

THE Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

VOL. XXVII.—No. 42

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 20, 1907

PRICE TWOPENCE

The superstition of to-day is our inveterate belief that the world exists for some other coming world—in heaven or on the earth.—M. D. CONWAY.

Mr. Campbell's New Manifesto.

WHEN the Rev. R. J. Campbell was a preacher at Brighton he did not attract wide attention. He does not appear to have had even a great local reputation. His fortune was made when he came into Dr. Parker's good graces. During that remarkable man's last illness Mr. Campbell became what is slangily called his "supply" and eventually his successor. Dr. Parker built up the City Temple and Mr. Campbell stepped into it by rare good luck. We do not mean that he had no merit; we simply mean that the City Temple provided him with a conspicuous platform and a big sounding-board. That is why his voice carries so far. We do not believe he would ever have been heard in anything like the same way otherwise. His pleasant persuasive manner is undoubtedly one of the secrets of his success, but it would never have placed him in his present position. He is far from being a great orator, and his latest volume of *New Theology Sermons* proves that he is not in the proper sense of the words a great preacher. These sermons all reach a good level; they never reach a high level. By the side of any sermon of Robertson's they are deficient in richness and strength; by the side of any sermon of Newman's they are commonplace. The style flows on freely and agreeably, but it is monotonous, and it ends by being rather tiresome. One longs for the sentence that "makes you sit up," the magic word that penetrates and thrills, the glowing passage that rouses and electrifies. Of these things there is not a trace. Mr. Campbell's preaching is suited to the average City Temple audience—and to nobody else. It may be said that this shows he has hit the mark. Perhaps so. But a man with a vein of genius in him cannot hide it. It will show itself in spite of every effort at concealment. It will betray him now and then to the sagacious listener, who will say to himself "That is his own; it is a flash from the centre; I see his naked soul in the light of that self-revelation."

There is even a certain weakness in Mr. Campbell's perorations, if we may employ that technical word. He is liable to end on a gasp. "No tomb," he says, "can bury love for ever, for love is God." That is the close of one sermon. The close of the next sermon is still more brief and abrupt: "Trust it for all in all." And the close of the very next one is little better. Such a facile pulpit trick (we use "trick" in its old and less sinister sense) accuses a certain poverty of resource. It suggests that the preacher (if we may be allowed the expression) is intellectually as well as bodily out of breath.

But it is not so much Mr. Campbell's sermons as his Introduction to them that we wish to deal with at present. We may take this Introduction as a sort of New Theology manifesto, and as such we shall criticise it.

The first paragraph shows no lack of self-confidence. On the next page Mr. Campbell says that "all he cares to do is to deliver his own message, and leave the

effect to the test of time." (Which, by the way, is unhappily expressed, for it is the message itself, rather than its result, that is to be, and must be, left to the test of time.) But in this first paragraph Mr. Campbell denies the contention of some of its critics "that the New Theology is not a gospel." He settles that peremptorily by declaring that "There is no other gospel," and that the New Theology is Christianity—that is to say, Christianity "stripped of its mischievous dogmatic accretions." The preaching of the New Theology moves people to "purer and nobler living," and it is broadly hinted that any other preaching which does this is only the New Theology in disguise. We may see, therefore, that Mr. Campbell does not intend to be sat upon; and also that he does not intend to suffer from any oppression of modesty.

Assailants of the New Theology point out that its advocates differ amongst themselves as to what it is. Mr. Campbell replies with "you're another." "Do adherents of older theologies," he asks, "agree?" And he answers—"It is a patent fact that they do not, and it is a patent fact that they are all a wretched failure; the world is gradually ceasing to take notice of them, and they have almost no influence upon either science or literature, not to speak of social and political life." There is something very feminine in this argument by retort. One understands now why Mr. Campbell gets "photographed like this, and photographed like that," after the manner of a star actress. "I'm inconsistent, am I," he seems to say, "in playing this part? Well, so are you; besides, you can't act at all. See!" It is a good deal worse than "Nobody marks you, Signor Benedick"—for there is no fun going on, and no love lost between the parties.

Mr. Campbell would not talk in this way if he were a thinker. With all his engaging qualities, he is anything but profound. He is not even sagacious. What he really has that differentiates him from so many of his clerical brethren is a vein of honesty. Lots of them see all that he sees, and some of them a great deal more, but they hold their tongues. They know, as he does not, that his New Theology is simply the Old Theology purged and purified to a certain extent by the spirit of Freethought. What he retains is just as incredible as what he rejects. Instead of crossing the Rubicon between Faith and Reason, he halts in midstream, and congratulates himself that he has reached a secure and dignified resting-place—or rather residence, for he does not contemplate the possibility of ever having to shift again. This is perfectly apparent to wiser heads than his own, inside as well as outside the Churches. If he will take the trouble to read the Pope's new manifesto, he will see that the clever men who run the Catholic Church at Rome know exactly what the New Theology or Modernism (they are the same thing) really is, and what it logically leads to. Mr. Campbell fancies he is helping to preserve Christianity; as a matter of fact, he is helping to destroy it; and that is why we wish him good-speed.

When the leading oracle of the New Theology declares that the "older theologies" are "all a wretched failure," he might see, if he could look far enough, that he is condemning Christianity itself. That religion has been in the world for nearly two thousand years; for a thousand years it has held

undisputed sway over Europe—including Russia; it holds under its influence the vast population, descended from Europeans, in North and South America; it has had control of all educational agencies, as well as the command of wealth and political power; it boasts of its divine origin, and its divine maintenance; it has a book which it calls a divine revelation; its purpose is to teach the truth, and its object is to save the world; and yet, after all that long innings, under the most favorable conditions, which will certainly never be repeated, Mr. Campbell declares it to be "a wretched failure." We are ready to take his word for that. And when he prophesies that "the New Theology will have a different tale to tell," we shrug our shoulders and smile. We are satisfied that Christianity has had its chance—and lost it; for no religion ever has a second opportunity.

Christianity is an oriental religion, and every oriental religion rests upon the eternal conflict between "spirit" and "matter." Matter is specialised as the "flesh," and hence the profound asceticism of the East, which is but mildly reflected in Protestant puritanism, or even in Catholic celibacy. The carnal mind, as Scripture declares, is at enmity with God. Original sin is legendarily connected with the fall of Adam; in reality it is involved in the conception of the endless war between body and soul. The former is the Devil's stronghold; the latter is God's. Out of this there arises "the sense of sin." Sin, in the Bible, always means sin against God. When we talk of sinning against our fellow-men, theology is dying and humanity is taking its place. Mr. Campbell fails to perceive this. He imagines that "sin" can be turned upside down without making any difference. He echoes the teaching of Ingersoll that the only sin is selfishness. He denies that man can sin specifically against God at all. "There is no sin against God," he says, "which is not a sin against man; there is no form of wrongdoing which does not find a social expression." He continues:—

"This is true even of secret sin, for anything that tends to the injury of one's own moral nature injures society in the long run. It seems to be perfectly easy to use exaggerated language about sin and yet to live a thoroughly selfish life. The sooner we get back to a healthy realism in our estimate of wrongdoing the better. It ought to be self-evident that sin has never injured God except through man, and that the moral value of a man's life is to be measured by its effect upon the common life of humanity. All the dogmatic considerations which have been woven around this subject are either useless or untrue, mostly the latter. It has occupied in Christian thought a place disproportionate to its true worth."

The substance of this is true. Strip it of pious verbiage, and it is the teaching of Ingersoll, the teaching of Secularism.

Schopenhauer said that Pantheism bowed God out of the universe. Mr. Campbell bows God out of the vast territory of "sin." All he allows Him is a polite mention on the record. And he fancies that nothing has happened!

Even the "world to come" is placed by Mr. Campbell in a very subordinate position. He is kind enough to say that he "does not mean that the Christian should ignore belief in a life to come." At the same time, he urges "the substitution of a true for a false other-worldism." He affirms that "the Church of Jesus originally knew of no commission to get men ready for a heaven beyond the tomb." But surely this is one of those half-truths which are the most dangerous falsehoods. The early Church expected the second coming of Jesus; if they were not immediately going to him, he was shortly coming to them—which was much the same thing; and, beyond that, there was the everlasting life for the saved, and the everlasting fire for the lost. It is really absurd for Mr. Campbell to suggest that the early Church simply preached a kind of Socialist millennium.

G. W. FOOTE.

(To be concluded.)

The Efficacy of Prayer.

MESSRS. DENT AND CO. have just issued in their excellent "Everyman's Library" a new edition of Dr. Francis Galton's *Inquiries into Human Faculty and Its Development*. The edition is the more welcome as the book has been long out of print, and only procurable at a very fancy price. The volume is revised by the author, and should be carefully studied by all who are interested in problems of race development. Dr. Galton has, however, thought fit to eliminate from the new edition two chapters contained in the earlier one on "Possibilities of Theocratic Intervention" and "The Objective Efficacy of Prayer." As he thinks their omission improves the general plan of the work, it would perhaps be out of place for readers to cavil at his decision. Still, the two chapters were of special interest to Freethinkers; and as few may have the original work, and many, I hope, will purchase the new issue, an indication of their scope may prove of interest.

Dr. Galton's book is concerned with a study of human nature, in both its normal and abnormal condition, with a view of reaching some scientific principle of race culture. In the course of his inquiry the question is raised of how far trustworthy is the statistical method when applied to human nature, and also whether the possibility of divine interference may not vitiate the conclusions reached. Dr. Galton's reply is that the interference of deity is voluntary or solicited. If the former, he shows at some length that this interference cannot effect the average result, and that we may ignore it in our considerations. God is put out of court, save on the assumption that he deliberately misleads man in order to amuse himself with their blunders. This was Milton's opinion of the way in which God acted in relation to scientific investigators; but, as Dr. Galton says, the theory would probably find few supporters nowadays. The solicited interference involves prayer; and to an inquiry as to the efficacy of prayer Dr. Galton devotes some twenty-one pages of his work.

After pointing out that any argument based on the general use of prayer is suicidal, since it would give an equal value to *all* prayers, and that the general habit of prayer proves the tendency of man to "invest his God with the character of a human despot," he deals with the simple statistical inquiry, Are prayers answered, or are they not? The method adopted is to gather cases "in which the same object is keenly pursued by two classes similar in their physical, but opposite in their spiritual, state; the one class being prayerful, the other materialistic."

