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You can do nothing much worth doing, in this world, without trouble, you can get nothing much worth having, without expense.—JOHN RUSKIN.

Gerald Massey.

GERALD MASSEY, poet and ethnologist, who died on Monday, October 28, was referred to in the usual way by the newspapers. Everything was said about him except what really signifies. The fact that he had spent nearly a half of his long life of eighty years in laboriously demonstrating the mythical nature of Christianity was carefully concealed. I did not perceive an allusion to it in Mr. A. E. Fletcher's long article in the *Daily Chronicle*. Naturally there was no reference anywhere to the awful fact that Massey had lectured widely on such subjects as "The Historical Jesus and the Mythical Christ" and "Why Don't God Kill the Devil?" Even to mention such subjects would be a deadly sin in "respectable" newspapers. They all recorded the fact that he was a believer in a future life. That was a point, of course, which placed his genius in contact with their mediocrity. Besides, it is so "proper" to believe in a future life. Some intellectual people believe in it—and all the fools; and the fools, of course, find this association very comforting. The one thing that secures Mrs. Besant's "respectability," now that she has broken away from the "crass materialism" of her best days, is the fact that she preaches a life beyond the grave. That is the great thing. Every little nincompoop (and oh the multitude of them!) likes to believe that his wonderful individuality will be preserved for ever and ever. The rest doesn't matter. The details don't count. Heaven or no heaven, hell or no hell, purgatory or no purgatory, continuous life or intermittent life, conscious life or unconscious life—all that is of no importance as long as you only say "I believe in the world to come." Any world will do.

Gerald Massey was a poet and a true one, but I do not think he was at all a great poet. I say this in spite of the generous and enthusiastic eulogy of Landor, whose noble nature led him to give royal praise to some second-rate contemporaries as well as to the loftiest. I believe that the instinct of Massey's maturity, which led him to turn away from verse-writing and devote himself to a scholarly and philosophic exposure of the greatest religious fraud of all the ages, was a perfectly sound one. Other people discuss a man's capacity and character; the man himself inevitably obeys the law of his own nature.

I assert, then, that the one great significant fact about Gerald Massey is that he was a pronounced, an ardent, and a zealous Freethinker. Twenty-five years ago, when I was enjoying the sweets of Christian charity in Holloway Gaol, for the crime (which will some day be reckoned my virtue) of "bringing the Holy Scripture and the Christian Religion into disbelief and contempt," I should have received a visit from Massey, who was then on a visit to England from America, but he was churlishly refused a visiting order from the Home Office. He sent me, however, his two magnificent volumes on *The Natural*

Genesis, which I still have and prize; and to the interim editor of the *Freethinker* (Dr. Aveling) he sent a note in which he said of me—"I fight the same battle as himself, although with a somewhat different weapon."

Massey fought *the same battle* as I. That is the important point. Why quarrel about the weapon? He didn't. He recognised a fellow soldier in the same holy war. Whether you fire a six-hundred-pound shot from a big gun, or work a maxim, or wield a long-range rifle, or charge home with the glint of cold steel and the thrust of the deadly bayonet, you are doing your part to disable and defeat the enemy. Your position in the great Army of Human Liberation shall be as it may be. That is a mere social accident. Whatever your part is, play it well; stand to your post, keep your eye on the foe, strike home at the right moment; and whether you are the general with the brooding brow, or the common soldier with strong arms and stout heart, you shall have your share of the victory.

I have not yet seen Massey's last two volumes, completing his long comment on the text "Out of Egypt have I called my son." Sometimes a text is false in one sense, and true in another. The Jews never were in Egypt, but Christ was. The holy mother and child—the one a virgin, the other a god—were worshiped in Egypt millenniums before the Christian era. The mythical Christ came out of Egypt. It was there that all the dogmas of early Christianity, and all its myths and legends were manufactured; for, until the Mohammedan wave of conquest swept Christianity out of North Africa, it was not Rome, nor even Constantinople, that was the most important Christian centre, but Alexandria, where East and West met, where Greek science and philosophy and Oriental superstition and mysticism faced each other for a death-grapple, where Hypatia was murdered and the great Museum destroyed, and where Christianity was at last established on the ruins of "the grandeur that was Greece," leaving for another famous city, farther west in the Mediterranean, its establishment on the ruins of "the glory that was Rome."

Among the quotations on the back of the title-page of *The Natural Genesis*, published in 1883, Massey included this one from the Atheist who was called "The Devil's Chaplain" and was twice imprisoned for "blasphemy"—for one year in 1828, and for two years in 1881:—

"Bind it about thy neck, and write it upon the tablet of thy heart, 'Everything of Christianity is of Egyptian origin.'"—REV. ROBERT TAYLOR, *Oakham Gaol*, 1829.

Here is another striking and pregnant passage from the close of Massey's "Explanatory" Preface:—

"The writer has not only shown that the current theology *is*, but also *how* it has been, falsely founded on a misinterpretation of mythology by unconsciously inheriting the leavings of primitive or archaic man and ignorantly mistaking these for divine revelations. The work culminates in tracing the transformation of astronomical mythology into the system of Equinoctial Christology called Christianity, and demonstrating the non-historic nature of the canonical gospels by means of the original mythos in which the Messianic mystery, the Virgin motherhood, the incarnation and birth, the miraculous life and character, the crucifixion and resurrection, of the Savior Son who was the Word of all Ages, were altogether allegorical."

This was a clean sweep of the New Testament history. It was putting Christianity into a sweating-bath of Egyptian mythology, in which it was utterly dissolved. No wonder the newspaper obituaries of Gerald Massey are silent in this direction.

As soon as I can find time I will read and deal with the last instalment of Gerald Massey's real life-work. Meanwhile, I cannot help noting the fact that he labored at these two big volumes with all his remaining strength, seeing them through the press by a great effort (in more ways than one), and dying only a few weeks after he had placed them securely before the world.

How stern and grand is such a life-work in comparison with the easy task of those who take a few points of Freethought criticism that have obviously triumphed, and put them forward with the air of discoverers as the New Theology—without the loss of a single penny, and with a great gain in notoriety and applause. Gerald Massey was not a camp-follower, he was a pioneer. He looked for other rewards than those which the mob of the hour can bestow. I have been struck once more at the noble pathos of his "Dedicatory" verses to the great work he sent me in Holloway Gaol. They moved me to tears then; I can scarcely withhold them now. The poet-scholar feels his isolation while accomplishing his self-imposed task. He compares himself to a diver whose friends watch anxiously for his return:—

" Year after year went by,
And watchers wondered when
The diver to their welcoming cry
Of joy, would rise again.

And still rolled on Time's wave,
That whitened as it passed:
The ground is getting toward the grave
That I have reached at last.

Child after child would say—
' Ah, when his work is done,
Father will come with us and play—"
'Tis done. And playtime's gone.

A willing slave for years,
I strove to set men free;
Mine were the labors, hopes, and fears,
Be theirs the victory."

I call that a singularly noble utterance. Such is the spirit in which great men fight for their convictions. They look beyond the tumults and shoutings of the day. They are touched by what the Master called "the prophetic soul of the wide world dreaming on things to come." They strive, not for themselves, but for humanity. And they have their reward. They were true to themselves, and they contributed to the triumph of truth and progress. Nothing that happens can rob them of that consciousness, and it lifts them up above all sufferings and miseries. And therefore I, for one, feel a soft smile stealing over the gravity of my face as I raise my own sword—battered, but I hope never dishonored—and salute the brave older soldier who now rests from his long fight. Here indeed is peace with honor. Here indeed lies one of those whose works live after them. The good he did shall not be interred with his bones; it shall be as seed sown, it shall fructify, and bear a rich harvest for future generations.

G. W. FOOTE.

Christian Morality.—III.

(Concluded from p. 692.)

UNFORTUNATELY, the sins of omission are not exhausted when we have dealt with the question of the State. The absence of positive teaching concerning the family is equally striking. It is a subject that is quite ignored by Jesus, and the slight references to it by Paul are anything but satisfactory. Indeed, one might go through the whole of the New Testament without being able to extract therefrom sufficient guidance to bring up a family. The truth is that the family and the State are both dealt with from the

same point of view. If it is there it is to be accepted; but, as St. Paul teaches, it is well to avoid the responsibilities of family life, unless weakness of the flesh and the desire to avoid a greater evil makes the married state preferable. Family life is a drag on the higher or spiritual life, a theory that has always held a prominent position in Christian philosophy. It is true that a few—a very few—of the early Christian writers do give a little attention to family life; but the belief that it is a burden which checks spiritual development is always present. And with all there is an absence of an adequate conception as to the extent of the influence of family life in refining and elevating human nature. The Rev. Principal Donaldson notes how seldom children are mentioned in the Christian writings of the first three centuries, and attributes some of the unpleasant features of succeeding centuries to this ignoring of the power of domestic affection. The Christian appeal was, in brief, to the individual, as such, and not always to the individual at his best. The clarifying conception of the individual as an expression of family and social life never arises.

It is curious, and yet understandable, that Professor Seth, in his defence of Christian morality, does not dwell upon its intellectual shortcomings. Yet so far as conduct can be made a profitable study, either for the philosophic teacher or the practical statesman, the intellectual element is certainly of no small importance. But the higher intellectual life is completely ignored by Jesus. Just as the whole world of Pagan science lies outside the purview of the Gospel Jesus, so the higher Pagan presentment of ethical truths, with the analysis of moral states, was beyond him. Even in the case of the objection to oath-taking we get the lower in place of the higher objection. The ground taken is a religious one pure and simple, instead of the demand for an oath being taken as a slur upon a man's honesty and an appeal to his fear of punishment instead of to his love of truth. The duty of truth-speaking is but little insisted on, the duty of truth-seeking completely ignored. It is from the Greeks, from Buddha, and from modern teachers—most of whom were in opposition to Christianity—we may get the lesson that it is a sanely-developed and well-trained intelligence that provides the surest guarantee of a well-ordered moral life. Such a lesson is foreign to the Gospel Jesus, as it is also to historic Christianity. And the result of this omission is seen, not merely in the continuous opposition of organised Christianity to scientific thought, but also in the continuous depreciation of character under its influence. Ignoring the material and intellectual conditions that make for a higher ethical life, it has prevented the little good that might have accrued to mankind from its reiteration of official moral platitudes.

Professor Seth's last point deals with the objection, which he identifies with the name of Nietzsche, that Christianity degrades the race by protecting the weak at the expense of the strong, and so securing the survival of the unfittest, or, at least, of the undesirable.

To this he replies, that Christianity, instead of breaking down, levels up. "It sees in all, the possibilities which the best Pagan insight discovered only in a few"—which is a method of praising Christianity by a sheer distortion of Pagan thought. One could fill columns of this journal with actual quotations from Pagan writers proving the reverse of Professor Seth's statement. It will be enough, however, to point to the slave culture of antiquity, to remind readers that slaves were often enough artists and philosophers, poets and teachers; that slaves could become freed men; and that, to a Roman citizen, every office in the State was open, to show how misleading is such a statement. The brotherhood of man, indeed, was the cardinal principle of the Stoic philosophy—a philosophy that could boast of having an Emperor as a representative, and he, probably, one of the best monarchs that ever sat upon a throne. Slavery itself was defined as a mere convention of nations and contrary to the

law of nature, eighteen centuries before Christians were justifying its existence as instituted by God, and making it a penal offence to teach a slave to read or write. The Stoic teaching, that by nature all men are equal, and that all differences are created by virtue, is one that Christianity, with all the pressure of modern thought, has not yet risen to.

