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PRICE TWOPENCE

*All feel the secret operation
Of Nature's ever-ruling might,
And from the bases of Creation
A living track winds up to light.*

—GOETHE.

After-Easter Reflections.

MARVELLOUS is the ingenuity with which divines endeavor to make Christianity logically presentable to the twentieth century mind. On Easter Sunday, for example, the resurrection of Jesus was described by a most popular preacher as the "centre of the centre of our holy religion." The centre of Christianity is Christ, in his incarnation, teaching, death, and resurrection; but the central and foundational fact in the history of Jesus is his rising triumphant from the tomb. Then we were shown the place which the fact of the resurrection occupies in the scheme of redemption. As a person, Christ is God manifest in humanity. By the incarnation, the Divine Being came into human observation; but there was nothing new in that. By his teaching, the Nazarene revealed the Divine will respecting mankind as a sinful race. In his death was to be seen, in full display, the infinite passion of vicarious suffering, by means of which the Father in the incarnate Son eternally identifies himself with and redeems a lost world. Now, the great point specially emphasised by the preacher was that the incarnation, teaching, and death of Jesus are redemptively valueless apart from his resurrection. How beautifully logical the whole scheme appears to be! The chain is complete. The incarnation brings into view the active existence of God; the teaching, his holy will; the death, his suffering, saving love; and the resurrection, his invincible, glorious might. If Christ was not raised from the dead, Christianity is an absolutely false religion, and Jesus must be branded, if not as a deliberate imposter, at least as one who was wholly imposed upon.

Up to this point we are in entire agreement with the preacher's position. If Jesus did not rise from the dead, if he did not leave his rock-hewn tomb, the Gospel that bears his name is a stupendous lie, and the faith of Christendom consummate mockery. But did Jesus rise again? "Nineteen centuries of continuous moral progress is my answer," triumphantly exclaimed the man of God, before a hushed and awed congregation of three thousand people. It was all deeply impressive, and the eminent plausibility of the whole presentation carried conviction to the majority of the hearers. But just here, the preacher referred, in an evident aside, to the modern critic, and then contemptuously dismissed him thus: "If you want to tear up my New Testament, don't come here to hear me preach. For me, this Book contains not a cluster of human opinions to be examined and criticised, but a series of revelations from heaven to be reverently believed." He was a sinner groaning under the crushing burden of guilt, and in the risen Christ he found complete salvation. And yet in that disdainful allusion to the impious critic, he exhibited the fundamental weakness of the case for Christianity. To pooh-poo honest criticism is to invali-

date faith. To say to sceptics, "Don't come to hear me preach," is virtually to admit that the doctrine preached is intellectually indefensible. That a system of theology is logically consistent, and holds well together, is no proof whatever that it contains a single atom of truth. What is the use of fixing the exact place of the resurrection in the scheme of redemption if the fact of the resurrection cannot be established? And if the fact of the resurrection be repudiated, or even doubted, as it is by the New Theologians, is it not clear that the preaching of Christianity, in any form, is a species of unspeakable folly? If the tomb was not supernaturally emptied of its tenant, the death of Jesus has no greater value than that of Thomas Cramner, and to call it in any sense saving, is to trifle with words. No half way house between belief and unbelief is logically possible. An intellectual necessity is laid upon every man to be either faithful or faithless; there is no practicable betwixt and between.

But even the faith of the orthodox is nearly always hovering between life and death. "Let some great trial befall the Church," says Dr. Robertson Nicoll, "and immediately many hearts faint. Among the faithful, there is a constant tendency to believe the very worst about the progress of the Christian cause." It appears that John Keble once wrote of the *Christian Year* in these terms: "So far as I remember, it everywhere supposes the Church to be in a state of decay." The underlying conviction of all honest people seems to be that the creeds they so glibly recite from day to day are only a blind to prevent outsiders from seeing the rank unbelief that thrives in their hearts. The Christian cause stares them in the face as the supreme failure. "It may be said truly that most sermons, and most religious books, and most of the talk that passes in Christian circles, all assume the same." This humiliating admission, made by a theologian of Dr. Nicoll's standing, must be accepted as substantially true; and the only inference that can be drawn from it is that the Church's belief in the Lord's resurrection is a perfect sham, and that in reality it never has been anything else. "Christ is risen," shouts the creed; "Christ is not risen," declares the life of the Church in all generations.

The hollowness of the faith in the risen Lord is further betrayed by the Church's everlasting talk about what is known as the higher life. Christians profess that they have a life which is radically different from the life of the world. The moment they believed in the risen Christ God bestowed upon them eternal life, and in consequence of this they imagine themselves to be a peculiar people, the elect of heaven. They are in the world, but not of it. But when we begin to catechise them as to the nature and fruit of this new life that is theirs as disciples of the risen King, they are instantly put out of countenance. "Yes," they say, "we have this life, we received it as a priceless treasure the moment we surrendered to our Redeemer; but it is hidden, and outsiders cannot see it." This is how Dr. Nicoll speaks of it:—

"Their life is hidden with him [Christ] in God. His life after his resurrection was much hidden in God, and so is ours. The hiding of the spiritual life is at once the Christian's great sorrow and his great solace. It is a great sorrow, for it is down so deep that it is often hid from ourselves. Many a time doubts and fears

shake us. We question our own interest in Christ. We have no assurance of the reality of that of which we have thought so much. Try to put a finger upon the life and it may well escape you.....What have we that many others who profess no Christianity have not? Does it not seem as if many who rejected our faith lived a higher life?"

Not only is the higher life which Christians claim they possess hidden from themselves, it is also hidden from others. "They cannot see it. What they see often perplexes the most charitable." Here is an astounding statement by Canon Winterbotham:—

"The life of Christ is essentially a hidden life. It only reveals its existence to outsiders by its effects on the feelings, the opinions, the speech, the conduct of Christians, and these effects, though always considerable and sometimes very marked indeed, are never absolutely unmixed, and may generally be accounted for with more or less of probability in some other way."

After making such damaging admissions what avails it to add that "though hid, the life of the believer is safe with God," or that it is "involute in its shrine"? If it is hid, by what means does Dr. Nicoll know that it is with God, and safe? Is he not merely repeating ancient phrases which never had nor have any intelligible meaning? To say that the life of Christians is hid, and that its "effects are never absolutely unmixed, and may generally be accounted for with more or less of probability in some other way," is to confess that the risen and ascended King of kings and Lord of lords, proclaimed as the Redeemer of the world, is as mythic a personage as Dionysus or Osiris, and has never been of the slightest service to the human race, and that the futility of the Church's persistent efforts to spread his name is explained alone by his non-existence. It is impossible to continue, for any length of time, to believe fervently in a being who never makes the least tangible response. It is true that the Church is never without a few enthusiasts, or fanatics, here and there, who impress one as red-hot believers and disseminators of the faith; but that there is no Eternal Christ whom they represent is proved by the fact that in order to gain any success in their mission they must resort to innumerable humanly-prepared plans, contrivances, and arrangements, and adopt all conceivable methods in the endeavor to reach those whom they seek to influence, and by the further fact that men so fundamentally different and of such radically opposite and conflicting views as Dr. Torrey and Mr. Campbell are, not only equally tolerated, but enabled, by the help of elaborate human machinery, to win converts with almost equal ease. And yet in spite of the comparatively successful activities of an immense army of such discordant missionaries, the faith of the Church still burns low and lower, and the number of unbelievers keeps constantly increasing. Indeed, the trend within the Church seems to be towards less and weaker faith, and towards more and stronger infidelity.

The Rev. Dr. Warschauer takes great pains to convince his readers that some genuine facts lie behind the original tradition as to the resurrection, but what they are, he admits, cannot be discovered. The one thing of which he is quite sure is, that the apostles passionately believed, as the result of some strange experiences in Galilee, that the Jesus whom they had seen dead was still alive, and more active than ever. Dr. Warschauer does not think that the Savior's body ever left the tomb, and he is of opinion that the women, if the narrative about them is credible, which he seems to doubt, must have mistaken some other rock-hewn grave for the one in which Jesus had been laid, and that therefore their story possesses no evidential value whatsoever. But how were the apostles led to believe that their Master was still alive? They must have had a vision or visions—whether subjective or objective we are not informed—and, on the strength of such visions, they went out preaching a risen Christ. We allude to this theory, advocated by so many just now, to show that, even at the beginning, the Church's faith in a risen Savior rested on a pain-

fully insecure foundation, and could be kept standing only by artificial buttresses. From that time to this, the Church's one business has been to devise means to prevent its tumbling into a heap of ruins; and this fact alone is an unanswerable argument against the alleged resurrection. A Living Lord, of omnipotent and irresistibly saving love, would long ago have convinced the whole world of his existence by solving all its problems, destroying all its evils, and righting all its wrongs. That he has not done all this, that two-thirds of the human race are still ignorant of him and attached to other Saviors, is sufficient evidence of his non-existence. And clearly to believe, however languidly and haltingly, in a non-existent Deliverer, and to rely upon him for salvation instead of upon our own exertions, is to seriously hinder social reforms and ethical developments.

J. T. LLOYD.

Notes on Theism and Atheism.—II.

(Continued from p. 260.)

BEYOND vouchsafing the information that Atheism is full of a "dark significance," lying like a "deadly vapor on multitudes of souls," that it blackens the heavens," and therefore "deserves to be treated as a hateful jest"—a truly lame conclusion—neither Mr. Ballard nor Mr. Fitchett condescends to give a definition of the Atheism they are fighting against. Each, however, makes certain statements concerning Atheism, and each puts forward arguments in favor of Theism. The statements and arguments are both of a commonplace character, but this lends them a certain value as illustrating the character of the average religious mind.

Mr. Fitchett has two statements in particular that deserve notice. One is that the Atheist regards the universe as a product of chance, the other that Atheism teaches the self-existence of matter. In the last, a purely negative statement has been converted into a strongly positive one. Atheism, *per se*, is neither concerned with the nature of "matter" except in a negative sense—nor with its self-existence. So long as existence is not conceived in terms of volition and intelligence, it matters nought to Atheism whether it be called matter or force, or merely *x*. The question at issue between Atheism and Theism is really the issue of vitalism *versus* mechanism. If the Theist can show that the universe is dominated by an intelligence akin to the human intelligence, he has established his case; but in so far as he fails to establish this, he furnishes a justification in favor of Atheism. The question of self-existence does not logically arise. All that the Atheist assumes is existence. And everyone is forced to make this assumption. All reasoning assumes the existence of something; discussion can only be concerning its nature. The Atheist, in common with all others, starts with the unquestionable statement that something exists; he makes no positive statement concerning its self-existence, but simply asserts that neither he nor anyone else can either think of existence as beginning to be or as ceasing to be. Further than this he does not go. And, therefore, to ask the Atheist to *prove* the self-existence of matter is absurd. He declines to make any statement, the terms of which cannot be brought together in consciousness.