It need hardly be said that the method pursued fails to yield any proof. Dr. Galton points out that although the medical works of Europe teem with records of disease, he has failed to find any instance in which a medical man of repute has attributed recovery to the influence of prayer. Statistical societies also ignore the agency of prayer on disease, or on anything else. This universal habit of ignoring the power of prayer is, he says, "a very important fact"; for, "had prayers for the sick any notable effect, it is incredible but that the doctors who are always on the watch.....should have noticed it." In support of this he quotes from a memoir by Dr. Guy on the average age reached by the various affluent classes from 1758 to 1843. Omitting decimals, the average of the clergy is 69 years, members of Royal houses 64, doctors 67, lawyers 66, gentry 20, naval officers 68. Thus members of Royal houses, who are constantly prayed for, have the lowest life value of the affluent classes. The clergy, it is true, show a slightly higher value than the others, but this will be explained by so many of them leading an easy country life. The difference is reversed on taking those only who live under the same conditions, when clergy, lawyers, and medical men stand at 66.42, 66.51, and 67.04 respectively. Thus under equal conditions the clergy have the lowest life value of all the three.

An inquiry into the proportion of deaths at the time of birth among the praying and non-praying classes gives the same result. The proportion is absolutely unaffected by it. Again—

"When we pray in our Liturgy that the nobility may be endued with grace, wisdom, and understanding, we pray for that which is clearly incompatible with insanity. Does that frightful scourge spare our nobility? Does it spare very religious people more than others? The answer is an emphatic negative to both of these questions. The nobility, probably from the want of wholesome restraints felt in humbler walks of life, and very religious people of all denominations, probably in part from their meditations on the terrors of hell, are peculiarly subject to it. Religious madness is very common indeed."

English history is next made to yield its testimony in the remark that "Biographies do not show that devotional influences have clustered in any remarkable degree round the youth of those who, whether by their talents or social position, have left a mark upon our English history." Lord Campbell, in the preface to his *Lives of the Chancellors*, points out that while the Lord Chancellors have been men of distinguished ability, they have not been remarkable for their piety. Dr. Galton also dwells upon the enormous power exercised by the governing families of England, *apropos* of the belief that the descendants of the righteous shall continue and that those of the wicked shall fail. And he asks whether the ducal families, who have and do wield so much power, have been distinguished for their devout habits either in their origin or history. The descent of some of our ruling houses from Lucy Walters, Barbara Villiers, Nell Gwynne, and Louise De Querouaille, goes far to answer the question. The procedure of Convocation, always opened with prayer, has never inspired the outer world with respect, while the histories of the Church Council are most painful to read.

Commercial enterprises are not any more successful in the hands of pious people than in those of a non-religious character—rather the reverse. Above all, insurance offices, keen as they are to note every circumstance that has any bearing on their business, take no account of the habit of prayer. Says Dr. Galton:—

"If prayerful habits had influence on temporal success, it is very probable that insurance offices, of at least some description, would long ago have discovered and made allowance for it. It would be most unwise, from a business point of view, to allow the devout, supposing their greater longevity even probable, to obtain annuities at the same low rate as the profane. Before insurance offices accept a life, they make confidential inquiries into the antecedents of the applicant, and a schedule has to be filled up. But such a question, or such a heading to a column of the schedule, has never been heard of as, 'Does he habitually use family prayers and private devotions?' Insurance offices, so wakeful to sanitary influences, absolutely ignore prayer as one of them. The same is true for insurances of all descriptions, as those connected with fire, ships, lightning, hail, accidental death, and cattle sickness. How is it possible to explain why Quakers, who are most devout, and most shrewd men of business, have ignored these considerations, except on the ground that they do not really believe in what they and others freely assert about the efficacy of prayer?"

Finally, it is pointed out that the belief in the efficacy of prayer must be given up as other beliefs associated with religion have already been surrendered. Witches were generally believed in until the close of the last (the eighteenth) century. The teaching that the touch of the sovereign could cure the sick was part of the regular Church Service until the time of George II. Ordeals, logical corollaries from religious beliefs, have also been abandoned. The miraculous power of relics and images, auguries of good or evil, the importance of dreams, is only believed in by the most illiterate. This

"is the natural course of events, just as the Waters of Jealousy and the Urim and Thummin of the Mosaic law had become obsolete under the later Jewish kings. The civilised world has already yielded an enormous amount of honest conviction to the inexorable requirements of

solid fact; and it seems to me clear that all belief in the efficacy of prayer, in the sense in which I have been considering it, must be yielded also."

Although there is nothing new to readers of the *Freethinker* in the above arguments, they are of interest as coming from one of our leading scientific workers, and particularly as these sections are omitted in the popular edition of the *Inquiries into Human Faculty*. There is no reason whatever to believe that their excision is due to any change of opinion on the author's part, which is also worth noting. Probably Dr. Galton is of opinion that the belief in the efficacy of prayer is not held as strongly as when the book was first written, and that there is not any strong necessity for its reproduction. If that is so, one may be permitted to express the belief that it is possible to take a too rosy view of the situation. It is true that many religious leaders are now asserting that prayer has only a subjective value—that is, that prayer has no effect whatever in modifying the course of events. But, while this is to be welcomed as a change in the right direction, two things ought to be borne in mind. First, this is the expressed belief of the minority; and even they have only been forced into the position because of the attack on the objective efficacy of prayer. And the assault that has been successful so far with them would be equally successful with others. But beyond the minority lies the majority. With them there is still a professed belief, at least, in the efficacy of prayer. Stories are still circulated of charitable homes maintained by prayers, and of illness cured by prayers. We still have prayers connected with many of the mundane affairs of life, and even though much of this be mere form, the sooner this empty formality is settled the better. We are still, as a matter of fact, too apt to measure the extent of the world's enlightenment by ourselves. We have dispensed with superstitious beliefs, many of our religious acquaintances have also dispensed with those of the cruder kind, but do not let us too readily assume that the rest of the world is in a similar position. Much work has still to be done; and for the reason that Dr. Galton's new edition will circulate among the masses, one regrets the more the exclusion of a very convincing piece of writing.

C. COHEN.

"The Net and Its Meshes."

RECENTLY, the Bishop of Durham visited the Parish Church of Great Yarmouth for the purpose of preaching a special sermon at the service of "The Blessing of the Nets," and in anticipation of the Church Congress. It is well-known that Dr. Moule is a distinguished member of the Evangelical Party in the English Church, and nothing is more noticeable in the sermon just mentioned than its thorough evangelicalism. The text is John xxi. 7: "Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord." Jesus, being now risen from the dead, "manifested himself to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias; and he manifested himself on this wise. Simon Peter, Thomas, Nathanael, the two sons of Zebedee, and two other disciples" went a fishing:—

"That night they took nothing. But when day was now breaking, Jesus stood on the beach; howbeit the disciples knew not that it was Jesus. Jesus therefore saith unto them, Children, have ye aught to eat? They answered him, No. And he said unto them, Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and ye shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes. That disciple therefore whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord."

Bishop Moule treats that passage as if it contained veritable history. He believes that the risen Lord performed a mighty miracle on the occasion. His faith evidently can swallow anything; and the

literalness of his language is quite pathetic. "They toiled all the night," he says—

"And the net had never met a fish, nor a fish the net. Then there was put forth from the shore a will and power which guided the net to the fish, and, behold, the prey was taken, and the fishermen were made glad; and there was a something about the whole event and its conditions which flashed into the soul of John what his eyes had only begun dimly to perceive—that the will and power came from that figure seen upon the shore, and that that figure was the Lord."

The story, as thus interpreted, is so perfectly silly that every thinking person must turn away from it with disgust.

After expounding the miracle in that fashion, the Bishop passes on to a consideration of the Blessing of the Nets. "What heart within these walls," he asks, "has not been moved by that old and simple ceremonial, as we meet here within the peaceful walls of the house of God, with the lamps around us of the Sabbath evening, and calmly commit to the Almighty's care the toilers of the deep for the harvest of the sea?" But what is the use of praying over the nets and over the lives of the fishermen? "Why, why in the last resort do we do it? Why, under a silent heaven and amid a thousand mysteries, do we go on praying about the nets and the fishers?" This is the Bishop's answer:—

"The real, ultimate reason is because God in his work, speaking out of eternity, has told us to pray. He has not explained to us the mystery of prayer, but he has told us to pray, and guaranteed to us that prayer is a reality to him."

But we submit that this is by no means a satisfactory answer; in fact it is no answer at all. Evidently words come easily to his lordship; but will he condescend to tell us just exactly what he means by them? To what work does he refer as the medium through which God's command to pray was ever conveyed to men? Who saw the work and heard the command? When did God guarantee to mankind that prayer, in spite of its mystery to men, is a reality to him? Does praying about the nets and the fishers really mean any more than wishing them good luck, or has it, as a matter of hard fact, any better effect? If two fishing boats go out to-night and encounter a dreadful storm, the one having received a Bishop's blessing, and the other not, will the former have any better chance of escape from a watery grave than the latter? Do the forces of Nature ever distinguish between piety and non-piety? Do they recognise prayer at all?

Dr. Moule seems to be aware that he is face to face with a stupendous difficulty here; but instead of removing it he gets more and more under the crushing weight of it. He appeals to science, and science mocks him for his pains. He says:—

"There was a time, not so long ago, when the progress of material discovery and human thought seemed strangely—and, many Christians felt, formidably—to be leading man's mind away from the hope that a living God will indeed answer prayer, and seemed to be shutting them up within a world which contained matter and its forces alone and sole. But things have moved since then, and some of the very latest discoveries and guesses of the experts of science, seeking and penetrating more deeply into what matter really is, have been led down—or, shall we say, have been led up?—to a region where mere materialism cannot breathe. Some of the last suggestions and the last discoveries seem to carry us very far indeed towards the point where what we commonly talk of as material mass is seen, so to speak, in its very foundations—seen, as it were, almost from its underside, resting upon what? God; upon something which, after all, cannot be called matter; upon something which can only be explained as 'spirit.'"

The Bishop must have been completely out of breath when he reached the end of that curiously constructed and hopelessly involved passage; and to what does the whole of it amount? Seriously, is it not unscientific in the extreme to speak of matter as *resting upon anything*? and even if it did rest on anything its doing so would not affect its nature. What matter rests on or springs from, if it does

either, no one can tell. The one thing beyond doubt is that no discoveries of science support the claims of theology.

It is true that the atom has broken up; but it is not true that the electrons are any less material than the atoms. The electrical theory of matter does not cut the ground from under materialism. Even Sir Oliver Lodge admits as much as this. But the Bishop of Durham is reckless enough to assert that now "we see the mass which makes the visible and tangible world almost, so to speak, visibly resting on and springing from the utter mystery of eternal spirit, eternal will, eternal thought." It is difficult to understand how a gentleman of education and culture could so barefacedly and so radically misrepresent the latest teachings of science on so important a subject, and especially how he could conscientiously express the view that "the instinct of prayer will get a reinforcement from the very latest thought about mass and matter, about force and motion." Does he not know that the New Theologians, in consequence of their acceptance of the discoveries of science, have repudiated the orthodox conception of prayer, and simply regard it as a man's natural demand upon life?

The Bishop proceeds to speak of the net of the Church. The business of the Church is to catch men. The clergy are spiritual nets, wielded by Jesus Christ, whom Clement of Alexandria addressed thus:—

"All praise to thy Name
Thou Fisher supreme
Of souls for salvation
In life's ocean stream."