Objection might also be taken to the argument that Christianity teaches that "a man is not to think of others as existing for him, but of himself as existing for others," and that this "is a new note unheard in the highest ethical reflection of the Greeks, or only faintly heard in the claim of the State upon the citizen." But Professor Seth, before he concludes his essay, says:—

"It has been said that the idea of duty is absent from the highest morality of the Greeks. But surely in Socrates, in Plato, and in Aristotle, in the Cynics, and the Stoics, we find the intrinsic claim of ideal excellence, of the obligatoriness of the rational life upon a rational being like man; and, in Aristotle, we find the affirmation of the superior value and dignity of the 'theoretic' or spiritual life, to the practical life which is governed by the ideal of self-satisfaction. Again, it is often said that the spirit of altruism and self-sacrifice is absent from Greek morality. Yet the ideally good man of Greek ethics is the good citizen, and the good citizen is the man who unselfishly spends his life in the service of the State."

We may, therefore, safely leave one portion of the essay to answer the other.

But when it is said that Christianity involves degeneration, Professor Seth retorts with the query, "From what type?" and adds that "degeneration from the animal type may well be progression towards the human type," and that it is only from the standpoint of a physiological naturalism that such an objection could be raised. But whatever may be the objection raised to the form of the criticism as stated by Nietzsche, it is, I think, certain that it contains a truth, and a very important one. So far as Christianity involves a glorification of weakness, suffering, and unhappiness, and holds these up as desirable qualities, or even tolerable qualities, in an ideal character, so far it certainly makes for degeneration. Sympathy with weakness and misery is good, and no one has, so far as I am aware, anything to say to the contrary. But it is obviously not a desirable thing that weakness and suffering should be either perpetuated or regarded with indifference so far as their eradication is concerned. And, so long as our sympathy with suffering leads us to merely make the lot of the sufferer tolerable, without our knowledge being applied to the task of preventing the perpetuation of the weak and socially undesirable, so long our sympathetic feelings will be our deadliest enemies instead of our best friends. Nature's method is to eliminate in a more or less brutal manner. By our knowledge and our sympathies we preserve alive those who, in a less civilised stage, could not exist. But to perpetuate a poor type of being is desirable neither from a purely biological nor from a social point of view. The great question for us and for the future is, therefore, since we suspend or partly neutralise the operation of Natural Selection, what are we doing to bring about the birth of a desirable type, or to secure its survival once it is brought into the world? A truthful answer to this is, very little. And I believe that careful study would show that Christianity, by its foolish glorification of pain and suffering, has played no small part in blinding people to the real truth of the situation.

Professor Seth further remarks that "from the ethical point of view the fitness or worthiness of the individual to live is not to be measured in terms of his physical fitness or physiological efficiency, but in terms of his ethical fitness, the ethical possibilities of his life." But unless we are going to take up the perfectly absurd position that a person's ethical state is absolutely independent of his physical organism, it is obvious that our "ethical fitness" will be, at least, partly conditioned by physiological fitness. To desire ethical fitness while studiously ignoring the

conditions that make it possible, is not only absurd—it is socially suicidal. We are all the time contaminating the stream at its source, and marvelling that it is impure at the mouth.

What, then, have we when we carefully examine "Christian morality"? We have a teacher and a teaching which, in the words of their defender, has "nothing to do with civilisation, with culture, with work or industry." We have nothing as to the nature of the State, nothing concerning the social organism, the family practically ignored, the position of women inadequate, the intellectual life uncared for. We have weakness, suffering, and misery glorified, and more or less held up as an ideal. Sympathy may be excited, but it is of a mawkish, unintellectual kind that is apt to breed far more trouble than it removes. We have this Christian morality crystallised in organisations that have admittedly been more injurious than beneficial. Finally, we have a mere handful of ethical precepts only of use when interpreted in the light of principles that Christianity fails to supply. People of all shades of political opinions may look to Jesus for guidance, as one preacher recently said. It probably is so, when these people are Christian in religion; but that they should do so is surely evidence that no clear rule of guidance can be found in that quarter. For real help, man is thrown back upon himself, and although many may continue to cloak the fruits of human experience with a religious covering, some day the non-essential will be discarded and honor given where it is due.

C. COHEN.

Baseless Assumptions.

AT the recent meeting of the Congregational Union at Blackpool, the Rev. F. J. Powicke, M.A., Ph.D., of Hatherlow, contributed a notable paper on "The Relation between Theology and the Spiritual Life." Dr. Powicke is both a scholar and a gentleman, so that with the tone of his essay no fault whatever can be found. He is a pronounced New Theologian, but he wisely refrains from pelting the Old Theology with abusive epithets. However, while the spirit of this discourse is in the highest degree admirable, the same warm praise cannot be bestowed upon the quality of its argument. Indeed, its argument must be pronounced not only inconclusive, but radically false. Dr. Powicke begins with a definition of terms. By theology he means "a doctrine of God, or our formulated thoughts about him, his being, his character, his relation to the world and man"; and, by the spiritual life, "the life of God in the soul." In this definition there are three distinct assumptions—namely, that "man is made in the image of God, capable of receiving into himself the personal life of God"; that "the original essential connection of God with man has never been severed"; and that "God, on his side, has been continuously seeking entrance to the soul of his child—*i.e.*, of every human being." Now, each of these assumptions is absolutely incapable of verification. Dr. Powicke himself dismisses them with this vague blessing: "All this I take to be implied in the words which, for me at least, are ultimate: 'In him was life, and the life was the light of men'—the true light, which lighteth every man." This is falling back upon the dogmatic authority of a book with a vengeance.

Before proceeding any further, let us get at Dr. Powicke's standpoint. "Spiritual life," he says, "is primary, and is operative in myriads of souls that know nothing of theology, as the life of sensation and perception is active in many who know nothing of biology and psychology." Then he tells us that "the immediate effects of spiritual life are given in those emotional—generally instructive—attitudes of reverence, trust, gratitude, self-abasement, aspiration, which are connoted by the term religion, and are expressed in various religious cults." It follows from this that "theology is the first con-

scious effort of reflective thought to analyse, account for, formulate the contents of religion, or religious experience," and that "a completely true theology presupposes not merely an intelligible and adequate reflection of the religious or spiritual life, but also, and still more, the purity of that life—i.e., its full correspondence with the life of God." Now, then, for the conclusion of the whole matter: "Given a complete revelation of God, a spiritual life completely responsive to that revelation, and a completely adequate intellectual explication of that spiritual life, the result would be a theology altogether true."

Such, in brief, is Dr. Powicke's argument, and nothing is more obvious than that it is vitiated by a fundamental fallacy. It is quite true that "the life of sensation and perception is active in many who know nothing of biology and psychology," but it is wholly false to say that "spiritual life is operative in myriads of souls that know nothing of theology." All who insist on the teaching of religion in day-schools thereby tacitly admit that the religious life is dependent on religious instruction. Belief in God implies a doctrine of God, or theology. This is an inescapable fact. Dr. Powicke need not go far to discover that, without theology, religious experience is non-existent. We are surrounded by "myriads of souls" that know nothing of spiritual life because they are without belief in God. The "attitudes of reverence, trust, gratitude, self-abasement, aspiration, which are connoted by the term religion," are wholly emotional, but never instinctive. They are solely acquired dispositions—acquired by much laborious and long-continued training. Only parents and teachers realise how laborious and long-continued the training must be in order to be lasting in its effects; and, even at best, its tendency is to lose all its hold on the mind and its emotions. Is not the Church perpetually grieved at the enormous number of backsliders and fallers from grace?

Dr. Powicke frequently refers to "revealed truth," "revelation," and "complete revelation," and yet by such terms he simply means "truth clearly apprehended." Of course, in that sense, every truth perceived by the mind may be said to be revealed, uncovered, made known; but that has never been the theological connotation of the word "revealed." In theology, *revelation* has invariably signified some special, superhuman disclosure of what previously was hidden from all eyes. The prophets, for example, claimed to be, in an extraordinary sense, the spokesmen of Jehovah. God *revealed* to them his mind and will, and commissioned them to communicate the same to the nation. They were ambassadors, mediators, divinely-ordained preachers, who delivered, not "truths clearly apprehended" by themselves, but direct messages received from heaven's throne. If the Bible is not a revelation in this specific, supernatural signification, its claim to be the Word of God, as distinguished, say, from Shakespeare's plays, falls to the ground. It was Paul's constant boast that the Gospel he preached had been supernaturally revealed to him by the risen Lord from heaven, and that to tamper with it in any way was the greatest of sins.

Now, Dr. Powicke definitely repudiates the Bible as a book of supreme authority in matters theological and religious; and in this we are wholly at one with him. We are also in agreement with him when he condemns all theologies strictly founded upon and verified by texts of Scripture. Many there are whose "early drilling in Oosterzee and Shedd has left a painful memory" in the mind; but, apart from the Bible, what authority is there to which an ultimate appeal can be made? At this stage the New Theologian is, of necessity, in a dense fog. He cannot part with the Bible altogether; and yet he is equally powerless to accept all its conclusions. He claims the right to criticise it, as if it were an ordinary volume, and yet pretends to pay it reverence, as if it were an extraordinary one. Of course, his thesis always is "that theology, rightly taken, springs out of the endeavor to find a logical answer to the ques-

tions suggested by data of the spiritual life"; but he omits to tell us how the spiritual life can originate without theology. It is all very well to say, "Get your theology out of your religious life"; but the existence of the religious life, in the absence of all theology, is an absolute impossibility. This is the rock on which the New Theology is bound to founder.

Dr. Powicke seems to be dimly aware that his position is unsafe as well as illogical, for, in the end, he ignores his own pet thesis and falls back upon the Bible. It is true that, professedly, he falls back upon the Bible after the critic has completed his legitimate work on it. In reality, however, it is upon orthodox theology that he falls back. Looking into the Gospels, purged of all mythical dross by the critic, what does he see? "A 'face' of so Divine a beauty and power that it is thrilling the open mind and heart as never before since those words were written, 'We beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth'!" Then he quotes the well-known passage from Browning, which begins—

"The very God! Think, Abib; dost thou think?"

and says, "Here, I repeat, we stand at the centre." Then he makes a long quotation from Dr. Adams Brown's *Essence of Christianity*, which concludes thus: "In restoring him [Jesus] to his highest place in Christian thought and life, scholarship has taken the greatest single step in the direction of a scientific definition of Christianity." "For myself," adds Dr. Powicke, "this satisfies me." But, most assuredly, this does not satisfy us; nor does it satisfy any genuine scholar. Dr. Powicke says of the critic:—

"He may even be able to say that all the alleged miracles of a certain period of history did not happen; and the value of his assertion will depend upon the amount and quality of his evidence. Nay, if the evidence seems to him of adequate force, he may be able to say that, in his judgment, miracles have never happened; and before his judgment can be upset, it must be shown that the evidence is insufficient."