It is the Theist who asserts self-existence. He asserts this of his Deity, from which, by some legerdemain, he derives the universe. And having posited self-existence in the one direction, he immediately retorts on the Atheist that self-existence is an unthinkable proposition. Granted, most cheerfully; only if it is unthinkable in relation to the universe it must be equally unthinkable in relation to a deity. Or, if it is a thinkable proposition, then the argument that we must assume deity because the self-existence of the universe is inconceivable, breaks down. Mr. Fitchett and his like first of all

rule out an argument as being altogether invalid, and then immediately bring it in again as possessing the highest possible warranty.

The statement that Atheism believes the world to be a product of "Chance" is an example of the manner in which unscientific meanings linger in commonplace minds. To say that a thing came by chance is only one way of saying that we do not know the causes that produced it. It could only mean more than this to those who believe that a very different thing might have happened without any modification of the operative conditions. Theists undoubtedly used the word "chance" in this sense when their only sense of determination was that of direction by intelligence. Under such a condition, any questioning of the existence of an extra-cosmical intelligence guiding natural forces in their respective paths, seemed to equal the assertion that *anything* might occur, and therefore that an entirely different world might have been. But this is, of course, scientifically absurd. All the knowledge we possess enforces the lesson that all that is is all that could be. The sum of phenomena at any moment is the exact result of all preceding phenomena. This is the basic principle of all scientific reasoning and calculation; without it science becomes a mere collection of more or less probable guesses.

The one thing that would make the universe a product of chance, in the sense in which Messrs. Ballard and Fitchett use the word, would be the existence of a deity exercising a free and undetermined intelligent control over natural forces. Given this, and all scientific calculation and revision must be vitiated by the operations of a force concerning which no definite statements can be made. For the essence of the position is that the forces of nature, uncontrolled, may produce widely differing results under identical conditions, while the determining cause of their regular operations is itself absolutely undetermined. On the other hand, if we assume that this directive intelligence is forced by its nature to act upon natural forces in a regular and calculable manner, causing them to operate in a manner equally regular and calculable, then the element of "chance" is again ruled out, since one—and only one—result is possible. Moreover, the only way by which one could prove that regularity in nature was not the result of the properties of non-conscious forces would be by nature presenting cases of irregularity—*i. e.*, by different results occurring under identical conditions. But this admittedly does not transpire. Not only does it not occur in fact, but it is unthinkable even as a proposition. One simply cannot conceive identical causes producing anything but identical effects. Thus the only means by which one could get a tolerably strong presumption in favor of a controlling intelligence is ruled out as inadmissible on the testimony of both experience and the laws of thought.

Mr. Fitchett says: "We talk of the 'constancy of nature,' but constancy is a quality of character, and the constancy of nature is but the expression in physical terms of the character of God." But constancy, as a matter of fact, is less predicable of character than of physical nature. Not because we are not convinced that did we know all the forces in operation at any given moment we could not say just how a given character would act, but because in the case of human character the causes are so involved and so obscure that one can only say, in very general terms, how a person will act under specified conditions. The truth is that constancy, as a quality of character, is very largely an extension of a principle first established in physical nature; and it is only as human nature is affiliated to nature at large that the same principle can be confidently asserted of both.

Mr. Ballard has some remarks on the order of nature that are a curious manifestation of "stodginess" and confusion. "Chaos" is used over and over again as the opposite of "order," which is evidently what Mr. Ballard takes it to be. We are

also told that "the laws of nature.....are themselves phenomena requiring cause," while

"no series of sequences whatever, even if it be infinite in extent, makes a law. Law, whenever real, expresses not that which is, but that which is ordained to be. It is the incarnation of an imperative. If there is no force to compel an intended sequence, there is no law."

I said that both he and Mr. Fitchett were only useful as types, and what has been quoted demonstrates it. We are among the crudest of Theistic reasonings, although accompanied by a bombastic use of philosophical terms well calculated to impose upon the writer's Methodist following. To begin with, there is as much "order" in a state of "chaos" as at any other period of cosmic history. The chaos of a world, constituted of nothing but a gaseous nebula, is, scientifically, as "orderly," and expresses as much "natural law" as it does when the same world has cooled sufficiently to allow a diversified fauna and flora to exist on its surface. Chaos is a word that has no scientific meaning whatever, although it is here used by a man who writes B.Sc. after his name. Which goes to illustrate the value of a degree.

It is also plain that, in Mr. Ballard's opinion, a scientific "law" is something imposed by force upon unruly materials, much as a legislature imposes laws on a turbulent populace. Now it is surely late in the day—it is certainly a little depressing—to have to point out that a scientific "law" does *not* ordain what is to be, but simply *describes* what is. Kepler's laws of planetary motion did not ordain the motion of the planets, but simply described the direction of their movements. And no other scientific law does more than this. Even a writer like Professor Henry Drummond, who in some respects resembles Mr. Ballard, would have corrected him on this point, and if this is not enough one may recommend him to almost any writer on scientific methods, or to the definition of a scientific law as laid down by the *Oxford English Dictionary*. I do not dwell upon this point further because it is really so much of a commonplace that I am surprised at even Frank Ballard, D.D., M.A., B.Sc., not appreciating its accuracy. Evidently the stupifying power of degrees must be greater than I had imagined.

A word may be said, however, on the curious sentence, "If there is no force to compel an intended sequence, there is no law." "Intended" is here quite meaningless, and may be put on one side. "Sequence" remains, and this, instead of being the result of an extra compelling force, it would, as I have already said, require a force of this description to prevent a sequence. A scientific law, being nothing more than a statement of observed uniformities, the fact of "law" remains unaffected, whatever the uniformity be. And uniformity, in some direction, is an inescapable condition of human thought. No one can even think of identical causes producing differing effects. If the effects are different, we are forced to think of some difference in the causes. If the causes are different, we look for, and find, a difference in the effects. Given mere existence, some sequence is an inevitable result. Were the sequence varied, without either an alteration in the forces themselves or in the conditions of their operation, we should be driven to assume an external cause coercing them. In brief, once we fairly work out the principle of uniformity following from the persistence of existence, Mr. Ballard's God is, on the one hand, impossible, and, on the other, useless.

(To be concluded.)

C. COHEN.

The Sayings of Jesus.—V.

(Continued from p. 262.)

ANYONE who has carefully examined and compared the sayings ascribed to Jesus in the four Gospels can hardly have failed to notice that the style, language, and even subject-matter, of the discourses in the Fourth Evangel are totally dissimilar to those

recorded in the three Synoptics. The two classes of sayings have nothing in common. If the historic Jesus spoke as represented in the Gospel of John, he could not have spoken as described in the Synoptics, and *vice versa*. The language employed by the Jesus of the Fourth Gospel is long, rambling, and largely metaphorical, and the teaching—if we may dignify his absurd utterances by that name—sophistical and dogmatic. The language of the Synoptics, on the other hand, is by comparison simple, clear, and more rational, and the teaching of a wholly different character. This dissimilarity may be accounted for by the fact that the three Synoptists took their accounts from an earlier and more primitive Gospel, while the Fourth evangelist composed the sayings he put in the mouth of Jesus himself.

The artificial character of the discourses in the Fourth Gospel must be apparent to any unprejudiced reader. Jesus, in that Gospel, is made to go about declaiming against imaginary Jews, wrangling, quibbling, and using silly figurative language they did not understand, and is apparently either unable or unwilling to explain himself. The following samples may be cited in illustration:—

(1) John iii. 1-21.—Nicodemus, "a ruler of the Jews," came secretly to Jesus by night to receive instruction in the new Christian religion. This instruction Jesus proceeded to impart by saying: "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Nicodemus, astonished, asked "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" To this idiotic question Jesus replied, "Except a man be born of *water and the spirit*, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." What meaning Nicodemus drew from this ridiculous teaching is not recorded; but the reference would seem to be to some such compound as "three of Scotch cold." However, whatever the meaning might be, Jesus did not explain it further than by saying, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the spirit is spirit." He might have added: "And that which is born of fish is fish, and that which is born of fowl is fowl; and that which is born of ignorance is fishy and oft-times foul." Quite as much wisdom—or imbecility—is displayed in the one saying as in the other.

(2) John iv. 5-26.—Jesus, when seated at "Jacob's well," is represented as saying to a woman of Samaria who came to draw water: "Every one that drinketh of this water shall thirst again: but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst." The woman, surprised at such a strange statement, said, "Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come all the way hither to draw." Jesus, in reply, made a long rambling discourse; but gave no explanation of his absurd language.

(3) John vi. 27-58.—On another occasion Jesus, addressing the multitude, said: "Work not for the meat which perisheth, but for the meat which abideth unto eternal life." Some of his hearers responded by asking how they were to do this. Thereupon Jesus said: "This is the work of God that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.....For the bread of God is that which cometh down out of heaven, and giveth life to the world." The people, not understanding, said: "Lord, evermore give us this bread." To this appeal Jesus replied: "I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall not hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.....I am the living bread which came down out of heaven; if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever." His hearers, amazed at such language, said one to another, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" Jesus, instead of explaining his meaning, went on with more figurative nonsense—"He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life.....For my flesh is true meat, and my blood is true drink."

That no historical Jesus ever uttered the words recorded in the three discourses just referred to may be set down as a certainty: the writer had in his

mind certain rites which were celebrated (as described by Justin) in all Gentile churches of the second century, but were unknown in the time of Jesus. These he refers to in language understood by the Christians of later times, but unintelligible in the days of Jesus. Being born of "water and the spirit" would be known in the second century to refer to baptism and the Holy Ghost, as described in the Acts of the Apostles; eating the Lord's flesh and drinking his blood would be recognised as a reference to the Lord's Supper—"Take, eat; this is my body..... Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood," etc. (Matt. xxvi. 26-28).

The writer of the Fourth Gospel, furthermore, makes his silly fictitious Jesus denounce the people for not understanding his incoherent ravings—"Why do ye not understand my speech? Even because ye cannot hear my word. Ye are of your father the Devil.....But because I say the truth, ye believe me not" (John viii. 43-45). Here is a direct falsehood. It was not because Jesus spoke "the truth" that his countrymen did not believe him—even according to the Fourth Gospel. If that irrational individual came "to seek and to save that which was lost," as stated in Luke, his method of doing so, as described in the Fourth Gospel, was certainly not calculated to effect the purpose of his mission. To endeavor to puzzle his hearers with a lot of figurative nonsense, and then, without attempting to explain his absurd utterances, to use abusive language and complain of their not understanding him, can scarcely be called the act of a sane man. But, as already stated, the words placed in the mouth of the Jesus of the Fourth Gospel are purely imaginary, and were composed for the fictitious circumstances described therein by the pious forger of the Gospel himself.