Now, according to Dr. Moule, the Church cannot catch the fish without being blessed with the prayers of the saints. The net may be perfect in texture and construction, and its meshes may be all that can be desired, and it may be discreetly spread in the stream of human life; but the fish will not come in unless it gets duly blessed:—

"As with the net of the literal fisherman's toil in the literal sea, so with this mysterious net of organisation and possible influence cast into the deep ocean-stream of human life. It will do nothing without blessing. There must be blessing, or the net will be as fruitless for its work as was the net of the seven apostles in the waters of Galilee till the blessing came shooting from the shore, and all was altered because the mighty influence of love was upon the finny tribe of the deep, and the toiling men for whose sustenance God had made them."

One cannot help smiling while reading such inane puerilities. One wonders how an intelligent congregation can sit and patiently listen to such unmitigated nonsense. Even a Bishop would not talk like that outside the pulpit. Does Dr. Moule seriously believe that the nets cast into the sea with a Bishop's blessing will lure a greater number of fish to their destruction than those that did not enjoy such a holy send-off? Does he imagine that the farm of a praying man yields more abundant and wholesome crops than that of his non-praying neighbor? The idea is laughably absurd on the face of it, and to dwell on it would be an inexcusable waste of time.

The Bishop admits that the nets he blessed at Great Yarmouth are, to their prey, instruments of destruction. Had he been a vegetarian, he could not have blessed them. However, "the net of the Kingdom of God, of the Church of Christ, is a net meant to entrap and to imprison souls into life eternal, and to bring them into captivity to the love of Christ and to the liberty which it brings." The Bishop becomes hopelessly confused and self-contradictory here. He ends by saying that the clergy are not fishermen, but so many bits of the Gospel net. "The Lord is the Fisherman. We are the net, and we want him to wield the net his own way; and we want him to order so that the prey that we long to take for its blessing—the souls we want to entrap and fix for him—may be brought in through the influence of the nets made ready for his work." Well, now, it was

Jesus who blessed the nets in the sea of Galilee, and it was Jesus who wooed the fish into them. Why is it that the Gospel nets must be blessed by men and women who can pray? If Jesus wields the Gospel nets "his own way," why does not his blessing come shooting from the shore of heaven, and why is not all altered because the almighty influence of his love is upon the souls of men and women who are perishing in the sea of death? Has the Christ of God less influence over human beings than Jesus of Nazareth had over the fish of Tiberius? The truth is that the Bishop's Gospel is as void of truth as the story of the miraculous draught of fishes—as the story of the conversion of John Stuart Mill, told for the first time upwards of thirty years after his death. Instead of catching human souls, which he is said to need and love so much, Christ is to-day losing them by the thousand. The nets are steadily emptying, not filling. The preaching of the old Gospel is still a paying concern, as the Bishop of Durham can well testify; but it has ceased to hold the public ear.

J. T. LLOYD.

How Religions Are Found Out.

BY THE LATE COL. R. G. INGERSOLL.

MAN is a being capable of pleasure and pain. The fact that he can enjoy himself—that he can obtain good—gives him courage—courage to defend what he has, courage to try to get more. The fact that he can suffer pain sows in his mind the seeds of fear. Man is also filled with curiosity. He examines. He is astonished by the uncommon. He is forced to take an interest in things because things affect him. He is liable at every moment to be injured. Countless things attack him. He must defend himself. As a consequence his mind is at work; his experience in some degree tells him what may happen; he prepares; he defends himself from heat and cold. All the springs of action lie in the fact that he can suffer and enjoy. The savage has great confidence in his senses. He has absolute confidence in his eyes and ears. It requires many years of education and experience before he becomes satisfied that things are not always what they appear. It would be hard to convince the average barbarian that the sun does not actually rise and set—hard to convince him that the earth turns. He would rely upon appearances and would record you as insane.

As man becomes civilised, educated, he finally has more confidence in his reason than in his eyes. He no longer believes that a being called Echo exists. He has found out the theory of sound, and he then knows that the wave of air has been returned to his ear, and the idea of a being who repeats his words fades from his mind; he begins then to rely, not upon appearances, but upon demonstration, upon the result of investigation. At last he finds that he has been deceived in a thousand ways, and he also finds that he can invent certain instruments that are far more accurate than his senses—instruments that add power to his sight, to his hearing, and to the sensitiveness of his touch. Day by day he gains confidence in himself.

There is in the life of the individual, as in the life of the race, a period of credulity, when not only appearances are accepted without question, but the declarations of others. The child in the cradle or in the lap of its mother, has implicit confidence in fairy stories—believes in giants and dwarfs, in beings who can answer wishes, who create castles and temples and gardens with a thought. So the race, in its infancy, believed in such beings and in such creations. As the child grows, facts take the place of the old beliefs, and the same is true of the race.

As a rule, the attention of man is drawn first, not to his own mistakes, not to his own faults, but to the mistakes and faults of his neighbors. The same is true of a nation—it notices first the eccentricities and peculiarities of other nations. This is especially

true of religious systems. Christians take it for granted that their religion is true, that there can be about that no doubt, no mistake. They begin to examine the religions of other nations. They take it for granted that all these other religions are false. They are in a frame of mind to notice contradictions, to discover mistakes and to apprehend absurdities. In examining other religions they use their common sense. They carry in the hand the lamp of probability. The miracles of other Christs, or of the founders of other religions, appear unreasonable—they find that they are not supported by evidence. Most of the stories excite their laughter. Many of the laws seem cruel, many of the ceremonies absurd. These Christians satisfy themselves that they are right in their first conjecture—that is, that other religions are all made by men. Afterward, the same arguments they have used against other religions were found to be equally forcible against their own. They find that the miracles of Buddha rest upon the same kind of evidence as the miracles in the Old Testament, as the miracles in the New—that the evidence in the one case is just as weak and unreliable as in the other. They also find that it is just as easy to account for the existence of Christianity as for the existence of any other religion, and they find that the human mind in all countries has travelled substantially the same road and has arrived at substantially the same conclusions.

It may be truthfully said that Christianity, by the examination of other religions, laid the foundation for its own destruction. The moment it examined another religion it became a doubter, a sceptic, an investigator. It began to call for proof. This course being pursued in the examination of Christianity itself, reached the result that had been reached as to other religions. In other words, it was impossible for Christians successfully to attack other religions without showing that their own religion could be destroyed. The fact that only a few years ago we were all provincial should be taken into consideration. A few years ago, nations were unacquainted with each other—no nation had any conception of the real habits, customs, religions, and ideas of any other. Each nation imagined itself to be the favored of heaven—the only one to whom God had condescended to make known his will—the only one in direct communication with angels and deities. Since the circumnavigation of the globe, since the invention of the steam-engine, the discovery of electricity, the nations of the world have become acquainted with each other, and we now know that the old ideas were born of egotism, and that egotism is the child of ignorance and savagery.

Think of the egotism of the ancient Jews, who imagined that they were "the chosen people"—the only ones in whom God took the slightest interest! Imagine the egotism of the Catholic Church, claiming that it is the only church—that it is continually under the guidance of the Holy Ghost, and that the Pope is infallible and occupies the place of God. Think of the egotism of the Presbyterian, who imagines that he is one of "the elect," and that billions of ages before the world was created, God, in the eternal counsel of his own good pleasure, picked out this particular Presbyterian, and, at the same time, determined to send billions and billions to the pit of eternal pain. Think of the egotism of the man who believes in special providence. The old philosophy, the old religion, was made in about equal parts of ignorance and egotism. This earth was the universe. The sun rose and set simply for the benefit of "God's chosen people." The moon and stars were made to beautify the night, and all the countless hosts of heaven were for no other purpose than to decorate what might be called the ceiling of the earth. It was also believed that this firmament was solid—that up there the gods lived, and that they could be influenced by the prayers and desires of men.

We have now found that the earth is only a grain of sand, a speck, an atom in an infinite universe. We now know that the sun is a million times larger

than the earth, and that other planets are millions of times larger than the sun; and when we think of these things, the old stories of the Garden of Eden and Sinai and Calvary seem infinitely out of proportion.

At last we have reached a point where we have the candor and the intelligence to examine the claims of our own religion precisely as we examine those of other countries. We have produced men and women great enough to free themselves from the prejudices born of provincialism—from the prejudices, we might almost say, of patriotism. A few people are great enough not to be controlled by the ideas of the dead—great enough to know that they are not bound by the mistakes of their ancestors—and that a man may actually love his mother without accepting her belief. We have even gone further than this, and we are now satisfied that the only way to really honor parents is to tell our best and highest thoughts.

Acid Drops.

The *Christian Commonwealth* likes to blow hot or cold according to circumstances. It notes the fact with pleasure when any leading Socialist calls himself a Christian, and represents Socialism and Christianity as one and the same thing. That is all right. It gives Christianity a leg up. But the case is altered when a leading Socialist calls himself an Atheist, and represents Socialism and Atheism as one and the same thing. That is all wrong. It gives Atheism a leg up—which will never do.

Last week the *C. C.* professed respect for Mr. Robert Blatchford's "personal opinion about Christianity," but said it was "peculiar" because it was "shared by very few men." This, by the way, is not true. There are more than a "few" men who disbelieve Christianity; and to put "very" after the "few" is mere silliness. That, however, is not our point. The *C. C.* goes on to say that, as Mr. Blatchford's opinion of Christianity is so peculiar, he "incurs a very grave responsibility in associating it with Socialism, and trying to spread it as part of the Socialist teaching." Now we do not understand that Mr. Blatchford has really done this. He declares, for his own part, that he regards Christianity as standing in the way of Socialism; but he does not commit the *Clarion* as a paper to that view, and he certainly does not seek to commit anyone outside it. We believe that Mr. Blatchford holds aloof from all Socialist organisations, thinking that he can serve his cause better as a journalistic free-lance.

But suppose Mr. Blatchford had done what the *C. C.* alleges. In that case, he has only done what the Rev. R. J. Campbell has done—in the opposite direction. Mr. Campbell's opinion of Christianity is quite as "peculiar" as Mr. Blatchford's, and is "shared by very few men"—certainly not by more than those who share Mr. Blatchford's. Yet the reverend gentleman, in his *New Theology*, devotes a whole section of the penultimate chapter to the subject of "Christianity and Collectivism." He declares himself a Socialist, and proceeds to say that "the New Theology is the theology of this movement." In the opening chapter he says in a marginal heading that "The New Theology is spiritual Socialism." And again that "The New Theology is but the religious articulation of the social movement." Nothing could be plainer. Mr. Campbell asserts in that same opening chapter that "The waggon of Socialism needs to be hitched to the star of religious faith." This has never been censured in the *Christian Commonwealth*. It reserves its censure for Mr. Blatchford when he asserts that Socialism should be hitched on to Freethought.

