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PRICE TWOPENCE

Education is the bread of the soul.—MAZZINI.

Sir Oliver Lodge on Immortality.

WHEN we were reading the Rev. R. J. Campbell's *New Theology* we were struck by the fact that he never for a moment relied on the orthodox Christian hope of immortality. He certainly accepted the story of the Resurrection in a peculiar sense, but all he appeared to see in it was the disciples' assurance that their Master was still living. That an actual dead body came to life again and walked out of its tomb, Mr. Campbell does not seem to credit. His doctrine of the risen Christ, if we understand him, is that Jesus lived on in spite of the Crucifixion. But he does not regard this as in any way exceptional, and therefore the Christian's expectation of a future life, according to the New Theology, bears no resemblance whatever to that which is set forth by Paul in a famous chapter of Corinthians. Mr. Campbell did not derive his hope of everlasting life from Jesus, or from anything connected with him; he derived it, apparently, from Professor Crookes and Sir Oliver Lodge. At any rate, he referred us to these gentlemen, as affording us a kind of scientific certitude of the hereafter.

Professor Crookes, we believe, is a thorough-going Spiritualist. We understand that he has been taken in by more than one enterprising "medium." Be that as it may, his belief in a life beyond death is not in the remotest degree the outcome of his researches as a man of science in the particular department where he is looked upon as an expert; and it appears to us that the fact that Professor Crookes is a Spiritualist is just exactly as important as the fact that Professor Faraday was a Sandemanian.

Sir Oliver Lodge is really as much of a Spiritualist (or Occultist) as Professor Crookes, but he does not parade the fact quite as indiscreetly. He prefers to talk about "psychical research," which, as far as we can see, is mainly a collection of tales of mystery. But even such talk is not meant for general consumption. Sir Oliver Lodge's favorite rôle—at least his most common one—is that of a scientist standing out in support of the primary doctrine of religion. For the primary doctrine of religion is not the existence of God, but the immortality of man; and if man felt that he was sure of his immortality *without* God, he would trouble very little about having it *with* God. After all, as it has been wittily said, God is for the most part only the dot to complete man's "I."

On electricity Sir Oliver Lodge is to be listened to with the greatest respect. He is an authority on that subject. But he is not an authority on the "soul" and a "future life"—any more than he is an

authority on Roman history or entomology. Many people do not see this. Being very ignorant themselves, they have a feeling that a man who can teach them on one subject can teach them on any subject. That is where they are mistaken. Sir Oliver Lodge is able to teach electricity. He knows all about it. But he is not able to teach "immortality." He knows nothing about it.

We have previously drawn attention to the fact that Sir Oliver Lodge never tries to prove his religious ideas from the science with which he is specially conversant. He flies off to biology in answering Darwin and Haeckel. But the average orthodox auditor does not care for that. All sciences are alike to him, for he knows none of them; and when he hears his inherited religious beliefs advocated by a man like Sir Oliver Lodge, he calls it the testimony of a man of science—which, to him, is the same thing as the testimony of science itself.

Sir Oliver Lodge recently lectured on "The Immortality of the Soul" in the Memorial Hall, Farringdon-street, London, in connection with the Hackney Theological College; and what is apparently a verbatim report of his lecture has been published in the *Christian Commonwealth*. At the very beginning he misrepresented his position. He told his hearers that his "lifework had been concerned with branches of physical and of psychical" investigation. This statement is both true and false. It is true in one meaning of the words, and false in another. And the false meaning is the one that is pretty sure to be taken by an ordinary audience. Sir Oliver Lodge's lifework as a physicist has been professional; his lifework as a psychiatrist has been amateurish. The one has been responsible—the other irresponsible. In the one he is likely to be right—in the other he is just as likely to be wrong. When he speaks, therefore, of his lifelong researches, it is important to bear in mind whether he speaks as the expert or as the amateur. As the former, his voice is authoritative; as the latter, it is entitled to no sort of deference. Sir Oliver Lodge the physicist is a master; Sir Oliver Lodge the psychiatrist is one of the crowd.

Now, if we bear this distinction in mind in reading Sir Oliver Lodge's lecture on Immortality, we shall perceive that there is really nothing in it. He does not, for instance, advance a single argument, or a single illustration, that has not done duty a thousand times before—from the pulpit or the Christian Evidence platform. There was no need to fetch a scientist from Birmingham University to utter those religious commonplaces again.

We must also point out that the whole question at issue is begged from first to last. Before we discuss "immortality" we must have something to be immortal. That something is the "soul." Well, then, is there a "soul"? Instead of proving it, Sir Oliver Lodge quietly assumes it. After spending some time

in stating that the body dies (which nobody disputes), and pointing out that the literal doctrine of the resurrection of the body is "a superstition" (which most people now admit), he should have proceeded at once to the demonstration that the "soul" still exists—instead of sharing the fate of the body, as Hume argued was the inevitable conclusion of the argument from analogy. But this task is evaded in the most light and airy manner. "Take our present incarnation," he says. Our *incarnation!* Why, that begs the whole question. If this life is an incarnation, something is incarnated, and that something is the "soul." Sir Oliver Lodge thus assumes his conclusion by packing it into his premises. He gets it out as a mariner gets out the slides of his telescope; pushing them in first, and pulling them out afterwards; which is no more evolution than the spinning and ravelling of Penelope's web.

Assumption and assertion are the staple of Sir Oliver Lodge's argument. We have seen his assumption; now let us look at his assertion. Living things all have form. What, then, he asks "is the controlling entity" which causes this form. But in this question there is an assertion. How does he know that there *is* any such entity? He subsequently speaks of it as if it were the "life." But is life an *entity*? Is not the living thing the entity, and the life its characteristic? To assert the contrary is easy; but it does not settle the question.

Sir Oliver Lodge also defines the soul as "that controlling and guiding principle which is responsible for our consciousness and will" as well as for our bodily organisation. At one minute it is an "entity"—at another minute it is a "principle." Is this consistency? Is this science?

When the body dies, and eventually disappears, the "soul" likewise has "disappeared from our ken; apparently it has disappeared from the planet." "Has it," Sir Oliver Lodge asks, "gone out of existence altogether?" He answers, No; but he does not adduce a single scrap of evidence. He makes a speech as counsel for the defence. That is all. He has no witnesses. And in the circumstances it is quite unnecessary to go through his speech point by point. Talk about a future life is endless. Where are the facts? We want them.

G. W. FOOTE.

The Standpoint of Atheism.

FOR some weeks past the word "Atheism" has been unusually prominent in the newspapers. It commenced with the Kirkdale election. The Socialist candidate found himself attacked by literature and speeches denouncing Socialism as Atheistic, while throughout the country people were warned against Socialism for the same reason. To this the Socialists retorted that Socialism had nothing whatever to do with Atheism, but was quite consonant with the most profound religious belief. Then, while this war is still going on, along comes Mr. Harry Snell with a letter to the *Daily Chronicle* supplying the information to all and sundry that Atheism has nothing to do with Ethicism. Both the Socialists and the Ethicists assure the public on their honor that they have nothing to do with Atheism, while those portions of the public that are opposed to either persist in calling them by the worst name they can think of—which happens to be Atheist.

Now, to the Atheist who is an Atheist, there is a pleasing aspect to all this. The more Atheism is talked about—whether it be blessed or cursed—the more converts it will make. And Atheists who are Atheists—if I may repeat the phrase—are the last to dread any discussion of their intellectual convictions. What is not quite so pleasing is to find people who are certainly not Theists, in such a fearful hurry to ostentatiously mark themselves off from Atheists and Atheism. To say the least of it, such conduct is hardly worthy of the professed chivalry of Socialists or the professed altruism of Ethicists.

For consider how Atheism is knocked about and misrepresented by the religious world. Whenever a religious person wishes to characterise low, greedy, cruel, or bestial conduct, he refers to it as due to an Atheistic conception of life. And, as both Socialists and Ethicists realise the injustice of such an association, surely they might of their goodness and kindness stretch a point, even at the risk of being associated with so terrible a thing as Atheism. For the world—particularly the religious portion—sadly needs the lesson that noble ideals do coexist with all sorts of opinions, and that, whatever an opinion may look to an outsider, to those who hold it, and who work for its popularisation, it represents their honest contribution to the social life.

The humor of the situation, however, is that these disclaimers are really ineffective. As a stroke of policy they are ineffective, and as a statement of philosophic theory they are inaccurate. Religious people will continue to tack Atheism on to any theory that is specially objectionable, and will continue to treat as Atheistic any theory of social life or of morals that does not involve a belief in the existence of God or of a future life. And on this last point, at least, the religious world is right. There is a subconscious logic that is often far more correct in its conclusions than the conscious variety, which is so open to perversion by all sorts of illicit motives. And in this case the subconscious logic of the religious world concludes, and rightly concludes, that any theory of things which may be perfected without religious beliefs is essentially Atheistic in character, and cannot help but develop an Atheistic type of mind.

Now, I am not aware that either Socialism or Ethicism involve, in even the remotest manner, the belief in either God or a future life. It is true that among both bodies there are certain people who are fond of using religious phrases; but this we may charitably ascribe to a weakness of the flesh which leads them to drop into current colloquialisms as Silas Wegg did into poetry. It is true, also, that many Socialists—I do not know about Ethicists—may be religious; but their Socialism is independent of their religion, and their ideas may be taken as psychological parallels that have no logical point of juncture. Religion is to a sane Socialism what a merry-go-round is to civilised society—it may coexist with civilisation, but civilisation would be unaffected by its disappearance. Now, Socialism asserts—rightly or wrongly matters not—that a reorganisation of society on a particular basis will secure the general well-being that we are all in search of. And it relies *solely* upon human intelligence and human co-operation to bring this about. The Ethical Society, "Without denying or affirming a life after death, or reality beyond experience," teaches that we can, without loss, make our "moral ideas independent of these beliefs," and that we can all "love, know, and do the right," "by purely natural and human means." Evidently there is no religion involved in either of these positions. With both religion is something in the nature of an extra—a piece of intellectual dissipation that no one is the better for having or the worse for being without.

What is the difference between this position and that of the Atheist? Really, I am unable to discover any. The Atheist is one who is without belief in a God. In reply, it might be argued that a Socialist or an Ethicist might be either one or the other and still believe in a Deity. I admit the possibility, although it would leave God with very little to do in the world—somewhat in the position of an ex-official, whose only reason for drawing a pension was that he had once received a salary. But while Atheism, *per se*, equals the absence of a belief in God, it implies much more than this. It involves a definite attitude towards life in all its aspects; indeed, towards existence as a whole. Limiting it, however, to life, we may say that the standpoint of Atheism is that morality, social life—in a word, civilisation—is independent of religious beliefs. It says with the Socialist that the right

ordering of society is ultimately a question of human intelligence and co-operation; and, with the Ethicist, that our moral ideas are independent of religious beliefs, that we can, and do, "love, know, and do right," without believing in either God or a future life. So far as each of the three is concerned—the Atheist, the Socialist, and the Ethicist—there is an agreement on this point. None of them consider religious beliefs as necessary to the particular end they have in view; each of them regards life from what is essentially an Atheistic point of view.

