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A great lie is as easily told as a little one.

—THOMAS PAINE.

Ora Pro Nobis.

THIS fine, sonorous phrase has a charm of its own to persons whose ears are not simply appendages. The Catholic Church does well, from its own point of view, to make so much use of the noble Latin language, which has all the dignity and impressiveness of the march of Roman legions or the ring of Roman swords on barbarian helmets. Prayer is prayer, of course, under any circumstances, and its precise expression cannot alter its scientific ineptitude. But, as Matthew Arnold insisted, a religious service couched in the language of Eliza Cook is a different thing from a religious service couched in the language of Milton; and, in the same way, there is a vast difference between a grand form of supplication, in which verbal art has exhausted its resources, and the impudent egotism, with its broken-winded utterance, that is so common in Protestant impromptu addresses to the Throne of Grace.

It is not likely that I shall ever turn Christian. I do not say it is impossible, for no one can be sure that he will never be overtaken by calamity. Softening of the brain, for instance, might do anything. But if ever I did turn Christian I know what Church I should belong to. I always prefer the real thing. There is but one real Christianity—the Christianity of the Councils, of the great tradition—the Christianity of history; and there is but one real Christian Church—the Catholic Church with its centre at Rome. And from Rome it can never be divorced; for Rome is the greatest name in the world, and the Catholic Church inherits all its glamor; the truth being, in Hobbes's great simile, that this Church is the ghost of the dead Roman Empire, sitting throned and crowned on the grave thereof.

Yes, when I turn Christian I shall be a Catholic. Meanwhile—if I may express myself in terms of time about what is so unlikely to happen—I am a Freethinker, an Atheist, with no gods and no devils, no heaven and no hell, no sacred books and no holy men. And while I dote on the sound of "Ora Pro Nobis" in comparison with "Pray For Us," I laugh as much as ever I did at the foolish notion that words from our lips, or the lips of beings we pray to, can change the natural course of things in the infinite and everlasting universe. When water runs uphill, except in finding its level; when feathers lie on the ground and stones fly in the air; when people come into the world except by the gate of birth, or go out of it except by the gate of death; when babes dispense with fathers and corpses walk

about after being laid in their tombs; when food falls from heaven into hungry mouths; when bread and fish multiply, so that enough for two satisfies five thousand, and water turns into wine; when I see these things happening I shall believe in the efficacy of prayer. But until then I shall cry "Splendid!" to the words "Ora Pro Nobis," but with respect to the meaning of the words I shall cry "Rot!"

The Catholic Church, which has its practical side as well as its spiritual side, has carried the business of prayer to the height of perfection. What is the doctrine of purgatory itself but a huge device for selling priestly prayers for laymen's cash? Prayers are a marketable commodity—and are suited to all tastes and requirements. Prayers are even muttered over inanimate objects, which are thus "blessed" and then sold for money. When the pious Pigott, the forger of the Parnell letters, escaped from England to Spain, and committed suicide there rather than face further contingencies, he wore under his shirt a scapular—a bit of priest-blessed flannel (or other stuff), hanging down from the neck before and behind. This was supposed to guard the wearer from all harm. We have heard of Catholic soldiers fancying it would stop bullets! There is more sense in the Protestant idea of bullets being stopped by the Bible—which is a good protection if it happens to be right in the way; though we believe a pack of cards would serve the same useful purpose.

A more innocent and pitiable being than Pigott may be instanced in this connection. Poor little Marie Ellen Bailes, the six-year-old victim of one of God's madmen, whose mangled remains were left by her murderer at that Elephant and Castle lavatory, was dressed in the way described in the newspapers when she left home. One part of the description is very noteworthy. "Round her neck," it is said, "she was wearing a small Roman Catholic medal, with an image of the Virgin Mary upon it, attached by a blue silk ribbon." No doubt it was intended to be a protection. It was a silent appeal to the Holy Mother. Ora Pro Nobis! Mother of God, pray for us now, and in the hour of death! But there is no God's Mother—and who knows if there is any God? Certainly the Virgin Mary medal did not protect that dear child from a fiendish assault. Probably it rose and fell with her anguished breath, and was covered with the hot blood that gushed from her gaping throat.

What an answer to prayer! What a proof of Providence! What an evidence of the the benevolent intervention in human affairs of the Blessed Virgin Mary! What a striking advertisement of the efficacy of those wonderful medals! The trade in them ought to go forward now with leaps and bounds.

The Virgin Mary did not help that poor child. She might as well have been the child of an Atheist

for all the aid she received. But I do not suppose for a moment that this will upset the faith of her Catholic parents. I daresay they will go on praying to the Mother of God, and will buy other medals for the rest of their family. Reason slays superstition in the long run, but not in a minute, nor a day, nor a year, nor a century. The servants of reason must have the courage to fight her battles; they must also have the patience to wait for her victory.

Thinking people recognise that prayer is a superstition which modern times inherit from the ages of dense ignorance and limitless credulity. The answers to prayer are hallucinations. In all such matters, as Bacon noted, we count the hits and forget the misses. A thousand failures go for nothing: one success supports faith for a lifetime. When the old Greek sceptic was shown the votive offerings in the temple of Neptune, left by those who had cried to the god in storms and had been saved, he slyly inquired after the records of those who were drowned. But he was a thinker. Superstitionists are satisfied if one is saved, even if a hundred perish. One testifies to the hand of God. Just in the same way will a quack doctor's failures be buried out of sight in cemeteries, while his few accidental successes will figure in blazing advertisements for a whole generation.

This doctrine of prayer lies at the bottom of all religious worship. Man was always a mercenary sort of animal, and he flattered and worried the gods for what he could get out of them. On that fallacy and that selfishness all the priestcraft in the world was founded. There is help to be got from heaven, man wants it, and the priests obtain it for him. A simple idea! But not at all a simple game. It has been worth thousands of millions to the mystery-men. It is worth some twenty millions a year to them even now in this single country of England. No wonder they fight tooth and nail for their profession. Yet in their heart of hearts they know it is doomed.

G. W. FOOTE.

Science and the Church Congress.—III.*

(Concluded from p. 340.)

AS is only to be anticipated by those who are already acquainted with the writings of Mr. F. C. S. Schiller, this author's paper on "Science and Religion" moves on different lines to that followed in the two papers already criticised. There is much greater caution displayed, while the generalisations take a wider and more philosophic survey. Mr. Schiller's main point seems to be that religion is a "psychological reality," and is now recognised as such by science. The discovery of religion by science is, he says, one of the great discoveries of the nineteenth century. It is to be studied with all "reverence," and has "become a source of natural knowledge, from which it is possible to learn new facts about the nature of the universe." Moreover, this "implies the deepest and most thorough reconciliation of Science and Religion which it is possible to conceive."

That Religion has only recently been discovered by Science is true in a sense, but I do not think this is the sense which Mr. Schiller intends. That there has only been a scientific study of religion in recent years is true; but this is largely because it is only within recent years that such a study would have been allowed to exist. For many generations science itself only existed on sufferance; and even when its existence was recognised religious opposition was still able to keep scientific workers from dealing with

so-called sacred subjects. Under such conditions science was naturally concerned in making secure its foothold, and so confined itself to the less dangerous branches which, whatever might be their inferential bearings on religious beliefs, did not directly concern them. But with ideas as with nations, it is much easier to set out on a career of conquest than it is to limit acquisitions. The realm over which science claimed and exercised control steadily widened, until not only physical nature, but human nature in all its mental and moral aspects, came under its "sphere of influence." With expansion came strength; and having made good its title and secured its position, science not only pursued its career careless of religion, but began to subject religious beliefs to the same methodical scrutiny that had shown itself so fruitful in other directions.

Not that the discovery of religion by science is as recent as Mr. Schiller seems to think. It would be easy to compile a fairly lengthy list of works, from Lord Herbert of Cherbury onward, which would prove beyond question that the collection and comparison of religious beliefs has been going on for at least two centuries and a half. The writings of the Deists in the eighteenth century contain numberless references to religious beliefs in all parts of the world, with reflections and observations on their probable connection. What has been added to their writings, and so completed the survey, has been the religious beliefs and customs of savages in all parts of the world, which have in turn provided the foundations upon which the epoch-making generalisations of Tylor, Spencer, and Frazer have been built.

In this sense it is true that science recognises religion as a "psychological reality," and also that much may be learned from its rational study. But it is not true that what is learned either adds to the value of religion, as religion, or that it leads to a reconciliation. The reality of religion as a mere historic phenomenon has never been seriously questioned, nor is it easily conceivable that it could be. The real and only question at issue is whether this "psychological reality" corresponds to any objective reality in the sense that our other beliefs correspond to objective facts? Mr. Schiller himself says that "Any theory which works must evoke some response from the objective nature of things. If there were no 'God'—i.e., nothing that could afford any satisfaction, any religious emotion—the whole religious attitude would be futile." With this one readily agrees; only it is a test that religion is ill able to stand.

To commence with, there is no doubt to-day that religion began in the firm belief that there existed an objective reality corresponding with the conception men had of God. Nor is there much doubt as to the manner in which this belief was generated. The anthropomorphic character of all the gods is enough to prove that Matthew Arnold's phrase, "a magnified non-natural man," covers the case well enough. Man reads himself into nature, and thus gives birth to religion; and all development, far from endorsing the primitive hypothesis, has resulted in so continuously modifying this early belief that in the case of one like Mr. Schiller it is difficult to discover what there is left to which the name of God can be properly applied. The primitive theory of things is now so completely discredited that in a civilised country it is impossible to find anyone that gives it credence. Yet it is upon this foundation, and no other, that all religions ultimately rest, and with that discredited the intellectual basis disappears. To put the position baldly, if the history of the human mind had been other than is the case, if uncultured humanity had not given birth to the conception of intelligent forces governing nature and human destiny, is there any probability that such a conception would have developed in a cultured or in a scientific epoch? There does not seem to me the slightest probability that such would have been the case. The general hostility of scientific ages to such a conception is too generally admitted to demand detailed proof.

* A correspondent has called my attention to the fact that in representing, in the first article of this series, Mr. Tennant as saying "Science has made it harder for us to look upon the world as the work of God," I have reversed that gentleman's statement. On re-reading the passage, I find that my critic is correct, and that I had overlooked a small, but in this instance, an important word. I make this correction at the first opportunity, and regret the occurrence of the error. Readers will note that the sentence was in the nature of an aside, and that the argument is quite unaffected by the correction.