To place this fact beyond the possibility of a doubt, it is only necessary to compare the language of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel with that in the so-called "First Epistle of John." It will then be seen that the words put in the mouth of Jesus in the Gospel contain all the ideas and peculiar forms of expression which characterise the composer of the Epistle, and which are found in no other Christian writings. It should at the same time be borne in mind that all Biblical critics, without a single exception, are agreed as to the fact that the author of the Gospel and the composer of the Epistle were one and the same person. The following passages, placed in juxtaposition, will make the fact stated perfectly clear:—

EPISTLE OF JOHN.

i. 4. "And these things we write, that your joy may be fulfilled."

ii. 5. "But whoso keepeth his word," etc.

ii. 8; iv. 11. "A new commandment write I unto you.....if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another."

i. 7; ii. 11. "If we walk in the light.....we have fellowship one with another.....But he that hateth his brother.....walketh in the darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth."

ii. 18. "Little children, it is the last hour," etc.

iii. 8. "He that doeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning."

iii. 13. "Marvel not, brethren, if the world hateth you," etc.

iii. 16. "Hereby know we love, because he laid down his life for us."

iii. 19. "Hereby shall we know that we are of the truth."

iii. 22. "—because we.....do the things that are pleasing in his sight."

FOURTH GOSPEL JESUS.

xv. 11. "These things have I spoken unto you.....that your joy may be fulfilled."

xiv. 24. "If a man love me, he will keep my word," etc.

xiii. 34. "A new commandment I give unto you.....even as I have loved you, that ye also love one another."

xii. 35. "Walk while ye have the light, that darkness overtake you not; and he that walketh in the darkness knoweth not whither he goeth."

xiii. 33. "Little children, yet a little while," etc.

viii. 44. "Ye are of your father the devil.....He was a murderer from the beginning."

xv. 18; v. 28 "If the world hateth you, ye know that," etc. "Marvel not at this," etc.

xv. 13. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

xviii. 37. "Everyone that is of the truth heareth my voice."

viii. 29. "—for I do always the things that are pleasing to him."

EPISTLE OF JOHN.

iii. 24, 22. "And he that keepeth his commandments abideth in him, and he in him..... and whatever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments," etc.

iv. 5. "They are of the world: therefore speak they as of the world."

iv. 6. "We are of God.....he who is not of God heareth us not." (Also iii. 10.)

iv. 9. "Herein was the love of God.....that God hath sent his only begotten son," etc.

(More examples could be given; but the foregoing are sufficient.)

The Jesus of the Synoptical Gospels never employs such expressions as "walking in the light" and "walking in the darkness," and "knowing not whither he goeth"; as being "of God" and "not of God," and "of the world" and "not of the world"; as being "of the truth" and "not of the truth," and "abiding in Jesus and Jesus in him"; as receiving "a new commandment" to "love one another," or as the "love of God" and "his only begotten son"; as "little children" (that is to say, disciples), and "doing things that are pleasing in his sight"; as "that their joy may be fulfilled," or "keeping his word" and "keeping his commandments," or as "laying down his life" for his friends. The Jesus of the Fourth Gospel, in fact, speaks quite a new language to the Jesus of the Synoptics.

We have now to see how the case stands. In the first place, the writer of the Epistle of John exhibits a knowledge of ideas, and makes use of expressions, found only in the Gospel of John. This fact, it may perhaps be said, proves only that the writer of the Epistle had read the Fourth Gospel, and took his ideas and forms of expression from that Gospel. Against this view must be set down the unanimity of all Biblical critics as to the Gospel of John having been composed by the writer of the Epistle of John—an opinion which is obviously perfectly correct.

The next question to be considered is: Where did the writer of the Fourth Gospel get the sayings and discourses which he has attributed to Jesus in that Gospel? That they are not historical, and as such must have been concocted by some early Christian, are facts beyond all doubt. No sane man could have gone about telling people that they must eat his flesh and drink his blood, and be born of water and spirit, without ever attempting to explain his absurd language. The three Synoptical writers, who took their accounts from pre-existing writings, appear never to have heard of such irrational sayings; neither apparently had they heard of the Turning water into wine, the Raising of Lazarus from the dead, nor the Moving of the waters by an angel at the pool of Bethesda—miracles found only in the Fourth Gospel.

Where, then, did the writer of the Epistle find the sayings recorded in his Gospel? The answer is not doubtful: nowhere. The language of the sayings in the Fourth Gospel is that of no one but the writer of the Epistle. The mendacious Fourth evangelist has fraudulently composed them himself, and has piously placed them in the mouth of the fictitious Jesus portrayed in his Gospel. No other conclusion is possible.

ABRACADABRA.

(To be continued.)

FOURTH GOSPEL JESUS.

xv. 5, 7, 10. "He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit.....ask whatever ye will, and it shall be done unto you.....if ye keep my commandments," etc.

xv. 19. "If ye were of the world.....but because ye are not of the world."

viii. 47. "He that is of God heareth the words of God..... ye hear them not, because ye are not of God."

iii. 16. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son," etc.

Christian Creed.

BELIEVE Jehovah raving mad
That man has grown so beastly bad
He seeks the truth to know;
That He will damn the sinners all
Who doubt the tale of Adam's fall—
Will doom them all to woe!

Believe that, on December morn,
The God of heaven was virgin-born
(Of pure and pious nun);
That man was made of dust or mud,
And sinful souls are cleaned with blood
Of one obedient Son!

Believe the Scripture all divine,
No daydream writ in word or line;
As priest and preacher tell.
Believe whate'er the clergy say,
If you'd escape on Judgment day,
The brimstone-burning Hell!

Believe the Lord is hot with wrath,
The Serpent sneaks in every path,
Hobgoblins haunt the air;
That Science is a devilish liar,
And Christ will come in flaming fire—
His eyes with fury glare!

Believe that Gabe will blow the trump,
And sainted fools from grave will jump
To meet the angry Lord;
That Gabe will seize them by the hair,
And drag them upward through the air,
To get their sure reward!

Believe it all, nor make reply,
Nor ask for proof or reason why;
Distrust and doubt repel.
No matter what the life you lead;
Except you swallow down the Creed,
You go to the Devil in Hell!

—Reprinted.

CHARLIE CHURCH.

An Edifying End.

THE last message of Chester Gillette, the brutal and confessed murderer of Grace Brown, is as follows:—

"In the shadow of the valley of death it is my desire to do everything that would remove any doubt as to my having found Jesus Christ, the personal savior and unfailing friend. My one regret at this time is that I have not given him the pre-eminence in my life when I had the opportunity to work for him. If I could only say some one thing that would draw young men to him I would deem it the greatest privilege ever granted me. But all I can say now is I know in whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.

If the young men of this country could only know the joy and pleasure of a Christian life I know they would do all in their power to become earnest, active Christians and would strive to live as Christ would have them live.

There is not one thing which I have left undone which will debar me from facing my God, knowing that my sins are forgiven, for I have been free and frank in my talks with my spiritual adviser, and God knows where I stand.

My task is done, the victory won."

A poorly performed task. Gillette was reared as a Christian. His mother is a member of the Salvation Army. He was accustomed to attend church twice every Sunday. Yet he turned out to be one of the worst scoundrels the country has produced. He was rather more despicable than Harry Orchard, who did not kill women. Evidently since the commission of his crime he has thought of nothing except to lie himself clear of the law and to save his worthless soul. In the "shadow of the valley of death," his one regret is not for his crime but for his neglect of Christ; he expresses no contrition, has nothing to say about the pressure of public opinion which impelled him to get rid of the girl he had betrayed, makes no use of his experience to warn either parents or young men and women against getting into trouble, nor suggests to parents that they may save their boys and girls from the fate of himself and Grace Brown by timely admonition and help. The only lesson he sees in what has come to him is that a young man may live like a reptile, kill the girl who trusts him, and then come out a winner in the end by finding Jesus. That is Christianity, "the perfect rule of life"!—*Truthseeker* (New York).

I say to thee, a speculative wight
Is like a beast on moorlands lean, [plight,
That round and round some fiend misleads to evil
While all about lie pastures fresh and green.

—Goethe.

RIDICULE.

A religion which has shed more blood than any other religion has no right to quarrel over a few epigrams.—*Right Hon. John Morley.*

Acid Drops.

Mr. Lloyd George, in one of his speeches for Mr. Churchill at Manchester, evoked "loud and prolonged cheers" by one of those pious perorations which were so much affected by the late Mr. Gladstone. England, he said, by sticking to Free Trade, would eventually get credit for having "triumphantly defended the path along which humanity marched into the realms in which the Prince of Peace reigneth for ever and ever." This is an unhappy image, when you come to consider it; for the only place where the Prince of Peace reigneth—if indeed he reigns anywhere—is not on earth but heaven—which Mr. Lloyd George's auditors, we dare say, are in no hurry to arrive at. The Prince of Peace is really a satirical name for the Founder of Christianity; for that religion has stirred up, or exasperated, more quarrels and caused more bloodshed, than all the other religions in the world put together. It is a pity that politicians cannot keep their religion for private consumption, and talk simply sense and humanity in addressing miscellaneous audiences of their fellow citizens.

Catholics and Jews were both divided at the Manchester by-election. Protestants must have been too. It is an idle notion that religion is the chief controlling power. If it ever was so, it has long ceased to be.

How the Tory leader pooch-poochs the Bishops when they don't agree with him! Mr. Balfour does not "think them specially qualified to offer an opinion" on the Licensing Bill. This is very likely true, for it is doubtful if they are specially qualified to offer an opinion on anything. But why does Mr. Balfour dig them under the fifth rib?

A professor at the University of Vienna, his wife, and another lady, got amongst a small congregation in the Pope's private chapel on Easter Sunday. They did not know that Mass was to be celebrated, and when the Pope placed the holy wafer in their mouths, in common with the rest of the assembly, two of them took it out again and one spat it out on the floor. Everybody was horrified at this "gross act of sacrilege"—for the holy wafer, according to Catholic doctrine, is converted in the Mass into the actual body of Christ. The poor Pope was dreadfully cut up, and appears to have been quite ill afterwards. Of course the offenders were quickly put out of the chapel; and they were lucky it was no worse, for a hundred years ago they would have been killed on the spot.

We should be far from approving any gratuitous and intentional act of discourtesy to Catholics—or other religionists. To go amongst them for the purpose of flouting their religious beliefs and practices would be mere hooliganism. But when those three persons found themselves in that awkward situation, what were they to do? Could they join in the cannibalistic repast by swallowing their piece of the actual body of Christ? Had it been the blood of Christ, in the shape of port wine, it might have slipped down before it could be rejected. But that could not happen in a Catholic place of worship; for the laymen are only allowed the body of Christ—the blood of Christ being reserved exclusively for the priests.