Socialism and Ethicism are, then, in strict truth, essentially Atheistic. They are Atheistic in exactly the same sense that science is Atheistic, or that life itself is Atheistic; and the religious person is quite justified in calling them Atheistic systems. To what other conclusion can he come? As a religionist, he does not believe that social life can be properly organised, or the moral life properly developed, without the belief in God and a future life. The Socialist comes along and challenges one part of the belief, the Ethicist comes and challenges the other. And, logically enough, he says that if these people are not Theistic they must be Atheistic. For there is positively no half-way position. One's position must either involve religious beliefs, or not involve them. If it does, then the Socialist is wrong when he relies exclusively upon human knowledge, experience, and co-operation; the Ethicist wrong when he believes the moral life can develop by "purely natural and human means." But if both are right in their contention, their justification supplies all that is needed to prove that the religionist is right in asserting that their teachings are essentially Atheistic.

Probably what both the protesting Socialist and Ethicist have in mind is, that their positions do not involve a deliberate propaganda against religious beliefs. They may be right in this; but that is not, after all, what the religious person charges them with. He says, as was rightly said of Darwinism, that a system is Atheistic that leaves God and a future life out of account; and to reply "We have no concern with either of these issues" is really an attempt to evade the charge while tacitly admitting its truth. The religious believer might go further, and ask what chance is there of the belief in religion surviving if once people are convinced that the whole of life can go on in a perfectly satisfactory and admirable manner without it? After all, the justification of religion must ultimately be that it is good for something. But with scientists leaving God and a future life out of their department, with the Ethicists saying God is not required so far as they are concerned, and with the Socialists saying he is not necessary in sociology, to say, after this, that there is nothing for religious people to be alarmed about, sounds like an elaborate sarcasm. No one will accuse me of having too great a respect for the religious intelligence, but really I do not imagine it is so poor as to be imposed on for long by so transparent a device.

And, after all, one cannot suppress a suspicion that the abstention from conscious propaganda is largely due to the difference between those who believe that Atheism is good for themselves and those who believe it to be good for the whole of the community, including themselves. A little less readiness to assure the religious world that no harm is intended, a little less sensitiveness as to what unthinking people think of thoughtful positions, and a little greater readiness to run the risk of even misconception by declining to ally oneself, in the remotest manner, with the religious policy of misrepresentation, would be a most healthful sign as things are at present. No less a man than Coleridge said that not one person in a thousand had either goodness of heart or strength of intellect sufficient to be an Atheist. And with that compliment—and from such a quarter—before him, an Atheist may well feel as proud of the name as he is confident of the ultimate triumph of the conception of life for which it stands.

C. COHEN.

The Song of Songs.

ACCORDING to the orthodox doctrine, the whole Bible is the Word of God, specially revealed by himself to the men specially chosen and inspired to write it. Every book in it is equally inspired, equally infallible, and, to spiritually illumined souls, equally edifying. Dr. Horton tells us of a "complete unbeliever" who, as the result of studying the fifth chapter of Genesis in the Hebrew language, was converted to a belief in the truth of revelation. To him, even that part of the Bible which gives the traditional length of the lives of the Patriarchs glowed with the full light of the Spirit of God. The New Theology has repudiated that ancient conception of inspiration, but even to it there is something about the Bible that differentiates it from all other literature. A special sacredness attaches to the whole of it. Dr. Horton assures us that every portion of it is invaluable. Even the Book of Esther and the Book of Ecclesiastes are indispensable to the divine completeness of the volume. We hold, on the contrary, that while the Bible contains much that is beautiful, true, and useful, yet there is nothing in it that transcends human capacity, or that cannot be matched, if not in most cases, much more than matched, from Pagan literature. There is fine poetry in the Book of Job, and many of the Psalms are exquisite; but only blind prejudice can put these productions in a category by themselves, declaring that nothing in the literature of other ancient nations is worthy of a moment's comparison with them. Yet such is the prejudice that is allowed to dominate the judgment even of many of our Higher Critics.

Let us take the Song of Songs as the basis of this discussion. What has theology had to say about this lovely little gem? According to Jewish tradition, the poem is a description of the various phases of spiritual love, the bride being Israel and the bridegroom Jehovah; and it was supposed to be a lyric record of the intercourse between Jehovah and his chosen people from the Exodus to the Messianic time. In Christian tradition it has had a similar interpretation, the bride being the Church, or each individual member thereof, and the bridegroom the blessed Redeemer. It was Origen who really inaugurated this view in the Christian Church. Speaking of Origen as a commentator, Jerome says that, "while on the other books he surpassed all others, on the Song of Songs he surpassed himself." Even at the present time it is not at all unusual for sermons dealing with the intercourse of believers with their Lord to be based on different passages in this Song. An exceptionally eloquent preacher, not long ago, founded a most moving discourse on the following text:—

"My beloved is white and ruddy,
The chiefest among ten thousand.
His head is as the most fine gold,
His locks are bushy, and black as a raven.
His eyes are like doves beside the water-brooks;
Washed with milk, and fitly set."

That was God's own prophetic delineation of Immanuel, the Savior of the world; and, of course, "the chiefest among ten thousand" really meant incomparably lovely and lovable, the only being in the Universe on whom mankind could afford to lavish supreme affection. It will be remembered that Theodore of Mosquestia challenged the accuracy of that theory in the form given to it by Origen; but the protest proved utterly futile. Indeed, Theodore's own literal interpretation was condemned at the second council of Constantinople (553 A. D.), and all similar interpretations since have met with the same fate. "The great St. Bernard wrote eighty-six sermons on Song 1 and 2 alone, and his example fostered similar mystical studies in the Latin Church."

It cannot be disguised that, to a large number of Christians, the allegorical interpretation is most welcome. To those who have never tasted the

sweets of conjugal love, and particularly to those who have been bitterly disappointed in the matrimonial market, nothing is so enrapturing and joy-giving as the contemplation of Jesus as the Heavenly Lover, as the perfect husband, wife, brother, sister, friend, all in one. This is one, if not the chief, explanation of the Church's reluctance to give up the idea that the Song of Songs is a book chock-full of spiritual comforts specially intended for earth's disappointed ones.

And yet all Biblical scholars are aware that the allegorical interpretation is absolutely false. The very grammatical construction of the Song uncompromisingly condemns it, while the spirit of Hebraism is dead against it; and, of necessity, with the spiritual interpretation is destroyed the claim to inspiration. The book at once assumes the form of a purely human composition. It is simply a love-story of irresistible charm. It is as such that the distinguished commentators Delitzsch, Ewald, Cheyne, and Driver regard it. It was as such that it so powerfully appealed to Eichhorn, Goethe, and Renan, and it is as such that all honest students are bound to treat it. Herder does not believe that it is even a continuous poem, but sees in it a collection of some twenty-one independent songs, threaded like so many pearls on a necklace. Others see in it a drama in five acts, with one or two plots. The note throughout is lyrical, whatever may be thought of the poetical form.

According to Ewald's scheme the story is wonderfully fascinating. As everybody knows, king Solomon was a notorious polygamist. His wives and mistresses were simply innumerable. One day he saw a beautiful Shulamite maiden, and at once fell madly in love with her. He carried her against her will to his gorgeous palace in Jerusalem, and did his utmost to win her affection. But she had a shepherd-lover in the hill country to whom she was devotedly attached and absolutely true. The ladies of the court, being extremely jealous of her, resented her beauty and made game of her innocent simplicity. The king kept repeating his declaration of love and pressing his suit, and the maiden held her young heart locked against him, and comforted herself as well as parried the royal compliments with reminiscences of the chosen one far away, ever sighing for her release. We are angry as we think of her enforced detention at court, and the insults persistently heaped upon her there. Then she had two remarkable dreams about her betrothed, which she took great delight in reciting to herself, and, sometimes, to others. In the first dream (iii. 1-5) she seemed to go in search of him through the streets of the city, and to find him. After this the citizens of Jerusalem assembled at one of the gates, three of whom addressed her (iii. 6-11), with the intention, doubtless, of dazzling her with a sense of the honor and splendor awaiting her if she consented to become the king's bride. Afterwards, we see the king, and the ladies of the court, in the palace endeavoring to persuade her to surrender (iv. 1-v. 1), but without success. We now come to her second dream in which she imagined herself to hear her shepherd-lover at the door, but on rising to open to him, found he was gone, after which she sought him in vain through the city (v. 2-7). The memory of this dream haunted her, and impelled her to make a fresh avowal of her love (v. 8). Then the ladies of the court and she held a dialogue respecting her lover (v. 9-vi. 3). At this stage the king entered, tried to win her love by praising her beauty and describing the honor in store for her. He told her how he had first met her in the nut-orchard, what the ladies of the court had then said, how she had excused herself for having wandered there alone, and for allowing herself to be surprised by his retinue, and how they had all desired to see her dance (vi. 4-13). Then comes the king's last appeal, and the maiden's final repulse (vii. 1-viii. 4). In the end, she was allowed to return to her home. She and her lover met once more; and they were seen journeying along by some shepherds, who said: "Who is this that cometh up from

the wilderness leaning on her beloved?" They were walking arm-in-arm, and as they proceeded on their way she reminded him of several past scenes, among them being this: "Under the apple-tree I once found thee asleep, and I awakened thee." Then she pointed to his birth-place; and, afterwards, addressing him in a more serious strain, she said:—

"Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm:
For love is strong as death;
Jealousy is cruel as the grave;
The flashes thereof are flashes of fire,
A very flame of the Lord.
Many waters cannot quench love,
Neither can the floods drown it:
If a man would give the substance of
his house for love,
He would utterly be contemned."

That is a charming story charmingly told. But as a composition it is by no means perfect. It is neither a pure lyric nor a clearly-defined drama. Indeed, so far from perfection of form is it that Canon Cheyne, rejecting Ewald's interpretation, has no hesitation in concluding that "the book is an anthology of songs used at marriage festivals in or near Jerusalem, revised and loosely connected by an editor without regard to temporal sequence; and in saying this we do not deny that the kernel of the work may have been brought from some other part of the country, perhaps in the north."

Thus, any rational exegesis of the Song of Songs strips it of every shred of a claim to be regarded as a Divinely-inspired production; and what is true of this little book is equally true of every other portion of the Bible, as criticism is abundantly showing us. To make the Bible truly interesting we must make it human. As a collection of man-originated documents it shall never lose its value, while in its character of God's Word it is discredited and self-condemned at every point.