There never was any "cheek" in the world like Christian "cheek." Christians are utterly incapable of impartiality. They always assume their own right to special treatment. They think it is enough for Freethinkers to be tolerated. They are astonished and cross when Freethinkers claim equality of opportunity. In short, they fancy the world was made for them; and this nonsense will have to be knocked out of them somehow.

"If Socialism," the *C. C.* says, "means an attack on every form of Christianity, it may safely be predicted that it will not succeed." But that does not necessarily follow. Our contemporary's logic is good company for its grammar.

Our contemporary's prediction that if Socialists "dissociate themselves from an attack on Biblical Christianity" their banner will attract "crowds of enthusiastic supporters" may be dismissed as one of those mental exercises which George Eliot called "the most gratuitous form of error." Not that in this case it is unnatural. People brought up on Bible Christianity are likely to have a taste for prophecy.

There was a women's meeting on the last day of the Church Congress. One of the speakers was Miss Morley, head of the Young Women's Christian Association, London. She said it was the duty of women to share in the conflict against the world, the flesh, and the devil. "Under the first of these heads," the report says, "she would place the present-day rush after pleasure and wealth; under the second, impurity, intemperance, and love of luxury; and under the third, the spread of Rationalism." Good old devil!

Rev. Leonard Hills went all the way from London to tell a number of people in the Seamen's Bethel, Workington, "What John Bull ought to know." This was his way of christening the Anglo-Israelite theory. Mr. Hills said that Great Britain and her Colonies represented the tribe of Ephraim and the United States the tribe of Manasseh. King Edward was a lineal descendant of King David. Very likely! And the Rev. Leonard Hills must be a lineal descendant of Balaam's ass.

Secularists have been charged with cherishing a hymn which indulges in a reckless "glorification of whisky." Everybody knows how utterly groundless and libellous that wicked charge was. The other day, the Rev. J. Kneen, of Derby, expressed a desire that the Church should "enter into competition with the public-house," by making it "possible on church premises for young people to 'eat, drink, and be merry.'" Would we not be guilty of the crime of libel were we to suggest that Mr. Kneen is in favor of the religious glorification of strong drink? And yet such a charge would be much better grounded than was that made by the Christian Evidence lecturers against the United Secular Society.

Professor George Adam Smith, of Glasgow, who has spent some time in India, has discovered that "the psychological phenomena in all religions closely resemble each other," and that there are millions in India who live "a fairly sweet and wholesome commercial and family life," and face "death bravely under the guidance and support of religions which we in England have been taught to believe are wrong, irrational, and even immoral." Coming from a United Free Church divine, that is an exceedingly valuable testimony, and must prove alarming, if not anti-Christian, to many of his brethren. The world moves slowly, but it moves.

A reader of ours in the poor county of Bucks has been circularised by a parson in the rich county of Berks, who wants a new vicarage, and begs all and sundry to subscribe towards the cost, even if they can only send a shilling (half-penny stamps preferred). The reverend gentleman has a vicarage already at West Challow, but he wants another built at East Challow, where the population is 508 as compared with 170. The old vicarage is a mile and a half from the most convenient spot for a centre of his great labors among that vast population. That immense distance, of course, would tax the strength of the strongest walker. The reverend gentleman therefore asks for £1,000, which, with the amount realisable by the sale of the old vicarage, will enable him to build a nice new one. And as his parishioners are nearly all working people he begs that £1,000 from east, west, north, and south. He prints a testimonial to his worth and necessity from the Bishop of Oxford; and Lady Wantage and two Archdeacons have promised to help. Perhaps they will explain why the Rev. H. Sanders should solicit the world at large for the means to build himself a new residence, at a cost of (say) £1,500, in a small parish inhabited almost entirely by "working people." It certainly seems an odd proceeding for an apostle of the poor Carpenter of Nazareth. It is perfectly natural, however, if the reverend gentleman is simply engaged, like so many of his brethren, in making the best of both worlds.

The well-known American divine, the Rev. Dr. S. D. Gordon, says that Joshua was "a God-touched man," and that to to-day God "touches a man, and others, in large numbers or small, attend his word or pen." Dr. Gordon admits, however, that a man may mistake God's touch for that of his own genius. But the wonder is that God touches some and leaves others without the slightest tap. A greater wonder still is that he does not touch all alike, at least into

the knowledge of himself as their Maker and Ruler. Is it not possible, if not probable, that Dr. Gordon has been deluded into taking the touch of man's own faculties for that of God's Spirit? At any rate, God's touch left Joshua a savage, bloody soldier.

We had an "Acid Drop" of three or four lines last week on the Church Congress procession through the streets of Yarmouth. We were afterwards glad to see nearly two columns about it in the East-Anglian *Daylight*. The writer is ironic and sarcastic, and seems to have little love and less respect for "the men of God" (his own words). This is how he winds up:—

"The clergy expected reverence, but saw everywhere open mouths and smiles of amusement. No hat was doffed, no head bowed. The same people who gathered there would flock to see a rustic eat Norfolk 'busters' for a wager. The procession was merely regarded as a variation, a little less entertaining than somebody's circus. Even opponents of religion regret that the clergy did not march without the appendages of every petty civic event, or walk like other men to church. If this procession may be taken as an example of all others, no wonder irreverence is growing. Such a display may excite the religious spirit in old Madrid or Bruges, but in Yarmouth it has destroyed what little respect the multitude had for the Established Church."

This ought to warm up the Archbishop of Canterbury.

Bishop Sheepshanks, of Norwich, is the father of twelve children. Fancy inflicting a name like that on twelve helpless and innocent human beings! Luckily his lordship has a stipend of £4,5000 a year—so the pill is well-coated.

One of the ladies who "got God" during the Sunderland revival lunacy told a reporter, "Then I began to speak in a strange language—Chinese I think." That "I think" is delicious.

A local gentleman (the *Sunderland Echo* says) who remained through one of the revival prayer-meetings saw women "speaking in tongues." "When I went in," he said, "I saw a woman lying on the floor. She was going 'Ha, ha, ha,' in a sing-song tone. Then suddenly she began to make a noise like the crowing of a barn-door fowl, finishing with a sharp 'Phwitt, phwitt,' like the spit of an enraged cat. I said to a man next me, 'What's the matter with her? She's in an epileptic fit. Better send for a doctor.' 'No,' he replied solemnly, 'she is receiving the Holy Spirit.'"

There are many who still take fairy-tales for history. Miss E. Sisson, for example, tells us that a world-wide revival of religion is taking place just now. In India, California, Massachusetts, and Great Britain, the soul-saving business is booming. The multitudes everywhere are yearning to find the Savior. In India, "at a place of Hindu sacred pilgrimage, a hundred fire-baptised and tongue-gifted women and girls are singing Gospel hymns and telling the glad tidings to the multitudes who go there to bow down to the idols, and God is doing his work. They are so thirsty." Well, how do the people show their thirst? By throwing "mud, stones, sand, dirt, etc.," at the fair evangelists. "When I went out yesterday," says a seventeen-year-old girl, "the people throw a stone at me, and it hurt my eye a good deal." What base ingratitude! But it didn't really matter in the least, for, our sweet seventeen continues, "God gave me his life, and healed my eye." Hallelujah! What a glorious thing a revival of religion is!

Yes, "everywhere the holy fire of Divine grace is spreading with great rapidity." Such is the incoherent, nonsensical utterance of an irresponsible fanatic. Side by side with it we will place the following calm, deliberate deliverance just made by the Rev. Principal Henderson from the chair of the Baptist Union: "It remains scarcely doubtful that, so far as the profession and discipleship to Jesus Christ is concerned, the country is less and less satisfactory." We all know which of the two testimonies is the more reliable.

Even the *Yellow Press* does good once in a while. It has practically forced Mr. J. D. Rockefeller junr. to resign the leadership of the young men's Bible Class at the Fifth Avenue Baptist Church, New York. We offer Dr. Aked our sincere condolences. Perhaps Mr. Rockefeller is tired of playing the hypocrite on so conspicuous a scale.

The Rev. G. C. Britton, the new assistant at Whitefield's Tabernacle, is a man of wonderfully large faith. He believes in the Church of Christ "as the ever-living medium through which our Master's salvation is conveyed to individuals, communities, nations, and worlds." All we can say is that,

up to the present, the Church has been a shockingly ineffectual "medium." It has not yet conveyed "the Master's salvation" to one quarter of the inhabitants of *this* world yet. It may have been more successful in some other world, though no statistics to that effect have been issued. Would Mr. Britton tell how the work is progressing, say, in Mars? A report from there would be thrillingly interesting!

Mr. Britton will make his mark. "He is the same Jesus as walked in Galilee," says this young sky-pilot; "but [and what a difference is here!] he is my Lord and my God today. I follow on to know him and, following, I catch, now and again, a vision which lights darkest England." What a pity "darkest England" doesn't see this shining light! Even Whitefield-street, "the worst street in London," as Mr. Silvester Horne called it, has not caught sight of it yet! How easy it is to talk—nonsense!

The people who advocate "a systematic boycott" of the *Yellow Press* forget that the *Yellow Press* is a Christian product, and that, being such, it is most bitter, bigoted, and illogical in its opposition to and denunciation of Atheism, Agnosticism, and Secularism. *It is nothing if not religious.* The hostile resolution recently passed by the Baptist Union reflected on the stuff turned out by Christianity quite as much, to say the least, as on the character of the *Yellow Press*.

Mr. J. M. Robertson is a Rationalist. He also calls himself a Socialist. But the *Labor Leader* won't have him at any price. It refers to "J. M. Robertson and other anti-Socialist writers." How good men are misunderstood!

Rev. R. J. Campbell, in one of his *New Theology Sermons*, has been trying to improve Edward Fitzgerald's version of Omar Khayyam. Fitzgerald's sixty-sixth quatrain runs thus:—

"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.'"

Mr. Campbell disregards Fitzgerald's spelling and punctuation. Worse still, he turns the nobly simple "answer'd" in the last line into a theatrical and ridiculous "whispered."

The *Christian World* maintains that "there are no proofs that, in general, moral qualities—good or bad—are merely a matter of brain conformation." Does the *Christian World* know better than experienced surgeons who, by many operations, have demonstrated that moral qualities do depend on physical conditions? There was a boy of sixteen who was a liar, thief, and bully, without the least sense of moral responsibility. The surgeon removed a piece of bone from the centre of the skull, and in due time the lad's evil dispositions disappeared, and he began to behave like a normal human being. And there have been many such cases. This may be disquieting news to theologians, but it is demonstrably true.

Bishop Wilkinson is the most bigoted and unscrupulous of Christian apologists; but at the Church Congress he told the truth about the relation of France to Christianity. "We have there," he said, "the spectacle of a nation openly, ostentatiously, and of a set purpose ignoring God." "France, as a State," he continued, "has abjured Christianity; she is not, and does not, profess to be a Christian nation." The Bishop made this frank confession with tears of sorrow in his heart, but he made it without any reservation. It is encouraging to find a dignitary of the Church publicly admitting that there is at least one civilised nation which has had the courage to throw Christianity overboard.