Of course, more cultured ages have continued to believe in deity; this is admitted, but it is a phenomenon that admits of easy explanation. The weakness of primitive man in the presence of natural forces that he could neither control nor understand, the power ascribed to these extra-human intelligences, and the degree to which their influence was associated with the smallest details of life, would be alone enough to make release from these supposed rules a slow process. But when we add to this the fact that conclusions based on verifiable knowledge necessarily mature much more slowly than those that are the outcome of unreasoning fear, and that by the time this knowledge has been gained, the earlier beliefs have twined themselves round human emotions and become closely associated with numberless customs and institutions, we are brought to realise that it is not a contest of two sets of ideas only, but the struggle of a truth that has yet to become established against innumerable vested interests, financial, moral, and mental. The great thing is, that cultured ages have not *added* to the belief in deity. Their work has been to modify it, until for a large and growing number, it has ceased altogether to exist.

Mr. Schiller has, in the course of his paper, a number of *obiter dicta*, one or two of which call for notice. "The religious attitude," he says, "is not primarily intended to augment our practical control of things." The only reason we can see for such an observation is the desire to relieve religion from the charge of being practically valueless. Certainly it is far removed from facts. There is no indication whatever that religion developed because people were concerned in their own spiritual growth or were animated by a desire for knowledge. The gods were there and had to be reckoned with, and religious observances have really no other justification in the eyes of primitive believers except that they put them on good terms with the powers that be, and to that extent give them an influence over things. Moreover, the close connection of religion and magic points to the same conclusion. Here there is an obvious endeavor to gain a practical control over things. In the case of prayer there is, again, evident the same feature. People pray that their prayers may influence the course of events, and although many believers, unable to fight longer against rationalising influences, ascribe to prayer a subjective value only, the religious worthlessness of such a position is seen in the fact that as people have lost faith in the power of petition to alter the course of events, so they have, to an almost corresponding extent, given up the practice of prayer.

Mr. Schiller also tells us that the unity of space and time, the indestructibility of matter, with other teachings of science, are as much postulates of faith as religious doctrines, and are all "envisaged by faith before they are proved by experience." Such an opinion fails to take note of any important differences between the "faith" inculcated by religion and that upon which scientific generalisations rests. The "faith" to which religion appeals is demonstrably based upon a totally mistaken conception of the nature of cosmical forces; the "faith" which science asks us to have in, for example, the uniformity of nature, is based upon human experience in all times and under all conditions, without a single contrary instance. Rightly conceived scientific postulates come near to being laws of thought which we cannot deny without at the same time giving up sanity of thinking as hopeless. The "faith" to which religion appeals can be dispensed with without anyone being the worse for its absence. Moreover, scientific generalisations are not "proved" by experience, experience *verifies* them. The difference between proof and verification is, in this case, important, for it helps to bring out the truth that science, in its great generalisations, is merely systematising an experience of life, and is thus able and willing at any time to appeal from the idea to the fact as evidence of the accuracy of its generalisations.

Mr. Schiller argues, as a Pragmatist, that "it is enough to act as if religion were true to obtain its spiritual benefits," although he points out that we must believe a theory to be true if it is to work. This may easily be true, and to an outsider it looks much like "throwing up the sponge." No doubt all the benefits religion can give may be obtained by believing religion to be able to confer them. But this only makes religion a "psychological reality" in the sense that a delusion is a reality. By this method, religion is cut adrift from the world of objective fact, and its advocates are driven to say, in substance, if not in words, "We cannot prove the truth of religion; we cannot prove to you that a God exists; but nevertheless, if you continue to act as though you possessed the proof, you will get from the conviction all the comfort it is possible to obtain." This, I repeat, may contain a truth; but it reduces religion to a mental delusion, and while the world may be ruled, generation after generation, by a delusion, it is hard to believe that people will long continue to consciously submit to its influence.

C. COHEN.

Wisdom, Science, and Religion.

IN the old Testament, including the Apocrypha, there are four distinct species of literature; namely, the Prophetic Literature, which is the oldest; the Law Literature, which concerns itself chiefly with ritual; the Liturgical Literature, such as is embodied in most of the Psalms, which gives expression to religious emotion; and the Wisdom Literature, which contains reflections on moral and religious questions. The Wisdom Literature is to be found in Job, some fourteen Psalms, Ecclesiastes, Ecclesiasticus, and the Wisdom of Solomon. Now, "wisdom" is a word that frequently occurs in the Old Testament. In the Pentateuch, the Prophets, and the Historical Books it has four meanings, namely, magical skill, artistic genius, sagacity in practical affairs, and ethical discernment. At one time, there was a class of wise men, whose wisdom lay in acquaintance with the affairs of the State and of social life. To these wise men the Prophets generally showed strong hostility, denouncing them in most vehement and scathing terms. Solomon's traditional wisdom was mainly administrative, though later legend represents it as giving and answering riddles.

Such are the senses in which the word "wisdom" is employed in what is usually called the Old Testament. Down to the sixth century B.C. the Israelites had but few religious dogmas. Such had been their national isolation that they had no knowledge whatever of great religious doctrines which were widespread in the outside world. But after the sixth century they never enjoyed absolute independence; and, in consequence, they were dispersed in all directions and, naturally, Palestine was invaded by all sorts of new ideas. The period between the sixth century and the beginning of the Christian era was characterised by wonderful modifications and transformations, political, ethical, and religious. Contact with Babylonians, Persians, Egyptians, and Greeks furnished the Jews with fresh outlooks on life, and led them to borrow and adapt to their own use liturgical forms and strange theological speculations for which those heathen nations were famous. From the Greeks they received an impetus towards philosophy, an interest in speculative problems, the habit of looking at life critically, or reflectively, which gave rise to the Wisdom Literature, which finds its culmination in the Apocryphal book entitled the *Wisdom of Solomon*.

Now, what are we to understand by wisdom as employed in the Biblical Wisdom Literature? Sometimes it seems to be identified with the Spirit of God, and at other times with the *Logos* or Word. But it is always represented as Divine, both in nature and origin. It is the gift of God to man, and by means of it man gets to know all things. In the

Wisdom of Solomon, this Divine wisdom is personified, and we are told what part she plays in human life, what moral demands she makes, what rewards she offers, and what her nature and power are. For a highly poetical description of her read ch. vii. vs. 25-27. The other Sunday afternoon, at St. Paul's, the Rev. Canon Scott-Holland chose that passage as the text of an eloquent sermon on "Life under Law." As a rhetorical performance the sermon is exceedingly fine, but as an exposition of its text, a total failure. The Canon maintains that the Jew was not interested in metaphysics at all, like the Greeks, but solely in the world that lay about his feet, in the attempt to "get to the bottom of the things he saw and felt." But to any unprejudiced reader of the reverend gentleman's text, and of the whole chapter in which it occurs, nothing is more apparent than that the knowledge of the world spoken of therein is the direct gift of the wisdom of God. And yet this is how the Canon puts it: "Is it not rather surprising to us to find that for the Jew the knowledge of which he uses this exalted language is not metaphysic, but physical science?" If that were so, it would be the most surprising thing ever heard of. But it is not so. The writer of this book is steeped to the eyes in metaphysics, while of physical science he is as ignorant as the babe unborn. He is a philosopher and a poet, but in no intelligible sense a scientist. The following passage is truly beautiful:—

"For in his hand [God's] are both we and our words;
All understanding, and all acquaintance with divers crafts.
For himself gave me an unerring knowledge of the things that are,
To know the constitution of the world, and the operation of the elements;
The beginning and end and middle of times,
The alternations of the solstices and the changes of seasons,
The circuits of years and the position of stars;
The natures of living creatures, and the raging of wild beasts;
The violences of winds and the thoughts of men,
The diversities of plants and the virtues of roots:
All things that are either secret or manifest I learned,
For she that is the artificer of all things taught me, even wisdom."

In the original that is charming poetry; but it is not science. The writer did not acquire an "unerring knowledge of the things that are," did not "know the constitution of the world," and his theory of the heavens was entirely erroneous. Many of Canon Scott-Holland's statements are doubtless scientifically true; but it is not fair to interpret ancient poetry in terms of modern knowledge. For the Jew of the period under consideration, the world had been created by a supernatural being, and was governed in all its parts by supernatural law. To him natural law was utterly unknown.

Furthermore, the Canon assures us that "the more the Jew came to himself, the more he purged himself of the heathen delight in what was mythical and marvellous. As his Scripture grew, it shook off all this glamorous coil of fable. It left it behind." Did it? And yet in the second half of this *Wisdom of Solomon*, we read of nothing but signs and wonders, miraculous interferences on behalf of the chosen people, and for the punishment of their enemies, and the striking contrast between God's dealings with the Israelites and his treatment of the Egyptians. He showered favors innumerable upon the seed of Abraham, and wreaked his vengeance on all who stood in their way.

The truth is that the Jewish theory of the Universe, though religious, was wholly unscientific. The Jew recognised no law other than the will of a personal God. And his conception of the nature of morality was equally erroneous. He regarded the moral law as a supernatural reality, specially revealed to man by the Deity. If he obeyed it, it was because he feared the Lord; if he violated it, it was because he forgot his Maker. Does Canon Scott-Holland believe that without religion there can be no morality? Is that the teaching of any well-accredited science?

The Canon believes in two worlds; and speaking of the *Wisdom Literature Jews*, he says:—

"Two worlds were theirs—working in perfect, harmonious concord—the world of science and the world of re-

ligion—the world of nature in which each law had its divine seal of approval—'It could never be broken'—and the world of the soul with the Divine Authority committed to a law of life, which could be broken, but at man's peril."

The truth, however, is that the Biblical Jews' world of science exists only in the reverend gentleman's own imagination. To him, the world of religion was all in all. This earth was the centre of the universe, and he the most important person on it. The world was made expressly to serve him, and he was created to minister to Jehovah. That was the whole of his philosophy—a philosophy resting on a purely metaphysical background.

We are living in a scientific age, not an age of Divine wisdom, but of human knowledge—an age in which the world is regarded, not as a machine run by an Almighty Mechanician, but as the product of the necessary working of laws inherent in itself. And this world of science, the Canon admits, is not in anything like harmony with the world of religion:—

"In our case, alas, not only have the two worlds fallen into strange strife with one another, but even their own separate witnesses have been in trouble. Science does not now present us altogether with a spectacle of wisdom sweetly ordering all things; it has shown us traces of a nature 'red in tooth and claw,' shrieking ruin—of a rough hugger-mugger of war."