There is a law of compensation in everything; or, as Shakespeare said, a soul of good in things evil. This "shocking sacrilege" in the Pope's private chapel draws attention in non-Catholic countries to the doctrine of Transubstantiation. According to this doctrine, a miracle is wrought every time the Sacrament is administered, and the wafer (for common worshippers) and the wine (for the priests) are supernaturally changed—in spite of appearances and chemical tests—into the very body and blood of Christ. Many people were shocked at reading that Harry Boulter was charged with saying, amongst other "blasphemies," that when he was a Christian he used to eat his God. He does not appear to have said it at all, and while one police witness gave the word as "eat" another witness gave it as "adore"—which is probably what he said. But even if he had said "eat" there was really no "blasphemy" in it to anybody but an ignorant Protestant. Catholics in England, as well as elsewhere, do eat their God regularly. Moreover, the expression attributed to Harry Boulter was used by Robert Browning, quite seriously, in one of his fine early poems—"The Bishop Orders His Tomb." The dying prelate pictures himself lying in his marble tomb in St. Praxed's:—

"And then how I shall lie for centuries,
And hear the blessed mutter of the mass,
And see God made and eaten all day long,
And feel the steady candle-flame, and taste
Good strong thick stupifying incense-smoke!"

The line we have italicised makes the expression of "eating" God quite classical. And it would have been brought to the jury's attention if we had been defending the "blasphemer" at the Old Bailey.

A correspondent writes us concerning the Salvation Army, and our readers will be glad to see his letter in print. "I gave one of the 'Salvation Army' tracts," he says, "to a neighbor of mine, chief engineer of a steamer. The ship went to —, and on the way out my friend passed it on to the captain and the second engineer, who were greatly pleased with it. The second engineer said that he had formerly been in the — Line running to the —, and had twice carried 'General' Booth as a passenger. On one occasion he said that Booth had paid the captain £100 for the hire of his cabin, as the saloon wasn't good enough for this humble follower of the meek and lowly Jesus. When the ship arrived at — one of the first to board her was an official of the Salvation Army hunting for subscriptions. But the captain got him and read the tract to him, and demanded an explanation, which of course the man couldn't give, saying that he knew nothing of such things, and was merely paid so much for doing certain work. He was then politely requested to go ashore, and he got no money out of that ship."

Mr. Hugh Martin, writing in the *Daily News* on "Waitresses," says that he knows one who "has been in the same employ for twelve years; during that period she has received increases in wages amounting to 2s. per week, and has now, at the age of 34, a net income of 11s. per week." Yet this is a Christian country, where Freethinkers are liable to prosecution for "blasphemy," and where fervent appeals are made for the "poor clergy," most of whom get hundreds and some thousands a year.

William Buchholtz, the City lace merchant, who shot "Nancy" Power, and himself afterwards, was found guilty of the wilful murder of the woman, and of committing suicide in a state of temporary insanity. This was an illogical verdict, for if the man was insane he could not have committed wilful murder. Perhaps the coroner had this in mind when he exclaimed "Temporary insanity!" "Yes, sir," said the foreman, "we consider no man is sane when he takes his life." Killing somebody else is different. Which is all very absurd. Nevertheless, the jury were no doubt animated by a good motive. Both the woman and the man being dead, the verdict could not affect either of them in any way that they could feel, but it might lead to the man's dead body being buried brutally, according to the savage old orthodox law. In these cases, the jury represents, and rightly represents, something besides mere law; it represents the conscience of the community.

Just in the same way, the jury should turn a deaf ear when a judge informs them that all they have to do with the "blasphemy" law is to administer it by finding a verdict of Guilty on the bare facts of the case. Here again the jury represents the conscience of the community. Justice and law are often not the same thing; in press and platform offences they seldom are; and in such cases it is for the jury to voice the higher law. The law itself gives them that power, and they should exercise it, in spite of all that the official on the bench chooses to say to them. One way of repealing bad laws is the refusal of juries to convict.

Christianity is a kaleidoscopic religion. It has always been changing throughout the ages, and during the last hundred years the change has been going on faster than ever. Now we have the New Theology, which is simply Deism with a thin veneer of Christism. Mr. Campbell, on Good Friday, took occasion to repudiate all the old theories of the Atonement. Christ did not die for us, he did not bear our sins by *transference*, he did not pay any part of our debt, he did not incur any part of our *punishment*; what he did was to show us a good example, and give us a noble ideal—just like any other "martyr" in human history. Such, in brief, is Mr. Campbell's contention, and he calls it Christianity. Well now, let us turn to the Christianity of a far greater man—Martin Luther. In his *Commentary on Galatians*, the famous Reformer wrote as follows:—

"But because he beareth the sins of the world, his innocency is burdened with the sins and guilt of the whole world. Whatsoever sins I, thou, and we all have done, or shall do hereafter, they are Christ's own sins as verily as if he himself had done them. To be brief, our sins must needs become Christ's own sin, or else we perish for ever. This true knowledge of Christ, which Paul and the Prophets have most plainly delivered unto us, the wicked sophisters have darkened and defaced."

Luther and Mr. Campbell flatly contradict each other as to the very essentials of Christianity. Yet the "infidel" is told that he must regard them both as first-rate Christians. Mr. Campbell pities Luther as a mistaken person who had the misfortune to live before the days of the City Temple. Luther, on the other hand, describes Mr. Campbell, by anticipation, as a "wicked sophister." Is it any wonder that "infidels" smile at the wonderful harmony of the household of faith?

"What and Where is the Soul?" by the Rev. R. J. Campbell. This was the principal dish of the *Christian Commonwealth* menu last week. The line was printed boldly right over the title of the paper. On referring to the article thus indicated, we found it to be a verbatim report of an impromptu answer to "one of a number of questions addressed to Mr. Campbell at a recent meeting at the City Temple." The answer ran to a hundred and thirty-five lines. The first sentence was, "I do not know." All the rest was a commentary on the empty text.

The *Catholic Times* has made the peculiar discovery that the French nation is dead against the honor done to Zola's memory by transferring his remains to the Pantheon. So many of the French people, according to our Catholic contemporary, dislike Zola's writings "because of their sins against sound morality." It also suggested that any honor paid to Zola will encourage other writers and publishers of obscene literature. Now we are bound to say that such statements only reveal the most detestable bigotry. Nothing is more absurd, or more contemptible, than calling Zola an "immoral" writer. Painting vice realistically—that is truly—is not the way to make people in love with it. Justly does our English poet say that—

"Vice is a monster of such hideous mien,
As to be hated needs but to be seen."

Nana itself is more than a moral book; it is a book of terrible morality. We suspect that our Catholic contemporary is confusing two quite different things—immorality and plain speaking. Zola is certainly plain-spoken; but if that is a crime, what about the Bible? Is it not gratuitously plain-spoken; sometimes wantonly and disgustingly so?

What the *Catholic Times* says of Zola a little later on is, we regret to say, worthy of the religion it represents. The suggestion is made that "the motive of his sensational plea for Dreyfus was to secure an advertisement for himself and his books." It is this sort of thing that fills Freethinkers with loathing for Christian Churches. They blaspheme human nature in systematically slandering good and brave men who do not accept their dogmas. "Outside us," they say, "there is no salvation"—and that could be endured; but they add, "Outside us there is no morality"—and that makes them loathsome libellers. Zola sought vulgar profit, forsooth—the profit of the market-place—in risking his fortune, his liberty, and even his life in championing the cause of an innocent man who was suffering degradation and torture! Was ever a madder idea uttered in the name of man or God? Do sane men pay such a price for a mere trade advertisement? The notion is preposterous. Besides, the "advertisement" gained by Zola's action was distinctly not profitable. It seriously injured, as it was bound to do, the sale of his books in France; so much so, indeed, that his friends invited sympathisers in other parts of the civilised world to purchase his books in the original, in their own countries, in order to compensate him as far as they could for the loss he was sustaining. The *Catholic Times* is an organ of the Great Lying Church, as Carlyle called it; but in this case it has not even the wit to lie with some degree of likelihood.

The clergy are reforming. They will soon be too good for this world. Rev. A. M. Mitchell, vicar of Burtonwood, Lancs, denounces bazaars. "They rob God and swindle man," he says. When a parson quarrels with respectable methods of raising the wind, we must be near the beginning of the end.

Priests have not robbed God and swindled man; they have robbed man and swindled God. For all they have got out of man on false pretences was for the Lord's service, and it is not on record that he ever received a penny of the proceeds.

General Booth tells Mr. W. T. Stead that his seventy-nine-years-old head is not turned by recent praises and congratulations. "My only feeling," he said, "is one of intense humility." "O Lord," he cried, "thou knowest I am the least of all thy saints." But is *this* the language of humility? When a man calls himself the least of saints,

or the greatest of sinners, he is simply indulging his vanity; just like the man who goes to church and *calls himself* a "miserable sinner," but gets horribly angry if anybody else calls him so—outside. Paul was, apparently, the first good Christian who called himself the chief of sinners. Of course he knew he wasn't—it only suited him to say so—and even amongst sinners he wasn't going to be the last man. There is a certain distinction in being the worst of a bad lot.

James Thomson ("B. V."), the Atheist poet, hit off this vanity aping humility with brilliant sarcasm:—

"Once, in a saintly passion,
I cried with desperate grief,
'O Lord, my heart is black with guile,
Of sinners I am chief.'

Then stooped my guardian-angel
And whispered from behind—
'Vanity, my little man!
You're nothing of the kind.'

Let the "General" put that in his pipe and smoke it. It may be said, "He doesn't smoke." Very well, then, let him chew it.

The *Christian*, which would praise the "pathetic fallacies" of the Sermon on the Mount to the skies, finds delight in the thought that the flogging of criminals is likely to increase. This is just like the tribe. They are so ridiculously submissive in theory that they have to seek compensation in outrage in practice. In olden days they said "God is love" at one minute, and the next they burnt unbelievers alive for God's glory and honor—which, of course, included their own brutal vindictiveness.

David William Pugh, a farmer, of Allensmore, was charged at Hereford with stealing books. Two motor-car loads, and three wagonette loads, were fetched from his house, filling two prison cells. His solicitor pleaded kleptomania, and alleged that the prisoner's mind was so obsessed by religion that he was unable to resist the temptation of taking theological books. If this is true he should get off. We even think he should be compensated. A man who must steal theological books is an object of compassion—especially if he feels he must read them.

A correspondent draws our attention to a letter by V. Phelps in a contemporary on "The Repeal of the Blasphemy Laws." The letter is sensible and well-written, but the writer is evidently very new to the subject. He knows little or nothing of its history during the past hundred years, and especially during the past quarter of a century. He shows no acquaintance with former efforts to repeal the Blasphemy Laws. Had he been better-informed in this respect, he would not have been under the impression, as he appears to be, that it was reserved for the "Rationalists" to start an attack on these odious laws. Charles Bradlaugh, while President of the National Secular Society, introduced a Bill in the House of Commons for the complete abolition of the Statute and Common Law of Blasphemy. It was defeated, of course, but forty-five members voted for it, besides the tellers; and while that is not a great deal, from one point of view, it is quite splendid from another point of view—for it would hardly have been thought possible a few years before. There were people not connected with the N. S. S. who were going to do wonders in the way of repealing the Blasphemy Laws, and the same sort of people are going to do wonders in the immediate or remote future; but they never did anything in particular, and we don't believe they ever will. This kind of work, which is all hard fighting and no profit, will be left to the N. S. S. This Society has carried on the work all along. It has issued a public statement of the Blasphemy Laws, their origin, scope, and effects, with questions for members of parliament. Those questions have been put to members in all parts of the country, and many satisfactory answers have been reported from time to time in the *Freethinker*. At every general election we have raised the matter afresh, and pressed upon our readers—not without success—the advisability of heckling candidates at public meetings. On the whole, it is pretty safe to say that all or nearly all that has been *done* for the repeal of the Blasphemy Laws has been done by persons connected with the N. S. S. Even after the last general election, it was the N. S. S. Executive that asked Mr. J. M. Robertson, M.P., if he would introduce another Bill like Bradlaugh's. Mr. Robertson's reply was referred to in our columns at the time.

