

# THE Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

VOL. XXVIII.—No. 34

SUNDAY, AUGUST 23, 1908

PRICE TWOPENCE

*The beginning of Creation is—Light.*  
—THOMAS CARLYLE.

## Free Church Blarney.

DR. CLIFFORD has just issued his three millionth manifesto (we believe that is about the number) on the Education struggle. It is a curious document, and we propose to give it a little attention. Not that it is worth anything in itself. Its importance is entirely due to his position among the Nonconformists. They think a lot of him, and on that account we notice what he says.

"Dr. Clifford's Ultimatum on Passive Resistance," as the *Daily Chronicle* describes it, is one of the most hypocritical things we ever saw. We call it *hypocritical* because we cannot conceive any man of ordinary intelligence being quite so blind as this gentleman affects to be. A sincere polemist would reply to his opponents. Dr. Clifford never does that. He goes on repeating his "arguments" as if nothing whatever had been said against them. He pretends not to know that there is anything to reply to. This is not honest. It is one of the meanest and most impudent tricks of controversy.

The Free Church leader's first object is to stimulate and encourage Passive Resisters. He wants to see them rebel and go to prison in larger numbers. "Go to prison," he says. He never says, "Come to prison." They are to do time, and he is to applaud them—which is a nice division of labor. Dr. Clifford has carefully kept out of the stone jug himself. So have all the other Free Church leaders. We do not know of one of them who has fought at the front. They direct operations from the rear. And they will continue to do so as long as their silly dupes are ready to suffer for the falsest of all causes.

We repeat that Passive Resistance, as carried on by Free Churchmen, is the falsest of all causes. They cannot lay down any principle to justify their refusing rates in support of religious teaching in elementary schools under Mr. Balfour's Act, which would not justify Catholics and Anglicans in refusing rates under either of the Education Bills that the Liberal Government has introduced to satisfy its Nonconformist clients. Nay, the same principle would justify Freethinkers (who are more numerous than Dr. Clifford supposes) in refusing rates in support of any religious teaching whatsoever. If Dr. Clifford be asked why he refuses to pay rates for such and such religious teaching, he can only reply, "Because I do not believe it." Precisely the same reply could be given by Freethinkers to the same question. Not, indeed, that this is *all* the Freethinkers have to say. They deny the right of the State to teach any religion. They have a principle at stake. Dr. Clifford has only a preference.

This old mountebank leader of the Passive Resistance movement used to mouth about Secular Education. He made out that he was in favor of it as the only wise and just policy. Many people believed him, though we never did. We knew that he would have to appear, sooner or later, in his true colors. And the moment of detection and exposure arrived on the formation of the Secular Education League. Dr. Clifford was invited to co-operate. He replied,

in brief, that he was for Secular Education *plus* the Bible. Which was just like telling a Temperance meeting that he was for soda-water *plus* whiskey.

We are quite aware that Dr. Clifford says he wants the Bible used in the schools as *literature*. But that is all humbug—and he knows it. He really wants the Bible used as a book of *religion*. He stands for *Christian* teaching in the schools. He says so in moments of candor—or in lucid intervals—whichever way you choose to take it. Moreover, the Nonconformists have accepted Mr. McKenna's declaration that religious teaching, under his Bill, shall be taken as meaning the religious teaching embodied in the London County Council syllabus. This religious teaching is to be the only one that the Government will pay for. It is to be State endowed. It is to be the State religion. Dr. Clifford agrees to this. Yet he has the impudence to go on talking about the glorious principles of civil and religious liberty. The old charlatan!

Listen to this from Dr. Clifford's "Ultimatum":—

"I know it is said that so long as the Bible or any part of it is used in the State schools the Free Churches are on the rates. They are not. As Churches they derive no advantage whatever from its civic use over and above what they do from any legitimate use of Milton or Shakespeare. It is only in total ignorance of what the Free Churches hold and teach that such misrepresentation can find any support. In fact, the plea is simply the despairing cry of men who will not part with their unjust monopolies."

This rubbish is addressed to Free Churchmen. Dr. Clifford could not venture to address it to outsiders. He has sense enough to know that they would laugh in his face. Catholics want Catholic religious teaching; Anglicans want Anglican religious teaching; Nonconformists, having no common creed, want the religious teaching on which they can all agree for this occasion. What essential difference is there between the policies of these three factions?

The Free Church policy is "Simple Bible Teaching." What that means is discoverable from the London County Council syllabus. Just glance at that document, and you will see what unspeakable jargon is Dr. Clifford's talk about "the civic use" of the Christian Scriptures. Civic use! Why, the Nonconformist leaders have publicly agreed that "Simple Bible Teaching" shall be kept within the limits of the Apostles' Creed; a precious thing that does not contain a single sentence relating to the "civic" or any other uses of *this* world. It is all about the Christian Mythos and Kingdom-Come.

Free Churches are on the rates. The religion they approve—the religion that is useful to them—is taught in myriads of Council schools at the public expense. It is a shameless assertion that they "derive no advantage" from this arrangement. They derive an immense advantage. They get millions of children prejudiced in favor of the book which is the Protestants' all in all. Something more is necessary to make Anglicans, and something still more to make Catholics; but that alone is sufficient to make Free Churchmen. Thus the multitude of schools in which "Simple Bible Teaching" obtains (and Mr. McKenna hopes to increase them) are simply Protestant Free Church breeding-grounds. And this is what Dr. Clifford is fighting for.