But Bishop Wilkinson, having given his audience a quart of truths, immediately hurled at it a whole peck of falsehoods. He repeated, without one blush of guilt, his old lies about the results of secular education. He pretended to quote from relevant official documents to the following effect: "Our houses of correction are crowded with boys and girls"; "there is a loss of all notion of respect and duty"; "the young criminals spring up like weeds between the cracks of the pavement"; "juvenile crime is increasing at a truly frightful rate"; "our prisons are crowded and too small for the alarming increase of young criminals." Everybody knows that secular education was adopted in France some fifteen years ago; and during the interval crime in France has decreased at a greater rate than in any other civilised country. Official statistics tell us that boy crime had gone down twenty-five per cent., girl crime thirty-five

per cent., and adult crime almost twenty-five per cent. Now, we issue these two challenges to Bishop Wilkinson: first, to disprove those official figures, and, second to give the sources and exact dates of his oft-trotted-out quotations. Let him answer these challenges, or be branded as a deliberate falsifier of facts.

Mr. Victor Grayson, M.P., addressing a crowded meeting in the Mechanics' Hall, Saddleworth, the other night, declared that Socialism had nothing to do with theology or metaphysics. He himself was not an Atheist; he still believed that God was good. Perhaps the Almighty will take note of it, and feel grateful. There are some people, however, who, in view of recent reports of Mr. Grayson's utterances, will be apt to think that it doesn't much matter *what* he is—Atheist, Theist, Pantheist, or Pottheist.

The Nonconformists assert that, on the Education question, the Church of England is "neither sensible nor conciliatory." Is not this a case of the kettle calling the saucepan black? "The propositions of the Bishop of Manchester," it is alleged, "show that he and his friends have learnt nothing from this long controversy." Do not the articles and speeches of Free Churchmen show precisely the same thing regarding them? Has Dr. Clifford, for example, learnt anything from "this long controversy"? Then "this long controversy" has been a woeful waste of time and energy, as all religious controversies always are.

"If the contention between Church and Chapel does not cease," the *Daily Chronicle* says, "the nation, in despair, will seek peace in the secular solution." It is the same as saying that the quarrel between certain people enables certain other people to get their own back.

Principal Garvie, of New College, in delivering his inaugural address, said that God "objects to be bullied by science." We wish to ask Dr. Garvie two questions, namely, When did science bully God? and, When did God express his objection? We are not aware that science ever bullied the Deity, or had any dealings with him at all. We are, in fact, quite certain that the Principal entirely misrepresents science in this matter, and he probably misrepresents the Deity to the same extent.

What's in a name? Nothing, as Shakespeare put the question. A rose by any other name *would* smell as sweet. But in some cases a name is a great deal. Mr. Black is a very good name for an undertaker, and Mr. Curcall is a very good name for a doctor. But who wants an undertaker called Winkle, or a doctor called Gravestone? A doctor of that name has just become bankrupt at Chicago. He says that few people were strong-minded enough to engage his services. But couldn't he change his name? He might surely have discarded Gravestone and adopted Deathless or Dynot. A name containing some such suggestion would have been most advantageous in a Christian city, where people believe in heaven but keep out of it as long as possible.

Mrs. Besant lectured (or whatever she calls it now) at the City Temple last week on "The Spiritual Life for the Man of the World," with the Rev. R. J. Campbell in the chair. What a change from the old Hall of Science days! The lady has been many things—and right every time. Of course.

Miss Beatrice Grimshaw, in *The Strange South Seas*, displays quite a passion for those wonderful islands, whose charm has taxed the verbal resources of many great writers. And she tells of a Cingalese steward, who leaned over the schooner's rail as they were leaving Manahiki, and said: "He pretty good place, that. All the time dancing, singing, eating, no working—he all same place as heaven. O my God, I plenty wish I stopping there, I no wanting any heaven then!" Nobody ever does want to go to heaven if he has access to a jolly place on earth.

Rev. R. W. Colquhoun, vicar of St. Catherine's, Ventnor, has been sermonising "men only" on the fatuous old question, "The hen or the egg; which came first?" We suggest another theme for his eloquence—"Which came first, the fool or the preacher?"

The Bishop of Stepney "wants the working men of this country to shove the old 'bus of the Church of England." Loud cheers from a "men's meeting"—largely consisting of persons of the third sex. How different from the proud old text!—"Whoso believeth and is baptised shall be saved, and whoso believeth not shall be damned." That was how the

clergy talked when they ruled the roost. Now they say, "For God's sake, shove our old 'bus up the hill."

Mr. A. C. Benson has discovered what we have always been pointing out in the *Freethinker*, namely, that religion is sadly lacking in humor. "One of the reasons," he says, "why the orthodox heaven is so depressing a place is that there seems to be no room in it for laughter; it is all harmony and meekness, sanctified by nothing but the gravest of smiles. What wonder humanity is dejected at the thought of an existence from which all possibility of innocent absurdity and kindly mirth is subtracted—the one thing which has persistently lightened and beguiled the earthly pilgrimage." Mr. Benson finds little trace of humor in the New Testament, but he thinks Christ must have had a good share of it. We don't. Christ wept—he never laughed. That was his worst deficiency. But he was like all the other founders of religion. They were all very solemn. Otherwise they wouldn't have done it.

The Duke of Rutland has been bringing his gigantic intellect to bear on the Kirkdale by-election. He describes the Socialist program as "one of undiluted atheism, theft, and immorality." We have nothing to do with the Socialist program, but we have something to do with Atheism, and we venture to think his lordship doesn't understand it. He is perhaps a better authority on the other two-thirds of the prospectus.

A lady reader of the *Freethinker*, who has only known it recently, asks us who was the editor of it about twenty-five years ago. She has heard that it was a Freethought champion named Dunn, who confessed on his death-bed that his teaching was wrong, and asked his brother, who was a staunch Churchman, never to leave his own way of thinking. Thus do Christians compose the history of Freethought! The *Freethinker*, of course, was founded by Mr. Foote, who has always been its editor, and hopes to be for many a year yet.

Stay, there was one year during which Mr. Foote was only the nominal editor of the *Freethinker*. That was when he was "doing" twelve months for "blasphemy" in Holloway Gaol. During that twelve months the paper was conducted, first by J. M. Wheeler, and afterwards by Dr. Aveling. So Dunn is done.

Rev. Henry Denning, formerly rector of St. Werburgh's, Bristol, and now, we believe, in charge of Holy Trinity, Fulham, has just been sued by a Bristol firm for £21 for whisky supplied in 1900 and 1901. The reverend gentleman did not deny drinking the whisky, he pleaded it was more than six years ago, and got off paying through the Statute of Limitations. We commend this to the attention of the C. E. S. people. Instead of lying about Secularists as "glorifying whisky," they might explain how one of their own apostles got through £21 worth of it in twelve months—and bilked the bill at the finish.

Mr. J. Ramsey Macdonald should avoid talking cheap nonsense about Atheism. He has really nothing to gain in the long run by making a fool of himself. Speaking in St. George's Hall, Bradford, on Sunday, October 13, he said that the evils of society were the result of "sheer blank atheism." A reader of ours, a Secularist as well as a Socialist, asked him for an explanation. Mr. Macdonald replied that he didn't mean to refer to individuals, but to the "ethics of atheism." What on earth did he mean? Where does he find any ethics put forward by Atheists that would cause or countenance poverty, ignorance, vice, and misery? We invite him to give a clear and straightforward answer.

Obituary.

FREETHOUGHT in North London lost last week one good, sterling soldier from its ranks. Mr. Walter Lupton died suddenly on Tuesday, October 8, from hæmorrhage on the brain. An ardent Freethinker, he was well known and highly respected for his sterling principles and uprightness of character. He was buried at Finchley Cemetery on Saturday last, the funeral address being given by Mr. W. J. Ramsey in the presence of a large number of relatives and friends.

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, October 20, Royal Assembly Hall, South Shields: at 3, "Church, Chapel, and Child; and the Necessity of Secular Education"; at 7, "The Bishops, the Lords, and the People."

October 27, Leicester.

November 3, Stanley Hall, London; 10, Liverpool; 17, Birmingham; 24, Stanley Hall, London.

December 1, 8, 15, Queen's Hall.

To Correspondents.

C. COHEN'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—October 27, Glasgow. November 3, Workman's Hall, Romford-road, E.; 10, Stanley Hall, North London; 17, Liverpool; December 1, Birmingham; 15, Workman's Hall, Romford-road, E.—Address: 241 High-road, Leyton.

J. T. LLOYD'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—November 10, Manchester; 17, Stanley Hall; 24, West Ham. December 22, Holloway.

A. H. LOMAX.—Sent as desired. Thanks for good wishes. Also see "Acid Drops."

W. G. HASWELL.—It is as you say. So many people don't know of our existence. Our readers, therefore, do us a great service by introducing this journal to their friends and acquaintances. We are still ready—and eager—to forward a specimen copy for six consecutive weeks to any likely addresses with which we may be furnished.

W. BARTON writes: "The *Freethinker* is always full of good things, and I look for it every Thursday as a hungry man looks for food. If more editors were outspoken we should see things move a bit. In the village where I live there are six gospel-shops and twelve public-houses, and those that don't pray drink beer and talk about their cabbages and masters' cows. So you can see what a treat it is to get hold of a paper like the *Freethinker*."

C. W. STYRING.—You do good work in that way. We will give the enclosure our attention.

A. ALLISON suggests that our article on "A Blackguard Policy" should be reprinted in leaflet form for distribution at our outdoor meetings. He would willingly subscribe towards the cost. This correspondent is thanked for his prompt effort to squelch another Baker lie—that Joseph Symes had to flee from England twenty-four years ago on account of the "Leeds orgies." Joseph Symes never "fled" in his life. He wasn't built that way.

J. A. REID writes: "I quite agree with your article on Atheism and Socialism. We are all Socialists more or less: it is a question of degree. But I do not see how it is possible, even if desirable, to stifle individualism, or do away with capital and private enterprise. Your article is very good. We should become *Freethinkers* first and then decide what is practical Socialism."

F. J. VOINEY.—We don't see much to criticise in it. The vicar's notes in the Townstal Parish Magazine on the Deceased Wife's Sister Bill seem to us very sensible from his own point of view. And we can't jump on him because he is a Tory. There must be Tories as well as Liberals. How would the politicians get on else?

W. P. BALL.—Many thanks for cuttings.

E. LECHMERE.—A good letter, and it will do good.

E. J. JONES.—We don't expect to see it in print. The Christian section of Socialists are about as bigoted as other Christians. Christian and bigot always were, and always will be, fairly synonymous.

R. JOHNSON.—Sorry to miss you on Sunday, and sorrier for the cause of your absence from our lectures; but very glad to hear you are now well enough to attend to business again. The meetings were "records."