J. T. LLOYD.

Secular Education League Demonstration.

THE largely-attended meeting held at the Memorial Hall on Thursday evening, the 7th inst., was a veritable demonstration, and, as such, it was undoubtedly a success. The most notable feature of the event was the fact that the audience did not require any instruction from the platform, but was rather in advance of its would-be instructors. It was an assembly of thoroughly intelligent secular educationists, who could have given points to more than one of the speakers. The chairman, Mr. Halley Stewart, M.P., stated that the Secular Education League heartily welcomed all, whatever their religious convictions might be, or whether they had any religion at all, on the ground of common citizenship. He condemned without mercy the Nonconformist position on this question, and was specially severe in his denunciation of the resolutions agreed upon by the Nonconformist Parliamentary Committee. Though a Nonconformist himself, not for the world would he have been a member of that committee. He could not tolerate the idea of Dissenting established schools, and he solemnly urged his hearers to do their utmost to prevent such a terrible travesty of justice. The resolution in favor of the secular solution was moved by Mr. C. F. G. Masterman, M.P., who said that our bitter and long-continued wrangle over religious education had made us the ridicule of the civilised world. For forty years we had been trying solution after solution of the religious difficulty, and yet were to-day apparently as far away as ever from educational peace and happiness. He spoke as a Churchman, but was heart and soul for full justice to all parties. He even put in a strong word for the non-religious people of the country, an observation that was cheered to the echo. What he advocated was, not State hostility to religion, but State neutrality, and on this point he had the meeting completely with him.

The seconder was the Rev. R. J. Campbell, M.A., who had an exceedingly warm reception. This was his first appearance on such a platform, and naturally he was not quite in touch with his audience. He made the amusing mistake of assuming that they did not know what was meant by secular education. He understood that the editor of the *Freethinker* was on the platform. Here he was interrupted for several seconds by thunderous applause and loud cries of "Foote," "Foote," "Foote." Of course, Mr. Foote was doubtless thoroughly sound in his views, but he was not quite sure that the people in front of him were; and thereupon he proceeded to enlighten them in an astonishingly elementary style.

The resolution was supported by two advertised and one unadvertised speakers. Mr. Pete Curran, M.P., spoke for the working-classes of the country, who, he said, were emphatically in favor of the secular solution. At a Trade Union assembly, where 1,600,000 were represented, there were 1,400,000 votes in favor of free and compulsory secular education. He believed that if a proper appeal were made to the country on this question the friends of the secular solution would be found to be overwhelmingly in the majority. The next supporter was the Rev. Stewart Headlam, who delivered himself of a touching little sermon on the reality of God and his presence in every human heart and conscience. He told the Secularists present that, do what they liked, they could not disestablish God. They might deny his existence, and live without thought of him, but he was present in every one of them, and constantly thought about them. Nevertheless, Mr. Headlam wanted a thorough system of Secular Education, and was opposed to the State having anything whatever to do with religious education. He would have no "facilities," no "right of entry," granted to any representatives of the Churches.

Then came the turn of the unadvertised speaker, for whom the audience had so vociferously called, Mr. G. W. Foote, who received a tremendous ovation. He was clearly the hero of the evening. As a stranger, the present writer was amazed to find that the moment his name was called, all the reporters cleared out in a body. Why was this? Was it meant as a deliberate insult to a conspicuously brave and honest man? Was it cowardice? Was it an instance of English fairplay? On what ground can the secular press justify itself in such abominable conduct? However, the audience did not clear out, but remained and heard the persecuted man with boundless delight. Mr. Foote was not "part of the argument," but "a side issue." He was not there as a Secularist, but purely as a citizen. He was present to advocate Secular Education as "the only policy consistent with the rights of all." Secularists would be as opposed to the establishment of Secularism in the schools as they are to the establishment of any form of religion. What they want is justice all round. The function of the State is to manufacture good citizens, not theologians, good or bad. Therefore, he would exclude, not only the priest, but the priest's proxy, from all Government schools. Mr. Foote sat down to the music of loud and long-continued applause. Then the audience did clear out in earnest while the resolution was being put to the vote, and declared carried, with practical unanimity; and a highly-successful meeting was brought to a close with a vote of thanks to the chairman.

CELTICUS.

Mark Melford on Church Patronage.

"OUTSIDE THE PALE."

The pitiful hungering of the profession in general for the mock patronage of the Church is exemplified in a contemporary's report ("Variety Artistes Commended") of certain remarks made by the Bishop of Thetford that, like crumbs of comfort, are eagerly gathered up and published in italics as testimonials to our respectability. How long will the great body of professional people suffer these covert insults

from another profession founded upon speculation, wracked by internal dissensions, impeached by our greatest scientists, subsisting upon charity, and dealing in dogmas and doctrines more varied and less various than any variety program now before the public.

Let us see what glad tidings of great joy await the music-hall artiste. Please clothe them in italics—they deserve it *this time*.

After patronising golf, etc., the Bishop proceeds to speak of the "powerful engine for good or evil of the stage" (the theatre, mind you—not the music-hall), and proceeds (don't forget the italics): "*Nor should he be prepared to say that the variety hall should be outside the pale of their sympathy.*"

There! now you feel all right. Think what it would have been if we had been *barred* from the Bishop's sympathy and his vicars and his curates and his sexton and his gravedigger. But he becomes more personal, and the gross flattery invested in the next sentence ought to carry the utmost ecstasy to the Christian variety artiste.

More italics, please:—

"*The variety artiste possibly was a person* [think of that you have a personality] *whose general mode of living would teach a lesson to others who might imagine themselves to be on a higher plane.*" Such a bold and daring statement—even though qualified by the "possibly"—must carry panic and confusion into the bosom of his flock. That our lives should reach the level in propriety and good conduct with any stray members of the Bishop's Church and within the "pale of his sympathy" must be a revelation that might induce certain indiscreet and reckless disciples to leave the linen on the line. The Bishop has been generous; he has conceded that you are a person, and that you may "possibly" be respectable. He doesn't know for certain, because he is Bishop, and lives and thrives upon hearsay—ancient and modern—but as he does not mention the doubtful characters of the "others" by names who imagine themselves to be upon a higher plane, we must derive all the honey we can by inferring that there are a good many, and some of them even keep a shop.

Church, priests, and people as a body condemn all theatres and music-halls, and the occasional spasmodic and unnecessary approval doled out in simple doses by pious individual functionaries here and there should be resented rather than received with the open-mouthed gratitude of the bad boy who is told he might be worse. What would the physician, the painter, and the lawyer say to this stinted and offensive approbation if applied to them? They would laugh it to scorn, and refer the Church to the trouble and expense its assorted religious and contending sects confer upon the police. Its inner antagonism and open riots, its sanctified comedians, eccentric but eminently successful, from Piggott to Dowie and from Torrey and Evan Roberts to W. T. Stead.

Believe me, gentlemen of the profession, the gulf between the Church and Stage will *never be bridged*. They are naturally, properly, and desirably in opposition. Fiction and superstition will not mix, although both may be financially interested, and neither praise nor damnation—both fundamental ingredients in the theological pudding (in which there are many plums for Bishops)—affect or retard for a single day the great and brilliant progress of our theatrical institutions. Every manager knows to his cost the petty-minded Pecksniffs and Stiggenses—the inevitable camp-followers and jackals of the religious world—who await like vultures the application for the most temperate license only to offer the most bigoted and senseless opposition, inflicting great loss of time and money upon business people at no cost or risk to themselves.

In my poor opinion, the back-handed compliment squeezed out of the Bishop's stock-pot and served up in italics is most indigestible, unpalatable, and humiliating, and carries its own bad taste with it. We know what we are—the Bishop does not—and the lesson he so loftily hints as being "possible" for us to bestow upon certain inferior nobodies might well commence with himself. And I herewith make his lordship a present of mine. Let the Bishop attend to his own business in accordance with the handsome terms of his contract with the State. Let him learn that we artistes of the variety stage are not so densely ignorant or vain as not to detect the insult to ourselves and our livelihood contained in his objectionable reference to our branch of the profession, and not so unenlightened as to imagine that, like the Napoleon of our music-halls, the Church can bar heaven for a future date or open up hell as a first turn.

The individual is a shoot of Humanity, and nourishes and renews its own strength in the strength of Humanity. This work of nourishment and renewal is accomplished by education, which transmits to the individual directly or indirectly the results of the progress of the whole human race.—*Mazzini*.

Acid Drops.

The pious and foolish man who edits *Great Thoughts* continues his lucubrations on Swinburne. Whether he is quite such a fool as he seems may be debatable. Perhaps we ought to fall back upon Coleridge's definition of a rogue as a fool with a circumbendibus. Whether rogue or fool, or a mixture of both, this pious editor quotes (without the reference—just like him!) two verses from the fine "Mater Triumphalis" in *Songs Before Sunrise*, and this is how he prints them:—

"Death is subdued to Thee, and hell's hands broken;
Where Thou art only is heaven; who hears not Thee
Time shall not hear him; when men's names are spoken,
A nameless sign of death shall his name be.
Deathless shall be the death, the name be nameless;
Sterile of stars his twilight time of breath;
With fire of hell shall shame consume him shameless,
And dying, all the night darken his death."

Of course, the "hands" in the first line should be "bands." But that is a small matter compared with the capital T's in Thee and Thou. These are of the pious editor's own furnishing. They do not exist in Swinburne's text. And why are they introduced? For this reason. The man actually has the incredible folly or the amazing audacity to say that Swinburne apostrophises "the great Captain of the Host, the Christ who died for men," in these verses. Just as if, to begin with, a gentleman like J. C., with an abundant beard, could possibly be addressed as "Mater"—as if Swinburne could conceivably exclaim to a male Jew—

"I am thine harp between thine hands, O mother!"

No wonder Mr. Campbell says the religious press is rotten.

The pious editor can find what Swinburne thinks of Christ by referring to the poem "Before a Crucifix." It is enough to give the poor man the horrors, but he probably won't understand it, and is safe because he is too dense to be hurt

Turning over a few pages, we caught the pious editor again scribbling about "Christian Socialism." According to this fluent and fatulent writer, Christianity is going to do wonders. By the way, it always is—the man who was fourteen years looking for a job. Listen to this!—"The greed of landlordism, the selfishness of capital, the shame of inadequately-remunerated labor, the reeking dens in which men have thrust the poor to rot and perish, the barbarism of war, all are destined sooner or later to vanish before its healing might." Such is the cheap claptrap of pulpsters and pious editors. The fact is blandly overlooked that Christianity has been going to do all these fine things for nearly two thousand years. And it will be going to do them at the end of another two thousand years—if the world has so much patience with it, which we very much doubt.

Rev. Richard Francis Follett, Weston-super-Mare, kept out of heaven till he was nearly eighty, and left £21,279 behind him when he had to emigrate.