We will follow the reverend gentleman no further. That frank admission is enough, for it embodies a most unshakeable truth. The science of to-day shows us a world which is not sweetly ordered by infinite wisdom—a world which flatly contradicts the teachings of religion. This world is real; not a dream of poets or a figment of the schools, but a stubborn fact of history. Science has boldly unrolled it before the eyes of all men, and the story we read in it annihilates all supernatural makers and rulers of it. It is not worthy of such beings; and such beings, if they exist, are not worthy of its homage. This is the discovery that is emptying the Churches and robbing the parsons of all their ancient influence and power. This is the revelation that is calculated to bring man into the Kingdom that has been so long awaiting him. Religion treats him as a stranger in his own home, as an alien in his own domain. But science is teaching him how to accommodate himself to his situation, how to settle down in his habitation, and how, in some measure, to adjust the dwelling-place to the varied requirements of his life. You say that science is on the side of Theism; but recent experience is making it clear to us that Theism is in the way of science, and must disappear. That is why religion is dying out. That is the explanation of the present arrest of Christianity, which the clergy so deeply deplore, but are so powerless to prevent. It is nature having her revenge for the gross injustice done to her in the past.

J. T. LLOYD.

Notes on Tour.—II.

(Continued from p. 341.)

AS I had a good look at Kandy the last time I was in Ceylon I did not visit that interesting spot on this occasion, but spent the day in and around Colombo. Kandy, the ancient capital, is rich in historic associations, and the views from the train in the journey up the mountain-pass called Kaduganawa are alone worth going a long way to see. The Buddhist and Hindu Temples, and the Dalada Maligawa, are full of interest to the student of ancient religions and superstitions. Dalada Maligawa means "Shrine of the Tooth," and is so named from its supposed possession of one of Buddha's teeth. Here an annual festival is held, and with much solemnity and ceremony the priceless dental adjunct—really a piece of colored ivory about the size of a man's forefinger—is brought forth. The temples at Mount Lavinia and near the Cinnamon Gardens, and at other places in Colombo,

are much less pretentious than those at Kandy. In one we were shown an immense, but by no means artistic, painting of Buddha, while in a tent some little distance from the temple one could purchase all kinds of relics and mementoes—containing sublime moral precepts, pieces of silk, scraps of “divine wisdom” written in Sanscrit on sacred leaves, and other antique treasures manufactured last year at Birmingham. The prices, too, were not prohibitive—in fact, if the original demands of the vendors seemed excessive, it always became a case of “no reasonable offer refused.” There is a factitious air of mystery and solemnity about these temples which is all part of the game. Well do the priests and supporters of religion in all countries know the value of the misty, the vague, the incomprehensible. They may call it the Absolute, the Spiritual, the Unconditioned, the Esoteric, or anything else they like, with an array of capital letters extending from Fremantle to Colombo—“the more it changes the more it's the same thing” Theosophy or Divine Wisdom! Why, you have only to overload a simple idea with a cloud of metaphor and you have genius; nay, you can penetrate to the very Soul of Things, the *Ens Entium*! As I left these houses of mystification, and thought of the great temple I had seen at Kandy nearly two years ago, and then turned to the cocoa-nut plantations, the magnificent banyan-trees and other evidences of luxuriant vegetation, the noble lines of Swinburne's “Palace of Pan” occurred to my mind:—

“And statelier than temples uplifted with hands,
Tall column by column, the sanctuary stands
Of the pine forests' infinite aisles,
A temple whose transepts are measured by miles,
Whose chancel has Morning for priest.”

Our next stay of any importance is here at Port Said, but a little incident in the canal was not without interest to me. I was on deck at 5 o'clock in the morning, and saw a Mohammedan not far from the bank kneeling down and evidently praying. This reminded me, somewhat painfully, of some lines in Denton's “Song of Freedom”:

“Freedom for the bondman bent at Superstition's shrine,
With bandaged eyes imploring that the sun of Truth may shine....
Mohammedan of Mecca, the Catholic of Rome,
The Hindu in his distant land, the Methodist at home.”

I say the sight of this poor follower of the “one true Prophet” brought these lines painfully to my mind, because their author was himself a strong believer in “spooks” and “sweet voices from the spirit-world,” and I could not help wondering whether superstition will ever really die out, and whether one form of it can be said to be much better or much worse than another.

At Port Said we visited a Mohammedan mosque and the Greek Church. Here, again, all the business paraphernalia were observable—the sandals for the feet, the solemn attitude struck by the guide, etc., though this sort of thing did not seem so forced as in the case of the Buddhist temples in Ceylon. The proceedings at both places were wound up with a ceremony common to religion in all countries—taking round the hat. Of course, the form of superstition with which we are more familiar is not entirely in the background. The town is provided with a fine English church, and a large wing is at present being added to it. As in Ceylon, so here, Christian missionaries are to be seen on all hands, though they are less numerous. In Colombo there are representatives of the Roman Catholics, Episcopalians, Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians, and Salvation Army. A fine array of followers of the one infallible guide to save the souls of the poor unsophisticated Cingalese! These men of God, however, admit to sympathetic ears that they are making very little progress in the way of genuine conversions. I may say that on the boat I made the acquaintance of a Baptist missionary who proved himself a very courteous fellow, even after he had ascertained that I was an “out-and-outer.” A remark he made at Port Said was so characteristically naive that it is worth reproduction. We had just

left the mosque together, and he said to me, “You know the educated Mohammedan priests don't believe in all this nonsense.” I replied, “And do educated Christian priests believe in all the nonsense in the Bible?” Of course, there was “no anomaly at all between the two cases”!

The Suez Canal, eighty-four miles long—that wonderful waterway, partly artificial and partly formed by the dredging of the Bitter Lakes—was constructed under the French engineer, Ferdinand de Lesseps, and is one of the real triumphs of nineteenth-century science. Since the canal was opened in 1869, European interference in the surrounding districts has necessitated better sanitary arrangements, and the building of good hospitals, construction of water and sewerage works, etc., have gone a long way towards supplanting bubonic plague and typhoid, which no prayers or pilgrimages to Mecca could cope with. Trade, both at Aden and at Colombo, has more than doubled since the above date.

A. D. McLAREN.

Acid Drops.

Our remarks on the Religious Tract Society's appeal for £10,000 to secure “China for Christ” have elicited a reply in the June number of *Seed Time and Harvest*, a copy of which appears to have been sent us by Capt. H. W. Dickson, New Church-road, Wellington, Salop. This gentleman, we take it, is responsible for the marginal observation that “Freethought and lying innuendo are evidently synonymous”—a display of Christian charity based upon our supposition that the whole of the £10,000 would not be spent on producing “tracts and periodicals,” but some of it would represent “working expenses.” Captain Dickson must, therefore, if he has any honesty about him, be under the impression that missionaries and colporteurs work for nothing in China, and that the same spirit of renunciation prevails at the office of the Religious Tract Society in London.

The Religious Tract Society comes to the conclusion, after reading our satirical remarks, that our “wrath is excited by a movement whose aim is to counteract the ravages of the poison of infidelity among uncounted millions, for whom the Savior died.” This is the first time we ever heard that laughter indicated wrath. We beg to assure the R. T. S. that we are not angry. We are only amused. Christ “wants” China, and the R. T. S. wants £10,000 to help him to get it! Surely this is more calculated to excite hilarity than indignation. And we go on smiling when the R. T. S. makes our “wrath” the ground for doubling the size of its appeal. It now asks for £20,000. Well, we shall go on smiling if that figure is realised; for we are well aware of the gullibility of the Christian public in this country.

“The *Freethinker*,” says the R. T. S., “is the organ of aggressive infidelity. Its influence, such as it is, is all for mischief, and is exerted mainly among the working classes and imperfectly educated people.” We plead guilty to the “aggressive infidelity” and the “mischief.” We exist to do “mischief”—from the Religious Tract Society's point of view—and are glad to note its admission that we realise the object of our existence. The “illiterate” reference we can afford to smile at. It is answered by the extracts given from our columns. And as to our readers belonging mainly to the working classes, we may observe that this is probably true, because the working classes are the bulk of the population. But we have readers in all classes of society, including merchants, lawyers, doctors, and artists.

Suppose, however, that all our readers belonged to “the working classes and imperfectly educated people.” Why should the Religious Tract Society sneer at that? Christianity was started by working men and illiterates. Jesus was a carpenter, Peter was a fisherman, and all the others had common occupations. And when the apostles, after their Master's death, got into trouble and were brought before the bench, the magistrates “perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men” (Acts iv. 13). But things have altered since then. Ignorant and unlearned men are “no class” at the R. T. S. office; nor in any other Christian Society, unless they have money to give away. Then they become highly respectable all at once.

One does not look for accuracy in anything connected with the *Daily Mail*, but its "Year Book of the Churches" is quite gratuitously inaccurate in some things. Rev. Frank Ballard, for instance, is allowed to write on "Agnosticism," of which he is a professional opponent; and in the course of his article we find the following:—

"A smouldering fire of bitter antagonism to everything Christian has been maintained under the auspices of the National Secular Society. It has only a small following and, with the exception of Leicester, has scarcely any respectable buildings for its purpose. But a vigorous and sometimes coarse propagandism has been maintained by means of the modern Press, and several journals of greatly different literary merit are now issued, though with only a moderate circulation."

Such is history, written by a preacher, and published by the *Daily Mail*.

It is news indeed that the N. S. S. has maintained a "smouldering fire." As for the "small following," the word "small" is entirely relative. Mr. Ballard is reckoned a big man by the ordinary Christian, but he is a very small man when compared with any real thinker. Then as to buildings. The N. S. S. never aimed at *owning* buildings, and the Leicester Secular Society, which owns a good hall, is not connected with the N. S. S. except in the way of friendliness. Certainly the N. S. S. does not stand the same chance of obtaining the use of "respectable buildings" as the Christian bodies do. It is excluded by Christian bigotry from many such buildings. But it does get hold of a few. During the past twelve months, the President of the N. S. S., for instance, has lectured in the Queen's Hall (London), the Stratford Town Hall, the Woolwich Town Hall, the Birmingham Town Hall, and the Picton Hall (Liverpool). Mr. Ballard can hardly consider that these are not "respectable buildings." We take it that he is talking "respectable" nonsense.

What are the names of the "several journals" that Mr. Ballard refers to? We only know of one associated in any way with the National Secular Society. Of course that one has a "moderate circulation." That it exists at all in a hypocritical country like England is a tribute to its vitality. Swift said that you might always tell a man of genius, for the dunces were all in a conspiracy against him. And you may always tell a thorough-going Freethought paper by its "moderate circulation." The *Freethinker* is written by those who think for those who think. Men of Mr. Ballard's profession address themselves to the multitude whose intellectual quality is hit off in Carlyle's famous epigram.

Mr. Ballard is not going to cry stinking fish. He has a job, and we daresay a well paid one, which depends on the "spread of infidelity." The Wesleyan Methodist Church has appointed him as a Missioner to oppose "unbelief." Naturally, therefore, he doesn't want the thing to perish. Accordingly he prophesies that it won't. "During the coming century," he says—probably meaning the present century, "there appears to be every reason for believing that such anti-Christian influences will rather be increased than diminished." That's all right. But what composition! Mr. Ballard is a queer authority on "literary merit."