Those are words of truth and wisdom; and as a matter of fact many Christian critics have eliminated all the miracles even from the Gospels. Well, after such an elimination, what remains? "The very God," who comes to sinful man,

"Saying, 'O heart I made, a heart beats here!
Face, My hands fashioned, see it in Myself.
Thou hast no power nor may'st conceive of Mine,
But love I gave thee, with Myself to love,
And thou must love Me who have died for thee?'"

No, a thousand times, no. What Dr. Arno Neumann sees in the Gospels is a man of like passions and limitations with ourselves, a man relieved of "the tawdry adornment of a mere worker of miracles, and of the socialism which takes extravagant delight in poverty," and a man "influenced by the formative elements of his time." Dr. Neumann is himself a Christian and a theologian; yet honest criticism has led him to a purely rationalist estimate of the Gospels. To non-Christian critics, the Gospels are in no degree historically reliable.

Thus we find that Dr. Powicke, in reality, accepts neither his own thesis nor the findings of Biblical criticism. If he accepted the latter, Jesus would not be to him "the very God," Creator of all things, and if he were loyal to the former, he would not begin, at any rate, with a full-fledged God-man. If his thesis were true, the continued existence of Christianity would be an insoluble enigma. In the absence of all theology, religious experience would utterly cease to-morrow. Religious experience is the offspring of belief, and the object of belief is theological dogma. Banish the dogma and the belief is at an end; and with the belief disappears the experience. What is theology, then? A collection of unverified assumptions which, when fervently believed, and only then, generate what is called religious experience, or spiritual life. What does the experience prove? Merely the existence of the belief, not in any sense or degree the truth of the assumptions. This is a truism—to all but theologians.

J. T. LLOYD.

Death of Mr. Touzeau Parris.

THE news of the death of Mr. Touzeau Parris reached us as we were going to press last week. We were unable, therefore, to do more than announce the fact. This week we are able to give a few biographical details.

Thomas Collins Touzeau Parris was born sixty-eight years ago at Honiton, in Devonshire—Richard Carlile's county. He went with his parents to Bristol when he was about five, and studied at the Grammar School there, afterwards entering the Bristol Baptist College. On leaving the College he went to different places preaching for the Baptists. Becoming broader in his views, he went to Glasgow, and preached there for some years for a body called (we understand) the Christian Disciples. Subsequently he went to Tavistock as a Unitarian minister, and finally to Halstead, in Essex, where he preached in Mr. Sam Cortauld's chapel. But he became too advanced even for that, and left the pulpit altogether. For a while he was engaged in his father's bookselling business at Bristol. In 1877, he went to London to assist Charles Bradlaugh, who was then in the midst of the famous Malthusian prosecution. From that time, until Charles Bradlaugh's death in 1891, Mr. Parris was actively engaged in Freethought propaganda, in close association with both Bradlaugh and Mrs. Besant. He had meanwhile entered into a manufacturing business which finally failed, and which occupied more and more of his time while it lasted; but for some years after Bradlaugh's death he lectured frequently, although not regularly, on the Freethought platform. Of late years he had dropped out of the work of the movement owing to his growing infirmities, which culminated in the stroke of paralysis which left him the sad ruin of his former self. He never spoke after his last seizure in July, and his death was in many respects a happy release. Fortunately, his last days were brightened, as far as possible, by the efforts made on his behalf by his friends, and by the knowledge it brought him that he was far from being forgotten. He wished Mrs. Parris to say that he was very grateful to the Freethinkers for their kindness in his extremity.

Mr. Parris was a man of extensive knowledge and varied accomplishments. His lectures were always lucid and instructive, and were highly valued by auditors in search of information. It was perhaps a pity that he did not serve the cause more by means of his pen, but we fancy he needed the stimulus of a public meeting to call forth his intellectual powers.

We have only to add that we have cordially agreed with Mr. S. A. Gimson's proposal that the balance in hand of the Touzeau Parris Fund should be handed over to Mrs. Parris. Of course, the Fund had already been drawn upon by Mr. Parris's necessities.

G. W. F.

LIBERTY.

Without Liberty you cannot fulfil any of your duties; you have therefore a right to Liberty and the duty to wrest it by any means from any power whatever which denies it to you. Without Liberty morality does not exist, because if there is not freedom of choice between good and evil, there is not freedom of devotion to the common progress and the spirit of egoism, there is no responsibility. Without Liberty, no true society exists, because between free men and slaves there can be no association, but only dominion of some over the others. Liberty is sacred as the individual whose life it represents is sacred. Where there is not Liberty, life is reduced to a mere organic function.....There are things which constitute your individual being and are essential to human life. And over these not even the People has any right. No majority, no collective force can rob you of that which makes you men. No majority can decree a tyranny and extinguish or alienate its own Liberty. Against a people who would commit such suicide you cannot use force, but the right of protest by whatever means circumstances may suggest to your lives and will live in each of you eternally.—Mazzini.

Acid Drops.

The organ of "Campbellism," the *Christian Commonwealth*, reports the sermons and the doings of the oracle of the City Temple. Mr. Albert Dawson, the editor, went with Mr. Campbell when he addressed the Fabians at Essex Hall. Mr. Aylmer Maude presided, and Mr. Bernard Shaw, Mr. H. G. Wells, Mr. Hubert Bland, and other "Socialist intellectuals" were on the platform, listening to the new Messiah of Socialism. "One or two voices," we are told, "were raised in protest against Socialism being in any way mixed up with religion, but the curious thing was that the great majority of these non-church-going people seemed to be yearning for a religion they could accept." Mr. Dawson does not tell us the symptoms of this interesting condition. They seemed to be yearning! Yes, but how did he notice it? Did they look green or yellow? We have seen people yearning on the boat between Newhaven and Dioppe, especially in rough weather. Did the Fabians look like that?

What a lark it will be, after all, if the New Theology catches on with the Fabians! Mr. H. G. Wells found them philosophy, Mr. Hubert Bland found them haughty-culture, Mr. Sydney Webb found them statistics, Mr. Bernard Shaw found them amusement, and Mr. Campbell is finding them religion. We must have an interval with three pocket-handkerchiefs—not for our nose.

Mr. Albert Dawson wound up with the following bit of eloquence—and we suppose he caught the infection from his guide, philosopher, and friend:—

"If you study the statistics of church-going, and are foolish enough to imagine that they represent the strength of the religious spirit, you may well be filled with black pessimism. But if you go among the people who are outside the churches, and observe their temper and aspirations, you will be buoyant with hope, and the assurance that the race is not going downwards but upwards."

We quite agree with the second sentence—and the first is all right in its way, though it doesn't much concern us. The black pessimism, of course, is for Christian consumption.

Another writer in the *Christian Commonwealth* says—and says it rejoicingly—that "Spencer is almost forgotten." He forgot to say *by whom*. Everything lies in that.

Mr. Campbell is troubling the Almighty less than he did. His confidential talks with Omniscience before his sermons are getting shorter. No doubt the One Above says (after Shakespeare), "for this relief much thanks."

Mr. Campbell made a mistake in "explaining" how he became a Socialist—and he may live to repent it. In his *New Theology*, he presents Socialism as the natural logic of Christianity. His readers could never guess that he had any other reason for being a Socialist; although some of them might well wonder how it was that he had been a Christian all his life, and a Christian preacher for so many years, without ever seeing the logical result of his own principles. But now the reverend gentleman explains that he had other reasons for becoming a Socialist. He unbosomed himself on the subject at a recent meeting in Fulham Congregational Church, under the auspices of the Independent Labor Party. After stating that he was "struck by the sheer logic of the Gospel he was preaching," without saying *when*, he declared that "that was only one reason" although a "very powerful one." The other reason was "an event, or series of events, which took place about two years ago." Now we are coming to it.

We pointed out in a recent article that Mr. Campbell, who now poses as the Messiah of the Socialist movement, was only a short time ago libelling the working-classes, with the result that the City Temple was guarded by a crowd of police, and the preacher himself had to be smuggled out the back way, because Socialist demonstrators were so eager to let him know what they thought of him. A few weeks afterwards, Mr. Campbell attended a meeting called for the purpose in the West-end, and defended his attitude towards the lazy and drunken majority of the working classes. Amongst the speakers was Mr. Harry Snell, who delivered a withering rebuke to the reverend gentleman; and that withering rebuke seems to have been largely responsible for Mr. Campbell's conversion.

We think we had better tell the rest of the story in Mr. Campbell's own words, taken from the report in the *Daily Chronicle* :—

"I was convinced," he went on, "that, although it would be very difficult to disprove what I had said, I had not taken into account this working-man's point of view. I was speaking from outside and not from the inside, and did not know at first hand the actual life and struggles of the poor. I thought things over. I did not withdraw anything I had said, and I am not going to, because I feel that the real difficulty of such leaders of the Socialist movement as Alderman Saunders and Harry Snell arise from the ranks of the working classes themselves. But the result of being brought into touch with these men and of becoming fast friends with them was that I tried to get the working-man's point of view, and I think I have got it."

Mr. Campbell added that about a year ago he preached the first sermon in which he "took his stand by Socialism." Which shows how recent is the reverend gentleman's adhesion to, or even perception of, the "sheer logic of the Gospel."

Mr. Harry Snell, then, appears to have been (after Christ, you know, after Christ) the principal cause of Mr. Campbell's conversion to Socialism. And who and what is Mr. Harry Snell? We have known him for more years than we care to count. Our first recollection of him is in connection with the old Nottingham Branch of the National Secular Society in Bradlaugh's time. He was a hard and enthusiastic worker for the Secular movement then; and, of course, he is a Secularist still, although his present work lies chiefly with the Ethicists—whose business is morality, and nothing but morality, or, as they call it, the "good life." Whatever Mr. Snell has since become, it was to Secularism that he owed his first introduction to the "higher life"—the service of truth, freedom, justice, and humanity. He has spoken at more than one of the N. S. S. annual dinners, and he took part in the Queen's Hall welcome to Joseph Symes after twenty-three years' absence in Australia; Mr. Snell having known the doughty old fighter before he left England in 1883—the year of Mr. Foote's imprisonment in Holloway Gaol. Our readers will see, therefore, that Mr. Campbell's conversion to Socialism was chiefly brought about (after Christ, you know, after Christ) by Mr. Harry Snell the Freethinker. And whereas it took Christ ever so many years to make any serious impression on Mr. Campbell, the job was done by Mr. Harry Snell in a single speech. We see now who are the best missionaries.

Mr. Harry Snell has written to the *Daily Chronicle* to say that Ethicism has nothing to do with Atheism. This is quite true. But how is it that Ethicism seems to have so much to do with Theism? Dr. Stanton Coit's performances are well known. He has the whole vocabulary of piety at the end of his tongue. Mr. G. E. O'Dell, another Ethicist, has been discoursing on "When God Arrives in Notting Dale." We hope to be informed of the visit—when it happens, and will cheerfully pay for a telegram stating time and place.

Rev. George Neighbor, pastor of Mount Pisgah English Baptist Chapel, Mountain Ash, has resigned his pulpit, in consequence of the deacons not relishing his Socialism. He is going to form a Brotherhood Church, with room in it for "everyone who loves his fellow man and recognises God as the Father of all." No Atheists need apply.