The *Bethnal Green News* reports a Guardians' meeting at which an application was received from the Salvation Army for a donation to its "Darkest England" scheme. Mr. Lock asked whether the Salvation Army had been any benefit to any person under the Guardians' charge. Mr. Bailward replied that in 1897 some fifty to sixty inmates were sent to the Salvation Army Colonies. By far the greater number got back to the workhouse, and others disappeared. In no single instance had they any evidence that the Salvation Army had done any good whatever. Surely official statements of this kind are vastly more important than all the self-praises of William Booth and his colleagues in imposture.

A book has just been published called *The Romance of the Salvation Army*. "Romance" is a most excellent word—that is, if it refers to Salvation Army stories and figures. As experiments in pure fiction these are excellent, however reprehensible they may be in other directions.

Bishop Welldon, Dean of Manchester, has got entangled in a quarrel with his own party in regard to the Education question. His speech at a Conference of the Manchester and Salford Education League has elicited a remonstrance from the Committee of the Church Schools' Emergency League. They declare that his lordship's suggested minimum of religious instruction—reciting the Lord's Prayer, singing a hymn, and reading a passage of Scripture—cannot be re-

garded as religious instruction at all; and they want to know why Church parents should be taxed to maintain such a system. Bishop Welldon replies that he did not call it "religious instruction"—it would need to be supplemented by the Churches—but it is "as much as in the present divided state of theological opinions can be given under the authority of the State." This could hardly be grateful to Church ears, and his lordship was bound to give his real reason for playing into the hands of the Nonconformists. And his real reason is simply this, that there is a worse enemy than Nonconformity, namely, Secularism. Better any religion than no religion.

While rival Churches are "flying at each other's throats," Bishop Welldon says, "the nation is lapsing, out of mere weariness, into acquiescence in a secular solution of the educational problem." His lordship continues:—

"Secularism, if it means entire exclusion of religious teaching and worship from the schools, is in my eyes the worst of all educational evils; no triumph of any Church or party could atone for it. For the result of it must be that the nation would cease to be, in the sense in which it now is, a Christian nation.....You must forgive me if I use such little influence as may be mine to ensure that the many thousands of the children of England shall not be sent out into the world without having even known the name of Almighty God (except perhaps when it was profanely used) or even listened to the gracious and holy words of the Savior of Mankind."

This is a plain confession that unless the clergy can use the school teachers as their proxies in giving religious instruction, the children will mostly grow up as non-Christians. In other words, all the money spent upon the various Churches by the nation—some fifteen millions a year, at least—is absolutely thrown away. The children will never learn religion from the clergy if they do not learn it from school teachers. That is what Bishop Welldon appears to believe; and, if he does believe it, he is justified, from his own professional point of view, in adopting any policy—even the Nonconformist policy—rather than run the risk of ruining the clerical business altogether. If the schools don't provide customers the Churches will do no trade. That is the long and the short of it.

Mr. Reginald McKenna, M.P., President of the Board of Education, keeps on bewailing the fact that Secular Education is becoming inevitable. Speaking at Goolo the other day, he said (for the hundredth time) that "he would regard it as a disaster and a calamity to the nation if the Book which had entered into the lives and hearts of all was to be the one Book shut out by law from the schools." One would think that the blessed Book were thus banished from the world; whereas, outside the schoolrooms, it has the free run of all the rest of the country. Shutting the Bible out of the schools is no worse than shutting it out of parliament. Mr. McKenna ought to know that there is a time and a place for everything—including his "Book."

Mr. McKenna went on thus with his jeremiad:—

"He desired to utter a warning word, he said, about the secular solution. Those who advocated it would replace the present religious instruction by moral teaching without the aid of the Bible. Apart from his objection to that, he also saw great difficulties from the administrative point of view. The teachers had not been trained with this end in view, and it would put an impossible task on the vast majority of them. He hoped that wiser counsels would prevail amongst the denominationalists, because he was convinced that the overwhelming majority of the nation wished for a settlement of the controversy by the adoption of a universal system of simple Bible teaching."

How absurd it is for Mr. McKenna to talk in this way! He is a Nonconformist, and why should he expect Churchmen to swallow his nostrum? He says it is food; they say it is poison; and if he knows his business, we daresay they know theirs. And what right has he to say that the overwhelming majority of the nation want the Nonconformist solution? There are quite as many who want the Denominational solution. We believe there are as many, if not more, who would prefer the Secular solution. And it appears to us that Mr. McKenna and his like are getting painfully aware of the fact.

We find that we were mistaken in supposing that "Quicquid's" sensible and impartial remarks in the *Islington Gazette* on the Finsbury Park matter were "editorial." In another article "Quicquid" assures us that they were not. They were merely his "personal statement." Of course, we regret our blunder. We were misled by the prominence given to the gentleman's contribution. We are glad to hear, however, that the *Gazette* "always stands for free speech."

"Quicquid" has been attacked in the Park by Mr. Baker as a "jelly-fish," and his plea for mutual toleration and fair-play as "rot." He is told that he must be either with Pack or with Baker. To which he replies: "What can be said to such a gentleman? What reasoning can be applied to refute a statement which implies that there are only two positions in the world—the position of Pack, and the position of Baker?" But, after all, that is not the great point at issue. Shall Finsbury Park be the scene of orderly propagation of ideas or of controversial rowdiness? That is the real question. It is not a question of Christianity *versus* Atheism, as "Quicquid" justly says; it is "a question of Free Speech *versus* Intolerance. Shall we have a peaceful park, or riotous Sabbaths?"

"Quicquid" has done one good thing. He has elicited a plain declaration of policy from the mad Baker. He and his friends mean to "follow Pack up"—that is, to get near him, molest his meetings, and create disorder. "We mean," he said, "to turn him out of the park—that's true—and he's going." And the Bakerites greeted their hooligan chief with loud applause. Decent people, however, will greet him with something very different; and we suggest that the park police should deal with him when he thus pointedly promises violence and incites to a breach of the peace.

We have said so much, not out of any sort of care about the sayings and doings of Baker, but in order to show that Mr. Pack is being deliberately attacked and should therefore be defended. We have never heard Mr. Pack lecture, any more than we have heard his unscrupulous opponent. We are simply writing on the obvious facts of the case. We see that Mr. Pack is assailed simply because he is a Freethinker, and that is enough to enlist our sympathy and support.

Rev. B. Saunders Lloyd, B.A., told the Mayor and Corporation of St. Pancras, the other Sunday, that "this earth would soon be changed from a kind of hell to a living heaven if one of the most cardinal points of the Master's teaching were rightly understood and practised. I mean man's universal brotherhood." What arrant nonsense! Jesus never once mentioned "man's universal brotherhood," did not even believe in it. Even according to the Gospels, he was a rigid Jew, and did not contemplate the extension of his mission to the Gentile world.

A little girl named Louisa Tillett took home a Prayer Book from the National School, Bungay. On a Sunday, a month or so later, during school hours, the mistress saw it in the child's possession; the fly-leaf having been carefully pasted down to conceal some writing on the cover. The mistress reported the case to the treasurer, J. B. Scott, Esq., who had the child brought up and charged with theft at the Bungay Petty Sessions. There were two magistrates on the bench, one belonging to the red army and the other to the black army—Lieut.-Colonel Smith and the Rev. C. B. Bruce. These two worthies sentenced the poor child to fourteen days' hard labor in Beccles Jail. They deserve a month each themselves. Everybody involved in the case seems to have acted badly. But they are religious; oh, yes, religious. They must be, or they would not act so.

Rev. Dr. Horton has just delivered a sermon on the Bible, in which he naturally pronounces it the greatest book in the world. Being his text-book, he must stand up for it, or change his occupation. But, as usual, Dr. Horton makes the wildest assertions possible. An English officer's Mohammedan servant became a Christian after reading the New Testament, and this is Dr. Horton's ridiculous inference: "If once you can get a Mohammedan to study the Bible, his conversion is practically certain. He resists preaching, and, of course, he resists denunciation, but not the Bible." There are many Mohammedan scholars who know the Bible as well as Dr. Horton himself, and yet their intimate knowledge of it only confirms them in their own faith. It is also a fact that, generally speaking, Freethinkers are much better versed in the Scriptures than Christians.

Dr. Horton makes another absurd statement. His position, he claims, is this: "Criticism is allowed, must be allowed, cannot be checked, cannot be kept within prescribed limits." He took up that position, he tells us, twenty years ago, and now, he rejoices to know, it "has become the acknowledged position of the great bulk of trained and thoughtful religious teachers, not only in the Protestant, but even in the Roman Catholic Church." That is not true of "the great bulk of trained and thoughtful Protestants, and certainly it is not true—it is the very opposite of true—of the Catholic Church. No, the influence

of Dr. Horton's book, *Inspiration and the Bible*, has not been nearly as widespread and powerful as he seems to imagine. Really, the position referred to is both illogical and impossible, and no deeply "trained and thoughtful" person can hold it. The Pope fully understands this, and that is the explanation of his Encyclical against "Modernism," which is only another name for Dr. Horton's "criticism."

Rev. R. J. Campbell is "agin it" again. This time it is the religious press that comes in for his condemnation. He says, quite truthfully, we believe, that there is "no more rotten institution" in the country than the religious press. It champions no cause that really requires championing, and plays to prejudice quite as much as does the secular press, but pretends that it is actuated by the loftiest motives. Quite true, we repeat, but it is remarkable that Mr. Campbell never discovered the faults of the religious press while it was booming him, but only when it frowned on his "New Theology." The religious newspapers might also ask "What cause has Mr. Campbell ever championed that could not show a respectable following behind it?" Hitherto, we have not observed that Mr. Campbell has ever run any particular risks in the course of his career. His boldness is not very unlike that of a child's first attempts at walking upstairs with its mother behind it.

The Rev. R. J. Campbell was lecturing the other day on "The Care of the Children." The subject is a good one, and we have nothing to say except in support of his plea that children should receive every possible care from their elders both in the home and in society. What we have to say concerns another aspect of the matter. As a matter of course, Jesus had to be dragged in, and a text from the New Testament (Matthew xviii. 14) selected, thus making a celibate and a book which largely ignores the family a warranty for the better treatment of the young. Now, anyone who will take the trouble to read through the eighteenth chapter of Matthew will see that Jesus is only using children as an illustration of the type of character that is to gain the kingdom of heaven. The chapter has no reference whatever to actual children. Mr. Campbell makes the sentence "It is not the will of your Father.....that one of these little ones should perish" refer to the ill-treatment of children in society. But, unless the whole chapter is to be made absurd, "little ones" refers to the little ones of the kingdom of heaven—i.e., those adults who have become mentally as little children, and so gained the kingdom. Again, Mr. Campbell says the people who put the question, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" were thinking of the new social order to be established. Again a sheer assumption, which the most cursory reading will show to be baseless. Mr. Campbell has said a great deal lately about the duty of intellectual honesty. Would it not be as well to lead the way in abandoning these misleading and fundamentally dishonest manipulations of texts, so as to suit whatever spasm of feeling happens, for the moment, to be agitating one?