We have wondered who was the editor of the *Academy*, with its overwhelming religiosity, and its lavish display of Christian charity to "unbelievers." We see by last week's issue that the editor is Lord Alfred Douglas. That explains everything. Lord Alfred Douglas was a bosom friend of the late Mr. Oscar Wilde—and it was Lord Alfred Douglas's father who smashed the late Mr. Oscar Wilde. We understand now.

Notwithstanding the many complaints made by working-class representatives as to the state of trade in Canada, and the evils that accrue from the activity of the Salvation Army and other agencies in encouraging emigration to that country, the "Army" continues to advertise for emigrants and to deny the existence of either distress or lack of employment. The Toronto Branch of the Amalgamated Society, at a recent meeting—we quote from the monthly report for May—does not hesitate to say that, judging from the published reports of his speeches, General Booth must be "either very much misinformed, or he is deliberately lying." In Toronto alone, the Society asserts, there are 10,000 out of work, 800 of whom are carpenters, while "in all the cities of Canada the same conditions are in existence." Meanwhile, the Salvation Army in Toronto has received thousands of dollars from the City Council to alleviate the distress which, on this side, the Army declares does not exist. The Society goes on to say that the Army is now nothing more than a "common

emigration company" working for the bonus of £1 for each emigrant, and then goes on to say:—

"Three weeks ago the head officers of the Salvation Army here in Toronto were asked why some of the unemployed of this city could not be taken to fill the positions which the Salvation Army claim to have on farms and railway construction in British Columbia, instead of bringing in more unemployed from the old country. Their reply was that the unemployed in Toronto would not go out to fill these positions. This reply was challenged by Mr. Albert Chamberlain, the President of the British Welcome League, and to prove it he had a telegram inserted in the *Toronto Evening Telegram* asking all those who were willing to accept positions on farms and in railway construction in British Columbia to send him a postcard with their name and address. In reply to this single advertisement over 800 postcards were received, with about 1,000 names of persons willing to accept such positions, thus showing which the Salvation Army are more anxious to do—to help the unemployed, or to earn the £1 bonus for each one they send to Canada. Let it be known, also, that the Salvation Army have been helping the state of conditions by employing carpenters here in Toronto, and paying them thirty cents per hour, when the minimum rate of wages for the district is thirty-three cents per hour."

The report, it will be observed, is circumstantial in both its charges and assertions. The unfortunate thing is that our travesty of a "Free Press" is strongly averse to giving publicity to charges against the Army, while the astute General trusts that those who provide the money will either not see, or will forget, all that is being said against the Salvation Army and its methods. If the bonus of £1 per emigrant was withdrawn we should soon see a rapid cooling in General Booth's anxiety to transport unemployed from this country to the Dominion.

General Booth does not want to "die broken-hearted." The remedy for his heart trouble is "Money." We infer that the bottle is running dry.

We mentioned last week that the Rev. Dr. Aked, late of Liverpool, now of New York, had called upon the American millionaires to shell out the money required to save Christianity from death and burial. He didn't put it quite in that way, but that is what it came to. We now see that another Englishman, the Rev. Dr. W. J. Dawson, who has been "missioning" in America, and has practically settled down there, has just paid a flying visit to England, and been interviewed by the *Christian World*; and he also has a sad tale to tell of the decline of religion in the United States. This is what he says:—

"There is, I am sorry to say, a tremendous ebb in church-going. I do not think you could say it is hostility to religion as religion at all, but the average church is certainly experiencing a great ebb. Do you know that there are fewer churches now in New York than there were in 1840? Population has doubled, but the churches have failed to keep pace with it, and worse than that, position after position has been surrendered. The great bulk of the people do not trouble about the churches at all. You have here and there a great church with a great personality in the pulpit, and it draws a great congregation, but great personalities are necessarily rare. The trouble is with the average men. If you put in a Sunday morning at an average church in Boston or New York, you would be painfully struck by the evidences that the Church has lost its hold of the people. Many of these are splendid buildings, ideal from the point of view of comfort, beautifully kept, well maintained financially, but the congregations are wanting. The rich men will give to the Church, but they do not attend its services. They keep up a speaking acquaintance with the Church, and that is all."

Evidently the beginning of the end.

Dr. Dawson was asked whether the New Theology had caused any excitement in America. "None," he replied, "worth speaking of. The general public does not take enough interest in religion to read books on either side." We are getting at the truth now.

The Rev. Dr. Aked, now of New York, paints a darker picture still. In New York, with its population of 2,500,000, "there is a Protestant remnant of only 720,000, which is 50,000 less than it was ten years ago. Only the smallest fraction of these 720,000 nominal Protestants have any connection with the Churches." And yet these men of God have the effrontery to assert that Christianity is marching on to universal victory!

As one of the signs of the arrest of Christianity, Dr. Dawson, mentioned how a friend of his preaches on Sunday mornings in a vast music hall in Chicago, and how when the "Amen" is scarcely out of his friend's mouth, the scenshifters are at work preparing for the afternoon theatrical performance. When Dr. Dawson once witnessed

this quick transformation, he "looked with very startled eyes upon these evidences of the absolute decay on the part of large masses of the population of respect for the decorum of the Sabbath." Of course; but what constitutes the "decorum of the Sabbath"? What Christians regard as the "decorum of the Sabbath" is, to the majority of people, insufferable dullness.

Dr. Horton has explained one of the reasons why he believes many of the papers to exert an evil influence on people. One of the Sunday papers, it seems, contained an article on "The Folly of Being Poor," and offered to show its Christian readers how to make twenty per cent. on their capital. We refrain from expressing any opinion as to whether poverty is a folly or not; but it is at least certain that not many Christians would object to a twenty per cent. return—provided, of course, they kept the right side of the law. And on the whole in this Christian country people suffer more through being poor than for any other circumstance. And while money is worshiped, as it is worshiped in Christian countries, one can hardly blame people very much who seek to raise themselves to the level of established respectability.

A correspondent has been inquiring of the *British Weekly* why Jesus said to Mary "Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father," seeing that to the disciples he said "Handle me," and to Thomas gave the invitation to place a finger in his side. The correspondent is given two answers, and is allowed to take his choice. One is that Jesus "wished in his new life to receive first God's embrace, as a child runs to kiss his mother first." The other is that Jesus wished to bring home to Mary's mind the fact that they could not meet on the same footing as hitherto; that their relations had undergone a great change. Either reply may, of course, satisfy the questioner; but neither of them is correct. The truth is that "Touch me not" embodies the common Eastern religious idea that to a sanctified person the touch of a woman is unclean. Many examples might be cited, but one within the Christian area will be best. This is that the Church, later, made it one of its regulations that a woman should not be permitted to touch the Eucharist with bare hands. No such regulation applied to men. They belonged to what Christianity has always taught is the superior sex, or, as the Puritans explained, "the more godlike."

In the *Christian Commonwealth*, Dr. Warschauer, while not dealing specifically with this topic, has some remarks that bear upon it. His topic is "The Cause of Scepticism," and his conclusion is that one's faith or scepticism is much more the result of one's experience of life than of intellectual difficulties. In the main this may be true, but not quite in the sense Dr. Warschauer means. Our intellectual convictions are naturally and necessarily influenced by our experience of life; but it does not follow that because this is the case, therefore the conclusions at which we arrive are mere bursts of resentful emotion at the structure of things. These conclusions may be, and often are, the logical deductions from life as we find it in our own experience and in the experience of others. Disbelief in religion rests upon a far sounder and more impregnable basis than a feeling of resentment because the world has gone awry with our individual selves. It is because the Freethinker fails to see any justification in his own life, in the life of others, or in the processes of nature generally, for the belief in an over-ruling Providence, that he is what he is, not because in his own case his experience of life has been less pleasant than he would have wished.

Dr. Warschauer exhorts the doubter to "come out of selfishness and egotism; enter by any genuine act of goodwill into the order of love, and see if the world does not behave as if it were God's world." The exhortation is not exactly pleasant, or even polite. Those who do not believe that the world is God's world stand in no need of any advice from Dr. Warschauer to give up their "selfishness and egotism," since it is pretty certain that there is less of that in the composition of the average Freethinker than in that of the average Christian. The Freethinker is not acting with an eye to reward in some future life, and he certainly does not profess Freethought in the hope of reward in this. Every Freethinker gives some evidence of his unselfishness in his profession of faith; he braves public opinion, risks boycott, and invites slander. Can it be said that Christians offer anything like the same evidence of their unselfishness and devotion to right? It is an old trick of the pulpit, this assumption of a superior nobility of character merely because one happens to be on the side of the wealthy and respectable and powerful majority; it is, however, none the less objectionable, and experience usually teaches that the more

sterling virtues are oftenest on the side of the despised minority.

The young men who consult Dr. Warschauer, and with whose "cases" he deals in the *Christian Commonwealth*, are not intellectual unbelievers, but emotional doubters. Once a man becomes a convinced Freethinker, he never turns to a professional parson for guidance. And in the "case in point" submitted by Dr. Warschauer himself, we find that the experience through which the young man had passed only led him to look for evidence of the existence of God, and that he looked in vain. This failure was a sore disappointment to him; and it was in this keen sense of disappointment, *emotionally disinclined*, though *intellectually driven* to become an actual unbeliever, that he appealed for guidance to Dr. Warschauer, and appealed in vain. The reverend gentleman beats adroitly about the bush, but never comes into real grip with the problem presented.

"We admire Japan's qualities," said the Rev. Dr. Warschauer in a missionary sermon recently published, "but her record of cruelty and want of scruple in Korea should make us uneasily conscious of her moral defects." But is our own Christian Empire wholly free from "moral defects"? Has Dr. Warschauer never read the "record of cruelty and want of scruple" in our treatment of subject races, particularly colored ones? Has he forgotten the shocking brutalities and blood-curdling atrocities which characterised the Matabele War not so many years ago? Is he unmindful of what is at this moment happening to the Zulus under a distinctly Christian government? Is he proud of the existing state of things in India under the rule of the followers of the Galilean? In view of such facts, we ask him, In what single moral respect is Christian Britain one whit superior to Heathen Japan?

Nothing in the world is easier than to denounce one religion in order to praise another. All religions have their strong and their weak points, their good and their bad qualities. But is it fair, on Dr. Warschauer's part, to vilify Hinduism because its Sacred Books contain "depraved and licentious narratives, to whose details one cannot allude," while he knows that his own Bible abounds in stories of indecencies, immoralities, and obscenities quite as degrading? And surely he must know that in Hinduism, as well as in Christianity, there is in many respects a splendid moral code, and that in character thousands of Hindus would compare favorably with the very best Christians. Why, then, should the latter force their religion upon the former?

