sir Oliver Lodge, and the Rev. R. J. Campbell, it will be worth more than a king’s ransom. Mr. Tudor Pole may turn himself into a limited liability company, with a thousand-millions capital; and Carnegie and Rockefeller will have to take back seats.

At present, the evidence seems rather defective. Dr. Goodchild bought the cup as a curio in 1885; he regarded it simply as such until 1896, when he fell into a trance at Paris, and a figure appeared before him and told him that it was the “Cup of Our Lord” used at the Last Supper. That is all. Dr. Goodchild’s information obtained in that “trance” is the only link connecting that cup with Jesus Christ. It would be laughed at, of course, in a legal investigation; but it may be quite good enough in a religious inquiry. Many a hoax has been imposed upon mankind with no greater plausibility. We see no reason why *this* hoax should not be a screaming success. For the very fact that it commands two columns in a newspaper, and the grave attention of “leading” men, shows that the “dear public” is silly enough for anything.

G. W. FOOTE.

Freethought's Danger.

FREETHOUGHT has a new enemy to face—or, rather, an old enemy in a new form. The Rev. Frank Ballard has for a long time past been distinguishing himself—in more ways than one—as a lecturer in defence of Christianity. But he has been hitherto doing so on his own account. He has lectured and written against all kinds of anti-Christian belief, although no decrease in the number of Freethinkers has been observable—in fact, like the flies who waxed fat feeding on adulterated fly-papers, they appear to have grown more numerous under the onslaught. Still, his writings and lectures have convinced thousands who already believed, and confirmed chapel-goers have given up all intention of joining the N. S. S. But he has done this work as a free-lance. Now he is taken up officially by the Wesleyan Methodist Conference; he is sent forth to slay with the *imprimatur* of that august body upon him, while his directors are gloating in anticipation over the string of scalps with which next year's Conference will be able to decorate the Presidential platform.

This fateful resolve was reached on the afternoon of Thursday, July 18, during the sitting of the Conference in Wesley's Chapel, London. It is worth while to note the date carefully, for although no Freethinker knows exactly when, as a Freethinker, he may receive the "happy dispatch," it is well that he should remember the date when sentence was passed. The wording of the resolution was, too, sufficiently curious to deserve chronicling—at least in parts. This resolution stated that, in view of the "widespread scepticism" of to-day, there was need of the Christian faith being "effectively defended"; and, in view also of the Wesleyan Church possessing a man of "unique qualifications" for the work, the Conference resolved to finance Mr. Ballard, and send him forth under the direction of the Home Missionary Committee.

Mr. Haigh, the mover of the resolution, reminded the Conference that there were more people outside the Churches than inside—a phenomenon, by the way, which is just as evident in the sphere of Mr. Ballard's normal operations as elsewhere. Still, Mr. Ballard "faced all the deepest questions of existence." "He looked objections in the face, and tried to find reasonable and satisfactory answers." As these were special qualifications of Mr. Ballard's, the reflection on the other Wesleyan ministers was anything but complimentary. Mr. Ballard's qualifications, moreover, are "unique"—not merely remarkable, but unique. So that if we add to those already touched on the quality of understanding all he deals with, this makes all the other clergy look small. For the resolution declares that Mr. Ballard is the only man among them who understands the scientific aspect of religion, who looks objections in the face, and who can find reasonable answers to them. I am not saying whether this is so or not, but merely explaining the resolution. It may even be that Mr. Ballard's method is that of the minister who said that, having looked the objection in the face, he would pass on to another subject. At any rate, if Mr. Ballard really wishes to face difficulties, I can suggest a method by which he may do so. Let him pay a visit to every town in England and arrange, with Freethinkers, to address Freethinkers under fair conditions. Where there are Secular halls I have no doubt Secularists will be pleased to place them at Mr. Ballard's disposal. He and the Conference will then be able to judge the value of his efforts by the havoc made in the ranks of Freethinkers. But to convince chapel-goers that unbelief is wrong is not a very remarkable performance for so "unique" a person as Mr. Ballard.

Quite a number of speakers took part in the debate on Mr. Ballard's appointment, and before all of them stood the terrifying spectre of the growth of Freethought. The Rev. J. Scott Lidgett said there were "multitudes of English-speaking people in the Midlands and Northern districts [What other people did

he expect to find in "multitudes" in England?] who were profoundly unsettled by so-called scientific teaching." Dr. J. Shaw Banks was more emphatic in his remarks, and rather more interesting. He pointed out that the journalistic side of the sceptical crusade was conducted in a very able manner, while there were two special features to be noted. "One was the thorough-going character of the unbelief that it had advocated. It sought to do away, not merely with the Christian religion, but religion in every shape and form." One can imagine the gasp of horror that went up from the Assembly at this announcement. Its indignation at the villainy of leaving the British public without a shred of religion to cover its intellectual nakedness, with not even the smallest, shabbiest, most ineffective kind of a God to kow-tow before, could only have been equalled by its admiration of the perspicuity of the speaker. A man who has discerned that modern Freethought is fighting all religions obviously possesses qualifications second only to those of Mr. Ballard himself.

But there is another dangerous feature about modern Freethought. This is "its reputable character. It had not dealt in abuse and invective, but with sincerity and enthusiasm—features that gave it greater power for harm." Really, it is difficult to please some people. While the stock Freethinker of religious assemblies was a drunken, foul-mouthed, low-living ignoramus, Christians opposed Freethought because of its terrible effects on the lives of people, and held up the Freethinker himself as an awful example. Now that this game is nearly played out, and it is admitted that the Freethinker does not generally deal in abuse and invective, but leads a decent life and preaches his ideas with sincerity and enthusiasm, still they are not satisfied. Nay, it makes the case worse; he is a more dangerous person than ever. Not being a Christian he ought to be ignorant, but he isn't. Not being a Christian he ought to be foul-mouthed, drunken, dissolute, but again he fails to fulfil expectation. And what right has any man to so ruthlessly fail to live up to a standard that many generations of Christians have carefully created for him? Six months enforced reading of Mr. Ballard's flatulent productions would not be too great a punishment for one with so small a sense of his duty to society.

There is evidently no limit to the calculating villainy of the average Freethinker. He not only seeks to destroy religion, but considers how he sets to work. "The arguments—historical, scientific, and moral"—said Dr. Banks, "that had long been the property of the student and the school, had now been put into the hands of the man in the street. They had come to him as revelations, and had all the force of novelty." Here we reach the really unforgivable offence committed by the militant Freethinker. It is bad enough that people should not believe, but at least they ought to keep their unbelief to themselves. Unbelief in the upper circles there has always been, but that mattered comparatively little. Unbelief among the clergy, a certain amount of knowledge concerning the truth of religious beliefs there has always been; but that, again, mattered little. For the function of the clergy is to keep other people religious; and, while it does not signify though two parsons cannot pass without a wink and a smile, it *does* matter when other people become aware of the performance. For note that the historical and moral and scientific arguments against Christianity had long been known to students, but the clergy had wisely refrained from giving them publicity. Truth, in their opinion, was too valuable to be thrown about in this manner. Long ago Jesus suggested that pearls (of truth) should not be put before swine; and ever since the clergy have kept it behind them. Without, however, the least concern for the fitness of things, the Freethinker was here disclosing the truth to all classes indiscriminately. He is possessed of the utterly non-Christian belief that truth is as important to the crossing-sweeper as to the millionaire; as

necessary to the man in the pew as to the man in the pulpit. Is it any wonder that the Conference resolved on sending forth their "unique" phenomenon to do what he can to counteract this dangerous influence?

Dr. Banks was perfectly correct in saying that the danger was very real. How real, half-empty churches and the sympathetic reception of Freethought teaching proves. And, in addition, Mr. P. W. Bunting drew a harrowing picture of the "terrible nature" of the task before their new theological Sir Galahad. He had had "a distinguished professor standing in his chambers, and saying to him, 'I would cut off my right hand if I could be a Christian.'" Seeing that Mr. Bunting is a Methodist, and was addressing a Methodist Conference, it would be idle to question the accuracy of his statement. In such an environment, falsehood of the ordinary kind cannot live. But I really should like to know—merely as a matter of curiosity—what was the name of this "distinguished professor." You see, one cannot even pray for him without this information.

So Mr. Ballard sets forth on his career with the official blessing of the Wesleyan Conference. From one point of view, he is fortunate. Whatever measure of success attends his efforts he will break the record. For, hitherto, his predecessors in the field of Christian defence have not been conspicuously successful. The Roman Church, in its palmyest days, fought against the growth of Freethought, and failed. The various Protestant Churches, with the religious assistance of stake and prison, fire and water, presses and pillory, boycott and slander, were, if anything, more completely unsuccessful. Boyle lectureships, Bridgewater treatises, and various other methods of paying educated men *not* to say all they knew about religion, have had no more effect on the advance of Freethought than a child's sand rampart has against the advance of the tide. Even Great Britain's 50,000 parsons must be classed as failures in this respect. He has behind him a long chronicle of defeat; and, no matter how small his success, so long as he meets with any, he will establish a record. Mr. Ballard has my best wishes, as well as the blessing of the Conference. His lectures are *certain* to have the effect of rousing doubts in the minds of some of his religious listeners. All else is problematical.

C. COHEN.

Christian Optimism.

THE *Methodist Times*, in a leading article on "Christianity and the Nation," lays down the following important rule:—

"If this subject is to be discussed in a helpful way it must be approached in that spirit of tempered optimism which is characteristic of the highest Christianity. This means that it must be approached in the firm faith of our Lord's kingship and in the consequent expectation of finding everywhere the signs of his living Spirit and of the working out of his purposes for the redemption and uplifting of the race. Our faith is tested by our power to discern his presence in, and not by lamentations upon his supposed absence from, the affairs of men.....When a Christian prophet becomes a pessimist both his inspiration and his influence are fading away."

A truer paragraph was never written; and it is true, doubtless, in a sense undreamed of by its author. To "find everywhere the signs of the Lord's living Spirit and of the working out of his purposes for the redemption and uplifting of the race," you must first believe that they exist. The Christian sequence is believing and finding, not finding and believing. To "discern the Lord's presence in the affairs of men," you must take it for granted that it is there. You first assume the presence, and then discern it. This is not the order of Nature; but it is the rule always followed by Christian apologists.