Mr. Campbell says that when people are filled with the "spirit of the Nazarene" they will "no longer be guilty of the practical Atheism of believing that want and woe are the unassailable masters of life"; and will, we suppose, treat children better. Now this is either ignorance, impertinence, or a mixture of both. The belief that want and woe are the masters of life is far more a Christian than an Atheistic doctrine, and Christians have the highest possible authority for so believing. To a healthy Atheism the world is a place to be conquered by human intelligence, and made happy by human co-operation. And when Mr. Campbell ceases talking about the subject of child-life, and studies it closely, he will see that the increased interest in children is coincident with the development of the doctrine of evolution, and is one of the products of its influence on life. And perhaps Mr. Campbell will explain what either Jesus or Christians—of the orthodox type—have had to do with the development of the greatest scientific generalisation the world has known.

The Rev. T. Phillips tells a story that is worth reproducing. It concerns an old lady who had only a single penny and was undecided whether she should spend it on a tram fare or save it for the church collection. Finally, she decided on the tram, and arrived at the church breathless and triumphant. "Lor, sister," she explained to an attendant, "the Lord is good. When the tram came near the church it got into collision with a coal waggon, and I was able to get out without paying, and so saved the penny for the collection after all."

"It is notorious," says the *Christian Commonwealth*, "that there are cases in which reformed drunkards have taken to drink again as the result of attending sacramental

celebration." The picture of the Church as a sort of ante-chamber to the public-house is most distressing.

The foreign secretary of the London Missionary Society gives as a reason why people should support missions in China that the missionaries are on the spot "and are trusted by the Chinese." This, we presume, is why we read of so many outbreaks against missionaries in China.

The Rev. J. E. Rattenbury, in the *Methodist Times*, wishes to correct an erroneous impression. He has been understood by some to imply that Socialism can be accepted as a substitute for Christianity. This, as he explains, is a mistake. He approaches the matter as a Christian minister, and believes the one hope for Socialism to be that it shall be inspired by Christianity. "If Socialism means to reject Christianity it is obviously doomed," and so forth, and so forth. All of which means, that it is useless for Socialists to imagine that Christian ministers will work for any movement that does not provide for them. They may be willing to assist at a reshuffling of the social cards, but it is always to be understood that whatever is the longest suit they hold must be declared trumps. The Socialist state must be one in which Methodists, Baptists, Episcopalians, and all the rest of the religious happy family are to remain untouched. Everything is to be altered so long as they remain as they are—which is the Christian Socialist program in a nutshell.

The Countess of Warwick has spoken. She says that Socialism is a part of Christianity. The question is settled now. Mr. Blatchford may go home and go to bed.

We have been favored with a copy of the *Llanelly Mercury*, in which the editor tells a correspondent that—"We are wholly and solely indebted to the Bible, and the Bible alone, for the position which England holds even today amongst the nations of the world." The worthy editor overlooks coal and iron, and things of that kind. It was not the Bible that built the big Atlantic liners or the British battleships, or gave us our manufacturing industry and world-wide commerce. The Bible has simply given us our preachers of "Blessed be ye poor" on anything from £200 to £15,000 a year—the Salvation Army—and pious editors. If it has given us any other things, we shall be glad to hear of them.

This pious Welsh editor can hardly claim that Franco and Japan are indebted to the Bible for their positions amongst the nations of the world. Perhaps, if he thinks that fact over, he will come to see that he has been making a fool of himself.

The right of public meeting is of infinite importance. That is why we condemn the "Suffragette" tactics. The ladies were playing a game in which they were bound to be the greatest losers in the end—for every appeal to violence establishes the power of the male at the expense of the female. The other night, the "Suffragettes" kicked up a row at Batley, where Mr. Harcourt was addressing a Liberal meeting. They had to be carried out, and a member of the third sex (a clergyman, to wit) had to be carried out with them. But the ladies did not monopolise rowdyism that night. Students broke up a Christian Science meeting at Belfast. No doubt a good many of them came from the divinity class. Such students are the rowdiest of all. Medical students come next.

Karatagh, in Bokhara, was destroyed by the recent earthquake. Of its 3,500 inhabitants only 70 escaped. All the rest perished. "For his mercy endureth for ever."

The dear *Daily News* couldn't so much as mention the fact that Mr. Foote was one of the speakers at the Secular Education League's demonstration in the Memorial Hall, but it devoted a whole quarter of a column (the same morning) to a silly rigmarole about the weight of ghosts. A certain Mr. George Spriggs had been telling the London Spiritualist Alliance some of his experiences in this country and in Australia. A six-foot ghost walked downstairs, brought up a dish of fruit, and handed them round to the company. Another spirit form drank half a tumbler of water and ate a biscuit. Another weighed 100 lb. on a scale, and a few minutes afterwards only 80 lb.; a few minutes after that it scaled 104 lb., and then lost 24 lb., in 30 seconds. Such is the sort of stuff which the *Daily News* thought its readers would prefer to a report of Mr. Foote's speech. Well, perhaps it was right.

There was fun at a recent meeting of the Willesden Board of Guardians. The chaplaincy of the workhouse was vacant, and the Socialist members made a novel suggestion. They tried to persuade the Board to appoint two chaplains, one a Christian and the other a Freethinker, and let them share the salary. This would have been sport indeed. Unfortunately it hadn't a chance of being carried. A Church of England clergyman was appointed by a large majority. He will have the whole workhouse to himself, and the whole salary. Happy man! But how about the paupers? Where do they look in? Will they all agree to go to glory by the Church of England route?

"Agnostic" calls attention in the *Yarmouth Mercury* to the fact that there are 423 Christians in the Workhouse, and not one unbeliever. The figures are as follows:—Church of England, 343; Nonconformists, 57; Roman Catholics, 23. The Board of Guardians has decided to appoint (with salary—don't forget that) a Church sky-pilot, a Chapel sky-pilot, and a Catholic sky-pilot, to direct the paupers to heaven. Most of them prefer the Workhouse—though it isn't the best hotel in Yarmouth.

The Independent Labor Party and the London Trades Council held a meeting at Collins' Music Hall on Sunday evening, and Mr. G. J. Wardle, M.P., was one of the speakers. In the course of his address, he said that the I. L. P. contained more local preachers than any other party. Whereat the audience burst into laughter. Mr. Wardle proceeded to say that he did not know if that was any recommendation, but it ought to be regarded as a sign of respectability. Whereat the audience laughed worse than ever. They didn't appear to be in love with local preachers.

Coventry Socialists have been holding a Sunday night meeting to rejoice over their fighting a "clean" battle, although they lost. Dr. Richardson Rice, one of their speakers, said that his opponent "had put forward that Atheism was the basis of Socialism," but he "would have been nearer the mark if he said that Atheism was the basis of Toryism." This remark was greeted with applause. But both the remark and the applause were extremely foolish. Dr. Rice should know better—and we believe he does. We beg to remind him that one silliness about Atheism is no improvement on another silliness about Atheism.

Pity the poor curates! The Church Pastoral Aid Society's income during the past year shows a decrease of nearly £10,000.

We read in the newspapers—we did not know anything of it beforehand—that a memorial over the grave of George Jacob Holyoake, in Highgate Cemetery, was unveiled on Saturday. It was placed there by the Co-operators of Great Britain, and it consisted of a bust of Mr. Holyoake in white marble, by Mr. Albert Toft. The unveiling was performed by a Baptist minister—the Rev. Dr. John Clifford, who is regarded by many Freethinkers as a consummate hypocrite. We deeply regret that this man was selected to pronounce a eulogy over Mr. Holyoake's grave.

Christians imprisoned Holyoake sixty-five years ago. They now sigh and sob over his grave. We prefer the old performance to the new one. It was more honest. Persecution is preferable to misrepresentation.

THE LOST OCCASION.

Farwell, fair day and fading light!
The clay-born here, with westward sight,
Marks the huge sun now downward soar.
Farwell. We twain shall meet no more.

Farwell. I watch with bursting sigh
My late condemned occasion die.
I linger useless in my tent;
Farwell, fair day, so foully spent!

Farwell, fair day. If any God
At all consider this poor clod,
He who the fair occasion sent
Prepared and placed impediment.

Let him diviner vengeance take—
Give me to sleep, give me to wake
Girded and shod, and bid me play
The hero in the coming day.

—R. L. Stevenson.

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, November 17, Town Hall, Birmingham: at 3, "Robert Blatchford and R. J. Campbell; Christianity, Atheism, and Socialism"; at 7, "The Paradise of Fools."

November 24, Stanley Hall, London; 28 and 29, Bristol.
December 1, 8, 15, Queen's Hall.

To Correspondents.

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

J. T. LLOYD'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—November 17, Stanley Hall; 24, West Ham. December 8, Aberdare; 22, Holloway.

H. A. BLAMPFIED (Melbourne) writes: "The *Freethinker* is not as easily procurable and well-known as it should be in Australia. I hardly knew of it till about a couple of years ago, and I could not get it anywhere in Melbourne till I arranged with a news-agent to get out a couple of copies weekly from his London agent. I have been reading the paper for the past six months, and you would scarcely credit how highly and warmly I value and appreciate it. I sincerely hope you will live long to carry on your grand work." This correspondent is apprised that the missing number of the *Freethinker* has been posted to him.

E. COLE.—Pleased to learn that you mean to push the sale of the *Freethinker* in your shop. We do not issue a weekly contents sheet; we dropped it some years ago as an unprofitable expenditure, so few copies being exhibited, as far as we could see. We issue a standing placard, however, and have desired our shop manager to send you some.

HARRY HUNT.—See paragraph. Thanks.

M. E. PRIGG.—Glad you realised a good collection for the N. S. S. general fund at Manchester on Sunday. Also that Mr. Lloyd's lectures were highly appreciated. But why on earth—we ask it of those who stayed away—do not the Manchester "saints" give him better audiences? They ought to do more private advertising of his lectures.

We must repeat that we cannot answer letters bearing no name and address.

T. CLARK.—Accept our sincere sympathy.

J. BROUGH.—Thanks for cuttings. Glad you so much enjoyed Mr. Lloyd's lecture, and sorry (with you) that there were not more people to hear them.