Mr. J. Allanson Picton writes to the *Christian Commonwealth* advocating the inclusion of the Rev. R. J. Campbell as representative of the New Theology at the proposed Round Table Conference on Education. We confess we are surprised at a Secular Educationist like Mr. Picton giving the least countenance to this miserable imposture. The proposed Conference is merely a ring of predatory Christian sects considering how far they can agree to have their religious beliefs taught in the public schools at the expense of the rest of the community. There is absolutely nothing else in it. And the friends of Secular Education should treat it with the contempt it deserves—as well as apprehension at its possible dangers.

We do not trust the New Theology people in this matter. They are quite willing to keep the Bible out of the schools, because the Bible, as it stands, is an encumbrance to them. But they desire to see religious teaching in the schools, without the Bible; and they are prepared to sell the cause of Secular Education by allowing religious instruction to be given, though not by the ordinary teachers, *during school hours*. Mr. Campbell himself throw out a hint in this direction at the Memorial Hall meeting in November, and it has the support of Dr. Warschauer and others of the same school. The fact is that theologians of every sect require to be watched.

Rev. W. Schofield Battersby, rector of Holy Trinity, Blackley, has been giving some advice to the Bishop of Manchester, who has solicited it from the clergy and laity on the subject of the suggested division of the diocese. Mr. Battersby protests against "robbing priests to pay for two or more additional bishops at £3,000 per annum." "A bishop," he observes, "cannot eat and drink more than a priest—at least, not much more—and £2,750 is really too much to pay for episcopal gaiters, etc." He also suggests that the bishops' motto is: "Covet earnestly the best bishopric, and yet show I unto you a more excellent way, namely, an archbishopric." And the worst of it is that "the Church is getting emptier and more neglected Sunday by Sunday." All this is calcu-

lated to make the bishop expectorate, like a man who has bitten baked sawdust instead of milk-chocolate. But perhaps the Rev. W. Schofield Battersby would, after all, sing a different tune if he were on the road to being a bishop himself.

The Rev. H. W. Webb-Peploe is in a painful plight. For thirty or forty years he has been assiduously defending the Bible against the attacks of his fellow-men. He is fully aware that it almost "savors of presumption" for any man to "defend" the Word of God. God, who inspired the Bible, is obviously perfectly able to defend it. But the fact is that the Supreme Being is just now exceptionally indifferent to the fortunes of his own book. He utters not a word in its favor, nor in rebuke of those who attack it. So Mr. Webb-Peploe is "profoundly pained" to find that the Infallible Word is now being very roughly handled by flippant Higher Critics and wicked Freethinkers. Indeed, he fully realizes that the time has come when defenders of the Old Book are bound to lose reputation, and to be looked upon as fools. But the reverend gentleman, rising to a great height of heroic courage, nobly exclaims, "Very well, I stand for one of these fools."

Hurrah! Pastor Archibald Brown would be sorry to think that Jesus was ruling on earth to-day. "When he looked abroad and saw the misery and injustice and wretchedness there was," he could think nothing of the sort." But, hal-lelujah, Jesus was "on the throne, and was over-ruling all things unto the glory of Jehovah." How passing strange are the ways of Heaven! Do not worry, let things well alone; though he does not rule on earth, Jesus is on the throne in heaven, and all "the misery and injustice and wretchedness" of the world are working together for the glory of God. What a magnificent philosophy of life!

A theological author says that "it is quite possible to carry out the spirit of the whole of Christ's teaching." The spirit of Christ's teaching, however, apart from its letter, is as difficult to find as man's soul apart from his body. The truth is that words have no spirit besides that which the letter expresses.

Mr. Herbert Gladstone, our pious Home Secretary, sanctioned the late "blasphemy" prosecution; and the other night, in the House of Commons, he said something which proved the high moral value of the religion he thinks should be protected. Introducing his new Bill for dealing with habitual criminals, he said that the most formidable class of these enemies of society were "physically fit persons who take crime by preference. They decline work when it is offered them. They refuse the helping hand. They laugh at the present system of imprisonment." But they appear to be blessed with a large share of piety. "They are orthodox attendants at chapel," he said, "and in many cases they are regular attendants at communion." One understands now why Mr. Gladstone is so anxious to protect that holy and elevating religion from ridicule and contempt.

Since Easter Sunday all Catholics who marry, whether amongst themselves or with non-Catholics, are under the ban of the Church unless they go through the marriage ceremony before a priest and two witnesses. The Church will "consider such parties not married, living in sin, and their children illegitimate." This is called a new "law." But the law of England still exists, and the "illegitimacy" of children does not depend on the decrees of Mr. Sarto (that is, Taylor) who lives at the Vatican and calls himself the Pope.

Abd-el-Kadir, the prophet of the Blue Nile Province, who was executed the other day at Hallowin for the murder of Mr. Scott Moncrief and waging war against the Sudan Government, lived at a small village about a hundred miles from Khartoum. Some time before he got into trouble he proclaimed himself to be the prophet Issa—that is, Jesus Christ—and soon collected a following in his neighborhood. Perhaps he *was* Jesus Christ. Who can tell? Ask the Theosophists. They are supposed to be up in "reincarnations."

Prophet Baxter, who has made a lot of money by gulling fools about the end of the world, after fixing that great event a number of times without its ever happening, has now settled upon 1922 as the date of the general wind-up. This is positively the last time of prophesying, for the prophet himself may have gone to glory before then. But with an eye to business, and with a view to keeping the end-of-the-world game in the family after him, he has taken a fresh lease of his commercial premises for 99 years. It is so stated in *John Bull*, and "when you see it in *John Bull* it is so."

Prophet Cumming, who worked the end-of-the-world line before Prophet Baxter, did something very similar. After predicting the great event in fourteen years' time he took a thirty-five years' lease of his residence. Both are cases of "hedging."

We are glad to see *John Bull* protesting against the closing of the Franco-British Exhibition on Sundays. Our contemporary calls it "a severe blow at the *entente cordiale*," as French visitors coming over for the week-end to see the Exhibition will be "staggered to find that on the only day they have available the doors are closed in their faces."

"The English Sunday" was the heading of a beautifully hypocritical article—though otherwise sensible enough—in the *Daily Express* during the French President's visit to London. Our contemporary pays great respect to the Fourth Commandment—and presumably to the God who is supposed to be behind it; it retains its admiration for the British Sunday as "a national possession," and it shudders at the very thought of an "open Sunday" like that in Chicago; but, at the same time, it respects the *entente with France*, and therefore suggests that a modification of the Fourth Commandment should be made to oblige French visitors to the Exhibition. Religion is a fine thing, of course, but it must not stand in the way of social and political business. We cordially agree with the second half of this sentence. The first half is *Daily Express* soft sawder. The truth is that the British Sunday is doomed.

Hartley, the jam man (we have nothing to say against his jam), has bought the Holborn Town Hall for £30,000, and £500 extra for the organ and furniture. It is for the Primitive Methodists, who will use it as a Church House and Book-room. Church Houses are all the rage now. Christian denominations vie with each other in making a costly show. They can't win the people, but they still handle money—which we guess is what they prefer.

The Church Lads' Brigade are appealed to for funds towards a thankoffering in connection with the forthcoming Lambeth Conference. They are asked to put their contributions in a box in the Drill Hall, the contents of which "will be presented to the Bishop of Stepney," who will "in turn present it to the Bishop of London, and he will present it to God." A roundabout way of reaching headquarters! Some people will think that the money will never get beyond the Bishop. It is certainly doubtful if an acknowledgement from the last-named recipient will be forthcoming.

While a number of the clergy are preaching Socialism, and celebrating the Lord Jesus Christ as the greatest Socialist in history, a Christadelphian, named Jannaway, has a mission from the same Lord Jesus Christ to oppose Socialism as poisonous ungodliness. We see that he has been holding forth at Kennington amidst interruptions. To one of his interrupters he put this question: "Under Socialism, who is going to be the dustman?" The answer came pat: "You will." He asked for it!

Uganda is one of the African places that the missionaries boast of. They have "Christianised" it. And the Lord has rewarded the natives for coming into the fold of Christ. Four thousand have died of famine in one province. The crops are a complete failure. "Praise God from whom all blessings flow."

IF CHRIST CAME AGAIN.

Hot-headed Christians sometimes amuse themselves and their readers by speculating on what would happen if Christ again made his appearance on this planet. The chances are that Christ would, unless financially supported, naturally and inevitably gravitate to the workhouse; or, more dreadful still, the probability is that the clergy would kill him. If he, like Cæsar, came, saw, and conquered, the Black Army would find their occupation gone. He once died "on the cross"; they would find themselves unable any longer to live on it. Unless some someone kindly invented a new superstition, they would all be reduced to beggary. Think, dear reader, of the horrid position. The arch-humbags of Canterbury and York, and those perfumed darlings, the bishops, soliciting our pence on the kerbstones. His Oiliness the Pope and Monseignours the Cardinals selling matches. The uniformed officers of the Salvation Army and tens of thousands of professional soul-savers swelling the ranks of the unemployed. The times would, indeed, be "out of joint," and so would the noses of the clergy.

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, June 7, Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, All Saints, Manchester: N. S. S. Annual Conference at 10 30 and 2.30; Public Meeting at 7—Mr. Foote chairman—admission free, reserved seats 1s. and 6d.

To Correspondents.

R. J. HENDERSON.—Cannot give it an article at present. Have made it the subject of a paragraph.

THE PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND: Previously acknowledged. —Donations, £165: Annual Subscriptions, £184 7s. Received since.—R. H. Side, £2; Harry Organ, 2s.

G. ROLEFFS.—Thanks for cuttings.

W. P. BALL.—Your cuttings are always welcome.

J. PATTERSON.—Mr. Foote never held a "debate" with Mr. Bradlaugh, and he was a bachelor in 1876. The quotation is from a jocular article, which the Christian numskull hasn't brains enough to understand. Don't worry about such vermin.

J. B. W.—Under consideration.

HARRY ORGAN.—Very glad to hear that you have "read the *Freethinker* regularly for fifteen years, and owe it a heavy debt of gratitude."

G. EHRMANN.—Walton Powell was not, we believe, a lecturer for the Christian Evidence Society. He was active in the Anti-Infidel gang. But his filthy lies are repeated by the Rev. R. V. Faithfull Davies's underlings.

ATHEIST SCHOOL-TEACHER.—Will be dealt with in our next. Glad your boys "enjoyed" our lectures at Aberdare.

E. J. JONES.—Too late for this week; in our next. Thanks.

C. HUGHES.—A very good letter. Freethinkers should use the local press in that way as much as possible. Pleased to hear you "never tire of reading" our *Flowers of Freethought*. We intend to publish further collections of articles and essays, though perhaps not under the same title.