Is it a sound and safe rule to observe? Everybody is aware that the imagination is a high and noble

faculty, and can be exercised in a legitimate and thoroughly scientific manner. For example, there is nothing unreasonable in assuming the existence of the universal ether, because apart from some such assumption we cannot possibly account for certain well-known facts. But no scientist regards the existence of invisible ether as anything more than a working hypothesis. It is not an established fact, but merely a theory resorted to only in explanation of particular phenomena, which otherwise are utterly inexplicable. This is an instance of what Professor Tyndall spoke of as "the scientific use of the imagination." Now, mark, the existence of the ether is only an assumption, *although all the facts concerned seem to make it a necessity*. But Christian apologists declare that the presence of the Holy Spirit in the affairs of men is an absolute reality, *although all the relevant facts appear to deny it*. It is very true that "our faith is tested by our power to discern"; but even according to the writer of the article under consideration, the majority of the facts known to us plainly indicate that the thing discerned is not really present. What does the writer see round about him everywhere? Evidences of the presence of the all-holy and all-loving Lord? Irrefutable testimonies to the all-conquering power of the Gospel of Christ? No. What then does he see? Sin, unbelief, materialism, worldliness, vice, crime, cruelty, injustice, oppression. These are the grim realities which glare at him wherever he goes. The affairs of men are topsy-turvy, one vast and hopeless tangle. The writer admits all this, and yet insists upon the assertion that in these disorderly and iniquitous affairs of men the King of righteousness and peace is surely present, "working out his purposes for the redemption and uplifting of the race." This is faith triumphing over facts, trampling realities under foot, and living alone on hope deferred which maketh the heart sick. This is an assumption with nothing to support it, a belief nourished only by its own audacity.

Let us bear in mind that the God of Methodism is "a spirit, infinite, eternal and unchangeable, in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth"; that the Redeemer preached by the Connection is "the Lord Jesus Christ, who being the eternal Son of God, became man, and so was and continueth to be, God and man in two distinct natures, and one person, forever"; and that its Holy Ghost is the Almighty agent whose business is to make the redemption of the world through the Atonement of Christ an accomplished fact. Such, in brief, is the faith which every Christian, after the Wesleyan pattern, is bound to hold. He must believe, in spite of all appearances, that this world is the special property, secured at a stupendous cost, of the Holy Trinity. No other faith is possible to an orthodox Christian. "How, then, does it stand at the present time," our writer asks, "between Christianity and the British people?" An extremely pertinent question, indeed. Come, watchman on Zion's watchtower, what of the night? Is the dawn of your Lord's day in sight yet? The watchman reports: "That there is much worldliness and indifference goes without saying. It is as marked within the Church as outside it if the Church is to be tried by the authoritative standards of the New Testament." Watchman, what do you see? "Frivolity widely diffused throughout the community," "a widespread lack of vigor, depth and strenuousness both of mind and of purpose." "The shallowness of the public mind" is a perfect scandal. "From this standpoint the social reformer brings a charge of worldliness against the Churches. He is not impressed by a claim of fellowship with Christ which is not accompanied by the marks of his sincerity, courage, and unselfishness." And yet, in spite of this deplorable state in which the Church is admitted to be, we are expected to believe that it is the temple of the Holy Ghost, the body of the risen Lord, the sanctuary of the Most High.

Another fact observed by the watchman is "a widespread unsettlement so far as theological ex-

planations are concerned." This, the writer says, "is due, in part, to the lack of interest in and the incapacity for abstract thinking, which are characteristic of the English people as a whole." But are those defects of the English people, as a whole, more characteristic of them now than they were when faith was much more general and theology much more fixed than they are to-day? The truth is, that theology is losing ground because the people are finding out that the bottom has been knocked out of it by literary criticism and scientific discoveries. Many preachers still say, after reading a passage from the Bible, "God bless the reading of his own infallible Word"; but the congregation do not believe in the infallible Book. In consequence, they turn to science, in its various departments, and seek in it for the words of life. Partly true and partly false, the following sentence is most significant: "The popular mind boasts the all-sufficiency of physical science narrowly conceived, just when its best representatives are coming to appreciate its insufficiency." Who are the best representatives of physical science? The writer cannot name even a dozen who are on his side. Be that as it may, the world is sick and tired of theological explanations and denunciations, and is yearning for the light of knowledge and the wisdom of experience. Our writer is of opinion that science satisfies only those whose "higher powers are not sufficiently active," but that is simply because he is a theologian, and as such, believes that theology is incomparably higher than science. As a matter of fact, science is fully appreciated only by those who employ their very best faculties in its study, while theology's chief demand is, not for thought, but for faith. In any case, theology's tide is ebbing, while the tide of science is flowing in with ever-increasing force.

For the present, the New Testament is out of favor among the masses. The popular mind has no patience with the apostles Paul and John, and distrusts even Jesus himself. "For the moment, Amos and Isaiah count far more with it than St. Paul and St. John. The claims of righteousness and humanity are recognised, and the cry goes up, 'When wilt thou save the people?' from multitudes who are apparently indifferent to the salvation of the soul." Here, again, the article is partly true and partly false. The truth is, that in proportion as the claims of righteousness and humanity are being recognised, those of God and the soul disappear. What other claims are there than those of humanity? The cry, "When wilt thou save the people?" is out of date now. Throughout all the centuries and millenniums of time, that cry has constantly gone up without any response whatever coming down; and the cry of to-day is, "When shall we learn to save ourselves?" The article is quite right in saying that "this, of course, represents a one-sidedness which, from the completely Christian point of view, is deplorable"; but we maintain that "the completely Christian point of view" is fundamentally false, and that the holding on to it so long has seriously retarded the ethical progress of the race. To proclaim that "Christ is indispensable to national prosperity" is to indulge in sound rather than in sense. Christ has had his innings and has ignominiously failed.

Does it not necessarily follow from the admissions of this article alone, that for a Christian to be optimistic is a logical impossibility? It is never wise to prophesy; but certainly the history of the last three hundred years does not justify Christian hopefulness concerning the future. The signs of the times are all opposed to it.

The article in question closes by giving expression to a delusion. It seeks to show that, at bottom, the working classes are still intensely religious. "Impatience with ecclesiasticism, with sectarian wrangles, and with the apparent minimising of conduct in comparison with creeds," they undoubtedly evince; but, at heart, they are still lovers of God and Christ. Though they are, in increasing numbers, making an earnest demand for what is called the Secular

Solution, yet we must not infer that they understand this demand "to exclude either Christian hymns and prayers or the reading, and even the explanation, of the Bible from the schools of the country." It is to be feared that the writer's acquaintance with the non-Christian working classes of this country is woefully superficial and limited. He evidently relies largely on mere hearsay, which is characteristically inaccurate and misleading. Here the wish is father to the conviction. It is quite probable that the Wesleyan Methodist Church has a greater number of the working classes within its borders than any other denomination; but the masses of the people are out of touch with all churches alike, and the alienation is growing every day. In the Churches themselves spiritual religion is acknowledged to be on the decline; and the so-called Labor Church is practically a non-Christian institution. It is all very well to say that "the grace of God will use the Church to save the nation, and will also use the nation to save the Church"; but will it? It has never done it yet, and it is less likely to do it to-day than it ever was before. What the nation needs is to be saved by its own grace; and this grace is a fruit that will grow and ripen only on the tree of knowledge—which is also the tree of life.

J. T. LLOYD.

War.

An Allegory.

High on His jewelled throne, in Realms of Light,
The Great I Am, the mighty King of Kings,
Received the adoration of the Spheres.
Innumerable hosts, in shining flight,
Flashed rays of brilliance round Him with their wings,
Like sunlight glinting from a million spears.
Behind Him rolled the great celestial fires;
Before Him, at His feet, were grouped His choirs—
Mingling, with voices rich, the music of their lyres.

To the great throne there came a hideous Thing,
More loathsome far than o'er was grisly Death.
It's dull, dead eyes gazed with a leaden stare;
It's bloated lips, livid and festering,
Were open to exude It's foetid breath.
It's right hand held a burning brand, whose glare
Strove to out-rival the most fiery star,
And the sweet music of the choirs to mar; [am War!]
With a hoarse, carrion breath this Thing croaked: "I

The Ruler of the Universe looked stern.
"Why showest thou thyself unclothed and stark?
Where is thy glittering splendor and thy pride?
Long ages yet will pass ere men discern
Thy dreadful features, sinister and dark,
If in a suit of glory thou wilt hide.
Go! clothe thyself in these: the gleam of gold,
Scarlet and silver robes will screen the mold
Which on thy rotting bones so clammy lies and cold."

So spake the Eternal One, while o'er the Thing
Of horror trappings rich and rare were flung,
And golden armor sparkled on It's breast,
Studded with gems of crystal glistening.
A dazzling jewel round It's neck was hung;
It's skull with gallant helm was gaily drest;
Then like an awful Thing of monstrous birth,
With a loud, hollow laugh of demon mirth,
Spreading It's raven wings, it pounced upon the earth.

W. GEORGE HASWELL.

We want no more feasts of the gods, nor martyrdom of saints; we have no need of sensuality, no place for superstition, or for costly insolence. Let us have learned and faithful historical painting—touching and thoughtful representations of human nature, in dramatic painting; poetical and familiar renderings of natural objects and of landscape. . . . And let these things we want, as far as possible, be scattered abroad and made accessible to all men.—John Ruskin.

Acid Drops.

When the present leader of the Theosophists was an Atheist, she was a bold, bad woman in the eyes of the Christian multitude, and was treated as such by the newspapers; but circumstances alter cases, and Mrs. Besant is now praised for her ability, eloquence, and character, and lengthy reports are given of her "remarkable" addresses. A Bournemouth paper devotes a whole column to her lecture in the local Prince's Hall on "The Place of Masters in Religion." We are not going to trouble ourselves, or our readers, about the bulk of the lecture, which was little else than rhetorical moonshine—though we admit it was well calculated to please the religionists of every denomination, except perhaps the Catholics. But one passage of the lecture calls for a few moments' attention. Mrs. Besant is reported as follows:—

"The lecturer passed on to speak of the fresh efflux of spiritual life which was needed in the days of Thomas Huxley, and declared that the growth of the materialism which was at that time so rampant, and was even now the subject of complaint by the clergy, meant, in its ultimate consequence, the death of civilisation, whilst the triumph of Agnosticism meant the triumph of the body and the mind over the spirit, and that meant the death and decay of humanity, for the spirit in man was the one eternal verity which ever asserted itself, however it was denied, which appeared again, however much it was ignored."