They held a memorial service in St. Andrew's Hall, Glasgow, "for the Salvation Army officers in Heaven." No doubt they nearly run the place, and will take full command when their old General arrives.

"Salvation Army officers in Heaven." How cocksure some people are! Still, we wish them all luck.

The Education Committee of the London County Council has had a debate on corporal punishment, and a resolution was passed that it should be reduced to a minimum. Alderman Sheppard pleaded strongly for its abolition. Rev. Scott Lidgett, the well-known Nonconformist, was against that. Of course. He believes in the Bible, and the Bible is the child-beater's text-book. For our part, we have always been opposed to this cheap and easy method of maintaining discipline; and we consider its retention in English schools, when other countries have rejected it, as a serious disgrace to the nation.

Dr. Ernest Wilberforce, late Bishop of Chichester, left estate which has been sworn for probate at £44,789. "Blessed be ye poor, for yours is the kingdom of heaven."

Jesus said, "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." Everybody knows that the beatitude has never been fulfilled: the meek have not been, and are not likely soon to be, in possession of the earth. Aware of this humiliating fact, the Rev. A. W. Cooke, M.A., assures us that "the promise attached to this beatitude is not a guarantee of many houses, large estates, and stores of money." According to this divine, what Jesus meant, though he did not say so, was this: "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth in all its higher possibilities of conferring gladness and good and satisfaction—the earth as God made it and intended it to be, a place for the fashioning of souls and for the heaping up of every kind of spiritual treasure." That is what Jesus meant, only he hadn't the gumption to say it. What deep thanks Jesus owes to his modern emenders, or fulfillers!

A well-known Wesleyan Methodist says: "I would give my coat off my back to a starving child, but I must attend the prayer-meeting even if children starve." How eminently characteristic! Religion first, everything else second—even the feeding of starving children. A lady was an active worker in a Mission. But a sister died, leaving six or seven orphans. This lady took complete charge of the children, and, in consequence, had to neglect her mission work. One day the missionary called for an explanation, and, on receiving it, said: "My dear sister, nothing should be allowed to interfere with the Lord's work."

Dr. Parker once exclaimed, "The Devil is to be burnt out by the Divine look." Dr. Parker must have been laboring under a delusion, for only last Sunday a prominent pulpiteer confidently declared that his Satanic Majesty is still very much alive and most active, "seeking whom he may devour" up and down the world. The Divine look is not consuming enough for the tough old vagabond.

"It is to these flaming seraphs I look," cries Dr. Campbell Morgan. That may be quite true, but the "flaming seraphs" never return the look; at least, they never come and convert or burn up the wicked Infidels. Dr. Campbell Morgan has crowded Westminster Chapel to the doors, but the "flaming seraphs" never succeeded in doing even that. Possibly they are not there, or anywhere else, at all! Probably the great preacher only sees them with the eye of his imagination!

"A. B. C." of the *Methodist Times* has "great hope in God." He is "very sure that God is not going to abandon the world to our saving, that he is not going to let folk be damned if we do not organise the proper program." But what about the past? Has the Lord ever stepped in and done the saving himself? Has he ever spoken a word to an Atheist? Has he ever annihilated a slum? Has he once interfered with the sweating system, or put a sudden stop to any form of wrong-doing? Has he ever done a single thing to prove that he exists?

Poor old England! The Dean of Norwich informs us that she is going fast to the dogs. Of this sad fact there are three unmistakable signs. She is getting to believe in what is termed a "stream of tendency," and to deny the personality of God. In consequence of this, she is "in danger of being affected by an epidemic of irresponsibility." Even already she doesn't care a fig what happens to her. Worst of all, "England is busy turning the Lord's Day into a weekly Bank Holiday." This means, of course, that she is turning her back on the parsons, which is an infallible sign that she is facing the rocks. Poor old England!

Canon Scott-Holland says that "a converted Church would strike the world with terror; it would be irresistible; it would cast out the old serpent." That is as yet a Church unborn. It is the Church of an impossible future. The Church of the past and of the present can only be described as morally impotent and socially injurious. The "Church of power, of judgment, and of victory" exists only in a parson's dream.

China is awaking in earnest. She is going to establish universities, colleges, and schools throughout her provinces, and many thousands of teachers will be needed. But the Christians are resolved to have a finger in the pie, and already a "China Missions Emergency Committee" has been formed, with the object of forcing Christian teaching upon the Chinese Empire. Why cannot they allow China to work out her own salvation without this rude interference from outside? Plato defines justice as the art of minding one's own business, an art which Christians seem incapable of learning.

The Rev. Lord William Gascoyne-Cecil, during the course of his articles on Missions in the East, lets in a strong light on the character of Korean converts. He tells his readers of how the power of the Spirit of God was manifested at an annual gathering of converted men. These were all overcome by the Spirit of Jesus, and filled with the sense of sin. "Europeans described its manifestations as terrifying." The confession of sins went on for days. "It was with mingled feelings of horror and gratitude that the missionaries heard the long list of crimes committed by those whom, they had hoped, were examples of righteousness. One man confessed a crime not so horrible to their minds as to ours—that of murdering his infant daughter; another confessed a crime worse even to Korean ears than it is to our own—that of killing his old and infirm mother to escape from the burden of her maintenance. A trusted native pastor confessed to adultery, and of sexual sins, both natural and unnatural, there was no lack." The interesting thing about this statement is, that these confessants were not "heathens confessing their sins, but Christian converts of long standing." They had doubtless been paraded in missionary reports as shining examples of the moralising power of missions. How much one can depend upon such stories is well shown by the instances quoted above. Personally, we have never yet seen any testimony worth quoting which supported the view that converts anywhere were better men or women than their unconverted fellow-countrymen. The evidence is rather in the other direction.

The philosophy of missionary reports is ingenuously put by Mr. Bernard Lucas, a missionary, in his book, *The Empire of Christ*. He says: "There is hardly a single missionary who does not feel the contrast between what he has to say of his work abroad and what he is expected to say of it to the Churches at home. He has met with countless failures, of which.....he is expected to say nothing. He has met with a little success.....of which he is expected to say much.....He comes home in direct need of fresh inspiration, and he is greeted everywhere with the request to keep up the enthusiasm of the churches and rekindle the missionary zeal." Which, being interpreted, means that those who are in the missionary business insist on a certain kind of story being told to subscribers; and, if the story is at variance with the facts, so much the worse for the facts. Missionary enterprise is not to be retarded by such trivial considerations as to whether a story is true or not.

"The cultured man without knowledge is bad for the nation," says Sir Oliver Lodge. Quite so; but we have a suspicion that the man with knowledge, but without the intellectual balance to apply it properly, is even a greater danger still.

We have observed, in our leading article, how the newspapers fought shy of mentioning the late Gerald Massey's strong Freethought in their obituary notices. But the dear *Daily News* came out best in this competition. It referred to his last work, published just before his death, *Ancient Egypt: the Light of the World*, and added that "in it he developed his great idea that the human race originated in Africa." It would be hard to beat that. Not a word about his great idea that Christianity originated in Africa. Of course it couldn't be mentioned in the organ of the Nonconformist Conscience. The readers of the holy journal must not be informed that anybody thinks Christianity did not originate in Palestine. It would be too awful a shock to their delicate nerves.

The Rev. J. Ossian Davies, who favors the Christian Endeavor Societies with a weekly homily, imagines that omniscience is one of his attributes. He knows the heart of an Atheist through and through, and undertakes to inform the unfortunate reprobate what it contains. "The hardest fight the Atheist has," he asserts, "is with the irrepressible voice of his own heart, that continually cries out for the living God." This is a ridiculous falsehood; but that doesn't matter, as lies told in a good cause are readily forgiven, and the people to whom they are addressed are duly grateful.

Having uttered that lie about the Atheist, Mr. Davies plucks up his courage and hurls this bit of tawdry rhetoric at the blackguard's head: "You may curse our churches, and denounce our creeds, and ridicule our ministers as ancient fossils, and mock our God as a colossal chimera, but you can never uproot this worship-instinct." The Endeavorers will cheer that to the echo. The truth, however, is, either that Mr. Davies is a conscious and deliberate libeller of a numerous class of people, or that he dogmatizes wildly on a subject about which he knows absolutely nothing.

The Rev. Stanley Rogers says that a clergyman should never admit failure. To do such a thing is to make a bad impression upon the world. Whether he is a success or not, it is a minister's duty always to sound the note of triumph. Christianity is dying, but for heaven's sake tell the world that it is all-victorious. Such is Mr. Rogers' idea of pulpit honesty.

Great Thoughts is a paper with a very ambitious title. We cannot say our contemporary lives up to it. The editor, who is a reverend gentleman, we believe, writes long, gushing, and pious articles on poets. That is his speciality, and we daresay he hits the taste of a good many readers. For we might say of his articles what Lincoln said of a certain book in great vogue—"Well, if that is the sort of thing people like, that's the sort of thing they would like." Which sounds like an enigma or a paradox, but is witty sound sense all the same.

Last week's poet in *Great Thoughts* was Algernon Charles Swinburne. There were two good things in connection with him. The first was a fine portrait. The second was a fine piece of personal testimony from Lady Burne-Jones. Writing of the poet in his younger days, when she and her artist-husband were first acquainted with him, she said that he was "affectionate and unsuspecting, and faithful beyond most people to those he really loved." That was good, but better followed. "The biting wit," she said, "which filled his talk so as at times to leave his hearers dumb with amazement, always spared one thing, and that was an absent friend." This is one of the most splendid traits in human character, and all the more splendid because so rare.

The pious editor praises the music of Swinburne's poetry, especially in one of the great choruses in *Atalanta*; but he deplors the fact that the lines so "musical and fascinating" are full of the "melancholy wail of pitiful atheism." *Pitiful* is good. Fancy this pious gentleman, one of the illustrious obscure—to borrow Shelley's fine expression—pitying Swinburne! There has been nothing like it since the mouse—or was it the rat?—condoled with the lion.

We are told that the first volume of *Poems and Ballads* "inflicted irreparable injury" on Swinburne's "reputation." Perhaps so, in chapel circles; but is poetry ever read there? We don't mean hymns. In his old age, Mr. Swinburne has reprinted those peccant poems in the collected edition. The pious editor calls this a "crime," and adds that the volume should be burnt. The volume was "unworthy" of Swinburne's "transcendent genius." Whereas it contains some of the finest things he ever wrote. Clearly the editor of *Great Thoughts* understands poetry as well as he understands Atheism. Why does he write on subjects above his level?

The *Christian World* devotes a leading article to the question of moral instruction in public schools. The article is noticeable not so much for what it says as for what it implies. Considering that so much has been claimed on behalf of Christianity as a moral force—many even going the length of the assertion that our whole morality has its basis in Christianity—it is somewhat amusing to be informed that the great question of the day is how to impart moral instruction to children both in and out of school. If Christianity had been a real character-building force, by now we should have evolved a type of human being that by sheer example would have led the rising generation along the right path. For mere moral teaching may easily be overvalued. It is at least questionable whether moral exhortations ever succeeded in developing more than ethical "priggishness," as it is arguable that the forces that really mould character are those of whose influence we are wholly or partly unconscious. Certainly such things as good air, good food, and good homes have their influence in moulding character, while moral teaching is usually far more effective when it takes the line of warning off bad paths instead of coercing people along what is believed to be right ones. But this is a view that is quite foreign to Christianity, both in its substance and in its spirit.