R. J.—The Holyoake Biography was not sent to us for review. We shall look into the book at leisure. There is no hurry—and we have so many books to buy.

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

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

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

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Sugar Plums.

The National Secular Society's Annual Conference is to be held to-day in the Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, All Saints, Manchester. The President's hammer will strike the table for business at 10.30 a.m., and the morning session will close at 12.30. At 1 o'clock the customary luncheon (tickets 2s.) will take place at the Merchants' Hotel, Oldham-street, Piccadilly. The afternoon session will open at 2.30 and close at 4.30. At 7 there will be a public meeting in the Secular Hall, addressed by Messrs. Foote, Cohen, Lloyd, Davies, etc. For the comfort of "saints" who want to avoid a crush, and yet to secure seats, a charge of 1s. and 6d. will be made for first and second reserved seats. All the rest of the seats will be free.

It will be impossible for the Manchester friends to meet all trains arriving at so many stations. Visitors to the Conference will therefore please make for the Merchants' Hotel, Oldham-street, on Saturday evening. The position of the hotel is very central, being only one door off Piccadilly, opposite the Infirmary. The principal stations are within easy walking distance of it. Members of the Manchester Branch committee will be in attendance, as well as the N. S. S. general secretary, Miss E. M. Vance.

Now that the summer season is arriving, and Freethinkers, like other people, will be moving about on holiday, we venture to say a word to them about getting their weekly copy of this journal. If they are staying for a week or more at a seaside or other resort, the simplest method is to go to the railway bookstall and order the *Freethinker* when obtaining their other literature. Generally speaking, now, we believe they will find little difficulty; but should any be encountered, we beg them to communicate with our publishing office, from which a complaint shall be made to the firm in question. We might add that the summer season is a good time for taking extra copies of the *Freethinker* and judiciously introducing it to likely persons who are met in the more free and easy intercourse of holiday-making.

We will also say a special word about the boycott of this journal. Freethinkers should order it where they order other publications, and if obstacles are raised against their obtaining it they should threaten to take their custom elsewhere—and carry out the threat if necessary. The way to stop bigotry in the business world is to let the bigots see that it costs them more than they wish to pay. They will cry off when they see the game is too expensive.

Some of our friends are taking several copies weekly, and ordering them of several different bookstalls or newsagents. By this means they make the *Freethinker* better known, and show the trade that it is really in demand.

We have received the following for the Gerald Massey Fund (Those who intend to subscribe should do so by next week, as we intend to remit it to the Treasurer after seeing the *Freethinker* through the press):—J. H. Ridgway, 1s. 6d.; R. Taylor, 2s. 6d.; J. P., 1s. 6d.; R. T. Nichols, £1 1s.

There are some interesting articles in the June number of the *Positivist Review*. The first is on "The Philosophy of Comte" by that clear and powerful thinker, the late Dr. J. H. Bridges. The next is by Mr. F. J. Gould on "History Teaching," in which we note the following definition: "Civilisation is the progress of feeling, thought, and character towards the triumph of love over egotism in society at large as well as in the individual." Mr. Swinny, the editor, writes with his usual sanity and good temper on Mr. Wells's *New Worlds for Old*. We see in the editorial paragraphs a hint that the outrages of the extreme nationalists in India are the direct result of Mr. Morley's introduction of Russian methods in repression. We never could understand why Mr. Morley went to the India Office. And at his time of life, too!

Mr. Edwin C. Walker sends us a copy of his *Sketch and Appreciation of Moncure Daniel Conway*, being "An Address at the Paino-Conway Memorial Meeting of the Manhattan Liberal Club, January 31, 1908." Mr. Walker publishes it, price 15 cents, at his own address, 244 West 148rd Street, New York City. The sketch of Conway's life is excellently done, mainly, of course, from the *Autobiography*, and Mr. Walker has unlimited praise for Conway as a soldier of freedom. We hope the pamphlet will have a good circulation in America, and we should be glad to see it circulating in this country also.

"ST. GEORGE OF ENGLAND."

On the back of a half-sovereign—that painfully rare object—you may see a design of a man on horseback apparently killing a cockroach with a carving-knife. This is meant to portray St. George and the dragon. And St. George is facetiously supposed to be the patron saint of our "tight little island." The Saint's biography is unpleasant reading, and quite unsuited for the Sunday-school. Historians agree in disclosing a pitiable story of a misspent life. From the highest to the lowest, from Gibbon to Dr. William Smith, they describe St. George as a rascal. Yet this precious knave became, in good time, St. George of England, patron of chivalry, the emblem of victory and civility, and the pride of the best blood of the modern world.

What is most lacking to our time is the deep and serene calm which brings strength to the soul. Favored in so many ways, we are poor and mean in character. Our moral fibre seems weakened. And this is the reason why at times our civilised society seems to me like one of those beautiful ships which science, art, and industry have fitted with marvellous machines and sumptuous arrangements for comfort, but which, in the middle of the ocean, unexpectedly runs out of coal; and then the magnificent ship is nothing more than a waif, at the mercy of the winds and waves.—*Charles Wagner.*

Freethought in Many Lands.

FREETHOUGHT is not, like Whiggery, a mental product essentially English, or circumscribed, like Barclay and Perkins, by the gustatory palate of the British nation. It transcends the limits of our tight little island, and here and everywhere symbolises the intellectual and moral progress of every nation where its vivifying influence makes itself felt. Laws and conventions, the terrors of death or prison, or the more acute tortures which that sanctified virago, Mrs. Grundy, holds in reserve for the pioneers of new ideas,—all these cannot avail against that subtle and all-penetrating spirit of Freethought, which bloweth where it listeth—sometimes with the soft persuasive sigh of the summer breeze, and sometimes with the iconoclastic energy of the hurricane. The glory of Freethought shines forth in the fact that it is not—to repeat our original simile—a mere by-product of the English intellect, or some casual parochial characteristic chained down to a particular spot, or rooting itself to some eccentric local centre of manifestation. It is cosmopolitan, international, and widespread as civilisation itself, it grows day by day more intensely conscious of its power as a world-force capable of entering the lists with every confidence of ultimate victory against the hydra-headed monster of Christian superstition.

It is cheerful to know that the conflict which Freethought wages here in England is not an isolated and sporadic outburst of guerrilla rebelliousness against the constraining authority of religion. We can of course, if needs be, accept the task of cleansing our Augean stables in Church and State without these extraneous encouragements, but it is certainly more inspiring to know that the banner of Freethought is worthily upheld in other lands, and that the fight for freedom is being maintained by our brethren across the seas. One is gladdened to know that in every quarter of the world men are learning to recognise the deep moral significance of Gambetta's utterance, "*Le Clericalisme, c'est l'ennemi.*" In that world-wide conflict of Freethought for sanity and civilisation, we are all—whatsoever our nationality and tongue and the complex diversity of our racial traditions—brothers-in-arms and fellow-soldiers in the fight where Bruno, Servetus, Voltaire, and Bradlaugh won their claim to immortality.

The series of articles, which the present initiates, will seek to garner from the Freethought press in other lands some items of interest and encouragement affecting the progress of the movement throughout the world. Perhaps we may thereby learn some new lessons in human solidarity, and appreciate more fully the essential oneness of our interests as English Freethinkers with the interests of our Freethought co-workers in alien lands.

BOHEMIA.

The International Freethought Congress at Prague in 1907 imparted a phenomenal impulsion to the movement in this country. The first Czech Freethought paper, *Havlicek*, named after one of the early pioneers of the movement who took a leading part in the revolution of 1848, was launched on April 20 of the present year. A first edition of 100,000 copies, distributed gratis, was exhausted in three weeks, and a second edition has been put in hand. One of the leading lecturers—Dr. Barlosek, of Prague—recently delivered a Freethought address at Zizkov before an audience of 1,600 people. The event of the evening was the address of a Catholic priest named Svěgine, who mounted the platform and drew a touching picture of the moral sufferings he had endured for years whilst teaching and preaching Christian doctrines in which he had ceased to believe. He wound up his speech by formally separating himself from the Church, and by retracting his pulpit deliverances. The priest quitted the Church then and there, and is now earning an

humble livelihood as a weaver at three francs a day. R. J. Campbell, Go thou and do likewise!

The movement in Bohemia is not confined to one section of the population. Germans emulate Czechs, and both races forget their animosities under the beneficent ægis of Freethought. A German Freethought group was formed at Prague on January 11 this year, and has already given proof of remarkable activity. On February 7, it commemorated the life-work of Strauss. This function was followed on February 21 by a commemoration of Giordano Bruno. On March 6, it organised a lecture on Ulrich von Hutten, and on the twenty-first of the same month it co-operated with the Czech group in organising a grand demonstration—attended by more than 3,000 people—in favor of Professor Wahrmond, who has recently been such a thorn in the flesh of the Austrian bigots. Finally, on the seventeenth of the present month, a Congress of the various German Freethought Societies in Bohemia took place, concerning which I may have more to say in a subsequent article.

As a result of the Prague Congress, one of its principle organisers, Karel Pelant, made a special lecturing visit to the United States and toured the country, delivering lectures to his Czech compatriots in the States and founding new Freethought Societies, or consolidating the old, as he went along. On June 13, last year, a Congress of Czech Freethinkers took place at Chicago, and terminated its labors on the sixteenth of same month. At Chicago, it appears, the different Czech Societies of Freethinkers number about 80,000 members. They publish a daily rationalist paper, and have Sunday-schools of their own, where the instruction given is on purely secular lines. Czech Freethought in the States is, however, not a new growth. The recent Congress at Chicago was organised in order to celebrate the jubilee of their activity as a conscious fighting-force for Freethought. Evidently the spirit of John Huss is not dead in Bohemia, nor amongst the sons and daughters of that heroic race.

PORTUGAL.

The sombre tragedy of February last, which destroyed King Carlos and consigned Franco to eternal infamy, lends a touch of pathos to the movement in favor of Freethought in the land of Camoëns and Vasco da Gama. Nowhere, save in Russia and Spain, has the faith, once delivered to the saints, better illustrated its futility and inutility as an instrument of human progress. In this connection, it is worth while recording what M. de Laveleye said, some forty years ago, about the priests in that country. Like the traditional pope, they lead a merry life. The country curés are poor, and—so M. de Laveleye saw—not afflicted with excessive chastity. He found the clergy sunken in sloth, and as indifferent to religion as their flocks. In spite of all this, religion was firmly established, if not in the hearts of the people at any rate in the Penal Code of Portugal, according to the provisions of which any citizen who, having been brought up in the Catholic religion, embraces any other faith, is liable to loss of political rights for the period of twenty years. Although the Code severely punishes Freethought propaganda, the magistrates, more enlightened than the laws they are paid to administer, for the most part deem it prudent to allow these enactments to drop into desuetude.