It will be remembered that Mrs. Besant herself took part in propagating the "materialism" of the days of Huxley. She called herself a Materialist, which Huxley never did; she was the close colleague of the great Charles Bradlaugh, and wrote for years in his *National Reformer*, which was declared every week, on its front page, to be an organ of Atheism. She used then to declare that religion meant the death of civilisation; now she declares that religion is the life of civilisation. She *knew* she was right then; and she *knows* that she is right now. For on this point Mrs. Besant never lets us forget that she is a woman. She never *thinks*; she is always *certain*. But that may pass. It is something else we want to challenge her upon.

Mrs. Besant says that the triumph of Agnosticism means the triumph of the body and the mind over the spirit. Now if by spirit she means character and the ideal, we beg to tell her that she is talking the most absolute nonsense. And she ought to know it. There never was a man whose whole life was a sterner battle for the truth, and for human welfare as he understood it, than Charles Bradlaugh's. Atheism had no deteriorating effect upon *him*. Nor had it upon Mrs. Besant herself. She was a nobler and more inspiring personage in those days. Now she treads a primrose path; then she walked on stony ground. Now she has the good opinion of the majority; then she had its loathing and hatred. Now she associates with the most "respectable" people; then she was an insulted outcast. Truly things have changed with her; but, after all, it was when she fought for the most unpopular of causes—when she braved the malice and venom of bigots—when she faced the danger of imprisonment—that she was most high-spirited and admirable.

Mr. W. T. Lee, the Christian Evidence champion, speaking at Cardiff lately, endorsed Mrs. Besant's saying that "when she gave up the habit of prayer results fatal to a Christian believer followed." Such results always will follow, admitted the simple-minded Mr. Lee. God exists only for those who pray to him. The moment we cease speaking to him he leaves us to our doom. He is a curious sort of God who pouts and slips out of existence the moment we stop addressing and adoring him. Mr. Lee is quite right. The only God there is is the God believed in. That is precisely what Freethinkers get *persecuted* for daring to say.

So impressed was Mr. John Cory by Mr. Lee's atheistical teaching, that he presented each person in the assembly with "a copy of Henry Varley's trenchant criticism upon the New Theology; or, as some humble, but perhaps accurate, Christians term it, the New Mythology." This new terminology is excellent. Then all theology, old or new, is nothing but *mythology*.

General Booth has been doing another motor-car tour, and municipal authorities have been telling him how much social good his Army has done, but they never offer the slightest evidence in support of the statement. It is taken for granted that the Salvation Army is a great and glorious and beneficent institution. And all this uncritical praise, of course, helps to swell the old man's head, which has long been too big for his body. He makes the most extravagant

claims and promises; in fact, Jesus Christ—or God Almighty for that matter—might as well retire in favor of William the Conqueror. At Huddersfield, he expressed a wish that "some borough would hand over to his care its prison, its paupers, its lunatics, and its slums." He would soon show them how to reduce the number of criminals and the amount of poverty. No doubt! We shall probably see the Grand Old Showman offering to undertake the local government of the whole country through his Army Corps. How nice it will be when every local official wears a red jersey, and plays upon a Salvation cornet, or beats a Salvation drum. Oh, what will it be to be there!

Mr. John Manson, author of the recent searching book on the Salvation Army, has contributed to the Manchester *Daily Dispatch* a special article on "Is this Huge Agency a Gigantic Humbug?" He gave good reasons for believing that it is. These reasons have already been stated in our columns. What we wish to draw attention to now is the fact that the press is beginning to get to work on General Booth. This may be the beginning of the end for him.

The Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiner publishes a "Monthly Report," and the July number contains a letter sent to the Society by a carpenter, named G. McLeod, giving his personal experience of the "Rescue" work of the Salvation Army. This letter bears out all that we have said about this great imposture, and we shall not be wasting our space by reproducing it *in extenso*:—

"After having worked in the Aldershot District for about seven years I got out of work, and after several months, and still unable to find work, I pawned my tools and came to London. I found that I could not get work in London either. I was advised to go to the Salvation Army, and they told me if I went into their joinery works I would be given a chance to recover my position. I was told I would earn enough to get my tools out of pawn and make a fresh start. I worked with them two months, and the first week I got 1s., and afterwards 2s. weekly, with board and bed. I worked from 6.30 a.m. to 6 p.m., with three-quarters of an hour for breakfast and one hour for dinner. The work was the same as any builder's, and was mostly contracted for, for outside people. The food, bed, and money would amount to about 9s. per week, and as the 2s. had to be spent on washing and under-clothing, no man had a chance to recover himself. I might have been there still if I had not found a friend, who, knowing me, took me away."

Such is the "Rescue" policy of the Salvation Army; and that of the Church Army is precisely similar. They are both "sweaters" in the name of religion and philanthropy.

Mr. S. Sennett, the Secretary of the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners, points out that this "sweating" is a very serious question; for "the Salvation Army enters practically into open competition with builders," and "the Salvation Army are only paying 9s. per week, while a builder would have to pay £2 7s. 3d." Mr. Sennett asks, "What has the Salvation Army to say?" We can tell him. *Nothing*.

An old man got into the crowd to see General Booth at St. Neots, and fell dead on the church steps as "William the Conqueror" was entering. Moral: Don't go "salvating" at 82.

General Booth called at Waro, and told a curious story of the Salvation Army's "rescue" work. They got hold of an old sot, who had drunk so much that his memory was impaired. At length they discovered that he had deserted his wife; so they telegraphed to her, "We have found your dear husband"—and she telegraphed back, "You can keep him." She had more sense than Booth.

Heaps of babies were brought to General Booth to be kissed in Northamptonshire. The old Boss is doing his best to imitate his young Master. We may see him riding into London on two jackasses yet.

General Booth wants to see England swarming with babies. Speaking at Melton Mowbray, he said that every father and mother ought to bring up eight or nine children. It must be admitted that Booth has done his share in this line, but he should remember that the poor people he talks to in this way do not bring up their families on public subscriptions.

There was an extraordinary scene recently at St. Petersburg—in which the "Black Hundreds" (the anti-revolutionary assassins) bore a conspicuous part. It appears that the famous Ikon of the Resurrection was brought all the way from Palestine by the Orthodox Patriarch of Jerusalem

as a present to the Czar. This image was carried along the Nevsky Prospect in procession, a dozen bishops and many other ecclesiastics leading the way. The holy object was duly guarded by Cossacks, but hundreds of eager devotees fought for a chance of kissing it. Finally, it was deposited in the Kazan Cathedral. At a subsequent public meeting, Prince Volkovsky prayed that "though Antichrist is reigning in the West, the Madonna may restore the true Christ through Russia to humanity." We suppose there will be a fresh massacre of the Jews soon.

The Rev. Dr. Wardlaw Thompson, Foreign Secretary of the L. M. S., stated recently that, "by God's goodness," he and his companions "had freedom from all accident, and had health and strength" while touring in China and India. Is it, then, by God's malignity that others meet with all sorts of mishaps, and suffer from sickness, and sometimes die violent deaths on their travels? Is there a special providence protecting clergymen and their families? If there were a God, and if he were both infinitely powerful and infinitely good, he would be good to all alike, at all times, and under all circumstances. By his very statement, Dr. Thompson calumniated the God in whom he professes to believe.

Mr. Justice Darling's humor is not always of the highest quality, and he is rather fond of giving gratuitous performances. The other day, he was trying a Frenchman (a cook) for murderous assault. The man appears to have been a bad lot, but that was no reason for saying to him: "You are a Frenchman—why did you come over here? Why don't you live in your own country?" The man answered: "That is my business"—as indeed it was. Mr. Justice Darling is apparently not aware that a good many Englishmen live in France—although it is an "infidel" country.

The proprietors of Hay's Wharf refused to pay the rector's rate for St. Olave's—a sum amounting to nearly £200. An order was made against them in court, but they gained something by drawing attention to a curious state of things. It was alleged that Canon Rhodes Bristow, who draws £600 a year, besides fees, from the parish, resides at Lewisham, and lets the clergy-house for £120 a year; that the reverend gentleman completely cuts himself off from his parishioners; and that on one Sunday, at least, the church services were entirely forgotten. Canon Rhodes Bristow probably considers himself a good Christian—and perhaps he is.

St. Olave's derives its income from various sources, chiefly from the rent of part of the ground on which London Bridge Station stands, and numerous warehouses in the locality. The tithes of St. Olave's were commuted in 1864 for a sum of £2,600 per year. Canon Bristow is under the Bishop of London, who, so far, has had nothing to say on the matter. Bearing in mind that Bishop Ingram himself was pitchforked into a canonry at St. Paul's in 1897 with a salary of £1,000 a year, and practically nothing to do for the money, and in the same year made Bishop of Stepney with another £1,000 a year, his silence, perhaps, is wise.

The Rev. W. D. Walters, of the West London Mission, says the condition of the West-end is a challenge to civilisation. Maybe; and if so it is equally an impeachment of Christianity. If any other religion were concerned in the matter, Mr. Walters would realise this quickly enough.

The President of the Wesleyan Conference says that the Churches were interested in education long before Secularists and politicians were attracted to it. Which is only true in the sense that the Church once controlled politics, and that organised and definitely expressed Secularism is a comparatively recent thing. The amount of interest the Churches took in education may be realised when it is remembered that under their control the elaborate educational machinery of the Roman Empire disappeared; it was neglected until the French Revolution gave an impetus, with this subject as with others, to the whole of Europe; schools were utilised by Church and Chapel as mere traps for converts for many years; it was the inefficiency of education under religious control that forced on the Government measure of 1870; and, finally, ever since, religion has been the one supreme obstacle in the way of perfecting our educational system.