The *C. W.* remarks that the English public school contains no provision for teaching the duties of citizenship. This is not quite true of the elementary schools to-day; but the change, small as it is, has no connection whatever with Christianity. For that creed has not, and never has had, any working principle of social life and social duties. It has only recognised the State in this connection to enforce the lesson of obedience to established powers. But the fact that we are all sharers of a common social life, with the historic and scientific aspect of the same—the one aspect of moral instruction from which good could certainly be derived from

instruction—has been ignored. It is when one comes to deal with these subjects that one realises what a horrible fiasco social life would be had we only Christianity as guide, and how much the world has lost, absolutely by the destruction of serviceable ideals and relatively in view of what life might have been, by the triumph of Christianity.

There was a difference of opinion at the British and Foreign Bible Society's meeting at Wolverhampton. The Mayor (Councillor A. B. Bantock), who presided, had to admit that "some of the stories told in the Bible had been proved to be not facts." When he was a little lad he "believed in the stories of the Old Testament as literally true," but "there were many to-day who did not accept" them in that light. The Rev. R. Dunne, however, would not have the Mayor's theory at any price. "To no man," he said, "would he allow that the facts of the Old Testament were fables. If they were good enough for the Son of God they were good enough for him." Thus the two principal speakers at this meeting were quite opposed to each other as to what the Bible really is. Yet they agree to go on circulating it, anyhow—especially amongst the heathen.

George Lyons Press, ship's carpenter, of Clifton-wood, was committed for trial at Bristol on charges of wounding his wife and daughter. He went for his wife with a hatchet, and she spent ten weeks afterwards in hospital. She stated in evidence that her life for some years with him had been a living death. Prisoner wrote her a pious letter, saying, "Thank God, my sins, which are many, are all forgiven, and I have made my peace with God." Good old man!

Spurgeon—we mean the famous one—had a study clock which was presented by his son Thomas to the Rev. John Hockey, a Baptist minister and prominent Passive Resister at Bexhill. That interesting relic has just been seized by the police under a distraint at the reverend gentleman's house for non-payment of rates. We wonder what Spurgeon would have thought of it. He himself, we believe, was in favor of Secular Education. There were real Nonconformists in those days. They are half-breeds now.

It is amusing to watch the dear Nonconformists raising their eyebrows and throwing up their hands over Father Tyrrell's citation before the tribunal of the Holy Inquisition at Rome to answer the accusation of heresy. Freethinkers have a right to laugh at such antiquated tactics. But the Nonconformists have not. They are just as bad as the Pope, but they don't act as straightforwardly. Many of them call for the expulsion of the Rev. R. J. Campbell from the Congregational Church on account of his New Theology. Was not Dr. Robertson Smith turned out of the Free Church of Scotland? And how long is it since Dr. Agar Beet was told by the Wesleyan Methodist Conference to shut up on the subject of Immortality or forfeit his salaried position in the Wesleyan Church?

A very pretty quarrel is going on between the Rev. George Denyer, of Christ Church, Blackburn, and the Bishop of Manchester. The vicar uses unfermented wine in the holy communion, and the Bishop insists on his using the ordinary intoxicating port wine. Nothing else can be considered the *bona fide* Blood of Christ. How will it end? We wonder. Both parties are determined, and Christ isn't likely to interfere.

Bishop Welldon, Dean of Manchester, addressing a congregation consisting mostly of "salts" at Liverpool, praised the "simple piety" of that class of men. "Our greatest sailors," he said, "whatever their other faults, had been mindful of their belief in God." They may drink, and swear, and have a wife in every port, but, thank God, they are pious. Nelson himself was pious—in spite of Emma Hamilton.

Bournemouth Town Council has been discussing a Sunday question. Alderman Abbott elicited that the agreement with respect to the new tenancy of the King's Park Pavilion provided that the refreshment-room should not be open on the Lord's Day, and he moved the deletion of the clause. In doing so, he said that the opinion of the English on the continent was that they were a nation of hypocrites—and that was an instance of it. When the Council assembled after attendance at church on Sunday morning, how pleased they were to partake of the refreshments provided by the Mayor! Why, then, were they so anxious to deprive other people of the same enjoyment? Alderman Abbott's motion was seconded, but the question was burked by passing to the next business—the vote being 19 to 11.

Alderman Hamilton, the new mayor elect of Preston, raised so much local feeling by refusing to pay an official visit to the parish church, or any other place of worship, that he has refused the office. Commenting on this, the *Tribune* says: "It is doubtful whether consent to go to church ought to be imposed upon a mayor as a necessary condition; but at least it is clear that Preston has no sympathy with secularism." Our contemporary would seem to have "secularism" on the brain. Alderman Hamilton is a Baptist.

The *Christian World* can still stoop to nonsense occasionally. Referring to the last Salvation Army meeting in the Albert Hall, our contemporary gravely "recalls the fact" that "Brigadier Richard Slater, who has for many years acted as musical editor to the Army, was, previous to his conversion, an infidel lecturer." Where and when?

We are next told that "the simple testimony of a servant-girl, given at an Army meeting in the West-end, upset his infidel ideas." Is it possible that the *Christian World* staff really believe such rubbish?

Mr. J. Arnold Sharpley, speaking at a Social Democratic Federation meeting in Picton Hall, Liverpool, stated amidst loud applause that of the 640 pulpits in Liverpool not 10 took up the cause of the people. There was renewed applause when he described all the rest as "stinkpots."

We see by the *Islington Gazette* that the Christian Evidence people have had a special gathering in Finsbury Park, at which a Mr. Green trotted out the "Secularist hymn in praise of whisky" again. We do not intend to worry about this person. Green he is by name, and Green he may be by nature. The person we want to bring to book is the secretary of the Christian Evidence Society. If, after our late exposure of the "whisky hymn" charge, the Rev. R. V. Faithfull Davies still instructs his underlings to persist with their infamous lying accusation, we shall be obliged to stigmatise him as a vulgar slanderer, a blackguardly ruffian, and a contemptible scoundrel. We quite understand that he has to earn his salary, but is it necessary to stoop to a lower level than that of most of the criminals in prison?

"I feel," the Rev. R. J. Campbell says, "that there is no more rotten institution in this country to-day than that portion of the press which is supposed to represent religion." We have said the same thing for over so many years. Of course we are glad to see Mr. Campbell catching up with us on some points.

Lord Rosebery has been saying that scepticism may be a useful tonic for adults, but it saps the character of children. Why on earth didn't he state what he meant by "scepticism"? Was he only playing to the orthodox gallery? Or has he gone back on his old declaration of personal adherence to the principle of Secular Education—as he has gone back on so many other things?

People who are supposed to know something of Lord Rosebery represent him as not being over-burdened with religious belief. Is his lordship anxious (we do not say to live down, but) to talk down that reputation?

Isaac Lovey, charged at the Newcastle Police Court with obtaining money by false pretences—including worthless cheques—had renounced Judaism for Christianity, and Mr. P. A. Porteous, the missionary who turned him over, described him as "a very hopeful convert." Very!

Manchester's Lady Mayoress, at a Conference of the National Anti-Sweating League, declared herself a Christian Socialist, and asserted that the Socialists had not a good thing in their program which they had not got from the Bible. Mr. J. R. Clynes, M.P., replied that, with all due respect to the Bible, there were two things not in it—a minimum wage or a regulation of the hours of labor. The Bible wasn't enough.

Father Coyle talks like a true Hibernian. Lecturing on "Uganda and its People" at Manchester, he spoke highly of the Catholic mission there, and said that there were more Catholics in Africa than in England. He also said that if the white men withdrew the natives would simply exterminate each other.

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, November 10, Milton Hall, Daulby-street, Liverpool: at 3, "The New Theology and Socialism: Blatchford versus Campbell"; at 7, "The Growth of God."

November 17, Birmingham; 24, Stanley Hall, London; 28 and 29, Bristol.

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

To Correspondents.

C. COHEN'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—November 10, Stanley Hall, North London; 17, Liverpool; December 1, Birmingham; 8, Manchester; 15, Edinburgh.—Address: 241 High-road, Leyton.

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

J. H. F.—We don't think G. H. Bibbings is worth any more of our attention. We have pricked the bubble of his posing as an opponent of Christianity. He has certainly been a Spiritualist, but that is a different thing altogether. It is amusing to read that he applied (unsuccessfully) for a permanent job at the Spiritualist Church in Burnley before making up his mind to get dipped into the Baptist Church.

CASTOR.—Thanks. See paragraph.

G. DEER.—Prophet Baxter's paper, the *Christian Herald*, is too silly for anything—except for its readers. Of course, the Kansas girl who came back from death was never dead at all. Several cases are on record of persons certified as dead who escaped being buried alive by showing signs of vitality in time. We knew of a Freethinker once who was laid out and measured for his coffin; in this case, it was the undertaker who noticed a symptom of life. Not long afterwards, the certified dead man was at Brighton, instead of in heaven, or wherever else he would have gone to.

BRIXTON.—Sorry to hear you say you have not noticed the *Freethinker* announced at the Brockwell-park open-air meetings, with the exception of the last one. We regret that few of the London Branches are quite as active as they might be in this direction.

R. J. HENDERSON.—The weather has been very trying, as you say, but Mr. Foote is pulling through it tolerably well. Thanks for your good wishes.

W. BURCH.—The statement that our dear old friend and colleague, the late J. M. Wheeler, who was sub-editor of the *Freethinker*, and who died in May, 1898, sent on his death-bed for a clergyman or some other person to pray for him, is a lie. His death-bed was in the padded cell of a lunatic asylum, where he was taken while suffering from acute mania, of which he had suffered attacks fourteen and fifteen years before. Now that Mrs. Wheeler is dead too, the circulators of this lie probably think it will have a prosperous future.

F. S. BARBER.—Mr. S. Longville, of Cardiff, is no worse (and no better) than crowds of other Christians in coupling together "unbelief and lust." He was very ignorant or very reckless in saying that the Colony of Victoria showed the evil effects of Secular Education in an increase of crime. Official statistics, which we prefer to Mr. Longville's *ipse dixit*, prove the exact contrary. Moreover, there is less crime in Victoria, where Secular Education obtains, than in other Colonies, such as New South Wales, where it does not. Mr. Foote is trying to arrange a visit to South Wales early in the new year. Glad you were so pleased with Mr. Cohen.

CELEBON.—So the Hucknall Torkard Sabbatarians are on the rampage again. We hope they will be smashed. Jesus couldn't have objected to a man's buying a newspaper and a bit of "baccy" on Sunday; if he were alive now, judging from the New Testament, he would probably buy both.

J. J. TASSER.—If the Salvation Army's only reply (through Lt.-Col. G. J. Jolliffe) to a Salvationist's request for an answer to Mr. Cohen's pamphlet is that Mr. Cohen is "an infidel," honest people will know what to think of it.