F. NUTTALL.—Just what we thought.

J. STEWART.—Shall be sent. Glad you enjoy reading the *Freethinker*, and were "delighted" to hear us at Glasgow.

H. BLACK.—Pleased you "enjoyed yourself immensely" at the Manchester meetings. Your letter on Secular Education is a good one, and should prove useful.

R. J. HENDERSON.—See "Acid Drops." The most we can make of it. Thanks.

H. WISHART.—Glad to hear you are working zealously and successfully at your "mission" for the N. S. S. Executive in the Leeds district; but we must repeat, as editor of the *Freethinker*, that it is absolutely no use to send us long reports by Tuesday morning. It isn't a question of good will; it is a question of business; our arrangements cannot be altered. Too late is too late. Please do remember.

T. SUTCLIFFE.—See "Acid Drops." Thanks.

J. BROUGH.—Post it by all means. Glad you are looking forward to our next visit to Manchester "with greater pleasure than ever." Thanks for cuttings.

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

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

LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

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

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

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Sugar Plums.

Mr. Foote opened the new winter season for the Manchester Branch on Sunday with two lectures delivered to record audiences. The Secular Hall was so full in the afternoon that it looked like an evening meeting, and at night the hall was crowded in every corner. A considerable number of ladies were present at both meetings. The utmost enthusiasm prevailed, and the President, who was in good form, let himself go, as the saying is. Perhaps for that very reason there was but little discussion, although several questions were asked and answered. Mr. Jones, the chairman, made an earnest appeal for new members—we hope with a good result.

Tyneside "saints" will note that Mr. Foote is in their district to-day (Oct. 20). He delivers two lectures, afternoon and evening, in the Royal Assembly Hall, South Shields. This is a very large hall, and we hope the "saints" will do their best to fill it. It is thought that the subjects, selected by the Branch committee, are likely to attract good audiences; but there is still room for a little personal advertising, amongst friends and acquaintances, on the part of the local *Freethinkers*.

Perhaps we ought to state, for the benefit of visitors, that the Sunday entrance to the Royal Assembly Hall is situated in Stanhope-street, off Mile-end-road, close to the railway station, and near the Fowler-street junction of the Corporation Tramways. We are also asked to state that some music will be provided before the evening lecture.

Mr. Cohen had large and enthusiastic audiences at Aberdare on Sunday. His own powers of attraction, and Mr. Wishart's mission work in the district, brought about this happy result. Mr. Cohen says there is a lot of young blood in the movement there, and he hopes good things for the Branch's future. They are very anxious to hear Mr. Foote.

The *Eastern Chronicle* reported Mr. Cohen's opening lecture at the Workman's Hall, Stratford, on "Christianity and Sex." We understood it was going to give a report of Mr. Foote's lecture in the Town Hall, but we never saw it.

A Manchester "saint" showed us two copies of Mr. Foote's *Bible Romances* which he had bought at the Secular Hall bookstall, and asked us to guess whom they were for. We couldn't form the least idea, but it turned out that the recipient was one of the best-known of music-hall stars. The "saint" had been doing a little "Underground Propaganda." We hope he will have many imitators.

The Secular Education League is organising its first Demonstration at the Memorial Hall, Farringdon-street, on Thursday evening, November 7, at 8. Mr. Halley Stewart, M.P., is chairman; and the speakers are Rev. R. J. Campbell, C. F. G. Masterman, M.P., Pete Curran, M.P., and the Rev. Stewart D. Headlam. We are not able to state Pete Curran's religion, if he has any; but all the other speakers are well-known Christians.

Saturday's letters (Oct. 12) were posted on from the office to Mr. Foote at his Manchester hotel. They were not delivered on Sunday, nor on Monday. The dear Post Office people, on Monday afternoon, suggested that they might turn up "to-morrow," and thought it rather early to complain. The language we should like to use is not exactly printable. Any correspondent whose letter is not dealt with will understand the reason.

Telepathy Up to Date.

"To surround anything, however monstrous or ridiculous, with an air of mystery, is to invest it with a charm and power of attraction which to the crowd is irresistible. False priests, false prophets, false doctors, false patriots, false prodigies of every kind, veiling their proceedings in mystery, have always addressed themselves at an immense advantage to the popular credulity, and have been, perhaps, more indebted to that resource in gaining and keeping for a time the upper hand of truth and common sense, than to any half-dozen items in the whole catalogue of imposture."—CHARLES DICKENS, *Barnaby Rudge*, chap. xxviii.

"I do not believe even eye-witnesses when they tell me things opposed to common sense."—VOLTAIRE.

THE American wild turkey is a very timid bird, it also possesses an insatiable curiosity; if it sees anything strange it cannot rest until it has investigated it. The hunter knows this failing and works accordingly, he lies concealed and waves a bit of cloth attached to a stick, the silly bird approaches nearer and nearer, until presently he is within easy range and falls a victim to his curiosity.

The average human being is endowed with a similar failing. Let anything happen out of the usual, something he cannot explain, and he straightway calls in the aid of the supernatural, and grovels before the spirits he has conjured—like the German metaphysician's camel—from his own sub-consciousness. This frame of mind was once universal. Why, during the Middle Ages, the appearance of a comet of a peculiar shape was enough to throw all the population of Europe into convulsions.

The Cagliostro's, Slade's, Blavatsky's, and other exploiters of the love of the marvellous—who, like the poor, are always with us—whatever may be said of their tricks and frauds, were deep students of human nature; they touched the weak spots with unerring judgment.

To-day, we are a little more advanced; but not much. There is the Zancig affair, for instance. Towards the close of last year, Mr. and Mrs. Zancig were engaged at the Alhambra, in London, to give performances as thought-readers. Mr. Zancig claimed that what he saw, Mrs. Zancig saw; that, in fact, they were "two minds with one single thought." Their show caught on; the occultists and spiritualists went about exultant. "There you are," they said in effect, "you did not believe us, now you can see for yourself." And when Mr. Stead had given them a testimonial as to the genuineness of their performance, the long-eared British public flocked to see the miracle.

Our nation has a reputation for being a practical, hard-headed race, not over-given to superstition and charlatanry; but it is humiliating to learn from the New York correspondent of the *Daily Chronicle* that "the Zancigs toured all over the United States giving the same kind of performance that they are now exhibiting in London, but no one here ever attributed to them the powers of telepathy." He adds: "They attracted mere ordinary attention. No scientific speculation of any kind was excited by their performances"; and concludes with stating that "The idea of mental telepathy in this connection is ridiculed here."* As Mr. Labouchere observed, it was left for the green-horns of the London press to be bamboozled by a couple of clever conjurers—to the sardonic amusement of our cuter Yankee cousins.

Mr. Stead was largely responsible for the vogue of the Zancigs. They gave a test sitting at his house, to prove their power of telepathy or thought-transference—which, by the way, Mr. Stead required no proof of, as he was a believer already. Now, Mr. Stead is a gentleman incapable of fraud or deceit, and brave in the execution of what he considers to be his duty. Freethinkers in particular have reason to be grateful to him for his championship of the character of Colonel Ingersoll from the filthy and malignant slanders of the dirty-minded Dr. Torrey.

This was the more creditable as Mr. Stead is totally opposed to the teachings of Colonel Ingersoll. Doubtless many people were convinced by Mr. Stead's witness to the Zancigs' marvellous powers. They knew that he was incapable of bearing false witness, but they never asked themselves the question whether he might not have been deceived. They never do, these sort of people. It is difficult to tell exactly from their words what the Zancigs do claim. As Mr. Maskelyne remarked, "Mr. Zancig is as clever a writer as he is a conjurer." Mr. Zancig talks vaguely of their discovery and development of a latent power—which we take to be the power of conveying information by word and sign, unobserved by the audience. Then, if you have a sufficiently elaborate code of words and signals, you can, in the words of Mr. Zancig, occupy "two minds with a single thought." As to reading other people's thoughts, Mr. Zancig has declared emphatically that they are utterly incapable of doing anything of the kind.* Now, although we cannot find any plain, outspoken claim to telepathic powers advanced by the Zancigs themselves, still they deceived Mr. Stead into believing that they possessed those powers. When they gave their test sitting at his house they knew perfectly well they did not possess them, and they did not trouble to undeceive him.

Having obtained Mr. Stead's testimonial to their telepathic powers, the Zancigs attained the height of their popularity; and if they had lived in the first century instead of the twentieth, they might have rivalled Apollonius of Tyana, who performed miracles in the presence of the Emperors Vespasian and Domitian; or Alexander of Abonoteichos, who claimed to be inspired by Æsculapius, and worked the oracle by means of a large tame serpent wearing a human mask;† or they might have entered into competition with Christianity by founding a new cult. But, unfortunately for their success, they lived two thousand years too late. No one is going to claim supernatural, or supernormal, powers at this time of day without having their claims—if it is sufficiently worth while—challenged and investigated. And the greater their success in deceiving the people, the more sure are they of being ultimately unmasked. It was so in the present case; the very success of the Zancigs brought about their exposure. Mr. Stuart Cumberland, the cleverest living exponent of the Zancigs' "art," wrote to the *Chronicle* (Dec. 31, 1906) to say "There is in the Zancigs' feats about as much application of a sixth sense as one would find in the interior anatomy of a Dutch oyster." He pointed out that Mr. Zancig wore a white jacket suit, to be more easily seen among the audience, and that Mrs. Zancig wore glasses of a peculiar make and power, which would be of great assistance to her in interpreting at a distance any signs Mr. Zancig might seek to convey to her. But, as he very aptly observed, genuine telepathy ought not to be in need of any such assistance. He declared that the Zancigs did use a code, both by word and sign, and concluded:—

"An extensive experience in all parts of the world of alleged 'occult' phenomena and of beings spiritually and mentally gifted beyond their fellows in the production of such phenomena has taught me that there is really nothing inexplicable in this direction, and that no man is in possession of powers which cannot be rationally dealt with,"

and that if the Zancigs wished to demonstrate their powers of thought-transference they must necessarily submit to conditions under which they would be unable to use a code either verbal or by sign. Upon this the *Chronicle* sent to arrange a meeting with Mr. Zancig. The time arrived, but no Mr. Zancig; but

* *Daily Chronicle*, January 3, 1907.

† This clever scoundrel was unmasked by Lucian, the Pagan Voltairre—who, by the way, nearly lost his life in the attempt. It is almost needless to say that his followers were unaffected by Lucian's exposure, and that he lived and died adored to the last—as there are doubtless thousands who still believe in the telepathy of the Zancigs, notwithstanding their exposure in the *Chronicle*.

in the course of what the *Chronicle* describes as "a brief but illuminating" interview with Mr. Moul, the managing director of the Alhambra. It was made clear that the management were not going to allow Mr. Zancig to be interviewed. "This article in the *Daily Chronicle*," said Mr. Moul, "is the first attack that has been made upon Mr. Zancig, and he doesn't like it at all." In vain the interviewer pointed out that it would be to Mr. Zancig's advantage to have an opportunity of refuting Mr. Stuart Cumberland's charges. No interview could be arranged for love or money.