Reference was, of course, made by the President to the work of Joseph Lancaster in opening public schools. Why is there no reference ever made from religious platforms concerning the educational work of Robert Owen?—who, by the way, gave Lancaster £1,000 to open the schools to which

reference was made. The reason is not far to seek. Lancaster was a Nonconformist—although, as a Quaker, he in many respects belonged to the least Christian of all Christian bodies. Robert Owen was a Freethinker—a man who publicly declared that the religions of the world were only so many forms of geographical insanity. Herein lies a world of difference.

The Holy Ghost was terribly compromised at the recent meeting of the Wesleyan Conference. Nay more, the infallible Head of the Church was dishonored and positively insulted. Of course, the Wesleyan body is not a Church, nor have its ministers any commission from heaven. Yet the Bishop of London addressed the Conference by letter, and the Bishop of Stepney paid it a visit and delivered a speech couched in fraternal terms. This looked very like recognising Wesleyanism as a veritable member of the Body of Christ, and all the High Church organs are offended because a sin has thereby been committed against the Divine Founder of the Church. One journal goes so far as to say that it would be wrong for the Anglican clergy "to pray for the guidance of the Holy Ghost upon the deliberations" of such an assembly as the Wesleyan Conference. Poor, unfortunate Wesleyans! The Holy Spirit may deign to save them *as individuals*, in an irregular way, but *as a body* he utterly disowns them. They are outside the pale.

In the opinion of Mr. Lloyd George, Wales would by now have been as Agnostic as France but for the work of Nonconformity in the Principality—which is, or is not, a compliment to Wales; just as one cares to take it. Personally, we have our doubts as to the truth of the statement. There is a much greater tendency among the French people to follow ideas to their logical conclusion than has ever been displayed by either Welsh or English; and it is just as probable that without Nonconformity the Welsh would have been almost as Christian as they are at present, but with a little less of the hypocrisy engendered by Nonconformist influence. It would not be amiss, by the way, to hear from Mr. Lloyd George a plain and definite statement of his own religious opinions in relation to Christian doctrines. One might then learn just how far he is exploiting the religious feelings of his countrymen for political purposes.

There is, however, one aspect of Mr. Lloyd George's remark that illustrates a truth always ignored by Christians, and very often by Freethinkers. The logical extremes of modern religious thought are Roman Catholicism and Freethought; and if those whose revolt from the Church of Rome represented intellectual growth and pursued that development, they would end as Freethinkers. In Catholic countries this does, as a matter of fact, represent the main lines of the course pursued. The choice between reason and unreason, between science and superstition, is plain; and, in the majority of cases, people group themselves into two distinctly and logically opposite camps. But where Protestantism obtains in any strength we have a different state of affairs. In this case, while the religious beliefs are not a bit more fundamentally reasonable, they are disguised with a show of reason that makes them more acceptable to all but the strongest thinkers, and these are necessarily a minority. Other things equal, the intolerance remains as great, and the superstition, no matter how disguised, really as objectionable. All that happens is that the pill has been coated, new formulas adopted, and the course of mental development arrested. In this way Protestantism has been a far greater enemy to the modern world than Catholicism has been. It has done much to encourage timidity of thought and hypocrisy in public life, and to make bigotry a personal and domestic affair. In this way Protestantism does preserve Christianity, but only by carrying on the Catholic policy under different conditions. It was Goethe's opinion that Protestantism had put back the progress of Europe by two hundred years, and we should not be surprised to find that his estimate of things survived when Mr. Lloyd George, M.P., Preacher and Politician, is forgotten.

The *British Weekly*, a pious (Nonconformist) journal, has a column headed, "What to Do: Problems of Conduct." Last week's column contained answers to the previous week's "problem." The problem itself was silly enough, and shows how much intellect is expected amongst our contemporary's readers; the answers are silly and worse, being for the most part full of hypocrisy, and occasionally of downright lying. The problem (in brief) was what one lady should say to another who presented her with a chair inartistically covered, so that it had to be covered afresh by the recipient. One answer suggests this falsehood, and another that; it is even suggested that "she should blame the cat." And the cream of the joke is that the Editor says,

"Our readers have done very nicely this week." What will it be when they get on to "Bible Puzzles"?

The late Mr. Thomas Eustace Smith, at one time M.P. for Tynemouth, built a church at North Gosforth. It was never consecrated, but services were held in it, and it had stained-glass windows designed by Edward Burne-Jones and executed by William Morris. Not being a success, apparently, it was offered for sale by auction on July 25, but there was no bidder. It seems a pity that the money spent on this useless edifice was not given (say) to the National Secular Society.

The Rev. Dr. A. T. Pierson, of America, has been going up and down the country denouncing the New Theology, and proving to benighted souls that the Bible is the infallible Word of God. He tells us that his success has been phenomenal. One lecture alone has been blessed of God to the conversion of hundreds of Infidels. Indeed, not one has been able to meet its arguments. Prodigious! This is the man who, a few years ago, thrashed the Devil within an inch of his life, the Devil having first tried to play a dirty trick upon him at the time of his immersion. He is one of the finest charlatans of the age.

The Rev. Canon Barker said, the other day, that in Greater London there are seven and a quarter millions of people, eighty per cent. of whom attend neither church nor chapel. And yet London is claimed as a Christian city. He said, further, that terrible depravity and vice are to be seen in the streets, a traffic in which it is said 70,000 women are engaged. And yet it is the boast that London is a Christian city, crowded with Christian churches and innumerable mission halls, all doing the Lord's work.

We are now told that the apostle Paul was a Puritan. Of course it is a Puritan who supplies us with this curious piece of information. We do not care a fig whether Paul was a Puritan or not. But one thing is beyond question. Had all men acted on his advice, the human race, with all its perplexing problems, would have ended long ago.

The new Transvaal Government has framed a Bill concerning education, which proceeds on lines that are very familiar to English people. It arranges for what is called undenominational religious instruction, with permission to withdraw children if notice is given. It also provides that "no principal teacher or assistant teacher.....shall be retained on the staff unless he is prepared conscientiously to give the instruction in Bible history required by this section." In practice, this means "sectarian tests"; and all that Nonconformists are howling about here—when practised by someone else. It also means that those teachers who do not believe in the Bible must either sacrifice their livelihood or play the hypocrite. The one constant feature of religious legislation is that it makes honesty one of the seven deadly sins, and gives it the place of honor in the procession. Up to date, we have seen nothing in the shape of an objection in religious papers in this country against this example of "religion on the rates" and "tests for teachers."

The Rev. R. J. Campbell has just made a brand-new discovery. This is a *real* discovery, and deserves to be carefully noted. The great man has suddenly found out that the Antichrist, spoken of in the New Testament, signifies nothing more or less than "official Christianity"; and it now seems that "official Christianity" is practically synonymous with Individualism. But what about the Christianity of the City Temple? Is it not "official"? Is not Mr. Campbell himself the "official" minister of his church? If Christianity means Socialism, why is not the City Temple managed on Socialistic lines? Why are some of its members rich and others poor? Why do they not club together and have all things in common? Why is the Socialistic speech unaccompanied by Socialistic practice? If you cannot have State Socialism, why not make a beginning with genuine Church Socialism?

"Heaven," said the Rev. R. J. Campbell, in a recent City Temple sermon, "is not where you go but what you are." This is perfectly true, though it is not new. Freethinkers have been preaching it for any number of years. In their mouths it was Blasphemy; in Mr. Campbell's mouth it is the New Theology.

Hundreds of years ago, the great Persian poet (and "large infidel," as Tennyson called him)—Omar Khayyam—taught

the same truth. Listen to this, from Edward Fitzgerald's rendering:—

"I sent my Soul through the Invisible,
Some letter of that After-life to spell:
And by and by my Soul return'd to me,
And answer'd 'I Myself am Heav'n and Hell.'
Heav'n but the Vision of fulfill'd Desire,
And Hell the Shadow from a Soul on fire,
Cast on the Darkness into which Ourselves,
So late emerged from, shall so soon expire."

It was all very old, you see, before Mr. Campbell was born; and Omar Khayyam said it so much better than Mr. Campbell can hope to.

Rev. W. B. Graham, Alma-terrace, Thorysbridge, Huddersfield, writes to the *Daily News* contradicting the statement that Mr. Grayson, the Socialist new member for Colne Valley, is a "free lover." The reverend gentleman is very indignant, but he proceeds to commit the very same offence himself. "Very few Socialists," he says, "advocate free love. Many more Liberals and Conservatives than Socialists do advocate this, and Atheism too." Mr. Graham is true to his cloth. He could not finish without raising the *odium theologicum*.

The *Daily News* quotes, with due disapproval, the political utterances of a church parson—the Rev. C. C. Ellison, rector of Bracebridge, near Lincoln. This gentleman, haranguing the local Unionist Association, said that the Suffragettes who wanted votes really wanted a hiding. That was extremely vulgar and unmanly. But there was some sense (though the organ of the Nonconformist Conscience does not seem to see it) in the reverend gentleman's subsequent remark that some of the ladies in question should "join a new society that had just been formed, the object of which was to teach women how to feed their babies." Doctors are constantly drawing attention to the gross ignorance prevailing on this subject amongst multitudes of women.

A writer in the *Methodist Times* lets the cat out of the bag. Descanting on the need and value of faith, he says: "Faith has to be acquired, it has to be learned, it is a long and hard lesson." Quite so; but that means that faith in God, or trust in Christ, is not natural to us, and that, if left to ourselves, we would never have it. We do not take to it as the bird takes to its wing, or the babe to its mother's milk. We must *acquire* religion, because it is by nature foreign to us; but who ever heard of a man *acquiring* the habit of breathing or of sleeping?

How seldom do prayer and sermon agree. The other Sunday evening, a distinguished minister said in his prayer: "We thank thee, O Lord, that *dost* reign on earth in righteousness and truth; this is our comfort and strength." The sermon that followed was a forcible exposition of Isaiah, lix. 14: "Truth is fallen in the street, and uprightness cannot enter." The illustration used was the Yellow Press: its rise, progress, and baneful power in the public life of to-day. The prayer was purely emotional, entirely independent of facts, while the sermon was largely true, and of necessity contradicted the prayer. It is always the same—whenever the sermon *does* condescend to recognise the facts.