E. GWINNELL.—Will try to oblige another week.

B. G. BROWN.—Pleased to know we have had "such a potent influence over your intellectual life" since your "conversion in 1901."

J. J. MURPHY.—You really ought not to take the little Christian Evidence libellers so seriously. Mr. Cohen's friends can afford to smile at the statement that he had to run away from a meeting in Victoria Park; and as he never let a house or a portion of a house to anyone in his life; it is difficult to see how he could have "sold up" a defaulting tenant. Why didn't you ask the libeller for particulars—on the spot?

R. IRVING.—Sorry we have no time to make up such a list at present. But surely the three great names of Spencer, Huxley, and Bradlaugh, who were all opposed to Socialism, are sufficient to dispose of the Christian statement that Atheism and Socialism are identical.

J. BROUEN.—We will write more literary articles when we get time. Thanks for cuttings. Never mind the Bland articles.

P. W. M.—See paragraph. Thanks.

W. P. BALL.—Thanks for ever-welcome cuttings.

G. ROLEIFFS.—Mostly useful.

B. BALL (Stanley).—Glad you like our "style of writing." Perhaps it is because we write exactly what we feel and think. Pleased to have your agreement on the matter you mention. Mr. Foote is keeping fairly well.

M. D.—See "Acid Drops."

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

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

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

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

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THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months, 2s. 8d.

Sugar Plums.

Mr. Foote is lecturing this afternoon and evening (Nov. 10) in the Milton Hall, Daulby-street, Liverpool, for the local Branch of the National Secular Society, and hopes to see a strong rally of the district "saints." His subjects are fresh, and should be attractive. Perhaps we ought to repeat our last week's statement that the big Picton Hall is not available for Mr. Foote's meetings on this occasion.

The weather was gloomy in London on Sunday evening, but the new course of lectures at Stanley Hall opened extremely well. There was a capital audience, much better than on previous occasions, and Mr. Foote's lecture was highly appreciated; the applause at the close being very enthusiastic. Mr. Victor Roger, who came all the way from Camberwell, took the chair, and appealed to those present to do their utmost to fill the hall for the succeeding visits of Messrs. Cohen and Lloyd. A few questions were dealt with, but there was no formal discussion. One old gentleman, in a very pompous manner, wanted to know, before putting his questions, whether Mr. Foote would answer them with a plain "Yes" or "No." On being told that he could put his questions but could not dictate the answers, he declined to put them at all. But the lecturer drew him out of his hole all the same, and when he did put his questions there was nothing in them—much to the audience's amusement.

Mr. Cohen delivers the second lecture of the Stanley Hall course to-night (Nov. 10). North London "saints" should do their best to bring Christian friends along with them to the meeting. We hope to hear of another capital audience.

Manchester "saints" will make special note of the fact that Mr. J. T. Lloyd lectures to-day (Nov. 10), afternoon and evening, in the Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, All Saints. Mr. Lloyd's ability and eloquence should crowd the building.

The newly-formed Bristol Branch being desirous of an early visit from Mr. Foote, in order to get a good start for its winter propaganda, and being unable to obtain a Sunday from him this year, has embraced his offer to run down and lecture on two week-nights. The dates are already fixed—Thursday and Friday, Nov. 28 and 29; and the Shepherd's Hall, Old Market-street, has been engaged on account of its central position.

Birmingham and district "saints" should note that Mr. Foote delivers two lectures, afternoon and evening, in the Town Hall next Sunday (Nov. 17). We announce the meetings this week because the great hall takes some filling, and because we don't want any of the "saints" to be in ignorance of Mr. Foote's visit until too late.

A good many of our London readers will have this week's *Freethinker* in their hands in time for this reminder of the Secular Education League's demonstration in the Memorial Hall, Farringdon-street, on Thursday evening, November 7, at 8 o'clock. We hope a lot of them will be there—and early.

The resolution to be moved at the Secular Education League's demonstration runs as follows:—"That this meeting, recognising that the sole responsibility for religious education rests with parents and churches, expresses its conviction that there can be no final solution of the religious

difficulty in National Education until the Education Act is amended, so as to secure that there shall be no teaching of religion in State-supported Elementary Schools in school hours or at the public expense; that copies of this resolution be forwarded to the Prime Minister and the Minister of Education, and that they be respectfully requested to receive a deputation to urge that the next Education Bill should be based on these lines."

Mr. Robert Blatchford wrote on "Socialism and Unbelief" last week. One of his declarations was that Christians are not better than Freethinkers, but the contrary. "The unbelievers," he said, "taken man by man, and woman by woman, are more moral, more orderly, and more intelligent than the believers. To be a Christian one need not be educated, nor intelligent. To be an agnostic or an unbeliever, one must learn and think. Hence we find that the bulk of the agnostics and infidels are drawn from the ranks of the educated and thoughtful. But the strength of the religious lies in the unthinking and uninformed masses."

Here is another declaration. "Some Socialists," Mr. Blatchford said, "regard Socialism as a political creed, and would keep their religious ideas apart from it. But to me Socialism is a part of a great humane religion; and I cannot sacrifice the whole to a part. With us of the *Clarion*, Socialism is part of a religion. We are, as I have told you, religious men and women."

We are glad to see Mr. Blatchford sticking to his guns, though we hope he will drop the talk about his "religion." If he would try to draw up a statement of his "religion" he would probably find that it contained some ethics and some poetry, and not a scrap of what at least nine hundred and ninety-nine people out of every thousand mean by "religion." The use of such a word, without a constant definition, is apt to be very misleading.

Some unbelievers use the word "religion" too much like the gentleman in the following story. He was clean-shaven below the mouth, and a man with a flourishing beard sneered at him for having no hair on his chin. "Oh yes, I have," he replied, "I've got the roots." Some men clean-shave in the matter of supernaturalism, but they are proud of the roots in the shape of "religion."

Mr. F. J. Gould has worked hard and well for the cause of Secular Education on the Leicester Town Council. He was a member of the Education Committee, and kept that cause well to the front. He was making gradual headway with it, but the new elections have thrown him out of his seat. Mr. Gould defeated a popular publican at the previous election, but a lawyer was too much for him this time. The lawyer was a Liberal and a Christian. Mr. Gould was a Labor candidate and a Secularist. So the man of law polled 969 votes and the man of ideas 718. It really seems to us wonderful that Mr. Gould polled so many. Evidently he made a good fight. Anyhow, we thank him, if we may, for the good he did while on the Council. We thank him quite as much for the good he attempted.

Mr. Gould's votes were all the more surprising when we consider the efforts made by the religionists against him. Rev. F. B. Feist, vicar of St. Andrew's, and the assistant clergy of the parish, issued a warning against Mr. Gould's "alarming views," and asked the electors to consider whether he was "the man to be entrusted with the duty of looking after such matters as the education of their children in the Council Schools." Would they "send men into power who would tamper with the immutable laws of the Creator"? This is a perfectly imbecile expression, and it is sad to think that such an idiotic appeal helped to return the "Simple Bible Teaching" candidate.

Mr. Wishart, who has been "missioning" for the N. S. S. Executive in Yorkshire lately, reports that the weather has been much against open-air meetings during the past week or two, but they have been held whenever possible. The revived Leeds Branch now has sixty-two members on its books, who are all looking forward to an early visit from Mr. Foote. Good work has been done also at Huddersfield, where the local "saints" are minded to resume active work. Heckmondwike, Dewsbury, Bradford, Bramley, Halifax, and other places contain a number of Freethinkers who may be brought together for the purposes of organisation and propaganda in the spring. Mr. Wishart is moving on to Liverpool, where he will do some work in connection with the N. S. S. Branch, besides visiting other South Lancashire towns.

"The Mother."—II.

BY DR. JOHN EMERSON ROBERTS,
Minister of the Church of This World, in Kansas City.

(Concluded from p. 700.)

UNDER this change, if it were come, the service, the worship of men would greatly change. Instead of building cathedrals for God, and poor-houses for women and children, we would give God the poor-houses and the women and children comfortable homes. Can anyone think of anything more useless, more heartless than our boasted service offered to God? What difference does it make to him whether a building costs \$250,000.00 or \$10,000.00? If it is well ventilated, and has plenty of his abundant air, and the light falls from his heavens, what difference does the price make to him? And yet everywhere people are striving and sacrificing to outdo with their architectural display their neighbors—for the glory of God. Of course, they are sincere about these things; but, when we think about it, how rapid and foolish it appears. Then there is the present service that we render to God a kind of a metaphysical quibble. Men go up and down this world serving God with trumpets and display and ostentation, and all the while oppressing the mothers and the children of mothers, by laying burdens upon the human world. There is a distinguished Sunday-school man that is, perhaps, the richest man in the world; prominent in church circles; the church where he belongs is called after him—a fact which he protests against but cannot help. When people are in the city they ask where is such a man's church. It is altogether possible to serve God acceptably according to the creed or the routine, and yet be possessed of hundreds and hundreds of millions of dollars, while about him, and in every great city, children lack bread and mothers suffer, and oftentimes sell themselves in the markets of men to secure bread and shelter for their children—that is altogether possible under the persuasion men have that they are serving God. I should like to see the time come when only the useful shall be honorable, and when no feeling of sacredness should attach to anything that brings to the cheek of justice or mercy the blush of shame. I should like to see the time come when we shall all cease building temples and cathedrals to any God, but build them to humanity, to the service of men and women upon this earth now. That time can come, that time will come, when we change the ideals, when we take our divinity from the skies, and, having domesticated and acclimated it, made it a home in the world where we are living. We shall make all life that is kind and just and honorable and useful the service that we now perform.