Now, if the Zancigs really possessed the powers they were credited with, this conduct was most extraordinary. When Mr. Stead wished to test their powers they received him with open arms; but then Mr. Stead did not require any proof of telepathy. He was a firm believer in it already, and even believes in thought communication with the dead. But when Mr. Stuart Cumberland, who disbelieves in telepathy—and, what is more, knows all the tricks of the so-called thought-readers—asks for a test, he is indignantly refused. The fact is they found it easy to hoodwink Mr. Stead, but they knew perfectly well that it would not do with Mr. Stuart Cumberland.

Then the *Chronicle* published part of the code used; and on the following night several of the audience chimed in before Madame Zancig could answer. Here are some of the formulæ:—

- Why this?.....A pin.
- Or this?.....A watch.
- Well this?.....A card.
- You this?.....A case.
- Now this?.....A paper.

Then Mr. Stead began to hedge a bit. He explained that the Zancigs used telepathy *and a code*; the code only being used to relieve the strain on their minds! Which reminds us of Voltaire's observation that incantations and arsenic had been known to destroy flocks of sheep. The arsenic and the code being the only efficacious agents in the respective cases.

Mr. Maskelyne suggested that if there was anything in the nature of thought-transference "the whole matter can be settled in five minutes." But of course no notice was taken of this. And after Mr. Zancig had publicly admitted from the stage of the Alhambra that "If it were our misfortune to lose our sight and hearing, we should not be able to work," the bubble was pricked for all people capable of being influenced by fact and logic. For if they communicated by thought alone, the loss of sight and hearing would make no difference. But if, on the other hand, they communicated by means of codes—as, indeed, they did—then the loss of sight and hearing would render their codes useless.

Of course, these performers invent their own codes; but, as a matter of fact, the system was invented by Pinetti in the eighteenth century. Signor Trevori, the society entertainer, sent to the *Chronicle* a page of a code he used fifty years ago, and it is a remarkable fact that the majority of articles likely to be produced can be easily covered by one hundred and ten different forms of questions, well within the compass of an ordinary memory. A very simple arrangement of phrases suffices for the dates; in the signalling of these only thirty-seven variations are needed. The success of the Zancigs in imposing on the credulous was due to the supplementing their code of words by a code of signs.

And all the while, as Dr. Andrew Wilson pointed out in a letter to the *Chronicle*, a much more wonderful entertainment was being given at the St. George's Hall by Mr. Devant and his sister. Miss Devant is blindfolded with a thick piece of cloth, previously handed round to the audience for examination. Mr. Devant then "comes among the audience, receives instructions regarding what his sister is expected to do, and she in turn carries out the instructions to the letter. This is really wonderful, because there is an utter absence—apparent absence,

at least—of all communication between the two. There is nothing of the 'This please' or 'Now please' about the entertainment; all is accomplished in silence." As Dr. Wilson remarked, a claim for telepathy would certainly be far better supported by the facts of St. George's Hall than by those of the Alhambra. "Comparing the Alhambra and St. George's Hall performances, I wonder to find that people are puzzled over the former feats."

As Miss Devant was blindfolded, signs were out of the question; and as Mr. Devant did not speak, they could not use a code of words. Why, then, did not they create a sensation, and get boomed by the London press, like the Zancigs? Because they did not pretend to the possession of mystical powers, or to be more highly gifted than ordinary people. They honestly declared that all their wonderful performance was accomplished by natural, physical means. Therefore they did not appeal to the bump of wonder of the gaping multitude.

It is amusing to note that Mr. Harold Begbie, who lately assumed the rôle of the superior person and—with asinine gravity—lectured us upon our want of reverence, recorded his conviction that the Zancigs obtained their results by the aid of hypnotism. A little less reverence in his composition would have saved him from a foolish blunder. We hope it will take a little of the starch out of this very cocky individual.

And where are all the gentlemen who were so anxious to assure the public there was no deception? Mr. Harold Begbie, Mr. Sinnett, Mr. Stead? Do they come forward to explain that they were mistaken? Not a bit of it. They lie low, and will probably be on hand to testify to the mystic powers of the next charlatan who succeeds in mystifying the public.

W. MANN.

Leicester's Mayor Visits the Secularists.

IT is so unusual in this country for a Secular Society to receive civic recognition that a record of the visit of the Mayor to the Leicester Secular Hall in order to open the Society's Bazaar should be of some general interest. Alderman Sir Edward Ward, J.P., is the most prominent citizen of the town, a wealthy merchant, a Liberal in politics, and a Nonconformist in religious views. He very readily consented to appear at the function when approached on the subject by Mr. Sydney A. Gimson, the President of the Society. A good muster of members and friends greeted the Mayor as, wearing his chain of office, he stepped into the gaily-decorated Hall, where seven stalls were prepared to dispense, at moderate prices, articles of linen, flannelette, hosiery, together with china, books, dolls, fruit, flowers, etc., the *Freethinker* being laid for sale on the bookstall. Among the contributors to the Bazaar were the Secular Society, Limited, the Failsworth Secular Sunday-school, and friends in various parts of the country. Over the platform were suspended the portraits of the Society's two chief apostles, Michael Wright (died in 1881) and Josiah Gimson (died in 1883). To the latter gentleman, who had once served as a member of the Town Council, the Mayor made sympathetic allusions, as also to his old friend, Mr. W. H. Holyoak, whose death had recently occurred, and whom he esteemed as good workmen, and as men of honor and sterling integrity. He had read the rules and principles of the Society, and, while he could not agree with the whole, he was yet in full sympathy with nearly all their practical aims. He recognised that the Society tried to rear good citizens, to raise humanity, and to promote the happiness of the people. He thanked the members for inviting him to be present, and then declared the Bazaar open.

The vote of thanks to the Mayor was moved by Mr. F. J. Gould, seconded by the vice-president, Mr.

William Wilber, and carried with the heartiest good feeling. Before the formal portion of the proceedings terminated, Mr. Sydney Gimson announced that Sir Edward Ward had contributed £10 to the Bazaar Fund.

The takings on the opening day (Saturday, Oct 12) exceeded £50, and the Bazaar continued on Monday and Tuesday.

F. J. GOULD.

The Famous "Whisky Hymn."

For a considerable time the Christian Evidence Society's lecturers in London, including the Rev. A. J. Waldron, have been telling their credulous audiences that the National Secular Society had a hymn in its Hymn-Book in "glorification of Whisky." In an unfortunate moment, the C. E. S. secretary, being invited by the N. S. S. secretary to give a reference, indicated the last four lines of a "hymn" entitled "Let Us All be Unhappy on Sunday" in an ancient publication, long out of print, edited by Charles Watts and Austin Holyoake in 1871, called "The Secularist's Manual of Songs and Ceremonies." The malicious numskulls of the C. E. S. were, or pretended to be, unable to see that the verses in question were satirical. They treated their easy dupes to the last four lines of the fifth verse entirely divorced from the context, and asked them to believe that the Secularists advised people to sit at home and get drunk on Sundays. Well, it turns out that the verses were actually reprinted from the highly respectable and orthodox *Blackwood's Magazine*. They were included (pp. 120-122) in a volume published by William Blackwood and Sons, in 1879, entitled "Songs and Verses, Social and Scientific, by an Old Contributor to *Maga*"—the author of them being really Lord Neaves. This volume was a collection of pieces that had been printed and circulated long before, and were brought together "in the hopes of preserving or reviving in the minds of those who were then pleased to approve of them a recollection of the feelings that attended their first reception." (Preface). We think it advisable to reproduce the whole of this particular satire—from a volume of satires. Secularists can keep this copy of the *Freethinker* by them, and dispose of any C. E. S. blackguard whom they may find talking again about this dirty mare's-nest. We may even reprint it, with this introduction, in leaflet form, by way of exposing the tactics of these champions of what Shelley called "the bloody faith."

"LET US ALL BE UNHAPPY ON SUNDAY."

A LYRIC FOR SATURDAY NIGHT.

AIR—*We bipeds made up of frail clay.*

We zealots, made up of stiff clay,
The sour-looking children of sorrow,
While not over-jolly to-day,
Resolve to be wretched to-morrow.
We can't for a certainty tell
What mirth may molest us on Monday;
But, at least, to begin the week well,
Let us all be unhappy on Sunday.

That day, the calm season of rest,
Shall come to us freezing and frigid;
A gloom all our thoughts shall invest,
Such as Calvin would call over-rigid.
With sermons from morning till night,
We'll strive to be decent and dreary:
To preachers a praise and delight,
Who ne'er think that sermons can weary.

All tradesmen cry up their own wares;
In this they agree well together:
The Mason by stone and lime swears;
The Tanner is always for leather.
The Smith still for iron would go;
The Schoolmaster stands up for teaching;
And the Parson would have you to know,
There's nothing on earth like his preaching.

The face of kind Nature is fair;
But our system obscures its effulgence:
How sweet is a breath of fresh air!
But our rules don't allow the indulgence.
These gardens, their walks and green bowers,
Might be free to the poor man for one day;
But no, the glad plants and gay flowers
Mustn't bloom or smell sweetly on Sunday.

What though a good precept we strain
Till hateful and hurtful we make it!
What though, in thus pulling the rein,
We may draw it so tight as to break it!
Abroad we forbid folks to roam,
For fear they get social or frisky;
But of course they can sit still at home,
And get dismally drunk upon whisky.

Then, though we can't certainly tell
How mirth may molest us on Monday;
At least, to begin the week well,
Let us all be unhappy on Sunday."

Correspondence.

IS MR. ROBERTSON CONSISTENT?

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—We have had Mr. J. M. Robertson at Keighley, in the Municipal Hall, giving a lecture, entitled "Liberalism and Socialism," under the auspices of the Liberal Association. A discussion followed the lecture, and I thought myself justified in asking Mr. Robertson to give us his reason for his action during the Jarrow election some weeks ago. The following is a copy of the written question which I sent up:—"Is it true that Mr. Robertson at the Jarrow election worked on behalf of the Free Church candidate and Simple Bible Teaching whilst there was in the field a man pledged to the Secular Solution? If so, how can he justify such action with his Freethought?"

Mr. Robertson gave no reply. I did not like putting off in such a manner; therefore I waited outside the ante-room for Mr. Robertson. When he put in an appearance I politely asked him his reason for not replying to the written question. The reason he gave was, in my opinion, altogether beside the mark; in fact, it was an evasive answer. He said: "I think I was justified when seventeen of the Labor members voted against the Secular Solution."