All honor to the Rev. F. L. Wiseman! Speaking at a Methodist valedictory service to missionaries, this gentleman said he did not believe that either the gifts of tongues or of healing had been withdrawn by God, and the proof was that many missionaries showed great facility for learning new languages. (In the New Testament they spoke them without learning). No proof was offered for the second item, unless the dispatch of several medical missionaries was intended as a demonstration. Mr. Wiseman is evidently trying to live up to his name.

There is a volume of Tauler's sermons in Methuen's "Library of Devotion." Tauler was a fourteenth-century "mystic," and, of course, a Catholic. This volume of his "festal" sermons has been translated and edited by the Rev. A. W. Hutton, rector of Easthope, Shropshire. But instead of calling it *Tauler's Festal Sermons*, he calls it *The Inner Way*—his reason being that "in bookselling, regarded as a business, the word 'Sermons' bears a fatal significance, and must be avoided at any cost." Which is a notable sign of the times.

More men of God gone wrong! The Right Rev. Allan Becher Webb, D.D., of the Deanery, The Close, Salisbury, formerly Bishop of Bloemfontein, and afterwards of Grahams-town, left £6,950. But what is that to the £145,657 left by the Rev. John Evans, of Cantref Rectory, Cantref, Brecon? A minnow to a whale.

The Rev. J. J. Evans, of the preceding paragraph, ordered his executors, within a month of his death, to "burn and utterly destroy all his sermons and manuscripts and papers not relating to financial or business matters." Did he know their real value? Or did he repent having written them?

Rev. John David Macbride Crofts, of Elstree Grange, the Meads, Eastbourne, left £32,250. Another poor Christite.

Amongst the recent men of God who left estate behind them in this world, is the Rev. George Day, of Willerby, near Scarborough, who was unable to take £12,943 with him to kingdom-come. "Blessed be ye poor! Woe unto you rich!" It is enough to make a London bus-horse laugh.

The Edinburgh *Evening Mail*, edited by Hector Macpherson—who privately, we understand, is a Herbert-Spencer-ite—refers to a contemporary's article on hooliganism, and traces that popular disorder to "materialism," with its "old well-known creed, 'Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.'" "That demoralising creed," the *Mail* article concludes, "to-day is following hard upon the heels of unbelief, and as a result we have hooliganism, not merely of the lower, but also of the higher classes." This is a very convenient theory, but it is false. Hooliganism springs largely from the fact that, while religion is taught in elementary schools, morals and manners are neglected.

Signor Nasi, who is to be tried by the Italian Senate on the charge of gross appropriation of public funds, has been elected five times in succession during the last two years by his constituents at Trapani, in Sicily. The people there assert that they have seen supernatural declarations of his innocence written in letters of blood across the sky at sunset. That proves his innocence. Of course!

We understand now why the Bishop of Durham trotted out that ridiculous story of John Stuart Mill's having died a Christian—thirty four years ago. The right reverend gentleman sees that his business is going to the dogs, and that something desperate must be done to retrieve it; and as drowning men clutch at straws, frightened bishops clutch at lies. Just look at the following confession made by Dr. Moule at the consecration of a new Sunderland church, for which we suppose his lordship received the usual handsome consideration:—

"Can we not see around us already intimations that religion, as a matter of tradition, custom, reputable observance, is everywhere losing ground. It has ceased, even in the most orderly and advantaged ranks of society, to be unusual and disreputable to be non-religious. Within years quite recent, a large relaxation of the public and social conventions and usages of religion has set in. It is more and more a thing accepted and expected, to ignore altogether the sanctities of the Lord's Day in the church, and also in the home. In the home, in a degree undreamt of two generations ago, family worship is dying out. The Holy Scriptures are for the rank and file of even churchgoers, under the multiplicity of lamentable causes, fast becoming an unfamiliar book. To open them with awe, to explore them with prayer, to store them in the memory, to guide life by their precepts, to prepare for death in the pure glory of their promises—no wonder that this is rarer and rarer when, in vast circles of nominally Christian society, their very contents are unknown, and when less and less are they allowed to be a factor in education, at least, with any reverential recognition of their divinity. And little can we wonder, when thus it is with the Bible, that the great Christian creeds which lean upon the Bible are scouted far and wide for some last new watery theory of God and man. Let once the Bible seriously go, and its ruins will be encumbered in due time—in a generation or two at most—with the ruins of all orthodox theologies heaped in a common demolition."

We clip this from the long report in the *Sunderland Echo*. Most of our readers will be glad to see it.

The "wonderful girl preacher" would not have been an acceptable phenomenon to John Ruskin. In his *Sesame and Lilies* he sneered at "Your converted children, who teach their parents," and "your converted convicts, who teach honest men." It would not be surprising if Frances Bradley Storr, of Doncaster, went the same way as Evan Roberts, whose break-down and present sad condition is what might be expected after the orgie of excitement he passed through.

The man Austin, who is accused of the murder of Unity Annie Butler, aged thirteen, daughter of the people he lodged with at Windsor, had a letter upon him when he was searched, in which he had written—"Good-bye, and God bless you all. I hope and pray God will forgive me." Not an Atheist, anyhow; is he, Torrey?

The *Daily Chronicle* says that Americans are startled to hear young men running along the bank of the Isis and shouting, "Well rowed, Jesus." We should think so. Jesus used to walk on the water.

"Ethical Society Notes," written apparently by Ethicists, appear in the *Christian Commonwealth*. In them Dr. Stanton Coit is praised for preaching "God," and an assurance is given that "the root ideas of the founders of Ethical fellowships have been poles asunder from those of the protagonists of Secularism." The Ethical movement is "a religious movement—a church—with an object of worship." It seems to be getting a refuge for half-baked unbelievers.

Mr. Save-His-Soul-Alive, O!

(Dedicated, without permission, to the Rev. Ebenezer Grimes, and the Rev. Habakkuk Sinfulman, of Little Bethel.)

BY THE LATE JAMES THOMSON ("B.V.").

ONCE he was wicked, and jolly, and stout,
Now he is pious, and gloomy, and thin;
And he wanders restlessly, moaning out—
"I am lost, I am dead in sin."

And he calls this "conversion"—the infinite ass!
Converted! yes, since so he desires;
As a tree from its growing life in the grass,
Into fuel to feed church fires.

He is one of "God's vessels" now that he is cracked;
For he pleadeth well that his spirit depraved,
Eternally lost ere it knew the sweet fact,
By knowing it now may be saved!

So the world in its self-complacent way
Concludes, "If this driveller be as he paints,
We, who are hearty in work and in play,
Are surely unconscious saints."

If this bathos of lunatic selfishness
Solely concerned for its own precious soul,
Be sanctified virtue, the Devil us bless!
We would rather serve him, on the whole!

Through this mighty ocean, which heaves and raves,
We carry, as well as we can, our life;
Holding it up from the angry waves
Only by sleepless strife.

The winds howl loud, and the billows run high,
Our little skiff strains, and quivers, and reels;
This fool doth nothing but croak and cry,
Quaking from head to heels.

The timbers, in fact, are not too sound;
The shore's far off, and the chart-marks dim;
And this coward shrieking his "Oh! I am drowned!"
Will upset us all with him.

Nay, already his Bedlamite antics and fits,
With the storms confusion deaf and blind,
Have frightened out of their feminine wits
The half of our womankind.

He is drunk from some damned illicit still
Of mental blue-ruin long scores above proof;
A dastard must drown his sense in a swill
When Hope goes a little aloof.

Would Hope, with her frank, bright smile, embrace
Such a maudlin, whimpering wretch, do you think?
She turns, with disgust in her blooming face,
From his thick breath, hot with drink.

Can he fancy that Providence placed him here
To drivel out measures of lachrymal brine,
When it rains hard half the days in the year,
"And the sea's too deep for our line"?

Or are sighs and groanings needed to swell
This great dead wind, whose pitiless blasts,
With enormous swoop and savage yell,
Come clutching our poor slim masts?

To think that a fellow should launch to fight,
In the name of Heaven, against Hell and Sin,
Croaking in such a delirious fright,
As if the Devil must win.

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

(Suspended during June, July, and August).

To Correspondents.

- F. TREMLETT.—Thanks for the useful cutting. Pleased you think so highly of this journal, which was introduced to you by a London friend, and that you look forward to it every Thursday as "the best paper you ever read."
- J. STRINGER writes: "Thanks for specimen copies of your very interesting paper. Please put me down as a subscriber. I enclose payment." Letters like this show that good is done by our policy of forwarding six consecutive copies of the *Freethinker* gratuitously to any addresses sent us of persons likely to become regular readers of this journal, if it were only introduced to them.
- W. G. HASWELL.—Glad to have your interesting and encouraging letter; also your "testimony as to the value of the *Freethinker*," which you have read regularly since you first saw it two years ago, and which you "have to thank" for your "conversion from Christianity."
- P. W. M.—See "Acid Drops." Thanks.
- W. and M. E. BOLLAND.—One cutting has been useful. The other relates to a purely domestic Church quarrel, which does not seem to present any features of interest to Freethinkers.
- H. BLACK.—Your letters must have done good.
- MEADOWCROFT (Mrs.).—Glad to hear you are so pleased at coming across the *Freethinker*, and that you find it "just the sort of paper you have been looking for." Also that Mr. Killip has done good work by his lectures at Rochdale.
- THE COHEN "SALVATION ARMY" TRACT FUND.—D. Malinger, 3s.
- E. B. WOODHEAD.—Herder said that "Christian veracity" deserved to rank with "Punic faith." The Rev. Stanley Parker illustrates Christian veracity in his own district.
- CYMRU.—Glad you are "delighted with the *Freethinker*," and that "Freethought is getting a strong hold in South Wales."
- W. P. BALL.—Thanks once more for cuttings.
- G. GARRETT.—Sending as requested. We did not think the Mountain Ash Free Church Council would accept your challenge.
- J. BROUGH.—No doubt, as you say, the sin-fighters are holidaying. Seaside resorts swarm with them at this time of the year.
- P. C. STEWART.—Thanks for cuttings. Glad you consider the *Freethinker* "the brightest and best paper you have ever seen" dealing with religion.
- G. ROLEFFS.—Thanks.
- H. E. DONSON.—Pleased to hear that Mr. Theakstone's first Freethought lecture was so much appreciated by so large an audience in Brockwell Park.
- J. H. BOUCH.—General Booth travelled *via* Canada on his last trip to Japan. We do not remember his having visited New York.
- We must once more remind correspondents that anonymous letters go into the waste-basket.
- G. T. WHITEHEAD.—If you decide to go on advocating Freethought you must make up your mind to be slandered. It is unavoidable—while there are Christians in England. Of course your blood boils, but it will cool down in time, when you understand these people. As to prosecuting your slanderers, you must remember that they are likely to have more friends than you will find on the bench and in the jury-box. Truth and justice go for very little in such cases.
- D. MALINGER.—Thanks for getting the 1,000 copies of Mr. Cohen's tract distributed over Harrogate on the occasion of General Booth's recent visit. You will find something on the other matter you refer to in our *Bible Romances*.
- J. G. BARTRAM.—Will fill a corner.
- THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED, office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.
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- LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.
- LECTURE NOTICES must reach 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.
- FRIENDS who send us newspapers would enhance the favor by marking the passages to which they wish us to call attention.
- 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.
- SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS: Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

Sugar Plums.