E. A. H.—Chesterton is not easily answerable—for the same reason that it is difficult to follow a flea.

W. T. BLACKBURN.—Will answer you next week.

F. NUTTALL.—Glad to hear that the Labor men at Crewe are largely Freethinkers.

G. LACK.—See "Acid Drops." Thanks.

A. G. LYE.—Will fix the date up and write you; also about Mr. Wishart. See paragraph.

J. W. MARSHALL.—Mr. Neate's communication was already in type. Thanks for your trouble, all the same.

T. HOPKINS.—It fell into Miss Vance's hands all right. We are happy to say she is much better. No doubt, as you say, after Judge Wills, the Isle of Wight is "very near heaven." Unfortunately, for us, it is too far from London.

H. SCHOLEY.—You will see the time and subjects of the lectures announced this week. Pleased you think this journal "gets better every week."

W. P. BALL.—Many thanks for cuttings. Your welcome article is in hand, and you shall have proof shortly.

T.—Glad to know you were so "delighted" with the tone, temper, and substance of our Memorial Hall speech.

E. BOWEN.—Pleased to read your letter. It is good to know that the *Freethinker* is looked for so eagerly every Thursday.

LIVERPOLITAN.—An encouraging letter. Thanks.

H. R. CLIFTON.—You need not be surprised. *Reynolds'* was never friendly to us, and now, we understand, it has been bought up and will join the worse than Jack Falstaff army of the "glorious free press." Thanks for all your trouble in the matter.

ALICE MARTIN.—The letter is already answered by the Chairman. Thanks for your communication. Pleased to hear from one who was with Gerald Massey when he died. We note that only about three months ago he referred to the shabby treatment he received when he tried to pay us a visit in Holloway Gaol.

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

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

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Sugar Plums.

The Birmingham Branch, though wickedly persecuted by the local authorities, including the Education Committee, is still able to obtain the occasional use of the Town Hall by the courtesy of the Mayor. There will be two meetings held in that great building to-day (Nov. 17) under the Branch's auspices. Mr. Foote lectures afternoon and evening on subjects that will probably attract large audiences, in spite of the press boycott. Before both lectures selections will be played on the noble Town Hall organ. We appeal to the district "saints" to do their utmost to bring along their more orthodox friends or acquaintances and crowd the hall.

Mr. Foote had capital audiences at Liverpool on Sunday—the largest Branch meetings yet held in the Milton Hall. And the audiences were enthusiastic as well as large, so that the Branch committee feels cheered and encouraged in starting its new winter's work. Dr. Niven presided at the afternoon meeting, and Mr. Holmes in the evening. There were many questions asked and answered, but no discussion. One young Christian got on the platform after the evening lecture, and wiped away a tear as he referred to his "Savior"; but as he then went on reading a long metaphysical extract from some nameless writer, he was called to order and asked to criticise the lecture on his own account, which he did not seem able to do.

Mr. Cohen follows Mr. Foote at Liverpool and lectures there to-day (Nov. 17), afternoon and evening. No doubt the local "saints" will rally round him. We also hope they will try to bring some Christian friends to the meetings.

Mr. Cohen delivered the second of the Stanley Hall course of lectures on Sunday evening. Mr. Lloyd delivers the third this evening (Nov. 17). We hope the North London "saints" will give him a good meeting and a good reception.

Mr. Wishart has been "missioning" at Huddersfield, and strengthening the N. S. S. Branch there. Some of his meetings have been very successful. He is now going on to Liverpool for some time. An announcement to that effect was made at the President's meetings on Sunday.

The new edition of Mr. Bonte's pamphlet is going off well. Freethinkers should circulate it at all points of the compass. It is bound to do a lot of good. It is not like a theoretical essay; it palpitates with actuality. Besides, when the orthodox make so much of their "converted infidels"—who have generally no name or address—Freethinkers should make the most of their *bonâ fide* "converted Christians."

The Memorial Hall was crowded on Thursday evening, November 7, and the Secular Education League may well be proud of its first Demonstration. The Demonstration had been arranged at a Committee meeting which Mr. Foote was unable to attend through absence in the country, and the list of speakers there and then fixed up was not, in his opinion, exactly representative of all the League's forces. It was on Mr. Foote's initiative that the Rev. Stewart D. Headlam was subsequently added to the list. Even then all the speakers—with perhaps the exception of Pete Curran—belonged to the definitely Christian side of the agitation. Mr. Foote's view was that both the speakers and the meeting should, in the circumstances, be (unavowedly, of course) left to the Christian side. In that case he would neither have attended himself nor have urged his friends to attend. But the League secretary (Mr. Harry Snell) requested him to help whip up a big meeting through the *Freethinker*. This he did, and the result proved it was necessary; there would have been no packed meeting otherwise. And this in turn led inevitably to the scene which so astonished some occupants of the platform. The meeting got tired of hearing

the Church and Chapel view of Secular Education exclusively, and clamored for Mr. Foote; especially after the Rev. R. J. Campbell had pointedly referred to the fact that "the editor of the *Freethinker*, he understood, was sitting on the platform." Mr. Foote had an extraordinarily enthusiastic reception from the overwhelming majority of the meeting. We are bound to say that, while this did not seem to please some, it did not appear to give any umbrage to Mr. Campbell, in whose nature there is a certain frank ingenuousness, which is perhaps one of the secrets of his success. He shook hands and chatted with Mr. Foote after the meeting without a shadow of embarrassment.

Mr. Campbell was not quite at home on that platform addressing that audience, but he had a fine reception, and the Freethinkers applauded him very heartily for standing out so firmly on behalf of his principles—especially in view of the hypocrisy of the general Nonconformist attitude. He said some things with which the Secularists could never be in agreement, but they took it all good-humoredly; for he was obviously speaking with sincerity, and there was a pathetic look in his eyes—as of one undergoing strain and trial—which made a mute claim on sympathy.

Mr. Halley Stewart, M.P., the chairman, made a strong speech in favor of Secular Education, and was vehemently cheered when he denounced, as a Nonconformist, the strange, illogical, perverse, and contemptible attitude of his fellow-Nonconformists, with their demand for the State establishment of their religion in the public schools. We should like to see Mr. Halley Stewart's speech in pamphlet form. It would do a lot of good.

Mr. Pete Curran, M.P., was sound enough, except for one little slip. He remarked that an Atheist employer could be as cruel and tyrannical as a Christian employer. It may be so—though the statement needs some evidence to be convincing to non-Christians; but it should not have been said at that meeting, for it had no relation whatever to the matter under discussion.

The largest and best weekly Freethought paper in America is the New York *Truthseeker*, owned and edited by Mr. Eugene Macdonald, who, as his name suggests, is of Scotch extraction. We made Mr. Macdonald's acquaintance when we were in America, eleven years ago, and liked him as a man of grit and intelligence, who was likely to be working successfully for the good old cause when more showy persons were tired of it. Mr. Macdonald, if we may say so at such a distance, still comes up smiling in the editorial chair, does his work with steady efficiency, and keeps up the interest of his paper. And that is no light task. We know what it is, and speak from experience.

Eugene Macdonald's "brother George" used to contribute "Observations" to the *Truthseeker*, and they were a feature of the paper, for he had a head on his shoulders, thought for himself, and displayed a sort of humor which must have been derived from his pawky ancestors in Caledonia. Brother George has been out of the *Truthseeker* for some time, but we gather that his pen is busy elsewhere. The other day we came across a number, though not a very recent one, of *Liberty*, edited by Benjamin R. Tucker, whom we also ran across during our American visit, and found him a pleasant, wholesome man, with a good-sized and good-shaped head, and the appearance of having it well-furnished. Mr. Tucker is an Anarchist. Not a bomb-thrower, not an advocate of violence—in other words, not a fool; but one who believes that the less Government people have the better. Of course there is nothing novel in this, although the word Anarchist is a new one, and of sinister significance to the majority. Thomas Paine, in a page of masculine eloquence, drew a distinction between Government and Society; the latter, he said, is based upon our virtues, and the former upon our vices—or at least our weaknesses. This view was propounded with greater solemnity by Herbert Spencer, who probably did not know (for he was not a wide reader) how Paine had anticipated him. But we are straying from the point. Let us get back to it. What we wanted to say is, that in Mr. Tucker's *Liberty* we found several pages of "Unbidden Thoughts" signed George E. Macdonald, and evidently of the original brand, for they bore "Brother George, his mark" all over them.

We gave last week a taste of George Macdonald's quality in an extract on the Japanese trouble in California. Since then we have received a copy of the *Truthseeker* with more "Observations" from his pen; so he is not out of touch with the old paper, after all—of which we are glad.

Church and Stage.

It seems that the present Roman Catholic Archbishop of Glasgow has developed strong puritanical tendencies. His Grace is a Glasgow Irishman by birth, which (some may think) renders it the more surprising he should be narrow in his views. He is broad-minded in some things, of course. For instance, shortly after his elevation to the See of Glasgow he discovered that his fitness to pose as the local representative of the homeless and penniless Founder of Christianity would not be seriously damaged by the acquisition of a house in the country for the benefit of his health. As an individual he is not to be considered blameworthy for looking after his own physical well-being. Only, like a good many other Christians, he evinced by his conduct that his solicitude for his personal comfort bulked more largely than his faith, and practically intimated that he had no intention of interpreting the precepts of the New Testament in too literal a fashion.

I am informed the Archbishop objects to any augmentation of church funds from the proceeds of balls and dances; and it is stated he vetoed a *matinée* performance which was being arranged at one of the music-halls in aid of a Roman Catholic educational institution. Evidently he is by way of being fastidious concerning the sources from whence money shall flow into the coffers of the Church—which affords refreshing proof that even Churchmen have a conscience, and are sensitive about taking tainted cash. If one could believe that Archbishop Maguire's squeamishness in money matters were likely to become general amongst the Roman Catholic clergy in this country, the speedy downfall of Roman Catholicism might confidently be predicted. Money, being the root of all evil, is naturally indispensable to a flourishing Church; and if the Catholic Church became too particular as to the methods whereby the offerings of the faithful are earned the necessary sinews of the holy war would be painfully lacking. However, although the Archbishop has apparently decided that the profits from an evening's dancing are ill-gotten gains, and that the proceeds of the gratuitous efforts of generous theatrical artistes are unclean, the Church still derives (though perhaps not without an inward qualm) a large portion of its income from those who thrive on the debauchery and demoralisation of the poorest of our population. So there are limits to the scope of the episcopal self-denying ordinance.

To be sure, to charge Roman Catholics with inconsistency in this connection is but to say they have their share of a common Christian trait. They strain at gnats while swallowing camels. Objection is taken to money that passes through the dancing-saloon and the theatrical paybox, but money that comes from much more questionable quarters is freely accepted. It is notorious that in all our large industrial centres the businesses that are most closely associated with the degradation of the people are being steadily concentrated in Roman Catholic hands. It is from these businesses that much of the wherewithal comes to adorn the altars, decorate the churches, and bedizen the priests. Certainly in the matter of discriminating between lucre that is filthy and lucre that is slightly less so the Catholic Church has something to learn if she wishes to be consistent. Whatever may have been the inspiring motive of His Grace of Glasgow it has never hitherto been the custom for the Roman Catholic clergy to look their ordinary gift-horses too closely in the mouth. The League of the Cross billiard-rooms form a case in point.