Mr. Phelps, in consequence of his newness to the subject—or its to him—makes a very natural mistake. He fancies that a prosecution is not necessary as a basis of agitation.

Let us explain the case to him. There never will be, as there never has been, any prosecution for "blasphemy" merely on the ground of unorthodox opinion. On the other hand, Christians will never bother about the subject unless you press a recent case upon their attention. "Oh," they reply, "that was a long while ago; things are different now." They don't want to repeal the Blasphemy Laws, and they will avail themselves of every excuse for inaction. A recent case is the basis of every agitation. Holyoake was imprisoned in 1842. Who on earth, except Freethinkers, cared for that ancient fact when he started his "Liberty of Bequest" movement. All he could say on the subject was stale—and it therefore proved flat and unprofitable. The movement came to nothing; absolutely to nothing.

There is only one way of upholding freedom; and that is, defending it every time it is attacked. There is only one way of defeating a bad law; and that is, fighting it every time it is enforced. Only a fool tries to create opportunities; the wise man seizes them as they arise.

Rev. Prebendary Burroughs, vicar of St. Andrew's, Plymouth, complains of the inadequate contributions of the congregation to that most sacred church object, the collection-box. What they drop in does not average a penny a member for each service. Dr. Hingston, the vicar's warden, says he is pained to see people going to football matches and concerts paying 5s. and 7s. for their seats, and then going to church and putting a threepenny bit into the Lord's treasury. Another officer of the church said that a large number of buttons were contributed instead of cash. It is really too sad for anything.

We referred last week to the *Liverpool Daily Post* being "sold" over a newly-discovered manuscript, which was simply the old forged letter from Publius Lentulus to the Roman Senate about Jesus Christ. Since then the *London Daily Chronicle* has been "had" by an "eminent Egyptologist" who has discovered another document, which is simply the old forged letter from Jesus Christ to Abgarus, Prince of Edessa. Eusebius, the champion ecclesiastical liar of the fourth century, pretended to have translated it from the city archives; yet, according to Jerome, J. C. was unable to write. Archdeacon Jortin called it "a forgery, and a foolish one too." Addison was the last eminent writer who accepted it. Lardner finally disposed of its claims to authenticity. Since then it has been universally and quietly abandoned. That is by scholars. Halfpenny newspapers are another matter. They are up to anything, and the public are fools enough for anything.

Lord William Cecil has been telling a meeting at the Bible House that "they had to show the Chinese that English civilisation was not based on Science, but on Christianity." Evidently his lordship believes that the age of miracles is not past.

Rev. D. S. Murray, of the London Missionary Society, speaking at the same meeting, said that two hundred daily newspapers were issued in Chinese, and not one Christian. Probably there never will be one. People don't start daily newspapers to promote foreign religions.

Rev. Dr. Davidson, of Belfast, Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, sent a letter to the *Northern Whig* (April 23) calling upon his "Beloved Brethren," the rest of the clergy, to thank God for the favorable weather they had been blessed with for some weeks, and which he attributed to their united supplications. It is a pity, however, that he did not leave well alone. The very night the reverend gentleman's letter was being set up in the *Northern Whig* office the snowstorm began, and it continued all the next day. And trade (which the Lord was also asked to brighten up) is as bad as ever. Belfast will have to muzzle that Moderator.

"The Thieves and Atheists who are now governing France." A choice flower of Christian sentiment from last week's *Academy*.

According to the *Liverpool Catholic Times* the new McKenna Bill is doomed unless the Nonconformists compromise matters with the other religious bodies. If they refuse to do this "away goes the Bill, and nothing but a secular solution of the education question is possible." England will then (our Catholic contemporary groans) have a system of godless schools. To which we say "Hear, hear!"

Stands Scotland where it did? Not exactly. Many things are changing in that classic land of piety, whiskey,

and something else celebrated by Robert Burns. According to the *Dundee Evening Telegraph*, which ought to know, being on the spot, godliness is declining rapidly, to the great dismay of the professional servants of the Lord. Even the Highlanders are giving the holy Kirk the go-by. "Farm servants appear to take little or no interest in the Church. In centres of population the percentage of non-churchgoers is alarming." So the sad tale goes on to the end of the chapter.

Frederick Slater, having failed with liabilities exceeding £8,000 and assets of only £3,000, was examined at the Rochdale Bankruptcy Court, and had to be taken out afterwards by a side entrance to escape his victims. Though only a foreman dyer, he had been borrowing large sums of money for eighteen years, chiefly from working people and widows. He admitted that in most cases he had secured the loans by gross misrepresentations. His road seems to have been made easy by his being superintendent of a Wesleyan Sunday-school and a class leader, besides holding other offices at the church.

"Our churches," Principal Griffith-Jones says, "are losing the very people who form the staple of the community." Sad news for Christians; good news for Freethinkers. "One man's meat is another man's poison."

The enterprising burglar caught red-handed at Leicester turns out to be a respectable local tradesman and a Sunday-school teacher.

The Bishop of London states that he prepares his sermons and speeches while he is shaving and dressing. We understand now.

The *Westminster Gazette* of Monday (April 27) referred to "the publication to-day" of the *Life of G. J. Holyoake*. These inspired paragraphs sometimes betray their origin. The Holyoake Biography was to have been published that day, but the publication is postponed, without any reason being assigned, for another month. Has it been found necessary to make alterations after Mr. Foote's recent articles? We wonder.

The Bible Under Secular Education.

WHAT will be the position of the Bible under a system of Secular Education? Will it be excluded from the schools altogether, and all mention of it be forbidden? If not, what restrictions in regard to its use are proposed?

These questions are asked daily by people who, by the logic of events, are being driven to accept the "Secular Solution."

The following is the answer of the Secular Education League, whose members hold widely divergent religious opinions:—

The Bible could only be used subject to these restrictions:—

1. Under a system of Secular Education it could not be used as a text-book, either of Ethics or Religion.
2. It could not be placed as a reading book in the hands of the children.
3. In so far as the teacher alludes to the Bible in any lesson or address to the children, he should be studiously careful to refrain from imparting to his allusions any *theological* or *religious* color.

The position of the Secular Education League in regard to religious teaching generally is laid down in its original Manifesto, and is as follows:—

"The Secular Education League neither professes nor entertains any hostility to religion. It simply regards religion as a personal and private matter, which all should be free to promote in voluntary associations, but which should never come under the control of the State. The League takes its stand on the principle of citizenship, with freedom and equality for all in matters that lie beyond."

It is of the utmost importance that those who desire to see the religious difficulty in national education settled in the only just and satisfactory way, should join the SECULAR EDUCATION LEAGUE. The minimum Subscription is One Shilling.

—Issued by the Secular Education League.

If a belief in God is necessary to the salvation of the soul, why should God create a soul without this capacity? Why should he create souls that he knew would be lost?—*Ingersoll*.

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, May 3, Picton Hall, Liverpool: at 3, "The Bible and the Drink Question: a Challenge to the Churches"; at 7, "Socialism and Religion: a Reply to H. G. Wells, Bernard Shaw, and other Fabians."

May 10, Aberdare.

To Correspondents.

C. COHEN'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—May 3, a. and e., Parliament Hill; 10, a. and e., Victoria Park; 17, a. and e., Parliament Hill; 24, a. and e., Victoria Park; 31, a. and e., Parliament Hill.—Address: 241 High-road, Leyton.

T. W. HAUGHTON.—See paragraph.

MODERATION.—Dealt with in "Acid Drops."

J. LAZARNICK.—We took the statements about Admiral Viron's orders from the newspapers. We do not keep the items on which we base our paragraphs. It would be impossible to do so.

THE PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND: Previously acknowledged.

—Donations, £165: Annual Subscriptions, £166 18s. 6d. Received since.—Hotspur, £1 1s.; H. C., 10s. 6d.; H. E., £1 1s.; J. H., 2s. 6d.; T. Hopkins, £1; Mr. and Mrs. James Neate, £1; James Baker, 2s. 6d.; Nottingham (monthly), 5s.; M. E. Pegg, £1; G. Newman, 2s. 6d.

H. C.—Whether you can send more next year or not, we are quite content to "take the will for the deed." We are sure of your goodwill always.

R. J. HENDERSON.—Best wishes for your health. Mr. Foote keeps fairly well in spite of the "wretched weather." We note your "wish that the President's Fund would increase quicker." Glad our Ingersoll article gave you "great pleasure."

P. W. M.—The *Daily Chronicle* ought to know better.

A. D. CORRICK.—(1) Your Christian friend argues oddly. Why must ideals have come from heaven? This is really not an argument; it is merely a statement—of his own opinion. He might as well say that roses must have come from heaven, because they are too beautiful to have come from a coarse stem and dirty roots. Man's ideals are fine flowers on his tree of life. (2) Freedom does not lie in the will; it lies in the action. There is free action, but not free will. Free will is a denial of causation; free action is not. You cannot be free from your innate and acquired motives; they necessarily determine your will; but you may be free to carry out your will in your surroundings; and this is the only freedom that is really conceivable. (3) Consciousness is not in itself an operant; it merely discloses what is going on; and the difficulty or pain of choice, in some cases, simply means that the consciousness is aware of the conflict of motives which is proceeding. We cannot give a longer reply in this column.

J. McNICOLL.—See paragraph. Thanks.

JAMES NEATE AND WIFE, subscribing to the President's Honorarium Fund, write: "Our only regret is that we cannot afford ten times as much. We hope all the expectations in regard to this Fund will be realised."

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

H. B. SAMUELS.—We know absolutely nothing, except what we learn from your enclosure, about Mr. Boulter's projected Secular Society in North London; it has no connection whatever with the N. S. S., and the printing you refer to was not done at our office. Mr. Boulter is not, and never has been, a member of the N. S. S. We have stated this before, and have no wish to go on repeating it.

NOTTINGHAM.—This is probably the most conspicuous part of the paper. You may depend upon it that what appears here is not overlooked. Perhaps it would be best, after all, not to attempt carrying out the two ideas you suggested together. The second might be dealt with hereafter. We repeat, however, your suggestion that "99 good men and true" should join you in forwarding 5s. monthly to the President's Honorarium Fund, thus making up the full £300 between them.

T. HOPKINS.—Always pleased to receive your humorous letters. There is time yet, though, to make up the figure asked for the President's Honorarium Fund. We know of some intending subscribers who will remit in the summer. Various times of the year are no doubt suitable to various pockets. It would be pleasant, however, to see the first year's Honorarium fully subscribed, independently of Donations, by the end of June.