Under this change in religion there will come a change in our civilisation. One of the first things that we would do, if the divinity recognised was the mother, would be to put a just and equitable tax upon Church property of every kind and everywhere, and remit the taxes, if on anything, upon the humble homes of the widows and the orphans. God can surely afford to pay his own taxes. The cattle on the thousand hills are his, and think of the price of beef! The cedars and firs of Lebanon, and the gold of Ophir, all are his—he could pay the tax and not miss it; and, if he couldn't, he could do as some rich men do—beguile the assessor. Some time that question will come forward for agitation, for intelligent consideration and action. Some—nearly all—of the old line churches have declined to receive and administer any money from the Government in the prosecution of their work of saving the souls of the Nation's wards. That was one step in the right direction. Already the sentiment is beginning to spread that it is an unjust and iniquitous alliance between the Government and the Church in the exemption of Church property from taxation. Another thing would transpire as a change in our

civilisation, and that would be that nowhere among the people religious in this human way, nowhere would the children of mothers, or the mothers of children, be dwarfed and degraded by greed and gain in factories, shops, and stores. If we revered the mothers of men as we are supposed to reverence God, our civilisation would speedily readjust itself until everywhere the child should have the divine right of childhood, and from off the shoulders and hearts of the mothers would be taken the heavy and crushing load. I am not one who boasts of this civilisation—nor despairs; I am perfectly willing that the Church should call it a Christian civilisation, if it chooses. When it comes to be a humane and just civilisation, then will be time to boast of it. Our present industrial conditions make a great future impossible. There never can be great men, men with large enterprise and splendid resolve, men of courage, heroism, and daring, without great mothers. There never can be great, wholesome, and natural mothers as long as the great part of the girl children of the world must labor with their hands for gain. In the South, for the sake of making prints and cotton cloth a little cheaper, all the factories are filled with children. There are less than a dozen avocations filled by men that have not been invaded by women. Something somewhere is wrong. Nature has so ordered it that the relative numbers of men and women born into the world are about the same. Could there be a more suggestive fact? It is discovered by statistics that following wars of devastation, when the number of men is depleted Nature changes the proportion, and more male children will be born than female children. Isn't Nature hinting to us some lessons, if we can learn? The ideal and the just way is for civilisation to make it possible for every man to support two, himself, and the woman that he loves. But that is impossible now. The lust for gain, the fierceness of competition, the mighty desire to accumulate, the destructive worship at the altar of Mammon—all these things have driven women and children into the busy places where livelihoods are being earned—all this is possible under a Christian civilisation. Under a humane civilisation these things would be impossible. We should look with condemnation upon any man who was selfish enough, or avaricious enough, to amass millions while thousands upon thousands starve and perish. We should come to see that the passion for great and enormous wealth was a form of insanity; we would not worship the rich man, we would pity him. So long as men go on serving God in the world here, so long as in this world they do as they please and make a compromise with their conscience, and hope for happiness in the world beyond, so long will these conditions continue. But when man, when universal man regards the mothers of the world as the most sacred, the most divine—when men of great enterprise and great executive ability, when men of great organising power refuse to be partners in combinations whereby for selfish gain and behoof thousands upon thousands must be pinched, dwarfed, oppressed, robbed, and destroyed, when men come to feel that way, our civilisation will mount upwards as with wings, and justice—a new justice—liberty—a wider liberty—will come and take up their home with the children of men.

I do not like the old religion. I frankly own I am not satisfied with our Christian civilisation, and for one I look for no amelioration under the old symbols and forms of worship. Men are too selfish; the world honors the selfish men and applauds their successes. I should like to see the time come when this world right here now is the concern, the chief interest, the chief inspiration of the men and women who have the habit of living in it. If we could turn the effort and divert the attention from the other world to this world, if we could dismiss God for the time being and worship at the shrine of humanity, if we could wrap around motherhood all of thought that is sacred and weave for her the golden glory of men's homage, we should transform this world. If

things go on as they are here and our great financiers get to the other world, what chance will we have there? They may have their agents there already picking out town sites. We shall be in luck, having arrived, if we can find an humble place in the suburbs. There is no attraction in any world without good, enjoyable, companionable, just, honorable, loving human beings. It is inconceivable that God could make heaven for us with angels. We prefer the angels that we are acquainted with, angels that weigh about a hundred and thirty pounds and don't wear wings. In order to make this world or any world a fit place for human beings to dwell in, human beings themselves must be just and merciful.

Moreover, if this idea of religion were to prevail, it would universalise religion. Swift and inexorable condemnation would be visited upon man that was false to the religion whose divinity was the mother. In this world of ours, among the codes of men, it is considered just and right at any time and place to fell with a blow the man who speaks slightingly of one's mother. It may be we are approaching that new idea. If that change were ever to come, childhood everywhere would be sacred; if it ever were to come, there would be no so-called fallen women, for no man would risk the condemnation of his fellow-men by leading or permitting a woman's feet to stray, and a woman never yet has strayed alone.

Do you know that the mother is the parent of civilisation? Without her it never would have been. Men loved the excitement of war. They loved to shed blood. The savage rejoiced in the destruction of his enemies, but the mother with the babe had need of rest and quiet and protection. The babe was helpless; she loved it, and in the savage times she did not even know who the father was; the father did not know his child nor care, but the mother knew and loved it. Shelter became necessary, and through her influence the man built the booth, or digged the cave, and a family life began to be. The mother, when she swung that babe in some cradle made of limbs and boughs and sang the minor lullaby, sang the morning song of this world's progress. She was the parent of civilisation. Nature had seen to that. Of all the beings that came into the world, Nature made the human infancy the longest, imposed upon it the most helplessness, and evoked from the mother's heart providence and faithfulness.

The future of progress, the civilisation that is yet to be, will depend for their greatness and glory upon the reverence, the respect, the adoration in which the sons of men hold the mothers of men.

—Here and Now (Kansas).

Two Nights with "Gipsy" Smith.

MONDAY, October 28, saw the conclusion of a week's soul-saving mission in Dublin by "Gipsy" Smith.

During the week the Metropolitan Hall (a building capable of holding a vast audience) was filled to its utmost capacity every night for the revival services, whilst the mid-day and afternoon meetings were also well attended; and yet there is no perceptible difference in the conduct or habits of the citizens.

Sackville-street is still paraded by prostitutes until the small hours of the morning, whilst every street still adds its contingent to the large number of "drunks" who are regularly thrown out at closing time.

The writer was present at two of the services—namely, Monday and Thursday evening's revival meetings; and the following is a rough sketch of the proceedings and a record of the most vivid impressions created thereby.

We—my wife and I—arrived at 7.30 on the Monday evening, and, as the meeting did not commence until eight o'clock, we obtained good seats, although there was a big number present even then.

In the entrance-hall were several stands, which were doing a roaring trade in picture postcards and photos of the Gipsy hero in various picturesque poses, whilst about half-a-dozen boys were busy selling paper hymn-books at a penny each. (These were afterwards re-collected, or as many of them as possible, as the audience passed out, although not a word

was said to the purchasers when buying them to show that the penny was only for the loan of the book; which savors of very sharp practice, to say the least of it.)

However, the next half-hour was spent in singing well-known hymns, and at ten minutes before eight the hall was packed and the doors closed.

At a minute or two to eight the missionary appeared on the platform, which was formed into a great bay in the centre, raised higher than its surroundings, and admirably adapted for getting close to any particular part of the audience.

At the conclusion of the hymn which was being sung when the soul-saver entered, he rose, and, with a winning smile, ejaculated: "Ah! but I think there's a touch of the Welsh in ye!"

With sundry other would-be flattering sentences, and one or two jokes, he achieved the desired end of putting his audience into a good humor with themselves and him.

After one of the ministers who adorned the platform had prayed earnestly to the Most High to vouchsafe great results to that service, a hymn was sung and then the notices of forthcoming meetings were read out, ending with the usual—"The collection will now be taken, and let it be a substantial one."

It was bound to be that, even at the modest computation of a penny per head.

Then more prayers and hymns, including a touching duet between the Gipsy and a washed-out little woman, in which the word "Jesus" appeared in every line.

After that the sermon, which was the usual ranting rot, delivered in the usual revivalist style of saying a few words quietly, then thundering out half-a-dozen more, and finishing up with a sudden awful pause.

When he had worked his audience up to the requisite pitch, he suddenly looked upwards and appealed to Heaven to save every soul there that night, then instantly asked the audience to bend low in prayer.

This request neither my wife nor myself complied with, to the great discomfort of those immediately behind us, who couldn't bow as low as they wished; and as we were in a very conspicuous position, the missionary did not fail to observe us, and in his subsequent talk with the Almighty he delivered sundry hits at us, as for instance: "We know there are some frivolous scoffers present, but we thank thee not many."

He then asked all those who had been in any way moved by the proceedings to stand up and then resume their seats.

I should say two-and-a-half per cent. of the audience stood up, and then came the inevitable request for all those who had stood up to proceed to the inquiry-room.

Whilst they were going, the audience, still bowed, sang several refrains of well-known hymns, whilst the missionary resorted to every trick of "oratory" which he knew in order to swell their ranks.

The last appeal took the form of this absurd proposition: "Is Jesus worthy? All those who truly think so will rise and go to the inquiry-room. Those who do not will remain where they are."

This gem of trickery saved about two or three more souls for Jesus; but evidently the soul-saver was not satisfied with his night's work, for in the final prayer, and just before the benediction, he sneered at the audience, who, he said, all professed Christ, but would not come forward and do so publicly.

An officious old lady behind us begged my wife to go with her to the inquiry-room, but she subsided when I handed her a slip of paper with several texts written thereon, and advised her to go home and look them up in her Bible, and if she could not reconcile them with an all-loving God, to get her pet minister to endeavor to do so for her.

So much for Monday's meeting; and I may say here that Thursday's was practically a repetition, except that a few more souls were saved than on Monday.

The whole program was a deliberate play on the emotions throughout, every item being in its exact place, and the whole gradually leading up to the climax, whilst every element was eliminated that was at all likely to disturb that influence which mesmerically affects a multitude of hysterical people when they are listening to a sympathetic speaker.

On the Tuesday I addressed the following letter to "Gipsy" Smith:—

"SIR,—I was present at Monday evening's meeting, but regret that in the tug of war between your eloquence *plus* the emotional effects of the singing and praying, and backed up by the Holy Ghost on the one side and the Devil on the other, the Devil won, as he so often does, in my case.

I cannot help thinking, however, that the Holy Ghost would be far less handicapped, in the case of intelligent and reasoning people at any rate, if you would appeal a little more to the intellectual side of human nature and a little less to the emotional side.

In my case, for instance, it would have far more effect if you would *reasonably* explain certain parts of the alleged Word of God.

As both my wife and I intend being present at Thursday evening's meeting, I shall be glad if you will publicly read

out at that meeting the following four texts, and give the best explanation of them, compatible with reason, which you are able: Deuteronomy xxi. 18-21; Numbers xxxi. 13-18; 2 Romans ii. 23-24; xv.-xvi.

If you do not accede to this request, I need hardly say that both my wife and I will entertain a worse opinion of Christianity and Christians than we even now hold.—Yours truly."

Need I say that the matter received absolutely no attention at Thursday's meeting, except that I was prayed for as "that unbeliever," in company with a gambler and a drunkard.

At the conclusion of this meeting, however, I went behind the scenes and bearded the lion in his den.

With the particulars of that interview I will not weary the reader. Suffice it to say that he said it was unfair to pick out a text here and there from the Bible, away from its context, and condemn the whole religion straightway.

I replied that nothing that came before or after those texts could possibly condone the barbarous cruelty of the acts therein recorded as done by Jehovah's chosen instruments.

He flew off at a tangent, and asked me that inane question as to how and where the first grain of wheat came from without God.

I declined the riddle, and simply pointed out that he was off the track of the argument. That to him, at any rate, I had not denied God, but simply the Bible God.

However, I could no more make him see the difference between those two attitudes than I could make him see reason on any of the other questions we argued.

My impression of the gentleman was that he was illiterate, coarse, conceited, and pig-headed, to mention only a few of his most striking characteristics; and I came to the conclusion that there was only one other place besides his present one in the Christian pulpit that he was fit to adorn, and that was the gipsy tent from which he sprang.

He is truly a shining light on that hard and narrow way of Christianity, especially if his present lot is compared to the one he enjoyed before he got Christ.

Then he probably worked hard, if not honestly, every day, got more kicks than ha'pence, dressed in rags, and slept where he could.

Now he travels about in style, puts up at first-class hotels, wears a frock-coat and a gold Albert, and probably draws a princely salary.

Why, he is even hobnobbing with lords, as the concluding meeting had a real live one in the chair when "Gipsy" Smith gave the life story of "From Gipsy Tent to Christian Pulpit" (tickets 1s. and 6d. each).