Surely, sir, this is not Mr. Robertson's usual mode of reasoning, for in the opinion of most of us I think he would be laughed out of court. I also asked him if the statement of the *Northern Echo* about a lecture by him was true; that is, that he delivered a lecture in aid of the Primitive Methodist Church funds at Gosforth. Mr. Robertson's reply was that, in his election campaign, the Primitive Methodists at Gosforth were kind enough to place their school at his disposal, and a short time afterwards they asked him to give them a lecture, which he did. He declared he had no knowledge as to the funds, and that it did not make any difference to him whether they raised anything or not on behalf of the Church fund.

I drew his attention to the paragraph in the *Freethinker* of October 6, but he pooh-pooed that journal, saying he never read the *Freethinker*, but he was continually hearing of himself being vilified in its columns. This, I told Mr. Robertson, I did not believe. I next charged Mr. Robertson with being a contributor to the columns of this journal at one time, to which he gave an emphatic denial. To my disgust, Mr. Robertson seemed to scorn the paper. I am sure, Mr. Editor, that Mr. Robertson occupies a position in this matter no *Freethinker* could envy.

H. C. SHACKLETON.

[Mr. Robertson was never a contributor to the *Freethinker*. Perhaps our correspondent has a confused memory of Mr. Robertson's contributions to our old monthly magazine, *Progress*. It is absurd for Mr. Robertson to talk of his being vilified in the *Freethinker*. We have criticised his public action in regard to an important public question, and we defy him, or any friend of his, to point to a single objectionable word in our comments. Mr. Robertson has always been a free critic of other men's sayings and doings. Must we write him down as one of the critics who cannot bear criticism?—EDITOR.]

HARMSWORTH'S HISTORY OF THE WORLD.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—The Harmsworths are now publishing a *History of the World*, which doubtless will have a large sale. In a recent advertisement in the *Daily Mail* we are told that all the great scenes in the pageant of the world's history will be found in the pictures with which its pages are adorned. These will include "Peter the Hermit preaching the First Crusade, and rousing the flower of Christendom to go out to battle with the Infidel." Evidently the *Freethinkers* will catch it. But it seems that Professor E. Ray Lankester, Dr. Archdall Reid, and Dr. Saleeby are to contribute articles. They are all evolutionists. I do not know whether they are to be included amongst the "flower of Christendom" of the

present day. Does the head of the family of Harmsworths include himself? A history of the world, by whomsoever published, should be judicially edited, and not pander to the ignorant crowd. Can a "history of the world" ignore the history of Freethought? What would the history of the world be like without the Freethinkers? Really, it is about time that we had a little less humbug. People are not all fools. The Harmsworths have done fairly well by trading on the credulity of the people. A year or so ago the *Daily Mail* published an article, entitled "A Revolution in Thought," referring to Darwinism. It subsequently published a lengthy correspondence, "Should the Clergy Criticise the Bible?" Since then various articles and letters have been printed of an evolutionary and Freethought nature. But in a leading article on the Church Congress the *Daily Mail* reverted to its old policy as "defender of the faith." Huxley's views were misrepresented, calling forth a repudiation from Mr. Leonard Huxley, as was reprinted in last week's *Freethinker*. The Harmsworths continue to issue religious periodicals, printing lies and legends as though they were facts. Which side do they intend to finally take? Perhaps, assisted by the Bishop of London, they intend to lead a last crusade, rousing the present "flower of Christendom," whoever they may be, to go out to battle with the Infidel. The chief of the clan happens to be a Freethinker himself. But what does that matter where money and notoriety are to be gained? The Harmsworths should next issue a "History of Successful Humbugs," edited by Lord Northcliffe, the proprietor of the *Daily Mail*. It probably would sell very well.

J. A. REID.

ATHEISM AND SOCIALISM.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—It is certainly very rarely that Mr. Foote can be justly accused of writing ineptly, but unless I am greatly mistaken he must plead guilty when he wrote as he did in last week's issue to the effect that "Atheism is primarily intellectual and moral, Socialism is primarily economical and political." Had he said the former was intellectual while the latter was economical, it would, for me, have passed muster, though the antithesis is not good; but, as an Agnostic Socialist, I object that either Atheism or Socialism should be put down as being other than intensely concerned with moral considerations. Both these great world-movements are but means to an end, that end being humanitarian in the widest sense of the term. They are complementary. The Socialist seeks to strike the fetters from the body, and free it; the Atheist seeks to perform the same office for the mind. Those who say that a study of Socialism does not lead to Agnosticism must have had a very different experience from what mine has been. That the wave of Socialism which has recently swept over the land has washed up many newborn Socialists who still retain their Christianity very little impaired, is probably true; but as their Socialist days, so shall not their Christian strength be. It would be interesting to know of just what their Christianity consists—I mean those who repudiated the charge of Atheism so indignantly at the Kirkdale election. It seems inconceivable to me that Socialism and Atheism—the former the great dynamic, the latter the great liberator—can be separated indefinitely.

A. FRAYN.

[This correspondent entirely overlooks the important word "primarily" in the sentence he quotes from us. We see no reason for not standing by what we wrote. But we allow our correspondent his own opinion without calling him "inept."—*EDITOR.*]

SOUTH AFRICAN NATIVES.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—It is rarely one can question statements appearing in your journal, the *Freethinker*, but I would like to call your attention to an Acid Drop of the 29th ult. You speak of the Bushmen and Koronas hastening to extinction through liquor and vice. True; but not owing to any fault of the white man, for those races are the most depraved of the natives, and they are only happy in their vice. Were I not afraid of taking up too much of your time, I could show you that this has always been so; but the point I am particularly anxious to call your attention to is the treatment meted out to the intelligent natives—the Zulus, Basutos, Pondos, etc. You say these natives are treated as "the scum of the earth."

After five years' residence in Kimberley, and having travelled over the Colony fairly often, obtaining a personal acquaintance with several towns and corps of the Colony, I can testify to the following being rather the general rule than otherwise. Facilities (equal to those of the white races) are offered natives to reach a very efficient standard of education—which many take advantage of.

On every hand we find the educated native holding clerical posts of responsibility as clerks in Post Office, Government Buildings, Stores, etc., Interpreters at the Courts of Justice, Letter-carriers, and Telegraph Messengers, "Baas-boys" over gangs of other natives, Mechanics, etc. Surely this does not look like tyrannical subjection. I deeply regret that so much power is entrusted to the so-called missionary to enable him to instil into the native such ideas as he will, for I am convinced that the native is not trained by these people to utilise his intellect to the greatest benefit to himself and his race.

My reason for troubling you is, that I felt the subject one of sufficient interest, and have found, during my short stay here, that the subject of the "Treatment of the South African Native" is so entirely misunderstood on the British Isles.

FRANK TIMMINS.

LIBELLING THE DEAD.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—In *Barrington on the Statutes* (1769), under "Observations on Westm. Primer," page 83, the writer, dealing with libels, and, after mentioning the first rule, goes on to say:—

"The next rule was not extra-judicial, but can never be supported to the extent in which it is delivered, without a limitation of time. The rule is, that, if the person libelled is dead, when the defamation is published, the offender is equally punishable, as it may provoke the friends and relations of the deceased to revenge."

And there is something very quaint in what follows; that "If the dead person libelled is a magistrate, it is a reflection on government, which never dies."*

This statute was passed in the year 1272, and it would be interesting to know whether a case could be fought under this law at the present time.

It is certainly time that something was done to protect the honor of our noble dead and bring their traducers to book in the open court, in the view of all men; for it is useless scotching the lies of these ghouls who rake up dead men's bones, because these lies are only repeated directly your back is turned.

JOSEPH CHAMBERS.

DID NOT NEED TO BE CONFIRMED.

Bishop Talbot, for years the "Cowboy Bishop" of Wyoming and Idaho, often found himself faced by unusual problems.

At the close of one of his meetings, a man who was known as the "Colonel," said to him quietly: "I should like to ask you a few questions, if you do not object."

"I shall be only too glad to answer them, if I can, Colonel. Please proceed."

"Well, Bishop, do you think that my wife is a good woman?"

"One of the best I have ever known."

"Do you think she is a Christian?"

"If she is not, I should doubt whether any of us could be so considered."

"Well, now—er, do you think she will make it?"

"What is that, Colonel?"

"Do you think my wife will get in?"

A great light broke upon the Bishop, but appearing not to understand, he said: "Excuse me, Colonel, but please explain."

"I simply mean this, Bishop: Do you think that St. Peter will let the old lady pass through the pearly gates?"

"I have no doubt of it, Colonel; so far as my opinion is worth anything, I cannot for a moment doubt it."

"Well, then, if that is so, I do not think I shall be confirmed. I do not see any need for it. You see, Bishop, it is just this way, if the old lady gets in and they lock the door against the old man, she will simply raise Cain until she gets me in, and she is sure to succeed."

In vain the Bishop tried to show the Colonel that his position was untenable. The latter's faith in his wife's influence was too strong to be shaken by anything the clergyman could say.

* It appears by Wraynham's Trial, 16 Jam. I., that Sir Edward Coke plumed himself much upon the having introduced this second rule as law. "My Lord, you know that the slander of a dead man is punishable in this court [viz., the Star Chamber], as Lewis Pickering is able to tell you, whom I caused here to be censured for a slander against an Archbishop that was dead; for justice lives, though the party be dead, and such slanders do wronge the living posterity, and alliance of the man deceased."—*St. Tr.*, vol vii., p. 108.

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.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Workman's Hall, Romford-road, Stratford): 7.30, Mr. Gregory, "The Missing Link in Religion." Selections by the Band before Lecture.

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S.: Victoria Park (near the Fountain), 8.30, G. Aldred, "The Evolution of Religion."

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S.: Station-road, 11.30, Guy A. Aldred, a Lecture. Brockwell Park, 3.15, Louis B. Gallagher, a Lecture.

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

COUNTRY.

GLASGOW: Secular Hall, Brunswick street—Joseph McCabe, 12 (noon), "The Papacy and Modern Thought"; 6.30, "The Scientific Basis of Secularism."

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Secular Hall, Rusholme-road): 6.30, William Simpson, "Truth-seeking and Truth-finding."

SOUTH SHIELDS (Royal Assembly Hall): G. W. Foote, 3, "Church, Chapel, and Child; and the Necessity of Secular Education"; 7, "The Bishops, the Lords, and the People."

WEST STANLEY BRANCH N. S. S. (I. L. P. Institute): 3, Business meeting.

OUTDOOR.

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

HUDDERSFIELD BRANCH N. S. S.: Market Cross, Saturday, at 8, Geo. T. Whitehead, a Lecture.

MR. WISHART'S MISSION.

HUDDERSFIELD: Thursday, Oct. 17, Market Cross, at 7, "The Bible and Our Children"; Saturday, Oct. 19, Market Cross, at 8, "The Salvation Army, a Fraud"; Sunday, Oct. 20, Friendly and Trades' Societies' Hall, 7, "Beware of the New Theology."

LEEDS: Friday, Oct. 18, Branch Meeting and Address in Clarion Club, 125 Albion-street, at 8.

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