During the present year Portugal has given many tokens of her awakening to the influences of Freethought. The recent constitutional cataclysm was but the political expression of the intellectual revival which in Portugal, as in Spain and elsewhere throughout the long dormant Latin democracies, is heralding a new efflorescence of life and thought.

One of the principal events in the history of Portuguese Freethought during the present year was the series of demonstrations which took place on February 24, throughout the length and breadth of Portugal, in celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the entry of Professor Teófilo Braga upon his literary career. Braga, who is not only one of the chief

leaders of the Republican party but also a convinced Freethinker, occupies the highest position in the country as a philosopher, a historian, and a litterateur. The hero of this literary jubilee is only sixty-five years of age, having published his first poem when but fifteen years old. As poet, he is the author of an epic entitled *The Vision of Time*, embracing the history of the human mind from the early days when man's fears of the Unknown created the primitive myths and forged for him the chains of religion. The poet prospects his view forward to the time when the human mind will have freed itself from its present bondage to religion. As historian, he is still at work on his monumental history of Portugal. In his *Sociology* he follows on the lines of Comte and Spencer, whilst preserving his originality of treatment of the varied problems of our complex social life.

All that was most distinguished in arts and letters in Portugal gathered around the great thinker and paid the homage of their admiration to the man who has been an inspiration to three generations of his countrymen. It speaks eloquently of Portuguese Freethought when it can count a man so eminent amongst its chief luminaries.

It is gratifying, therefore, to know that when, on the four days April 19 to 22 last, the first national Freethought Congress met at Lisbon, Braga took a leading and enthusiastic part in its labors. He opened the proceedings of the Congress with a magnificent address, the boldness and perspicuity of which are in brilliant contrast with the tame, well-bred platitudes of the average professional palaverer in this country. Speaking of the condition of affairs in Portugal, he said that the dawning twentieth century is dominated by two terrible scourges, "the systematised folly of religion, and the legalised folly of dynastic monarchy." He went on to say that "the fiction of religion, which sets against the rational notions of science the absurdities of old myths, which are no longer even poetic, for they only present to the inquiring mind a number of common-place allegories, imposes its authority upon us by the perfidy of the priests who carry on their intrigues in the bosom of our families and intimidate the basely empirical and reactionary governments that rule over us."

The Congress—which, be it again noted, was the first of its ilk—was a signal success in every way. Representatives were present from working-class organisations, political committees, masonic lodges, educational groups, and democratic centres, whilst the professional element and the press—always to the fore in every Freethought fight on the continent—were conspicuously strong. A hopeful sign was the presence of women in large numbers. Dona Maria Velleda was the first lady president at the Congress, but on subsequent occasions during its sittings, other ladies occupied the presidential chair. There are solid grounds for believing that here, as in Italy and Spain, the female mind, long docile to priestly manipulation, is becoming refractory to religious influences. When the women escape from their age-long entanglements with theology, the rescue of the child from the hands of the priest will follow as light follows the dawn, and the emancipation of the Madonna and the Bambino will achieve the salvation of man.

One of the happy ideas of our Portuguese brethren deserves mention and emulation. Everybody knows the dolorous institution of "holy week," and what a plethora of inane preaching and pious self-torture signalise—in Catholic countries—the advent of Easter. As a protest against the insufferable stupidities which make the "holy week" before Easter so dismal to the memory of anyone who has been victimised in this fashion, the Lisbon Freethinkers started this year a "Secular week," by way of counterblast. On "holy Wednesday" Dr. Maximo Bron delivered a lecture on "The Origins of Religion," and Sr. Augusto Vieira another on "The Falsities of Religion." On Maundy Thursday the latter gentleman spoke on "The Origins of Catholicism," and Sr.

Saa Pereira traced "The History of the Romish Church." On Good Friday Sr. Ferrera Manso dealt with "Catholicism in Portuguese History," and Sr. Gastão Rodrigues dwelt on "Religious Reaction in the Family and the School." On the Saturday before Easter Dr. Cunha e Costa unfolded the theme of "Primitive Christianity and Modern Clericalism." Our esteemed friend, Dr. Magalhães Lima, a doughty champion of the sacred cause of peace and the embodiment of Portuguese Freethought—the man whom Franco so feared by reason of his persistent exposures of the great Franco fraud that he suppressed his paper, *Vanguardia*, and banished its editor—made his first public appearance on his return to Portugal as chairman at Dr. Costa's lecture. Two other addresses were delivered the same day in other parts of the city, and the series was concluded by two discourses on Easter Sunday. To some of us who imagined that no good can come out of Portugal except port wine, it will be refreshing to know from the foregoing facts that the days are numbered, and the numbers visibly dwindling, of the "God-intoxicated men" who are in the spiritual line of descent from the priests, dominicans, and other ministers at the altar of a God of Love, who, crucifix in hand, led the fanatical populace of Lisbon, drunk with blood for the glory of God, to the slaughter of the "Christianised" Jews, the priests first baptising the "converts" and the Christian crowd slaughtering them afterwards.

The rise of Freethought in Portugal is of happy augury for her welfare and dignity, and the manifestations of this new spirit in the national life will be hailed with profoundest interest by all the friends of intellectual progress throughout the world.

WM. HEAFORD.

The Sayings of Jesus.—X.

(Continued from p. 347.)

IN considering the so-called sayings of Jesus there is one point that should constantly be borne in mind. Assuming that sayings had to be concocted as the reputed utterances of a divine savior, how were such sayings to be made? To the minds of the primitive Christians there was but one method of doing it. These divine utterances must be based upon, and in harmony with, sayings believed to be divinely inspired in the Hebrew scriptures. No other way was open to them; and this method, as I have shown, was that usually followed. It should also be remembered that after the appearance of the canonical Gospels, many ancient MSS. of pre-existing Christian writings, which, no doubt, contained primitive sayings attributed to Jesus, ceased to be copied, and so were lost to posterity. Only an extract here and there from some of these writings has been preserved by early Christian writers. The following is one of these few excerpts, found in an ancient homily miscalled "The Second Epistle of Clement," whose composition has been assigned to A.D. 120—140:—

"For the Lord saith, Ye shall be as lambs in the midst of wolves. But Peter answered and said unto him, What then, if the wolves should tear the lambs? Jesus said unto Peter, Let not the lambs fear the wolves after they are dead. And ye also, fear ye not them that kill you, and are not able to do anything [more] to you; but fear him that after ye are dead hath power over soul and body, to cast them into the Gehenna of fire."

We are not told whether Peter experienced very much comfort from this reply to his question: but editor Luke, for one, did not think much of it, for he records the first sentence (Luke x. 3) and the concluding portion of the paragraph (Luke xii. 4-5)—which he represents as spoken on two different occasions—but he discreetly omits the words italicised, probably deeming them idiotic, or at least unworthy of the Savior.

In one of the Gospels Jesus is described as calling himself a "shepherd" and all who believed on him

his "sheep"; after which he goes on to say:—

"To him the porter openeth, and the sheep *hear his voice*; and *he calleth his own sheep by name*, and leadeth them out.....and the sheep follow him; for they know his voice" (John x. 3-4).

Such perfect knowledge, trust, and affection between this "Good Shepherd" and his flock is really quite affecting; but alas, the description is only an amplified paraphrase of a passage in one of the "holy books" in which the righteous are likened to sheep. The prophet Enoch says of the Lord of Spirits (xl. 1-2):—

"I observed that *he called them all by their respective names*, and that *they heard*.....They are the names of the righteous who dwell upon earth, and who believe in the name of the Lord of Spirits."

In another Gospel, Jesus invites all weary and overworked believers to "come" to him, and promises to give them "rest," as well as rest for their "souls." He says:—

"I am the good *shepherd*"—"Come unto me all ye that labor, and are heavy laden, and I will *give you rest*. Take my *yoke* upon you, and *learn* of me.....and *ye shall find rest unto your souls*" (John x. 11; Matt. xi. 28-29).

These comforting words have furnished material for thousands of sermons for many generations. They were derived, however, as might be expected, from the "holy books," though in this instance we have to search three of those books to find them. The passages are the following:—

"Look for your *shepherd*, he shall give you everlasting rest"—"Put your neck under the *yoke* [of wisdom] and let your soul receive *instruction*"—"Walk therein, and *ye shall find rest for your souls*" (2 Esd. ii. 34; Eccles. li. 26; Jer. vi. 16).

Again, in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus gives further directions as to getting "rest for their souls." He says (Matt. vii. 7-8):—

"Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you: for every one that asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh it shall be opened."

In these directions Jesus has omitted to tell us of whom we are to ask, where to seek, or whence to knock. The "Lord God," however, is more explicit. Speaking to, or through, his servant Jeremiah, he says (xxix. 12-13):—

"And ye shall call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you. And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart."

Thus, it was not Jesus who was to be asked and sought, but the Lord God himself. The Sermon on the Mount is a purely Jewish (or rather Essene) code; its rules applying to conduct and worship are quite independent of Jesus, and therefore cannot properly be called Christian.

In the First Gospel—once more, in the famous Sermon on the Mount—Jesus is represented as pronouncing a blessing on the victims of religious persecution. He says (Matt. v. 10-12):—

"Blessed are they that have been persecuted for *righteousness'* sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye when men shall reproach you and persecute you.....*Rejoice* and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven."

Assuming these words to have been uttered by Jesus, how did that Savior know that those who suffered persecution on earth should be rewarded in heaven? In what way were these unfortunate individuals to be rewarded above the righteous who died without having been persecuted? The twelve apostles, we know, were to sit upon thrones. Was there any other kind of reward? Could a righteous man get to heaven without suffering persecution? If yes, why should he rejoice at being tortured or put to a painful death? In short, were the words which are here put in the mouth of Jesus uttered by one who had an actual knowledge of the rewards awaiting the righteous in the kingdom beyond the skies? There

can be no doubt as to the answer. No one possessed of such knowledge would employ the vague and indefinite language used in the Gospel. The words are those of the Gospel writer only who took his ideas from the following passage in one of the "holy books":—

Enoch cii. 6; ciii. 3. "Fear not, ye souls of the righteous.....Grieve not because your souls descend in great trouble, with groaning, lamentation, and sorrow.....The spirits of those of you who died in *righteousness*, shall exist and rejoice."

Here are precisely the same ideas as those ascribed to Jesus. The Gospel writer merely gives more prominence to the word "rejoice," to which he adds "and be exceeding glad," which again means "rejoice." He does not say what shall be the reward of the righteous who had suffered persecution, the reason, of course, being that no such information is given in Enoch.