Such is the stony way to heaven!

L. H. LABONE.

Correspondence.

HELPING THE ENEMY.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Referring to your timely and caustic criticism of the general methods of procedure pursued by the C. E. S., may I direct attention to what, in my opinion, is the sole cause of the continued existence of that body? It is none other than the well-intentioned, but non-diplomatic, assistance which certain Freethinkers have been short-sighted enough to render by consenting to discuss with this "slippery set of scoundrels" at the conclusion of their "lectures." There is nothing to be gained by so doing, as only fools would credit their slimy slanders—and fools we can dispense with. Surely it cannot be doubted that a C. E. "lecture," of itself alone, is certain to fail in exciting any particular attention. The attraction is the opponent, whose appearance on their platform is hailed with joy by the hooligan-howlers who have angled for him; and, as long as the friendly Freethinker is simple enough to nibble the bait, he will play into the hands of the enemy by providing him with huge audiences which his own mediocrity would never have commanded. I unhesitatingly claim that Freethinkers have indirectly placed the Rev. A. J. Waldron in his present position. He was smart enough to see a simple way of attaining it, and, when he appealed to Freethinkers to help him, they joyfully did so. "Gentlemen," said he, "bend your backs, and behold I will ride into a snug little vicarage, even as Christ rode into Jerusalem." And it was so. Speaking for myself, nobody can have been slandered more than I; but none of the tribe have ever bamboozled me into becoming a vicarage agent, whose only commission is abuse and calumny. But, as I say, one man has been provided for, and another is now striving for a similar suggery by similar means. That other is Waldron's pet-hooligan, Baker; who, having been escorted out of Finsbury Park, has taken unto himself a hall somewhere in North London, where he frets his heart out because the needful number of opponents are not forthcoming. Now who will

oblige? Remember these places cost money to keep up, and it is hard indeed when a poor fellow has laid out all the wealth he might have invested in Woodbines, and other kindred enjoyments, to find there is so little prospect of a sound investment. I would lend a hand myself, but scarcely feel well enough at present. Perhaps you, sir, might attend to this little matter, or, at any rate, appeal to some of your readers to do so. Would it be asking too much of you to kindly express your editorial opinion on the subject?

ERNEST PACK.

SECULAR EDUCATION AT THE POLLS.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—First I have to thank you for kindly cutting out of my last letter any passages reflecting upon anyone's motives. I trust it is fully understood that we all desire the same end—Secular Education. And, in order to clear the subject still further from avoidable suggestion of personal considerations, perhaps you will allow these lines to appear under the above heading. My last plea is that you will permit me to protest, as mildly as possible, that I intended no reference to any "private" pledges in referring to Jarrow election in my last communication. Public speeches and reports were my only foundation, whether sound or unsound. If anyone trusted me with a private pledge, I trust I have the strength and good sense to prove myself worthy of the confidence.

I am unable to admit, either, that I overlooked any of the other considerations tabulated in your friendly comment. In my opinion, they do not substantially invalidate my position. Mr. Bradlaugh, in his political work, set an example which appeared to me to be a practical and worthy one; and that I have humbly attempted to follow. Unless prepared to bear our part in the political fight for Secular Education, I cannot hold that we are justified in asking any party to grant our request. That our demand is just may be granted; but any appeal for legislation should be justified by faith—and works. Here, I admit, we reach disputable ground; we may differ as to the best and quickest path; oftentimes, we are told, "the longest way is the shortest," and upon this, and other grounds, it is dangerous to dogmatise. There is no only way. My concern, however, like yours, is for Secular Education. I wish it could be obtained without the assistance of the politician, but compulsory State Education has made that impossible. I am sure, when gained, it will place politics and social reform upon a safer and surer basis, and that nothing else will do so. But the voter, the politician, and the theologian, as Mr. Blatchford has recently laid down, "must be converted." The best method is what we all seek; and, should we stumble or make a false step, our feeble but earnest attempts should be judged with charity and mercy.

R. CHAPMAN.

[Mr. Chapman will pardon us for remarking that "the longest way is the shortest" seems the maxim of most politicians.—*Editor.*]

NO SITTING ON JAPAN.

When Roosevelt clasped Togo to his bosom, and assured him that he does not approve the action of the California school boards in dictating to the mikado's subjects what schools they shall attend (see *Liberty* for December, page 17, and laugh), that was not the first instance where stick and meeting stick brought on the hug of peace in American-Japanese diplomacy. Our distinguished consideration for Japan, and our lively appreciation of the fact that she is not built to be sat upon, have previously been voiced by this government. It is known that in our condescension to heathen nations we insist upon an arrangement known as "exterritoriality," which amounts to this,—that, when the conduct of an American citizen, resident or sojourning in those countries, conflicts with local laws and customs, he shall be tried and acquitted by our own diplomatic or consular representative, and not by any heathen justice of the peace. To such a proposition any healthy Power would respond "What's that?" and a moment later the features of the proponent would appear to have been stepped upon. No Power but a Christian one taking the Golden Rule for a guide and exalting the square deal as its speciality would ask another for such a favor without tendering a similar privilege in return. Nevertheless the United States puts it all over heathendom in just that way. Trial by American authority is provided for in a treaty with China, the preamble of which sets forth that we aim to do to others as we would have them do to us; which, I conceive, is a touch of hypocrisy as light and graceful as we shall ever behold. And the coat of pretence loses none of its lustre, but is in fact all the more a holy show, because it was laid on by missionary hands and for the benefit of missionaries. The Hon. John

W. Foster, who was once secretary of State, has said that, in ninety-nine cases out of one hundred, the missionary is the person who avails himself of the privilege claimed. China submits; she "stands the gaff"; she not only holds up her heathen hands when commanded to do so by the white-cravated highwayman, but, even when a native Christian breaks through the trammels of Confucian morality and is dealt with by his fellow-countrymen, thereby becoming the injured party, not Chinese but American missionary justice dictates to the government how many Chinese heads and tails it will take to square Uncle Sam. Japan, on the contrary, does not submit. Some years ago she intimated that our "exterritoriality" smelt bad, and asked us to take it away. We did so, repudiating it, so far as Japan was concerned, as a thing we would not be found dead with. Just at present Japan has turned exterritoriality around and is pushing it at us; and through our president we take the dose.—George Macdonald in "*Liberty*."

FLOGGING FOR VAGRANCY.

Mr. Joseph Collinson, the Hon. Secretary of the Humanitarian League (Prisons Committee), has addressed a letter to the Secretary of State for the Home Department calling his attention to a sentence of flogging passed on a so-called incorrigible rogue named Thomas Podmore (an aged laborer in his 66th year) by Lord Hatherton at a meeting of the Staffordshire Quarter Sessions held on October 15th last. This committee of the Humanitarian League points out that the new Criminal Appeal Act provides that an offender sentenced under 5. Geo. IV. may appeal against the judgment of the magistrates; but, as the court will not sit in time, the hope is expressed that Mr. Gladstone will remit the flogging—a punishment which would be impossible in any other European country except Russia—and goes on to state that the power to inflict such punishment for every other offence except those which are scheduled under this most objectionable statute has been taken away from Courts of Quarter Sessions, and also that this antiquated statute does not enable the Quarter Sessions to specify the number of strokes, nor the instrument to be employed, but only requires that the time and place for inflicting the punishment shall be stated. The Secretary of the Humanitarian League contends that the sentence passed on Podmore is of doubtful legality, and urges upon Mr. Gladstone the advisability of consulting the law advisers of the Crown. It appears that Sir M. H. Ridley, and other Home Secretaries, have committed themselves to the view that this Act which authorises flogging for "incorrigibles" ought to be repealed.

CREATION.

Investigators generally confound the creation of the earth with the creation of the universe. Philosophical confusion not unfrequently begins with a similar lack of discrimination; for there is no great gulf fixed between fools and philosophers. The creation of the earth compared to the creation of the universe is a child's problem to a paradox. For the present constituents of the earth existed before the earth's actual creation, in other forms as nebulae, cosmic dust, meteors, or other planetary and astral material. The earth, in fact, in creation, or more correctly in evolution, could only be a re-formation of other earths, or a re-arrangement of the constituents of other astral bodies which had already existed. The creation of the universe, on the other hand, is assuming an impossibility. For, as the sum of all those things which exist, the universe neither has nor could have a beginning; antecedents to it are impossible. Blot out existence and non-existence is assumed, the absence of causes as well as of causal material; consequently the assumed creation of the universe could not be a re-formation of other universes, but would be a distinct creation of something from nothing, by a something, say a Diety, who was himself nothing, which is a *reductio ad absurdum*.—A. Redcote Dewar, "*From Matter to Man*."

WHY CHRISTIANITY FAILS.

A religion is never transformed; it exhausts the possibilities of life contained in the principle that created it, and then it dies, leaving that principle among the number of acquired truths. A given end is never reached by an instrument designed for another purpose. A faith that has for its end the salvation of the individual; for its means, the belief in a mediator between God and the individual; for its condition, Grace; for dogma, the fall and redemption through another's works—such a faith can never found a Society which, though it works for the same end, has for means the belief in the collective life of Humanity; for its condition, the works that we have done on the earth, for its doctrine, Progress.—*Mazzini*.

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.

STANLEY HALL (Fortress-road, Junction-road, N.): 7.30, C. Cohen, "Religion and Sex."

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S. (North Camberwell Hall, New Church-road): 3.15, Freethought Parliament—A. F. Short, "Evolution and Socialism."

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Workman's Hall, Romford-road, Stratford): 7.30, F. A. Davies, "The Religion of Shakespeare." Selections by the Band before Lecture.

COUNTRY.

ABERDARE BRANCH N. S. S. (Pugsley's Restaurant): 6, R. Cohen, "Did Christ Exist?"

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Prince of Wales Assembly Rooms, Broad-street): 7, H. Thompson, "Strange Plants and Animals."

BRISTOL BRANCH N. S. S. (I. L. P. Hall): 3, Business Meeting.

EDINBURGH BRANCH N. S. S. (Hall, 84 Leith-street): 6.30, J. Hutcheon, "That Secularism is More Christian than Christianity."

FALLSWORTH (Secular Sunday School, Pole-lane): 6.30, Councillor Grundy's Concert Party.

GLASGOW: Secular Hall, Brunswick-street—12 (noon). Discussion Class; 6.30, Miss Agnes Pettigrew, "The Economic Factor in Creeds and Morals."

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N. S. S. (Milton Hall, Daulby-street): G. W. Foote, 3, "The New Theology and Socialism: Blatchford *versus* Campbell"; 7, "The Growth of God."

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Secular Hall, Rusholme-road): J. T. Lloyd, 3, "Jesus Christ and the Joys of Life"; 6.30, "The Triumph of Freethought." Tea at 5.

NEWCASTLE DEBATING SOCIETY (Lockhart's Cathedral Café): Thursday, Nov. 14, at 8, A. L. Coates, "Henrik Ibsen."

OUTDOOR.

BRISTOL BRANCH N. S. S.: Horsefair, at 7.30, B. G. Brown, "Secularism and Social Reform."

EDINBURGH BRANCH N. S. S.: The Mound, at 3, a Lecture.

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