A Johannesburg correspondent, whose name we think we had better not mention, writes to us: "Though it is many years since I dropped Christianity, it is still less than a year since I first saw the *Freethinker*; but since then I enjoy and appreciate it too much to forego it, though it costs sixpence a number out here."

Writing to a correspondent of ours, Mr. G. Bernard Shaw says that he never called himself a materialist [neither did we], though he has often called himself an atheist. "I hope soon to publish a book on religion," Mr. Shaw adds, "which will make my position clear." We hope so.

The *Harrogate Daily Press*, referring to the Salvation Army tract, calls it "vitriolic" (which is silly), and says it has no idea who Mr. Cohen is, nor has it heard of the Pioneer Press. It doesn't say it never heard of the *Freethinker*. That would have been "too thin."

Mr. Cohen's many friends will be pleased to hear that he is taking a good holiday by the seaside; loafing and reading, we daresay—though we hope the reading is satisfactorily minimised, and of a non-head-splitting character.

Our much-esteemed contemporary, the New York *Truth-seeker*, went a little astray (in our opinion) over the French "Separation" business; but we are glad to see, from the last number to hand, that it reminds the Roman Freethinkers that "the church gets fat on persecution," and that "the priests are more afraid of education, Freethought, and secular principles than they are of fanatical attacks from the men who have turned against the church without unlearning the lessons of intolerance which it teaches." This is the right note.

We beg to call attention to the appeal on behalf of Mr. Touzeau Parris, which will be found on a later page of this week's *Freethinker*.

THE PURITAN IDEAL.

Notwithstanding the mighty results of the Pilgrim Fathers' voyage, they and their standard of perfection are rightly judged when we figure to ourselves Shakespeare or Virgil,—souls in whom sweetness and light, and all that in human nature is most humane, were eminent,—accompanying them on their voyage, and think what intolerable company Shakespeare and Virgil would have found them! In the same way let us judge the religious organisations which we see all around us. Do not let us deny the good and the happiness which they have accomplished; but do not let us fail to see clearly that their idea of human perfection is narrow and inadequate, and that the Dissidence of Dissent and the Protestantism of the Protestant religion will never bring humanity to its true goal. As I said with regard to wealth: Let us look at the life of those who live in and for it,—so I say with regard to the religious organisations. Look at the life imaged in such a newspaper as the *Nonconformist*,—a life of jealousy of the Establishment, disputes, tea-meetings, openings of chapels, sermons; and then think of it as an ideal of human life completing itself on all sides, and aspiring with all its organs after sweetness, light, and perfection!—*Matthew Arnold*, "Culture and Anarchy."

Why, there are maidens of heroic touch,
And yet they seem like things of gossamer
You'd pinch the life out of, as out of moths.
O, it is not loud tones and mouthiness,
'Tis not the arms akimbo and large strides
That make a woman's force. The tiniest birds,
With softest downy breasts, have passions in them,
And are brave with love.

—George Eliot.

The Unauthorised Version.—God made the world in six days and was arrested on the seventh.—*Ambrose Bierce* ("Dod Grilo").

You might sooner get lightning out of incense smoke than true action or passion out of your modern English religion.—*John Ruskin*.

Beethoven and the Revolution.

"The rare genius,
The great artist,
The good man."

—COUNTESS THERESA.

How true are Emerson's words, that "man is only half himself; the other half is his expression." As he points out, "no man can quite emancipate himself from his age and country, or produce a model in which the education, the religion, the politics, usages, and arts of his times shall have no share." What man does we may say is "one half." How he does it, the "other half." A savage might have the genius or inspiration of a Beethoven, but he lacks the means of expression which the culture of the age determined for the latter. And so in the study of individuals of certain epochs. By taking into consideration the social conditions and general culture which go to make up this "other half" of Emersons', we are led to a better understanding of the internalism of Bach, the ingeniously pious trend of Handel, and the revolt of Beethoven.

The eminent Wagnerian, Francis Hueffer, has said of Berlioz, that if the "mighty Hector" had not known Shakespeare, and if he had not taken an Irish wife, he would certainly not have been Berlioz. I know this "if" is altogether irrelevant. Still, I am tempted to say, after Hueffer, that had there been no French Revolution there would have been no Beethoven.

It was during his brief sojourn at the Court of the Elector, Max Franz, that Beethoven became influenced by the ideas of the revolution. In these days, the cultivation of the various forms of art lay mainly under the patronage of the aristocracies, a circumstance which forced both Mozart and Haydn into the service of a princely master. There was little or no life for art outside the courts. Even Beethoven had to submit to serve a wealthy patron. But his youth fell in a period of social unrest. The breezes of the revolution swept even the courts, and Beethoven was smitten with the *Zeit Geist*. When the revolution sent a wave up the Rhine, the Elector's glittering court at Cologne vanished. Beethoven, of a nature proud and passionate, felt with the masses in the great uprising, and the passing of the court at Cologne was the last glimpse we have of him as the servant of the courts. With the watchwords of the revolution on his lips, he now disdained to court the favors of the great and wealthy, and was the first great musician to attempt to subsist independent of direct social patronage.

Essentially a son of the revolution, Beethoven's music is but a reflex of it. He was the first musician to respond to the literary and social fermentation of his time, through whom it found its first adequate musical expression. In truth, he was almost dominated by the revolution. It is the key that unlocks all, and reveals the fundamental principles of his whole life. The humanitarian ideals, the reverence for nature, and the sceptical philosophies which arose with the revolution, all found their correlative in his music. In him the artist and revolutionary are inseparably united.

The humanitarian enthusiasm which, starting from Rousseau had gradually penetrated European thought, developed in Beethoven into quite an ecstatic faith, and found an outlet in his many acts of benevolence. "My greatest felicity," he says, "is in working for others." Mankind was sacred to him. Traces of his exalted humanitarian views may be seen in his only opera, *Fidelio*, and in such songs as *Die Liebe des Nächsten* (Love of our Neighbors), and *Das Glück der Freund* (The Joy of Friendship).

Similarly, the doctrine of reverence for nature found an expression in Beethoven's work. He wished to be counted "a scholar of the glorious school of nature." From daybreak until the evening he wandered in the woods, and his visits to the country he looked forward to "with the delight of a child." The *Pastoral* Symphony, and the cantata

Meerestille und Glückliche Fahrt (Calm Sea and Prosperous Voyage), we owe to his sentimental appreciation of nature.

In politics, Beethoven was a staunch Republican, and made no secret of it. He raved over Plato's *Republic*. Oulibicheff tells us how he considered it the model for all governments to establish in every quarter of the globe; this was a fixed idea which dominated him all his life, and on which he would never brook the least contradiction. The *Eroica* Symphony, No. 9—*Alle Menschen werden Brüder* (All Men become Brothers*), and such songs as *Der Freye Mann* (The Free Man), were the direct outcome of his fervent political views.

When Napoleon emerged from the French Revolution, Beethoven hailed him with acclamation, for he thought the First Consul had no other intention than to establish the republic of Plato in France. His feverish admiration led him to compose the *Eroica* in honor of the illustrious Corsican, and, just as the work was completed, came the news that his idol had accepted the purple and crown. Beethoven was furious, and in great passion tore the dedicatory page from the score, dashing it to the ground, exclaiming, "He is no better than the rest! He will trample the 'Rights of Man' under his feet."

Kings and princes, as such, were not imposing objects in the eyes of Beethoven. Addressing Bettina, Goethe's "child," he says: "I write nothing about our monarchs, for the newspapers give you every information on that subject.....Kings and princes can indeed create professors and privy councillors, and confer titles and decorations, but they cannot create great men—spirits that soar above the base turmoil of this world." Then he goes on to speak of Goethe, whom he regarded as "the most precious jewel in the German nation." But it grieved him to see the poet bowing low before the Austrian Court. Beethoven relates how, on one occasion, he and the author of *Faust* met the Imperial Family of Austria on the promenade. Goethe, courtier-like, insisted on standing aside for their majesties to pass; and, despite the entreaties of Beethoven, refused to move. "I," writes Beethoven, "pressed down my hat more firmly on my head, buttoned up my coat, and, crossing my hands behind me, I made my way through the thickest of the crowd. Princes and courtiers made a lane for me; Archduke Rudolph took off his hat, and the Empress bowed to me first.....To my infinite amusement I saw the procession defile past Goethe, who stood aside with his hat off, bowing profoundly. I afterwards took him sharply to task for this, and upbraided him with all his sins." Yet, *roturier* as he was, Sir George Grove assures us he lived on absolute equality with the very best aristocracy in Vienna. "I only hope," he says, "that I shall not be accused of being bribed; to be at court, and yet no courtier! After that, what is not credible?" Prince Lichowsky attempted to persuade him, rather too patronisingly, to play to some friends, and was answered, "What you are, you are by accident of birth. I am, what I am, through my own exertions." A correspondent, rather obsequious, was dismissed with: "To the devil with your 'Gracious Sir'!" It greatly distressed him that one man should humble himself to another. Yet his customary answer to the salutation, "How goes it?" was, "As well as a poor musician can."