My severance from the Church four years ago prevents me speaking with personal knowledge regarding the present management of these establishments, but for many years they were a standing scandal in a number of parishes. They were little else than gambling and betting saloons, and were the ruin of numerous young lads who were there initiated into a dissipated life. The facts

were perfectly well known to the priests; but what would you? The League of the Cross billiard-room was a steady source of revenue to the church to which it was attached, and neither the tears nor the threats (of exposure) of anguished parents or wives could move the clergy to take decisive steps for the cleansing of the Augean stable. The parish, if possible, had to be made to pay its way. The parish priest was appointed not because of his piety but because of his business capacity, and he could not afford to allow abstract ethics to interfere with the income of the church. He possibly salved his conscience with the reflection that if the young men were not in the League of the Cross rooms they might be in even a worse place—which is a species of reasoning that could be made to justify almost any abuse. As to other sources of income—well, I have no wish to give offence to many otherwise fairly decent individuals; so the less said the better. But that special objection should be directed against ball-room dancing and the theatrical profession seems to indicate that the clerical sense of moral perspective must be sadly defective—though this latter is scarcely of the nature of a revelation to any serious observer.

Where the sexes are involved the priestly mind seems to cherish an inherently morbid and prurient view. In fact one might hazard the assertion that, speaking generally, the taking of a vow of perpetual celibacy or virginity denotes an unhealthy conception of the sexual relationship. It is a heinous thing for young men and young women to enjoy themselves in each others' company. The old horrible sacerdotal notion that the touch of a woman meant pollution still lingers on in the consciousness of the priest and finds expression in various ways. If the women would only dance with each other and the men do likewise, the clerical objection to dancing would vanish. Similarly, if women were banished from the stage, the theatre would probably be a harmless resort in the estimation of the modern cleric, though in its early days the playhouse incurred the anathema of the clergy even when the players were all of the male sex. But Nature is too powerful for Mother Church, and the attraction of the opposite sex prevails in the dancing-room and in the theatre as elsewhere, even over the Holy Spirit. What an innocent and delightful world it would be if the population were entirely composed of the male sex! And if they were all priests doubtless the ideal towards which the universe is striving would be achieved.

The antipathy between Church and Stage is not a thing of yesterday. The Christian Church destroyed the ancient drama as it destroyed all other Pagan culture, and was in the early centuries of its career bitterly hostile to all forms of dramatic representation. The revival of the drama was coincident with the general European awakening in the sixteenth century. Clerical opposition to the stage in these countries dates from the first beginnings of the theatre. About the middle of the sixteenth century, when the first real precursors of the modern drama (which precursors were quite distinct from the miracle and morality plays they ultimately displaced) secured public representation in England, the clergy objected. In 1563, London was visited by a plague which carried off 21,000 people. Plague and pestilence were familiar friends of the public in the days when there was a maximum of prayer and a minimum of soap and water. And the clergy could be safely trusted to find a supernatural, or semi-supernatural, reason for every recurrence of epidemic. The wicked stage-plays were, of course, blamed for the plagues. Archbishop Grindal advised Secretary William Cecil, the founder of the house of Salisbury, to forbid all plays for a year, "and if it were for ever, that would not be amiss."

The lesser clergy denounced the plays in their sermons. A reverend gentleman of the name of Wilcocks, preaching at Paul's-cross in 1577, referred to a further embargo that had been placed upon the actors owing to the plague. "I like the policy well,"

he said, "if it hold still, for a disease is but botched or patched up that is not cured in the cause, and the cause of plagues is sin, if you look to it well; and the cause of sin are plays; therefore the cause of plagues are plays." Truly a precious sample of clerical logic! And the reverend John Stockwood, preaching at the same spot in the following year, lamented that a play would sooner call a thousand than an hour's tolling of the bell bring to the sermon a hundred.

Of course, the chief grievance of the clergy was that the plays were acted on Sundays and Holy-days, and constituted a powerful competitor with Divine Service for popular favor. No efforts were spared to procure a clerical monopoly of the first day of the week. If the clergy would only practice what they preach, and rest *themselves* on the Lord's Day, what a relief it would be! But in this, as in other respects, they lack consistency. The aforesaid Stockwood was of opinion that the acting of plays could not be tolerated on the Lord's Day in a Christian commonwealth. There are other actors besides those who don the sock and buskin, and the former must have all the limelight on Sunday, metaphorically speaking.

At the subsequent period of the Restoration there were doubtless substantial grounds for protest against the tendencies and the moral tone of the stage. The latter shared in the inevitable reaction that followed the foolish Puritanical repression of the Commonwealth. But there was no justification, other than the one indicated above, for the set made by the clergy against the Elizabethan drama. "The bitterest opponents of the stage under Elizabeth admitted that the plays were very honest, and had healthy aims. The substantial ground of offence was the retention of the old custom of Sunday entertainment—Sabbath conflict between the trumpets summoning to plays and the bells summoning to prayers" (Cassell's *English Literature*). Stephen Gosson, who, from being an actor himself, went over to the camp of the opponents of the playhouse, wrote in 1579 a pamphlet which, after the verbose fashion of those days, he entitled "The School of Abuse, containing a pleasant invective against Poets, Pipers, Players, Jesters, and such-like Caterpillars of a Commonwealth." The pamphlet was dedicated to Philip Sydney, and is believed to have led to the writing of the latter's famous *Apologie for Poetrie*. Gosson himself, in attacking the stage, had tacitly to admit its claim to being "a teacher of duty and upholder of all that was honest and of good report." But in fulfilling these worthy functions the theatre was seemingly felt to be usurping the place of the Church, and we have Gosson sagely remarking, "If people will be instructed, God be thanked, we have divines enough to discharge that, and more, by a great many than are well hearkened to." So that the enemies of the theatre were determined to have it either way. If the drama had an immoral influence it ought to be suppressed in the interests of the community, and if it had a moral influence it was superfluous, for the Church was there to look after the people's morals.

The first royal patent issued in favor of a dramatic company in England expressly stipulated that performances should not be given at the time of Common Prayer, or when there was general plague in the City of London. The Corporation of London would seem to have been intensely puritanical at that date, or much under the domination of the Church, for it endeavored to extinguish the new bands of players by a series of exasperating, and at last practically prohibitive, restrictions. First the very presence of the actors in London was objected to. Then, when the intervention of the Earl of Leicester procured their admission to the City, theatrical representations on sacred days were protested against. Complaint was made that youths ran straight "from prayers to plays, from God's service to the Devil's." So closely was the stage associated with the powers of darkness by narrow-minded Christian bigots, that a legend, that the Devil himself appeared on the stage to help his

friends with their performance, gained considerable credence.

The support accorded to the players by the court and the nobility was too powerful to permit of the complete interdiction of playacting, but much ingenuity was exercised by adversaries of the stage in order to render the position of the players an impossible one. Regulations were framed that required each exhibition of a play to be separately licensed by the mayor, and half the profits were ordered to be given to the poor. It is so easy to be charitable with the money of other people. It was proposed to forbid acting at the inns, and confine it to private houses, where, of course, there could never be a sufficiently large audience to make it worth while producing a piece. There should be no acting at all unless the death-rate had been for a period of twenty days below the rate of fifty a week. This, while having the appearance of fixing a sliding scale for the calculating of God's displeasure, was nearly equal to a total prohibition of the drama, for in those religious and insanitary days the death-rate of London was scarcely ever under fifty a week for any length of time. Limitations such as these forced the players to look for theatrical stances outside the City boundaries altogether.

The heated controversy regarding Sunday performances was brought to a close by the judgment of God. So, at least, it was alleged. A delapidated gallery collapsed in one of the theatres on the Surrey side of the Thames during a Sunday representation, and several persons were killed, as well as many injured. God had spoken. The number of Sunday performances at which no one had been injured were entirely left out of account, and the Privy Council, in obedience to the manifest will of the Almighty, proscribed all further profanation of the Lord's Day by His Infernal Majesty's servants.

The superior attractiveness of the stage seems always to have been a cause of annoyance to the Church. When one comes across a fresh display of clerical petulance one recalls the clever retort of the actor Betterton. Archbishop Tillotson once asked Betterton how it came about, that after he (the Archbishop) had made the most moving discourse that he could, was touched deeply with it himself, and spoke it as feelingly as he was able, yet he could never move people in the church near so much as the other did on the stage? "That," said Betterton, "is, I think, easy to be accounted for; it is because you are only telling them a story, and I am showing them facts."

GEO. SCOTT.

The Two Angels.

AN ALLEGORY.

(Developed from some verses that appeared in the "Freethinker" a few months ago.)

HIGH on his jewelled throne, in realms of light,
The great I AM, the mighty king of kings,
Received the adoration of the spheres.
Innumerable hosts, in shining flight,
Flashed rays of brilliance round him with their wings
Like sunlight glinting from a million spears.
Behind him rolled the great celestial fires;
Before him, at his feet, were grouped his choirs,
Mingling with voices rich the music of their lyres.

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

The Ruler of the Universe looked stern.
"Why showest thou thyself unclothed and stark?
Where is thy glittering splendor and thy pride?"

Long ages yet will pass ere men discern
Thy dreadful features, sinister and dark,
If in a suit of glory thou wilt hide.
Go, clothe thyself in these: the gleam of gold,
Scarlet and silver robes will screen the mold
Which on thy rotting bones so clammy lies and cold."

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

There came another suitor to the throne,
With fearless orbes of sapphire, wide and clear
As the blue sky upon a summer's morn;
And from within those liquid depths there shone
A crystal gem of purity, sincere
As the light from a babe's eyes newly-born.
And when she lifted up her voice to greet
The great I AM, the richest music beat
In waves of melody around the judgment-seat.

The Ruler of the Universe was sad;
Yet on his face the light of pleasure beamed
And from his forehead glory's rays were shed.
The presence of this angel made him glad,
And his divine love, like a torrent, streamed
Upon the fearless one, who promptly said:
"My name is Truth!" the Mighty One replied:
"I know thee well, though mortal men deride
And flout the very name thou speakest in thy pride.

If I clothe thee in glory men will see
Thee in a strange disguise and know thee not.
A cloak of sombre grey thou long hast worn
And yet must wear till men discover thee
For what thou art. Nay, look not so forlorn,
Æons will pass but thou wilt rise supreme,
And though the present hideous may seem
The light will come, the past be but a fearful dream."

A silence deep, ethereal, was spread
Over the vast angelic concourse; hushed
Were the rich, golden lyres; and sadly, mute
As a poor, broken harp, Truth bowed her head;
Her eyes were filled with tears, her pride was crushed;
And now enfolded in the hated suit
Of sombreness whose glory might have been,
She came again to earth, with lowly mien,
An outcast beggar where she might have reigned a queen.