NEMO.—Too late and too long for this week.

JAMES COSSEY.—In our next.

M. E. PEGG sends a "Self-Denial" subscription to the President's Fund, and says, "I wish more of this were done by our party." This correspondent is thanked for the information that Mr. W. A. Rogerson's lecture in the Manchester Secular Hall on James Thomson ("B. V.") was highly appreciated. We are glad to hear it.

N. LEVY.—Tuesday morning is time for Lecture Notices but too late for paragraphs, and much too late for letters. Will deal with it next week.

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

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

Sugar Plums.

There was a much improved meeting at the Queen's Hall on Sunday evening, when Mr. Foote lectured on "A Freethinker's View of the Shakespeare Memorial." For an hour and a half the audience listened with that profound attention which is the best compliment to the lecturer, and the close was marked with a great outburst of enthusiastic cheering. Some questions were afterwards asked, and answered. Mr. H. Cowell, who acted as chairman, expressed a wish that Mr. Foote could be heard more frequently in that vein.

Mr. Foote delivers two lectures to-day (May 3) in the big Picton Hall, Liverpool, and the local N. S. S. Branch is doing its best to give his visit the publicity necessary to secure large audiences. Admission is free to all seats, with collections in aid of the expenses. We may add that the subjects of Mr. Foote's lectures are considered to be "burning" in Liverpool at present.

Mr. Foote's visit to South Wales will be a flying one. He only goes to Aberdare this time, but he may visit other towns in the autumn. His lectures will be delivered, afternoon and evening, in the New Theatre, and his subjects will be "Did Jesus Christ Ever Live?" and "Heaven and Hell: Where and What?" We understand that there will be a strong rally of South Wales "saints" at these meetings.

"The Boulter blasphemy prosecution has caused a controversy among the Freethinkers and Rationalists of England. It began with the contention of Mr. Joseph McCabe, the translator of the works of Haeckel, and an author of note, that the only liberty denied was the liberty to express one's ideas in scurrilous language. Mr. McCabe, who is a comparatively new accession to the ranks of Rationalism, having been educated as a Catholic brother, has not grasped quite all the implications of Freethought. The veteran G. W. Foote, editor of the *Freethinker*, knows the consequences of any concession to the enemy and of the waiving or surrender of any right. The cry of 'scurrility' does not terrify him. He looks behind the mask and sees that the prosecutors are not the sticklers for literary style and discrimination in the choice of adjectives, but the defenders of religion. There were some Freethinkers in England who allowed themselves to be either deceived or frightened by the 'immorality' pretext when Charles Bradlaugh and Annie Besant were prosecuted thirty years ago. The same misunderstanding of the issue occurred in this country when the Founder of the *Truthseeker* made his fight against Anthony Comstock. Time has vindicated Bradlaugh; it has vindicated Bennett. Time will show that Mr. Foote is everlastingly right, and it is better to be so than, by concessions, to win the applause of the timid and conservative. Mr. McCabe made a mistake in discussing the Boulter affair from the point of view of the police. He had no call to repudiate the language used by the defendant. If he did not see his way clear to defend the freedom of speech in that conjuncture, he should have waited for more light—such light as Mr. Foote, Mrs. Hypatia Bradlaugh Bonner, and Mr. F. J. Gould have since poured in upon him."—*Truthseeker* (New York).

The New York *Truthseeker* is the oldest and best Freethought paper in America. It was started by the late D. M. Bennett, whom we once met in London, in 1880 we think, when he was on his trip round the world, which the American Freethinkers liberally subscribed for after he had "done time" for the cause of free speech—and incidentally proved the absurdity of supposing that Republics are necessarily friends of intellectual liberty. Mr. Bennett died at the end of 1882, his life having been in all probability shortened by his thirteen months' imprisonment. Fortunately, there was a young assistant of his, called Eugene Macdonald, ready to step into his shoes, as far as the paper and the publishing business were concerned. Ever since then Mr. Macdonald has carried on the *Truthseeker* with great credit to himself and great usefulness to the Freethought movement. In this task he has had, and still has, the invaluable assistance of his brother George, who is a hard worker, a devoted Freethinker, and a dry humorist. We met both the Macdonalds when we were in New York at the end of 1896, and found them fine brave spirits and companionable withal. We fear they must often have had a dark hour in the course of all those years since 1882, but they are made of the right stuff and likely to weather troubles that would overwhelm weaker men. They might

easily have made money in ordinary business, for they possess solid ability; but their minds have been set on something else than what the world calls "success." Perhaps the truest way of stating the case is that Freethought has had the benefit of their ability at the lowest possible price—the price that "keeps body and soul together" and cheats the cemetery.

According to the Paris correspondent of the *Daily News* the remains of Gambetta are now certain to be translated from Nice to the Pantheon at Paris. Men of all parties admire Gambetta. "Even good Catholics," the correspondent says, "admit that Gambetta was no foe to religion as distinguished from clericalism." This is true in one sense. Gambetta never thought of fighting religion, as he fought clericalism, politically. Clericalism is the intrusion of religion into politics, and political action is necessary to put religion back into its proper place. So far, then, the correspondent is right. In any other sense, his statement is absurd; Gambetta having always been a staunch Freethinker and an enemy of theological superstition. Religion and ignorance had brought France to the edge of the pit. Freethought and education had to rescue it—as they have done.

We venture to go back to what we said on this point in a *Freethinker* article written immediately after Gambetta's death, which occurred on the last night of 1882. The article appeared in the first number of this journal (January 7) in 1883, and it bears out what we had occasion to say lately, that the *Freethinker* was never the merely frivolous journal that some people imagine, but had always plenty of perfectly serious writing as well as sarcasm, irony, and ridicule. And there is another thing to be said. The passage we are going to quote from that old article of ours—published only a few weeks before we went to prison for "blasphemy"—shows that our recently expressed views on the Separation Law in France were not new, but a long thought-out conviction of ours.

"Freethinkers," we wrote, "can claim Gambetta as one of themselves. He never entered a church even at the burial of a friend, and he publicly professed himself a disciple of Voltaire. He called Comte the greatest thinker of the nineteenth century, and most of his intimate friends were Atheists or Positivists. It was he who uttered the famous words, "Clericalism is the enemy." He helped to drive the priest from the schools, to secularise education, to cripple the power of the higher clergy. But he was too sagacious to propose the immediate separation of Church and State, unlike M. Clemenceau and his friends, who are anxious to tear them apart at once. Gambetta knew that Catholicism is still a great power in France, and that while its dignitaries might be tied down and its unauthorised orders expelled, it would only provoke a religious reaction if the poor rural clergy were molested. He saw that by secularising education, and bringing girls as fully as boys under its influence, the future was assured to Freethought. His enemies called this Opportunism. The name is a compliment. The extreme Reds, who are no better Freethinkers than Gambetta, and much worse politicians, may have a chance of trying their Inopportunism; and it will be strange if they do not set France by the ears, and defeat their own object after all."

People who read this extract from that old article of ours, written more than twenty-five years ago, and while a prosecution for "blasphemy" was hanging over our head, will wonder how we ever gained the reputation of a "vulgar" propagandist. The truth is we gained it by treating our enemies with contempt. Most of them were Christians; some of them professed to be Freethinkers. Yesterday was so much like to-day!

"V.," who has been advertising in the *Freethinker* for fellow-readers to join him in forming a Sports Club, hopes to rope in "saints" enough to be able to play cricket on Sunday. It is a bit out of our own line, but we may say that "V." is all right and means business, and express a hope that he may be able to get co-operation enough to carry out his idea. Letters should be addressed to him at our publishing office.

The Bethnal Green Branch reopens outdoor work in Victoria Park to-day (May 3). Mr. J. Marshall lectures at 3.15 at the old spot near the fountain. On the following Sunday there will be afternoon and evening lectures by Mr. Cohen. The local "saints" should rally in strength at the opening lecture and give the new season's propaganda a good send off.

Notes on Egypt.

UNDER modern conditions, and with the facilities for travel now afforded, a visit to the land of the Sphinx is not difficult; but Egypt is a very expensive country to travel in, and, let me premise, unless one's pockets are well lined, the journey should not be undertaken. The cost by the time you are fairly through will probably have been about twice as much as you bargained for. Subject to this slight and—to those who have plenty of the needful—unimportant drawback, the journey is well worth making, and the country will be found extremely interesting, whether regarded from an archæological, historical, or theological point of view. Landing at Alexandria, the aspect of the town, with its long line of quays and custom-houses, would be commonplace enough but for the native workers giving it somewhat of an oriental character. This, it will be remembered, is the city where the once-famous library existed, where Christianity had an early footing, where Athanasius fulminated his damnatory (and damnable) creed, and where Hypatia, in the year 415, was brutally done to death by the savage and fanatical monks, incited thereto by the patriarch, Cyril, of unholy memory. What with theological feuds, riots, and bloodshed, Alexandria must have been a delightful place to live in after its emancipation from Paganism.

A railway ride of three hours, and you find yourself in Cairo, the city of the Khalifs, the modern capital of Egypt, and within a dozen miles or so of the pyramids. However, it is not my purpose to dilate on the wonders of the place, which are so well and minutely described in the guide-books, but merely to offer a few observations of my own.

The native men in their long robes and red-and-white headgear; the women with black face-veils over their foreheads and mouths, and queer-looking ornaments like reels on their noses; the numerous camels and donkeys carrying all sorts of merchandise; the narrow streets of the Arab quarters, with their bazaars; the magnificent mosques and tall minarets—these are some of the things which strike the stranger on his first arrival, and make a lasting impression on his mind.

The pyramids are naturally the first objects of his solicitude, and may be reached by electric tramcar. There is something incongruous in being whirled along by the most modern of travelling appliances to within ten minutes' walk of the greatest of the pyramids built by Cheops six or seven thousand years ago. You just alight as you might at the "Angel" or the "Elephant" in London, plough your way through the thick sand of the desert, and there you are gazing up at what are still, and are likely to remain for ages, wonders of the world.

Approaching them in the tramcar, I saw a mile or two in front what appeared to be a travesty of something I had seen in picture-books at home—a pyramid truly, but looking rather insignificant, and perhaps fifty or sixty feet high, brownish in color, and apparently built of brick; but, approaching nearer, the bricks assumed the proportions of blocks of stone three or four feet in thickness, tier above tier. Presently people were seen sitting, or clinging like flies, at the projecting corner hundreds of feet above, and then one began to realise somewhat of the enormous dimensions of the structure, which was originally 481 feet high, and is now little less, and covers thirteen acres of ground. The Sphinx is close at hand, carved out of the solid rock, and rises to a height of seventy feet out of the sand. It is sadly mutilated.