Doubtless his grand independent spirit was the cause of his conflict with "Papa" Haydn. It was, as Grove says, the Old World and the New—De Brézé and Mirabeau. The punctilious Haydn, slave to the conventional, was shocked at the innovating heretic who had "swallowed the formulas" of the day. The character of the old master is faithfully reflected in his oratorio, *The Creation*, which was the butt for many of Beethoven's jests. And surely we can forgive him, since even Schiller went so far as to

* This was composed in 1823, when the debates against slavery were going on in Parliament. Beethoven used to take home the *Allgemeine Zeitung* to read Lord Brougham's speeches.

call it "unmeaning hodge-podge." Haydn had his revenge. He nicknamed Beethoven the "Great Mogul," and called him an Atheist. As for the latter, he was probably not far wrong. The personal *bon Dieu* of Haydn's faith certainly had no place with Beethoven, for he professed no formal religion, as Sir George Grove tells us. Schindler, Beethoven's friend, says the master inclined to Deism. Sir George Macfarren is content with designating him a Freethinker. Even Joseph Bennett admits that "he subscribed to no creed," but lived "a philosophic Pagan.....in open revolt against all accepted dogmas."

It is probable that Beethoven followed the "great infidel," Goethe, in professing a sort of vague Pantheism. Professor Dickinson and Mr. Dannreuther are of this opinion. His faith seemed to rest on a Pantheistic abstraction, which he called Love. Reversing the orthodox shibboleth, he decreed: "Love is God." But what must he have thought in the days of his great affliction? It surely must have occurred to him, as it did to Winwood Reade, that if "God is Love" why is there any evil at all?

Pious biographers make considerable traffic with what they are pleased to call "Beethoven's Creed." It was a few lines copied out of Champollion's *Paintings of Egypt*, which he had affixed to his writing-table. Here it is:—

"I am that which is. I am all that was, that is, and that shall be. No mortal has lifted my veil. He is solely of himself, and to this Only One all things owe their existence."

Ruskin would probably have included this specimen of "an infinite deal of nothing" among the forms which he termed the "pathetic fallacy." It has raised the ire of Ernest Newman, who says he cannot, with any justice, think very highly of the intelligence of the man who made a fetish of such stuff. Yet I am inclined to think that Dannreuther is more pertinent, as well as more patient, when he suggests that these little commonplaces merely served Beethoven as themes for mystic musings, just as Diabelli's harmless little valse served as a starting-point for his wondrous excursions in thirty-three variations.

Nearly all Beethoven's God "talk" is to be found in his correspondence with the ecclesiastic Archduke Rudolph. Someone has hinted its significance. It is related of Moshelles, who arranged some numbers of *Fidelio* for Beethoven, that he inscribed the score to Haydn, with the words, "Finis. By God's Help." Beethoven did not fail to notice this phylactery, and wrote underneath: "O man, help thyself." That he even enjoyed poking fun at orthodoxy is evident from a communication addressed to Von Haslinger, where the "blessed book" is the theme for merriment. The letter ends thus: "I intend sending something composed on Steiner's name to show that his is no heart of stone (stein). Adieu, my good friend; it is my most heartfelt wish that you may prosper as a publisher; may all credit be given you, and yet may you never require credit. Sing daily the Epistles of St. Paul, and daily visit Father Werner, who can show you in his little book how to go straight to heaven. See how anxious I am about your soul."

Beethoven sought for no consolation in any form of religion. Art was his "great goddess," to whom he made all petitions. By his own confession, it was art that prevented him from laying violent hands on himself. "Art! art alone deterred me." He praised her in times of despair. "In godlike art alone dwells the impulse which gives one strength to sacrifice the best part of my life to the celestial muse." He despised the world that did not feel instinctively that his art was a higher revelation than all wisdom and philosophy, and "I," he says to Bettina, "am the Dionysos who will press out this glorious wine."

"It is strange," says Sir George Grove, "that the Bible does not appear to have been one of his favorite books." Strange! It reminds me of the remark of "the sage of Chelsea" over a similar observation.

"It is the wild cry of amazement," said Carlyle, "on the part of all spoonneys that the Titan was not a spooney too!" Strange! Why, the master mind of Beethoven was ever with the great Pagans of Antiquity, even to his death-bed. There was no room for "Hebrew Old Clothes."

Schindler assures us that Beethoven's last days were in all respects remarkable, and he looked forward to death with truly Socratic wisdom and peace of mind. His friends suggested that a priest be called. Beethoven consented. But we know that he had little thought for the beautiful land above. He once said to Bettina: "The intellectual realm is the most precious in my eyes, and far above all temporal and spiritual monarchies." Witnesses testify, however, that the ceremony of administering the sacrament was most impressive, and Beethoven expressed his thanks. But an "outburst of Rabelaisian laughter" was to follow; for, no sooner had the "ghostly man" departed, than Beethoven turned to his friends, saying, "*Plaudite, amici, comoedia finita est*" ("Clap your hands, friends, the play is over").

Beethoven's freedom of speech was extraordinary, and in all his observations, no matter what subject, radiate the word "Liberty." He was a privileged character in Vienna, and never molested on account of his opinions. Although he once narrowly escaped excommunication (he was nominally a Roman Catholic) for saying that Jesus was only a poor human being, and a Jew.*

Just as he rebelled against the conventions and formalities of Court and Church, so he protested against the pedants laws of form and modulation, which held music in thralldom. "Liberty and progress," he would say, "are great essentials in music as in the universe." Wagner called him the "great path-finder," who came to release music from the fetters of fashion. What the Bayreuth master did for Opera, Beethoven did for Sonata and Symphony, Mass and Oratorio.

Now, finally, let us inquire how far Beethoven, as a Freethinker, is concerned in this great emancipation of music. In his only oratorio, *The Mount of Olives*, where the scholarly Mr. W. H. Hadow detects the "un-Christian hand," the composer flings custom to the winds. From the sublime prelude to the magnificent "Alleluia" (which Mr. Hadow considers "purely Pantheistic") the style is secular. Christ is treated without the slightest reticence or restraint; and, contrary to all precedent, is made sing a lengthy *Scena ed Aria*, a florid duet with the Angel, and quite a lively trio with the Angel and St. Peter. The latter, says the orthodox Mr. Rockstro, is not only secular but, in some places, "absolutely sparkling." Here in England this oratorio has been considered "improper" and "extravagant," and an attempt has been made to "palliate the evil" by substituting another libretto—*David in the Wilderness*—fortunately, without much success.

Beethoven also used the ritualistic text of the Latin Mass for two great compositions. But they cannot be counted as Church music, for, besides being thoroughly alien to the ceremonial of the Roman Church, Beethoven had no real liturgic purpose in view. Not that he had no acquaintance with the requirements of the Church: he simply felt that he could not express himself within the limits of the *a cappella* style. In short, a return to the old forms of religious music was as impossible to him as a return to the old religious faith.

His biographer, Nohl, says the *Mass in C* is "not a religious composition," and Sir George Macfarren suggests that it "might scarcely have proceeded from an entirely orthodox thinker." It is in the *Missa Solennelle*, however, that we find the real emancipation from all ritualistic influences, for in this Beethoven positively ignores the Church. It is one of the greatest contributions to the glorious art.

* When a catalogue was made for the sale of his posthumous effects, the police seized five of his books as prohibited publications.

Beethoven considered it his most finished work. "Its astounding grandeur," says Schlüter, "leaves no room for religious feeling." Dannreuther speaks of it as "a veritable hymn to humanity.....before the glory of which all that pertains to any particular church, to any particular priesthood, vanishes as shadows in the noonday sun." As an example of the unconventional treatment, one may instance the *Agnus Dei*, where, right in the sublimity of the *Dona nobis pacem*—the prayer for peace—comes the sound of "thundering drums" and "trumpets' loud alarm." This is no supplication to the "Lamb of God." It is Revolt.

In a recent biography of the master, the author is of opinion that the *Missa Solennelle* has elements that "woefully detract from its value as helpful church-music." "Every Churchman," we are told, "welcomes music that will keep him in his devotion; not art that carries the mind away from the Church into the world." That has been the attitude of the Church from the days when Augustine adjured believers not to turn their hearts to worldly music down to the recent *Motu Proprio* of Pius X. But it is too late for any protest from Rome, or elsewhere, to influence modern thought. The Church that once did bend music as her handmaid is now impotent. All the greatest minds have turned their faces away from her, and the best music, even the so-called religious music—Bach's *B Minor Mass*, Beethoven's *Missa Solennelle*, Berlioz's *Requiem*, and Brahms' *Deutsches Requiem*, all constitute a phase of art in direct opposition to her interests.

H. GEORGE FARMER.

Proposed Fund For Assisting Mr. Touzeau Parris.

THE name of Mr. Touzeau Parris is well known in Freethought and Socialist circles, and we believe the friends of either or both the movements indicated will readily respond to an appeal to assist Mr. Parris, who is now incapacitated from all employment by a series of paralytic strokes.

Mr. Parris was intimately connected with the stirring enterprises associated with the Freethought work of Charles Bradlaugh and Mrs. Annie Besant, and for many years lectured on the Freethought platform in London and the provinces with persistent courage and energy, combining popular methods with varied scholarship. Nor did he relinquish his platform activity until absolutely compelled by ill-health.

In other directions, also, Mr. Parris testified his keen interest in public questions and reforms. With the late William Morris he was on terms of close friendship, and he was a familiar figure in the discussions and propaganda carried on at Kelmscott House, Hammersmith.

Mr. Parris originally had a business of his own, which was lost through one misfortune after another. Till May last, he held a position in London, in spite of much weakness, and he gratefully acknowledges the consideration with which he was allowed by his employers to continue in a post for which his vigor in the last years was scarcely sufficient. He is now, however, finally obliged to retire from any kind of work, and is practically dependent on the kindness of friends for support in his declining years. Mrs. Parris has a small annuity, which ceases at her death. Mr. Parris has in hand about £180, and the sale of his library and pictures will add a small amount to this sum. Sums already given or promised are named below.

The Committee issuing this appeal would use the fund in whatever manner might seem required to meet Mr. Parris's wants; but, should medical opinion (as it is hoped) justify such a course, it is proposed to purchase, for a little over £400, an annuity of £1 per week.