Under the stars she sat and watched their train
Marching in splendor o'er the firmament—
Celestial armies clad in silver sheen—
Until the sun baptised the earth again,
When she arose, and to a city went,
Where clarion bells appealed with voices keen.
She saw the men and women hurry by,
And "Whither go ye?" asked; they made reply: [joy.
"To hear the Truth!" Her stricken heart was filled with

Joining the stream, unnoticed, on she went
Until she reached a structure, temple-built,
And gorgeous within, and cruciform
In plan, to which the people's steps were bent.
On the walls, saints and angels shone in gilt;
A painting of Christ quieting the storm,
As told in Bible legend, occupied
An honored place; and on the northern side,
In flowing robe, he walked on Galileo's dark tide.

Truth looked around; she was a stranger there;
So, recognised by none, she sought a bench,
And with a feeling of timidity—
Alert and nerve-strung as a startled hare—
Seated herself, endeavoring to quench
Her pain of loneliness. Anxiety
As to her future, cheerless as the tomb,
Set her to wonder if the light would loom [gloom.
Up from that altar which she peered at through the

A gilded cross was hanging in the nave,
Whereon the figure of a man was nailed
With anguished countenance and bloody brow.
To Truth, all innocence, 'twas nothing save
A gruesome spectacle; the subject failed
To touch her tender heart; she did not know
The Christian fetish, Jesus, in whose name
Unnumbered multitudes had suffered shame
And fearful torments from the faggots' scorching flame.

How could she know this God whom men had raised
 In their own image? Was a peasant Jew
 With strange, unlikely stories of a birth
 Miraculous, for ever to be praised
 Because some fishermen—a motley crew—
 Had said that all inhabitants of the earth
 Were doomed to perish everlastingly
 Unless, believing, they declared that he
 Secured their pardon first by dying on a tree?

Mildly oppressive hung the perfumed air,
 Honeyed like ether in an orange grove,
 Over the crowd which dressed the aisles below
 In wondrous garments, silks and laces rare,
 And cloth of gold. High in the space above
 Bannerets gay swung gently to and fro.
 And as she pondered o'er the grand display,
 Lo! through a colored pane the sun's rich ray
 Flushed with a crimson dye her modest cloak of grey.

The beam still spread, the glory filtered through
 The stained window in rare harmony
 Of blue and amber, gold and purple rays;
 Shadings of color soft of ev'ry hue,
 Like the great arch which, in the western sky,
 The morning sun establishes anew
 To welcome back the cool, refreshing rain,
 Rich with prismatic diamonds in its train,
 Wherein it gladly bathes its dazzling shafts again.

Suddenly, great commotion filled the street;
 Trumpets and drums crashed with metallic clare,
 Sounding their notes of triumph hoarse and loud.
 Then came the steady tramp of marching feet,
 Rhythmic music beating on the air
 And the low murmur of a surging crowd.
 Nearer it came, convolving more and more,
 Marrying wave to wave till but one roar
 Of sound it's acme reached outside the temple door.

Wide was the portal, but the multitude
 Paused on the threshold, opening the way
 And ranging like a wall on either side;
 Their acclamations, more and more subdued,
 Murmured again, then softly died away
 As one approached the porch with measured strido,
 Magnificent in scarlet robes, and gold
 Harness, and trappings wondrous to behold,
 With steps of stately grace, and form of perfect mould.

A crowd of nobles, garbed in bright attire,
 Surrounded him and magnified his state;
 As a rich setting to a costly gem
 Glorifies it, kindles its latent fire,
 And, full of life, serves to accentuate
 The greater lustre of the diadem.
 Stars never dim the glory of the moon;
 Words glow within the setting of a tune;
 The scintillating dew adorns the rose of June.

Truth gazed in horror; she could scarce believe
 The people could be blinded by the glare
 Of blatant pomp; for there beneath the gold
 Which screened the Thing, the crowd did not perceive,
 But which to her keen vision was laid bare,
 She saw the rotting bones, the clammy mold,
 The frightful features in th' obscurity
 A mask can render. She alone could see
 And know the face of War, the form of Victory.

And now the glory from the window passed,
 Leaving her but a grey nonentity.
 Trembling, she rose, her head with sorrow bent,
 Heedless of all the glamor which was cast
 Around that gaudy shape of Majesty;
 With aching heart, unnoticed, on she went
 Out of the temple, silent in her woe,
 To wait, in gloom, the day when men shall know
 Alone from her their joy and happiness can flow.

W. GEORGE HASWELL.

Correspondence.

THE FREETHINKER IN BROCKWELL PARK.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I hasten to contradict the implication of "Brixton" (it is a pity he omits to disclose his name) that the *Freethinker* has not been announced at the Brockwell Park meetings during the present season.
 As a matter of fact, I personally, as Chairman of the majority of the afternoon meetings held there, appreciating fully the value of the journal, have made a special point,

not only of announcing that it was on sale, but of singling it out for eulogy Sunday after Sunday, always taking care to emphasise anything of local interest, with the result that the Secretary has reported more than once, "All sold out."

When the turbulence caused by the Christians has been so violent as to overpower the voice from the platform, I have invariably held high the paper, with its bold title, in full view of the whole audience, in order to circumvent the efforts made to suppress it. In addition to this, one member of the Branch, at some inconvenience, has brought large parcels of back numbers to the meetings, and distributed them gratis.

If any further evidence be required to refute the reflection cast by "Brixton," may I say that, so far as the Camberwell Branch of the N. S. S. is concerned, the season just closed has been a record one, not only for the sale of literature, but also as regards new members. It is therefore difficult to understand what "Brixton" means. Does he not recollect the incident of the young Christian who, after I had announced the paper, purchased one, and tore it into a thousand pieces in full view of the audience?

F. R. THEAKSTONE.

DR. MACNAMARA AND SECULARISM.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Dr. Macnamara, in a recent letter to the *Times*, explains his views in regard to the religious difficulty in the schools. The State, he thinks, might dispense denominational teaching all round, according to the wishes of the parents. This course, he considers, would be strictly just, strictly logical, and entirely symmetrical. But the cost, he says, would be prohibitive, irrespective of the effect of such procedure on the discipline of the scholars. He favors a system of common undenominational religious lessons as part of the State provision of public elementary education, meeting the objector by means of a conscience clause. In regard to the Voluntary-schools now on the rates, this "teaching" would, in his scheme, be supplemented, where desired, by the giving of denominational teaching by the denominationalists in their own time and at their own expense. A purely secular system would only be adopted as a counsel of despair. He would deplore this course. He evidently favors the "simple Bible teaching" advocated by Mr. Yoxall and others.

Perhaps when Dr. Macnamara next attempts to deal with this problem he will be good enough to inform his audience what he believes, and whether it is desirable or honorable to inculcate legends as though they were facts.

We do not advocate the "secular solution" as a counsel of despair. We consider it harmful and unnecessary to perpetuate a pernicious system of make-believe. Cabinet ministers seem to be like children in this respect; and, instead of attempting to advise others, they are sadly in need of counsel themselves, if they would only learn humility. Schoolmasters, Mr. Birrell has been informed, think too much of themselves. Certainly some of them seem to live in balloons. But then it is convenient for headmasters, who are receiving the salaries of Cabinet ministers, to appear to be child-like where their own commercial interests are concerned. Ministers of the Crown should be much more impartial, and not trim their sails to catch every passing breeze. Liberal politicians might remember that James Mill and John Stuart Mill, two eminent philosophic Liberals, rejected the Christian religion. If they were living to-day there can be little doubt how they would exert their influence. It would undoubtedly be on the side of the Secularists. They were bigger men than Dr. Macnamara or Mr. Haldane or Mr. Balfour. Secularism in the schools has got to come, and the sooner politicians and parents recognise this fact the better it will be for all. Secularism is not a sort of plague, as some think, but the only rational solution of the present difficulties. If we cannot teach children to be good without deluding them, it would be better to let the race die out.

J. A. REID.

Obituary.

DEATH has again visited our ranks. On Thursday (Nov. 7) the remains of Mr. Jarman, of Bow, were buried at Manor Park Cemetery. He was a staunch Atheist and a great lover of our late leader, Charles Bradlaugh; whom he looked upon as the greatest man that ever lived. A few weeks ago, he lost a daughter, and this so upset him that he soon showed signs of distress; and after a fortnight's illness, died at the age of 69. Mr. James Marshall read a very impressive Secular Burial Service. Mr. Jarman was an old member of the Bethnal Green Branch of the N. S. S.—JAMES NEATE.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, etc.

Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday be marked "Lecture Notice," if not sent on postcard.

LONDON.

STANLEY HALL (Fortress-road, Junction-road, N.): 7.30, J. T. Lloyd, "Theology Discredited."

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S. (North Camberwell Hall, New Church-road): 3.15, Guy A. Aldred, "Christian Indifferentism v. Atheistic Socialism"; 7.30, Business Meeting.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Workman's Hall, Romford-road, Stratford): 7.30, A. Allison, "God and Woman." Selections by the Band before Lecture.

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Town Hall): G. W. Foote, 3, "Robert Blatchford and R. J. Campbell; Christianity, Atheism, and Socialism"; 7, "The Paradise of Fools." Orchestral selections at 2.30 and 6.15; tea at the Town Hall at 5.

BRISTOL BRANCH N. S. S. (I. L. P. Hall, 21 King-square-avenue): 3, Business Meeting—Final Arrangements for Mr. Foote's Visit.

COVENTRY BRANCH N. S. S. (Baker's Coffee Tavern, Fleet-street): Thursday, Nov. 14, at 8, Reading from *Flowers of Freethought*.

EDINBURGH BRANCH N. S. S. (Hall, 84 Leith-street): 6.30, W. Macgregor, "Woman and the Bible."

FAIRSWORTH (Secular Sunday School, Pole-lane): 6.30, Harry Snell, "The Case for Secular Education."

GLASGOW: Secular Hall, Brunswick-street—J. M. Robertson, 12 (noon), "The Fear of Socialism"; 6.30, "The Evolution of Religion; I.—The Doctrines of Immortality and Salvation." Illustrated by limelight views.

LIVERPOOL (Milton Hall, Daulby-street): C. Cohen, 3 and 7.

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Secular Hall, Rusholme-road): 6.30, W. Saunders, "The Scavengers of Anti-Socialism."

NEWCASTLE DEBATING SOCIETY (Lockhart's Cathedral Café): Thursday, Nov. 21, at 8, R. N. Tyas, "The Fraud of Freethought."

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

OUTDOOR.

BRISTOL BRANCH N. S. S.: Horsefair, at 7.30, W. H. Fox, a Lecture.

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

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

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