The Egyptian Museum is a splendid new building, and filled with valuable and most interesting antiquities dating from the third dynasty. Exhibited in glass cases are mummies of some of the principal Pharaohs—Thotmes II. and III., Sati I., Ramses II. and III., Menepthah, son of Ramses II., etc. The countenances of these once mighty monarchs are exposed to view, and are perfect almost as on the

day—3,400 years ago or thereabouts—when they were deposited in their tombs; the skin is leathery in appearance, but the countenances could easily be recognised by anyone who had known them when living; the teeth, seen through the imperfectly closed lips, are white and well preserved, and, in one instance, the floral tributes remain as they were originally placed on the breast of the deceased. How are the mighty fallen! What degradation, what sacrilege would they not have regarded it to be thus dragged out of their coffins and exposed to the public gaze!

Menepthah or Mer-en-ptah, son and successor of Ramses II., above referred to, is, according to tradition, the Pharaoh of the Book of Exodus, and supposed to have been drowned in the Red Sea. Do Bible exegetists ever stop to inquire how, if that was really so, his body could now be on exhibition in a public museum? And why are the monumental records silent regarding this and the many other wonderful events related in so-called Bible history?

The construction of the pyramids is often ascribed to vanity on the part of the builders; but is this theory just, or borne out by the facts? The rock tombs which are so numerous were excavated, at enormous labor and expense, out of the solid rock, or in the mountain side; and the one supreme object appears to have been to render them impregnable and deposit the body in such a position that it should be for ever secure in its "eternal resting-place"; and all sorts of artifices, such as the construction of false doors and entrances, were resorted to to deceive and conceal the actual place of sepulture. The same method of concealment was adopted in the pyramids, which were really artificial mountains. The Egyptians believed that in some occult way their souls' welfare depended upon the preservation of their bodies, which contained a principle of life that might be destroyed. Osiris and other gods, so numerous in their pantheon, would one day sit in judgment on them, weigh their souls in the balance as depicted in the sculptures, and award them a future life according to their deserts.

Whence did the early Christians obtain their ideas of a future life if not from the Egyptians? The Jews appear to have known nothing of the doctrine.

The journey up the Nile abounds in tombs and temples; but, majestic as are many of the latter, they are as trifles compared with the remains of those at Luxor and Karnac, the site of ancient Thebes, which extended to the western side of the river, where the tombs of the kings and queens are situated. No one who has not seen them can form any conception of the colossal grandeur and magnificence of these ruins. Some of the columns, notably those of the great hypostyle hall at Karnac, are 27½ feet in circumference, and proportionately lofty. The buildings covered many acres of ground, and the two sets of temples were connected by an avenue of sphinxes 3,500 feet long! The greatest of modern buildings sinks into utter insignificance by comparison.

Judging by the imposing scale of magnitude of these remains, the pictured sculptures on the walls, and the various rituals, the religious observances in the temples must have been of surpassing interest, and well calculated to impress the minds of worshippers.

"Had Thebes a hundred gates," as sung by Homer? Not improbably; but no trace of any wall surrounding the city exists, and the expression is generally thought to refer to the gates of the numerous temples within the city's bounds.

How completely the tone of modern literature has changed owing to the progress of Freethought during the past half century! I chanced to refer to a quasi scientific work of high repute in its day, published in 1848 (*Chambers's Information for the People*, article "Egypt"), and was surprised at its archaic tone. The writer, otherwise well-informed, accepts the Mosaic chronology without reservation or demur. According to him the first dynasty—that of Menes—

was established in the year of the world 1816. Sacred has, of course, pre-eminence over secular or profane history. The Noachian deluge is treated as absolute fact. "After that disastrous event" the resettling of the human race took place in Asia, etc. The parting of the waters of the Red Sea to allow the Israelites to pass is also treated as historical. "Ancient history," he remarks, "is indeed only interesting where it throws light upon the origin and progress of our religion." Elsewhere he refers in contemptuous terms to the "ignorant superstitions of the Egyptians," while quite oblivious to those of his own creed.

It is refreshing sometimes to turn to an old volume like this, if only to keep our spirits up and see the progress we are making. Certainly no modern book of references would contain these expressions, except it might be an encyclopædia for the fooling of little children in Sunday-schools, such as was lately commented upon by our Editor.

W. H. ATKINS.

Settle These Things.

THERE is no definition of religion that the whole world can accept; there is no idea of God that the whole world can indorse; there is no agreement by the whole world as to what constitutes the word of God, and no universal acceptance of a savior of man.

Is there any such thing as religion? Is there a God? Is there a word of God? Is there a savior of man?

In view of the fact that there is such a difference of opinion as to what religion is, as to what God is, as to what the word of God is, and as to who is the savior of man, are we not justified in consigning the whole pack of ideas in regard to these subjects to the ragbag of superstition?

If there is such a thing as religion, why can it not be intelligently defined so that all men and women can accept it? If there is a God, why cannot his existence be so clearly shown that there would be no chance for denying or doubting it? If there is a word of God, why does not its divinity so stand out that he who reads may be convinced? And if there is a savior of man, why is not his power manifested in a way that compels belief?

There is more intelligent doubt in the world than intelligent belief. There are more men who want to know than men who know. There is willingness to learn but no teachers who can satisfy the inquiring mind.

What is religion? Is it Christianity? The Mohammedan says no. The Jew says no. The Buddhist says no.

Is it Mohammedanism? The Jew says no. The Christian says no. The Buddhist says no.

Is it Judaism? The Buddhist says no. The Christian says no. The Mohammedan says no.

Is there more than one religion? If so, how many religions are there?

Is Christianity religion and something else? Is Judaism religion and something else? Is Mohammedanism religion and something else? If the "something else" in all of these great systems were eliminated, would the religion which was left be the same in each? If so, what would be left? That is what we wish to know.

Is the Jew's God the same as the Christian's God? Is the Mohammedan's God the same as the Buddhist's God? Wherein do these Gods differ? If the differences in the Gods of these four great systems were eliminated, what kind of a God would we have left? Would there be any divine agreement which would make a deity that all mankind could acknowledge?

The Christian has a word of God. The Jew has a word of God, the Mohammedan has a word of God, and so has the Buddhist. They are not the same. They were not given to man in the same way. They do not teach the same things as essential to human

happiness. If one is God's word, the other cannot be. Each one contradicts the other three. They could not then be the word of the same God. What makes the Koran the word of God? What makes the Bible the word of God? Does the belief of the Mohammedan make the Koran divine? Does the belief of the Christian make the Bible divine? Is there anything else than belief that gives divinity to these books? If so, what is it?

Is there a savior of man? If so, who is he? The Christian has one savior, the Buddhist another. Which is the right one?

What is a savior of man? And what is salvation? And what must a savior do to save man? All of these questions ought to be answered honestly and settled forever. It has taken thousands of men to save man as far as he is saved. Science and knowledge have saved man thus far. On earth no one man has been man's savior, and to make his life safe here has required effort which can hardly be measured. Experience has shown to mankind the safe way in all things. But we are told that there is something more to be saved from than the dangers surrounding our earthly existence, and that a different savior is needed in this emergency. How do we know this? Is there any proof of it? What are we to be saved from? Why do we need a savior? Let us have the truth and not ecclesiastical excuses.

If there is a religion that all can accept, do we need it? If there is a God that all can believe in, of what use is he to man? If there is a word of God, wherein is it better than human knowledge? And if there is a savior, what can he do that we cannot do for ourselves?

It is time that these things were settled once for all. If we have believed lies, and lived on lies all of our lives, let us know it and save future generations from the fate of these falsehoods.

—*Truthseeker* (New York).

L. K. W.

Shelley Letters.

Letters from Percy Bysshe Shelley to Elizabeth Hitchener. Now first published. With an Introduction and Notes by Bertram Dobell. London: B. Dobell, 77 Charing Cross-road, W.C.

SOME day or other, let us hope, we shall have a complete collection of Shelley's correspondence, well edited, and in a handy form. His letters are scattered at present in many directions. A small library of books must be purchased to obtain them. But surely what has been done for Byron should also be done for Shelley. In the meanwhile, all admirers of the "poet of poets and purest of men" will be glad to have this edition of Shelley's letters to Elizabeth Hitchener, for which they must thank Mr. Bertram Dobell, whose energy and enterprise are not all absorbed in book-selling, but are being more and more devoted to book-making. And as he puts exceptional intelligence and taste into his efforts in this line, it is no wonder that his name sounds sweet in the ears of lovers of good literature.

The letters in this volume were first printed eight years ago for private circulation by that prince of Shelley collectors, Mr. Thomas J. Wise. They are now for the first time published. Not content, however, with mere publication, Mr. Dobell has supplied an interesting Introduction and some valuable Notes. And thus the volume is about as good as it could be.

The letters in this volume were all written between June 5, 1811, and June 18, 1812. Shelley was not quite nineteen at the opening of the correspondence and not quite twenty at its close. The letters are not, therefore, remarkable from an intellectual point of view, but they are of great biographical importance. They throw a strong light upon what we may call the last stages of Shelley's embryonic period. They also throw a strong light on certain characteristics of his temperament, which had much to do with the subsequent tragedy of his career.

Elizabeth Hitchener was one of the many ladies with whom Shelley formed ardent friendships. It was this feature of the poet's life that led Matthew Arnold to call him "inflammable." But there was not the slightest tinge of sexuality in Shelley's attachment to Miss Hitchener. There was none in his later and far more ardent attachment to Jane Williams, or the still more ardent attachment to Emilia Viviani. Those who think otherwise misconceive Shelley and misunderstand poetry. The glorious *Epipsychidion* is a hymn to love and beauty. The lady was only its accidental suggestion. He was not in love with her in the average male's conception of the word. Mrs. Shelley need not have been under any sort of misapprehension, as some have imagined from her printing it without a note amongst the posthumous poems. Shelley himself smiled at those who mistook his platonics for earthly love-making, and remarked that he did not deal in flesh and blood. Let us, then, dismiss the idea that there was any fleshly motive in Shelley's friendship with the ladies whose names appear in the pages of his biography and are connected with some of his loveliest verses. Nor was there any such motive in their friendship with him. It was the attraction of his genius and character to them, and the attraction of their receptive tenderness to him, that were the motive of the intercourse.

Shelley was in the early days of his marriage with Harriet at the opening of this correspondence. His idea was—and it was so like him!—that Miss Hitchener should come and live with them. The household already included Harriet's sister, Eliza, and the new Eliza was to join them as the "sister of his soul." He was full of sentiment and inexperience. He kept on pressing the lady to give up her school and everything else, and ally her mind to his for the speedy reformation of the world. The lady's greater experience (she was years older than he—and a woman) made her hesitate to accept the invitation, but in the end he prevailed by much importunity and unconscious flattery, and in an evil hour she yielded. In a short time the young poet's wife and sister had enough of her; he himself, through daily contact, saw that she was not the extraordinary being that he had imagined; and the connection naturally came to an end. Shelley was prepared to compensate her for any pecuniary loss she had suffered; but, on the other hand, his feelings towards her passed over to the opposite and equally irrational extreme, and the "sister of his soul" became "the Brown Demon." It was all very sad, and all very absurd; but what gives it an interest to us, nearly a hundred years later, is the fact that it was an episode in the meteoric history of that astonishing phenomenon called Shelley.