It is obviously desirable that the fund should be promptly collected and applied, and we earnestly invite subscriptions, which should be made payable to the Treasurer.

H. BRADLAUGH BONNER.

G. W. FOOTE.

JOHN M. ROBERTSON.

G. BERNARD SHAW.

CHARLES A. WATTS.

SYDNEY A. GIMSON, *Treasurer*.

F. J. GOULD, *Secretary*.

Secular Hall, Leicester.

August, 1907.

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Miss May Morris	1	0	0
John M. Robertson, M.P.	2	2	0
G. Bernard Shaw	5	0	0
Charles A. Watts	1	1	0

A Special Note on the Above.

I have pleasure in adding a few words on my own account to the official circular of the Committee formed to raise a testimonial to Mr. Touzeau Parris.

When a man has done good service to the Freethought cause it is not enough to say to him, in his old age and helplessness, "Thank you; here's a cheap illuminated address." Whoever fights at the front for Freethought sacrifices something; often, a great deal—occasionally, almost everything. What is needed, therefore, in this case as in others of the same kind, is a tangible expression of sympathy; something that will make the recipient say, "They did indeed remember me."

I ask my friends in particular, and the readers of the *Freethinker* generally, to respond promptly and generously to this appeal.

We will have a "*Freethinker* List" of our own. Cheques or postal orders can be sent to me direct, and I will acknowledge every subscription I receive up to Tuesday morning, each week. "This," as Mr. Sydney A. Gimson, the treasurer, writes me, "will certainly be more effective than leaving subscribers to communicate with Leicester."

This subscription ought to be completed during August, and I hope to be able to hand over a really decent sum to the treasurer on the first of September.

G. W. FOOTE.

Again, there is the illusion of "increased command over Nature," meaning that cotton is cheap and that ten miles of country road on a bicycle have replaced four on foot. But even if man's increased command over Nature included any increased command over himself (the only sort of command relevant to his evolution into a higher being), the fact remains that it is only by running away from the increased command over Nature to country places where Nature is still in primitive command over Man that he can recover from the effects of the smoke, the stench, the foul air, the overcrowding the racket, the ugliness, the dirt which the cheap cotton costs us. If manufacturing activity means Progress, the town must be more advanced than the country; and the field laborers and village artisans of to-day must be much less changed from the servants of Job than the proletariat of London from the proletariat of Caesar's Rome. Yet the cockney proletarian is so inferior to the village laborer that it is only by steady recruiting from the country that London is kept alive.—G. Bernard Shaw.

Correspondence.

THE THEORY OF NATURAL SELECTION.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—It is not my desire, any more, than I am sure, is it Mr. Waudby's, to score points in this discussion. I must therefore ask your readers to compare my remarks about adaptation and about the position of English Mendelians in relation to Darwinism with Mr. Waudby's version of what I wrote.

My opinion is that the difficulties surrounding the problem of development have been underestimated; that the Darwinian theory, with which alone I was concerned, is an insufficient description of the facts.

Take the phenomena of regeneration: for instance, Wolff's and Fischel's experiments upon the regeneration of the lens in the triton after extirpation. The lens normally develops from a thickening of the outer layer of cells, the estoderm. After extirpation the lens regrows from the iris, an outgrowth of the brain. In ordinary life these reptiles do not lose their eyes, although Weismann thinks they may do so. How can they have become naturally selected to an adaptation to a quite new experience for the race?

It has been experimentally shown that the sensation of pain is absent in whole groups of the animal kingdom. How can Darwinism, and gradual, steady development, account for the sudden appearance of pain, or any other definite character, without its existing in the whole animal kingdom?

We want more facts before it will be safe for science to make its attack upon ultimate biological problems; we gain nothing by premature theories unless they are frankly regarded as working hypotheses.

We are arriving at a description of evolution by the work on (1) Mutation, (2) Mendelism, (3) Variation. This work will, I believe, relegate Natural Selection to its subordinate rôle of eliminating teratoid formations or harmful variations.

Darwin did not contend that Natural Selection made any suggestions as to how variations arise. His words are: "Any being, if it vary however slightly in any manner profitable to itself..... will have a better chance of surviving, and thus be naturally selected." Mendelism likewise has, I am quite aware, nothing to say as to the causes of variations. The chemico-physical biologists are working at this problem.

I did not ask your readers to accept the opinion of any zoologist, however eminent. I quoted the opinions of a few experimenters who had come to certain conclusions from a first-hand study of facts; in many cases new facts first discovered by themselves. The conclusions would be briefly given; not so the facts. I hoped some readers might be sufficiently interested to study the literature for themselves. My intercourse with many Atheists and others led me to believe that quite a number of cultivated persons do not happen to have come across the works of the experimental schools of zoologists—such as T. H. Morgan's *Evolution and Adaptation* or Lool's *Dynamics of Life*; authors who can scarcely be regarded as "accepting miracle."

M. D. EDER.

THE LATEST "CONVERTED ATHEIST."

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Your reference to the alleged "converted Atheist," James Carl, strikes the true note.

When this gentleman was resident in London a year or two ago I was occasionally thrown into his company, and in conversation with him he displayed the grossest ignorance of the meaning of the word "Atheist"; indeed, he always seemed horror-stricken at the mention of the term.

I was also acquainted with him in the capacity of a conjuror and general adventurer. Is it possible that his latest rôle is that of mental juggler?

F. R. THEARSTONE.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Referring to the conversion of the "renowned Atheist," James Carl, by the Rev. A. J. Waldron, I beg to inform you that when questioned by myself and a few other members of the Camberwell Branch after the supposed conversion, he admitted that he always had a belief in something—meaning a Deity—and never was an Atheist. He on one occasion delivered a lecture from the N. S. S. platform in Brixton, and his lecture was of such a Theistic character that some of the members got up on the platform and opposed him. This conversion is like the remainder of the clap-trap that emanates from that ecclesiastical buffoon.

G. M. NICHOLLS.

National Secular Society.

REPORT OF MONTHLY EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD ON JULY 25.

The President, Mr. G. W. Foote, in the chair. There were also present:—Messrs. J. Barry, C. Bowman, R. Brooks, C. Cohen, E. A. Charlton, H. Cowell, H. Farmer, F. A. Davies, W. Leat, J. Marshall, Dr. R. T. Nichols, J. Neate, C. Quinton, F. Schaller, S. Samuels, F. Wood, E. Woodward, V. Roger, and the Secretary.

The minutes of previous meeting having been confirmed, and monthly cash statement adopted, the Secretary reported that Demonstrations had already been arranged for Victoria Park and Parliament Hill. Correspondence was read concerning the exposure of a person calling himself Carl who had recently posed at Bristol as a "converted Atheist," and who had falsely represented himself as having lectured for the Society's Branches.

The International Freethought Congress was discussed, and the following resolution was carried:—

"That this Executive regrets that it cannot see its way to arrange for a representation of the National Secular Society at the International Freethought Congress at Buda-Pesth in September—but hereby votes the sum of one hundred francs towards the Congress expenses."

A suggestion was discussed for sending an outdoor lecturer for a week or two to Bristol and other western towns; and eventually the matter was left in the President's hands to do whatever he found feasible.

The Sub-Committee elected at last meeting gave an interim report, and Mr. H. Cowell was added to their number.

Two new members were admitted, and other routine business transacted, and the meeting closed.

E. M. VANCE, *General Secretary*.

Fool Friends.

BY THE LATE COL. R. G. INGERSOLL.

NOTHING hurts a man, nothing hurts a party so terribly as fool friends.

A fool friend is the sewer of bad news, of slander, and all base and unpleasant things.

A fool friend always knows every mean thing that has been said against you and against the party.

He always knows where your party is losing, and the other is making large gains.

He always tells you of the good luck your enemy has had.

He implicitly believes every story against you, and kindly suspects your defence.

A fool friend is always full of a kind of stupid candor.

He is so candid that he always believes the statement of an enemy.

He never suspects anything on your side.

Nothing pleases him like being shocked by horrible news concerning some good man.

He never denies a lie unless it is in your favor.

He is always finding fault with his party, and is continually begging pardon for not belonging to the other side.

He is frightfully anxious that all his candidates should stand well with the opposition.

He is forever seeing the faults of his party and the virtues of the other.

He generally shows his candor by scratching the ticket.

He always searches every nook and corner of his conscience to find a reason for deserting a friend or a principle.

In the moment of victory he is magnanimously on your side.

In defeat he consoles you by repeating prophecies made after the event.

The fool friend regards your reputation as common prey for all the vultures, byenas, and jackals.

He takes a sad pleasure in your misfortunes.

He forgets his principles to gratify your enemies.

He forgives your maliguer, and slanders you with all his heart.

He is so friendly that you cannot kick him.

He generally talks for you, but always bets the other way.

He only is advancing in life whose heart is getting softer, whose blood warmer, whose brain quicker, whose spirit is entering into Living peace.—*John Ruskin*.

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), H. S. Wishart, 3.15, "Christian Socialism"; 6.15, "How I Became an Atheist."

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N.S.S.: Station-road, 11.30, Guy A. Aldred, "Trinitarian Heresy." Brockwell Park, Guy A. Aldred, 3.15, "Richard Carlile"; 6.15, "Hypatia."

KINGSLAND BRANCH N.S.S.: Ridley-road, 11.30, F. A. Davies, "The Devil Retired."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S.: Parliament Hill, 3.30, F. A. Davies, a Lecture.

WEST HAM BRANCH N.S.S.: Outside Maryland Point Station (G.E.R.), 7, W. J. Ramsey, "Some Gospel Tales."

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

WOOLWICH BRANCH N.S.S.: Beresford-square, 11.30, Andrew Allison, a Lecture.

COUNTRY.

PLYMOUTH RATIONALIST SOCIETY (Foresters' Hall, The Octagon): 7, F. Daniel, a Lecture.

OUTDOOR.

DEWSBURY: Market-place, 7, C. J. Atkinson and G. Whitehead.

EDINBURGH BRANCH N.S.S.: The Meadows, 3, Debate between N. Levey and F. Hamilton; The Mound, 7, meets for Discussion.

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

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