The writer of the Third Gospel narrates an incident of a woman in the crowd who "lifted up her voice" and declared the mother of Jesus to be blessed. The narrative continues:—

"But Jesus said, Yea rather, *blessed are they that hear the word of God*, and keep it" (Luke xi. 28).

Jesus does not say in what way these people were to be blessed. This was doubtless because nothing was said upon the subject in the source passage which suggested the reply.

2 Esd. vii. 45. "And I answerd and said, O Lord.....*Blessed are they who when living keep those things ordained by thee.*"

The "things ordained by thee" were the commands in the so-called "word of God."

In the Fourth Gospel, Jesus is represented as saying to the only sane man among the disciples—otherwise, the sceptical Thomas "who is called Didymus"—

"Because thou have seen me, thou hast believed: *blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed*" (John xx. 29).

Here we have a sample of the kind of faith approved by Jesus—blind, unreasoning credulity. The same method of reasoning was employed by all Christian writers of the second century; Justin Martyr, Theophilus, bishop of Antioch, and the author of the forged letter of Jesus Christ to Abgarus may be cited as examples. The words placed in the mouth of Jesus were, no doubt, suggested by the following passage in one of the "holy books":—

2 Esd. i. 37. "I take to witness the grace of the people that shall come.....and *though they see me not with bodily eyes*, yet in spirit *they shall believe* the things that I say."

The ideas of Jesus (or the Gospel writer) with respect to evidence are further illustrated in Mark xvi. 14, in which it is recorded that he "upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen." The testimony here referred to was that of three persons—Mary Magdalene and two unnamed followers of Jesus who were not apostles. The first of these three witnesses is stated in Luke xxiv. 23—and also in the same chapter of Mark (xvi. 6)—to have not seen the risen Jesus: so that the bare word of two men who had walked and talked with him without recognising him (Mark xvi. 12; Luke xxiv. 13-29) was considered amply sufficient to establish the fact that he had been raised from the dead.

The following are some further examples of sayings attributed to Jesus which I give without comment:—

GOSPEL SAYINGS.	OLDER WRITINGS.
Matt. xxvi. 11. "For ye have the poor always with you: but me ye have not always."	Deut. xv. 11. "For the poor shall never cease out of the land."
Matt. vi. 31, 34. "O ye of little faith! Be not therefore anxious, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink?.....Be not therefore anxious for the morrow."	Psalms xxxvii. 25, 29. "I have been young, and now am old: Yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken nor his seed begging their bread.....In the day of famine they shall be satisfied."

GOSPEL SAYINGS.

Luke xii. 24. "Consider the ravens, that they sow not, neither reap; which have no store chamber, nor barn; and God feedeth them." (Matt. vi. 26.)

Matt. xviii. 34. "Except ye turn, and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven." (Mark x.)

Mark x. 7. "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the twain shall become one flesh."

Matt. xxiii. 12. "And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be humbled, and whosoever shall humble himself shall be exalted." (Luke xiv. 11; xviii. 14.)

Luke xiv. 5. "Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fallen into a well, and will not straightway draw him up on the sabbath day." (Matt. xi. 11.)

Matt. xxvi. 24. "Woe unto that man through whom the Son of man is betrayed. Good were it for that man if he had not been born."

Mark iv. 29. "But when the fruit is ripe, straightway he putteth forth the sickle, because the harvest is come."

Luke xiv. 8-10. "When thou art bidden of any man to a marriage feast, sit not down in the chief seat; lest haply a more honorable man than thou be bidden of him, and he that bade thee and him shall come and say to thee, Give this man place.....But when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest place, that when he that hath bidden thee cometh, he may say to thee, Friend, go up higher," etc.

From the foregoing examples, and the passages already noticed, it will, I think, begin to be perceived what a truly great "revelation" Jesus has made to the human race.

OLDER WRITINGS.

Job. xxxviii. 41. "Who provideth for the raven his food, when his young ones cry unto God, and wander for lack of meat."

Psalms cxxx. 1-2. "Lord, my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty; neither do I exercise myself in great matters, or in things too wonderful for me. Surely I have stilled and quieted my soul.....My soul is with me like a weaned child."

Gen. ii. 24. "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh."

Prov. xxix. "A man's pride shall bring him low; but he that is of a lowly spirit shall obtain honor." (Psalms xviii. 27.)

Deut. xxii. 4. "Thou shalt not see thy brother's ass or his ox fallen down by the way.....thou shalt surely help him to lift them up again."

Ezech. xxxviii. 2. "— those who have rejected the Lord of Spirits. It would have been better for them if they had never been born."

Joel iii. 13. "Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe.....for their wickedness is great." (Rev. xiv. 15.)

Prov. xxv. 6-7. "Put not thyself forward in the presence of the king, and stand not in the place of great men: for better is it that it be said unto thee, Come up hither, than that thou shouldst be put lower in the presence of the prince, whom thine eyes have seen."

ABRACADABRA.

(To be continued)

Iconoclasts' Cricket Club.

Secretary :

E. H. Newson, 15 Avenue-road, Hammersmith, W.

Captain :

H. E. Voigt, 14 Aynhoe-road, West Kensington.

Treasurer :

W. A. Vaughan, 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

The hope of the promoters is that they may be the Pioneers of a strong movement for the rationalisation of the Sunday by the encouragement of games and recreations of all sorts, and they believe that the wide-spread adoption of such a movement would deal a heavy and damaging blow at the Churches and Sabbatarianism in particular.

All Freethinkers are invited to become members or send donations to the treasurer. Branches of the club could be formed in all parts if sufficient support is given. The Iconoclasts have arranged a complete list of fixtures and play matches every Sunday against other clubs on their own ground at Hanwell. Practice is given to players on Sunday mornings, and the Captain will be in attendance, whenever possible, to advise and coach those players with less experience than himself. The subscription is very moderate and boys pay only half the amount. Reports of matches will appear in the *Freethinker* from time to time. The ground is at the Grove, Hanwell, which is easily accessible from most parts of London. Freethinkers are cordially invited to look on on Sundays and to cheer the Iconoclasts on to victory.

Correspondence.

SOCIALISM AND RELIGION.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Your article in the last issue explains the whole situation, and is of the greatest interest and importance. The Socialist movement is slowly but surely being "nobbled" by religion. No effort as yet has been made by the leaders of Socialism to save the situation, but they appear to be getting slowly absorbed, bag and baggage; and the next thing to look forward to will be the edifying spectacle of leaders of religion dictating their own terms to the leaders of Socialism. The pity of it all! Within the last few months I attended a Socialist demonstration in the Coliseum, Leeds. The speakers were the Revs. R. J. Campbell, Stitt Wilson, and T. Rhondda Williams. Mr. Blatchford presided; and everything that your article contains was proved to the full at this meeting of about 4,000 people. Mr. Campbell, in his discourse, referred to the worthy chairman, whose views were pretty widely known; but he (Mr. Campbell) hoped that the time was not far distant when Mr. Blatchford would embrace the New Theology, and Mr. Blatchford smiled the smile that was to be expected. At the time the next speaker was introduced he made no comment on it, and here was a glaring example of a parson being allowed to come into a purely secular movement and foist his own special brand of theology on to audience and chairman alike. Pamphlets were pushed round with such titles as *Jesus Christ the First Socialist*, etc. Now, if Mr. Blatchford and other leaders of Socialism cannot extricate themselves from their present position, they will either have to take a back seat or be pushed out altogether. Socialism is being "nobbled" by the clergy, to be used as a buttress to decaying Christianity. They have fought against it tooth and nail for ages, and, as they could not kill it, they are taking it over, to be tamed or starved to death; and the fact of the clergy gushing on the one hand about Socialism, and men such as Blatchford and Thompson canting about religion on the other, is a fact that speaks for itself. A few years ago Mr. Campbell was brought to book for insulting working men in a sermon in the City Temple. They are now his "dear comrades," and they are welcome to him.

C. W. STYRING.

May 31, 1908.

Founded on Falsehoods.

"MIRACLES," said Matthew Arnold in a celebrated passage, "do not happen." The newest of new theologians echo the same cry. Yet one thing must be evident to every unprejudiced observer. Christianity is based upon miracle. It is on the truth or falsehood of miracles that the personality of Jesus must stand or fall. It was by miracles that he attested his divine sovereignty. It was by miracles that he won his first following. It was by miracles that he proclaimed himself the "Son of God," and without the credulous belief in the miracles Christianity would have died a natural death in its first infancy. It is not, indeed, a creed of Love which has fascinated so many millions of humanity. Christ claimed that he was God, and his "proofs" were that he multiplied loaves and fishes, healed the sick, and brought back the dead to life. The whole question, therefore, is reduced to one of facts. If we can believe that Jesus was really born of a virgin, that he performed many prodigies, and that he actually and finally left the earth like a balloon, then we need not hesitate in accepting the pretensions of Christianity. If, on the other hand, we believe that natural law is never broken, or that the proofs are inadequate, we need not pause to consider the moral beauties of the character of Jesus. We can no longer bow down before him as either incarnate God or even the wisest of men.

Obituary.

We regret to announce the death of a well-known and highly-esteemed London Freethinker, Mr. Jesse Hopkins, whose cremation took place at Golder's Green on Saturday, May 23. Mr. Hopkins was seventy-six years of age, forty of which were spent in the militant service of Freethought. He was for a long period a zealous follower of Mr. Bradlaugh, and to the end of his life he never neglected an opportunity of giving expression to the faith that was in him. And it was in the creed that sustained and comforted him in life that he triumphantly died, heroically refusing the consolations offered him by Christian ministers.—L.

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 and 6.15, Mr. Aldred.

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S.: Station-road, 11.30, W. J. Ramsey. Brockwell Park, 3.15, W. J. Ramsey.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S.: Outside Maryland Point Station, Stratford, 7, W. J. Ramsey, "God and His Chosen People."

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

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

COUNTRY.

EDINBURGH BRANCH N. S. S. (Rationalists' Club, 12 Hill-square): Social meeting, Thursdays, at 8.15.

OUTDOOR.

EDINBURGH BRANCH N. S. S.: The Meadows, 3, a Lecture; The Mound, 6.30, a Lecture.

H. S. WISHART'S LECTURES.

BOLTON: Tuesday, June 9, Town Hall Square, at 7.30, "Free-Will and the Bottom Dog."

WIGAN: Wednesday, June 10, Market Steps, at 7.30, "Human Responsibility: To Whom?"

ROCHDALE: Thursday, June 11, Town Hall Square, at 7.30, "Poverty, Misery, Free-Will, and Determinism."

LEEDS: Friday, June 12, Town Hall Square, at 7.30, "Mormonism: A Study in Mental and Moral Philosophy."

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