Mr. Dobell, in his admirable Introduction, comments as follows on the Hitchener episode:—

"The story of the Hitchener entanglement—for that is what it really was—is a strange one—as strange perhaps as any of the events in a life which was made up of marvels; though it was not, as it happened, so tragic in its sequel as others were. Shelley alone, and no one else of whom we have any record, could have been the hero of such a romance. It was an episode in his search for that ideal being, compounded of beauty, wisdom, and virtue, not cold and bloodless, but glowing with desire to promote the welfare of humanity, which his imagination had created, and which of course was not to be found in any mortal form. But Shelley's mistake, after all, was not an uncommon one. Most men idealise the women they love; or there would be a remarkable falling-off in the number of marriages. After a period of disillusionment, however, the average man learns, with more or less grace, to reconcile himself to the want of ideal qualities in his partner. And must confess, fell short of the ideal standard of humanity—the best companion for the average man will be, not the ideal woman, but woman as she is, with all her faults and imperfections. Whether Shelley ever realised this fact I do not know; but he was growing so fast in wisdom and knowledge of mankind at the time of his death that he would certainly have discovered it, as well as many other truths of human nature which were yet

obacure to him, had he lived a few years longer. Imagination is an excellent servant but a bad master. In his youth—and he had hardly outgrown his youth at the time of his death—Shelley's imagination was certainly his master rather than his servant: it made him a poet, but it also made his career a life-long tragedy."

We think this is essentially sane and sound, like nearly all the rest of the Introduction, which we have more than once read, and with increasing pleasure and admiration. Mr. Dobell's further comment on the "Hitchener entanglement" is also worth quoting:—

"At the beginning of this correspondence, Shelley had not yet reached his nineteenth birthday. He was therefore little more than a boy; as regards knowledge of the world, indeed, no more than a boy. That kind of knowledge he was always slow to acquire. Nothing indeed could ever teach it to him but the bitterest experience and the most cruel disenchantments. In the first of these letters we find him protesting that henceforth reason alone shall be his guiding star through life. How little did he know himself when he made that avowal! Did he, in fact, ever in his life see things in the clear light of reason? Or, rather, since that is a light in which no one ever sees them, did he ever see them in the light in which they appear to the average sensual (or sensible) human being?"

Ah, what a poem—and often what a comic poem—is youth! That majestic bull, the leader of the herd, was once a frolicsome calf, with ridiculous unsteady legs and wobbling head, floundering into all sorts of mischief and trouble. That splendid eagle, daring the sun, defying the tempest, soaring from peak to peak, high above every other living thing, was once a poor little helpless ball of useless feathers. That indomitable prizefighter once screamed with terror at nothing, and sought shelter behind his mother's gown. And the poet who commands the reverence of the world wrote empty verses in his callow youth. Shakespeare himself must have done it. But happily the record of his juvenile inanities is lost. Shelley's juvenilia are largely left to us; the juvenilia of his poetry, which give, as Mr. Dobell observes, no indication whatever of his future greatness—and the juvenilia of his character, which often make us smile but never make us angry. For the real truth is that Shelley's character was utterly without the baser elements of our poor humanity; mistaken he could be, and in his younger days so easily!—but he could never be mean or malicious, never intentionally cruel or unjust. One might almost say of him what Catholic dogma asserts of the Mother of God, that he was born without original sin. G. W. FOOTE.

(To be continued.)

"Christian Science."

CHRISTIAN apologists always protest that the Bible was never intended to teach science. These puny defenders of Omnipotence are right. The so-called "science" of "God's Holy Word" has no pretensions whatever to exact knowledge. Biblical mathematics would disgrace a school-boy. Biblical geology is stupid. Biblical medicine is exploded nonsense. Biblical history is largely imaginary, and Biblical zoology is too funny for words. In natural history not the veriest tyro could confound the hare with the ruminants. Yet the Bible gravely tells us poor miserable sinners that the Creator of Darwin blundered about the hare chewing the cud. In the Bible the animals are nearly all "freaks." Where else can we find a talking snake, a lodging-house whale, or a pigeon co-respondent? Where else are the fiery serpents, the dragons, the flaming horses, the cocatrice, and the worm that never dies? Where else are the bedevilled pigs, the four-legged fowls, the unicorns, the cherubim, and the talking donkey? Where else is the bloater with a savings' bank in his inside? And where else shall we find the wonderful menagerie of the Apocalypse? Even the human beings in the Bible act most strangely. Many fortunate persons had two funerals apiece. And some were so magnificently developed that ordinary men looked like grasshoppers beside them. If the Bible teaches science, Currier, Buffon, Lamarck, Huxley, and Darwin were as ignorant as Gold Coast niggers.

VOLTAIRE.

A good deal may be said in dispraise of Voltaire. But this is his centenary year; it is a hundred years ago this year since he died. *Il avait beaucoup travaillé dans ce monde*, as Michelet says of our own Henry the Fifth;—"he had done a big spell of work in this world"; and of the indefatigable worker let us on this occasion speak good rather than evil. He looked at things straight, and he had a marvellous logic and lucidity.—*Matthew Arnold*.

HEROES AND PIONEERS.

When we study the history of humanity, we see heroes appearing at the beginning of every great movement. Their example is contagious; some virtue emanates from them and takes possession of others. It is their privilege to rouse enthusiasm, hope, and light. They are the saviors of hopeless times, the guides in dark days, the pioneers of the future, the pure and noble victims who die for justice and truth, in order to pave the way for them.—*Charles Wagner*.

AS OTHERS SEE US.

It seems, perhaps, to the sober mind, incredible that, outside a lunatic asylum, Atheism can exist.

From a Christian standpoint, Atheism can never be translated into conduct, or be accepted as a basis of conduct, without an element of wickedness.

—*W. H. Fitchett, "The Beliefs of Unbelief."*

THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD.

We know nothing certainly of Jesus Christ. We know nothing of his infancy, nothing of his youth, and we are not sure that such a person ever existed.—*Ingersoll*.

Obituary.

THE N. S. S. has lost one of its most stalwart members by the death of Mr. John Jones, of Treberren Farm, near Monmouth, which took place on Sunday, April 12, in the 94th year of his age. He was buried in the Dingestow Parish Church cemetery, on the following Thursday, when a Secular Service was conducted by Mr. J. T. Lloyd. Mr. Jones was exceedingly well-known and highly respected throughout the county of Monmouth; and he always availed himself of every opportunity to proclaim his Freethought principles. Letters from his pen frequently appeared in the newspapers, in none of which he lacked the courage of his anti-theologic convictions. He was the first avowed Freethinker who was ever interred, as such, in the Dingestow Churchyard. He had taken precautions against any failure on this point, having arranged with the N. S. S. headquarters for a Secular funeral, and forwarded money beforehand to cover the cost of sending a representative man to officiate. Mr. Jones had corresponded with Mr. Foote for many years, and had been a fairly regular subscriber to the various Funds raised through the *Freethinker*, though not always under his own name. One of his last letters warmly thanked the N. S. S. President for his action in the "blasphemy" case.

We regret to report the death of Mr. C. Bowman, which took place at Ventnor, where he was buried on Saturday, April 25, Mr. J. T. Lloyd being present to represent the National Secular Society, of which the deceased had long been a member. Mr. Bowman and his wife used to be familiar figures at Freethought lectures in London, and were regular attendants during Mr. Foote's occupancy of the Athenæum, Tottenham-court-road. Some time ago he removed to Ventnor on account of his wife's serious illness, but his own death has taken place first. Mr. Bowman begged the President, in a recent letter, to see that someone was sent down to Ventnor if he or his wife should die, in order that there might be a Secular funeral, as both of them very much desired. Owing to Mrs. Bowman's helpless condition, and the undertaker's misconception, a Church clergyman had been engaged to officiate at the graveside; but Mr. Lloyd was in time to correct matters by publicly stating that the deceased had been an avowed and convinced Freethinker, and had specially desired a Secular funeral. We understand that the Secular movement will benefit under Mr. Bowman's will.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, etc.

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

LONDON.
OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S.: Victoria Park (near the Fountain), 3.15, J. Marshall, a Lecture.
CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S.: Station-road, 11.30, F. A. Davies, a Lecture; Brockwell Park, 3.15, F. A. Davies, a Lecture.
KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S.: Corner of Ridley-road, 11.30, W. J. Ramsey, "Some Humors of the Prayer-Book."
NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S.: Parliament Hill, 3.30 and 6.15, C. Cohen. (Weather permitting.)
WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S.: Outside Maryland Point Station, Stratford, 7, W. J. Ramsey, "The Rev. R. J. Campbell and the Soul."
WEST LONDON BRANCH N. S. S.: Hyde Park (near Marble Arch), 11.30, H. B. Samuels, a Lecture.

COUNTRY.

EDINBURGH BRANCH N. S. S. (Rationalists' Club, 12 Hill-square): Every Thursday, at 8.15, Discussion Class
GLASGOW (Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 12 noon, Annual Meeting of Members—Election of Office Bearers, etc.; 6.30, Social Meeting in Commemoration of Mill and Owen.
LIVERPOOL BRANCH N. S. S. (Picton Hall): G. W. Foote, 3, "The Bible and the Drink Question: a Challenge to the Churches"; 7, "Socialism and Religion: a Reply to H. G. Wells, Bernard Shaw, and other Fabians."
MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Secular Hall, Rusholme-road): 6.30, W. Sanders, "The Liberal Codlin and the Tory Short."

OUTDOOR.

EDINBURGH BRANCH N. S. S.: The Meadows, 3.30, meets for Discussion; The Mound, 7, a Debate between N. Levey and J. Macpherson, "That Christ was the Son of God."
HUDDERSFIELD BRANCH N. S. S.: Market Cross, Thursday, April 30, at 8, H. S. Wishart, "Rev. Rhondda Williams and Bible Examples."
LEEDS BRANCH N. S. S.: Town Hall Square, Friday, May 1, at 8, H. S. Wishart, "Is the Resurrection a Fable?"
MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S.: Stevenson Square, Friday, May 5, at 7.30, H. S. Wishart, "Christism a Failure"; Wednesday, May 6, at 7.30, "Is Christism False?"
ROCHDALE: Town Hall Square, Thursday, May 6, at 7.30, H. S. Wishart, "Christism and Socialism"; Friday, May 8, "Is the Resurrection a Fable?"

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The Memorandum of Association sets forth that the Society's Objects are:—To promote the principle that human conduct should be based upon natural knowledge, and not upon supernatural belief, and that human welfare in this world is the proper end of all thought and action. To promote freedom of inquiry. To promote universal Secular Education. To promote the complete secularisation of the State, etc., etc. And to do all such lawful things as are conducive to such objects. Also to have, hold, receive, and retain any sums of money paid, given, devised, or bequeathed by any person, and to employ the same for any of the purposes of the Society.

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