G. W. FOOTE.

## Religion and the "Daily News."

THE *Daily News* is almost, if not quite, a hopeless case. A week or two ago I commented on its confession that it believed Atheists to be quite extinct. In a more recent issue it pursues its policy of deluding itself and misleading its readers by asserting that "the Atheist, or even the determined Agnostic, is now a mere survival of the Victorian era." This marks a little improvement, but not much. Formerly there were no Atheists. Now there are some; but they are a survival, and will, the *D. N.* hopes, soon disappear. At this rate of progression these well-informed writers will discover—say in the course of the next ten or twenty years—that there really are a number of Atheists in existence, and then will follow the customary appeal for funds for the defence of the faith. The combination of Christianity and Cocoa seems to be exerting quite a depressing influence. Either alone is bad enough; together they are quite deplorable.

With quite an imposing air of philosophic gravity the *D. N.* gives reason for its belief that Atheism is now a mere survival. It says:—

"The old contest between religion and science is gradually dying away, although some belated combatants still continue the fight, knowing not that a fresh light has changed the very issues of the battle."

Now, one may grant that the battle between religion and science is not now as fierce as it was thirty or forty years ago. One cannot fight so fiercely when one of the combatants spends best part of his time lying down or begging of the other not to hurt. Forty years ago religion was still domineering, and claimed the right to express an authoritative opinion concerning matters over which science alone claimed control. To-day religion has almost completely surrendered all for which it then fought. It is now content to follow, and thankful when scientific men throw it a patronising word or take it under their protection. Tyndall's declaration that science would wrest the whole field of science from the control of theology has been made good. Religion may still practise the arts of boycott and social ostracism; it is no longer in its power to punish its one-time vassal and erstwhile enemy.

Naturally, then, the fight, on the surface, is not so fierce as it was. But it is not over, nor has the issue changed. What was the real issue in pre-evolutionary days? Of course, the immediate object of scientific men was to secure breathing space sufficient to exist. But the real issue was deeper than this. The great question at stake was, in a word, Determinism *versus* Direction. The dispute took various forms—now on a question of physics, now on a question of chemistry, now on a question of biology; but underlying all was the great issue, "Is it possible, or will it ever be possible, to explain all phenomena in terms of mechanical causation, or shall we be always driven to assume some directive intelligence as the real cause of what we mean by the cosmos?" There never has been any other real issue than this. And the conviction that, sooner or later, every change in the whole realm of nature, physical and biological, will be expressed in terms of necessary causation is one that has grown in strength as our perception of natural processes has gained in clearness. It is, moreover, one that no living scientist dare challenge without making himself a laughing-stock to the scientific world.

Will, then, the *Daily News* say in what manner it considers "the very issues of the battle" has changed? Or is the expression a piece of mere journalistic verbiage, without any other justification save that of the necessity of saying something that will please its religious readers?

On the assumption that the issues have changed, the *D. N.* next proceeds to give reasons for the transformation. It says:—

"The psychological researches of James and Starbuck have made it clear that the religious emotions are not

mere delusions, are not disorders of the human mind, but are genuine facts.....Indeed, some would go now so far as to say that those who scoff at religion as mere self-deception are unscientific, for they leave without adequate explanation a whole series of facts in human history and in human psychology."

To those religious people who do not know, or who do not appreciate, the nature of the researches referred to, the allusion, backed with a couple of names, will come with great consolation and effect. To those who do appreciate the nature of these researches the allusion will rouse a smile. To begin with, did anyone of any importance ever deny that religious beliefs, or the so-called religious feelings, were facts? That religious beliefs existed, no one ever denied; what was questioned was whether there existed any external fact to which they corresponded. And, personally, I should feel deeply grateful to the *D. N.* if it would point out anything in the writings of James or Starbuck, or anyone else for that matter, that would settle that question in the affirmative. That there were emotions which some people called religious was, again, not denied. But there was offered an explanation of those emotions, which affiliated them to other human emotions, of which they were shown to be but distorted expressions. The truth is that the sceptic has all along been offering explanations of religious feelings and religious beliefs, and these explanations are now enforced by a wide and trustworthy study of savage life that has given his explanations a thoroughly scientific character. And all along the religionist has been protesting that no explanation was offered, because the one given was not *his* explanation. The fact is that the explanation is there, and fits in so well with the known facts that religious teachers are *afraid* to handle it. Their safest policy, they feel, is to act as though no explanation were forthcoming, and to trust to the helpful ignorance of their supporters.

It is really amusing to find Starbuck's name quoted in this connection. Professor Starbuck's investigations were concerned almost wholly with the phenomena of religious conversion. It is quite true that his investigations showed that there were certain mental *facts* connected with conversion, but as no one questions this the conclusion does not carry much with it. But, on the other hand, his investigations gave the whole phenomena of conversion a thoroughly neuropathic basis. To commence with, about 85 per cent. of the cases under investigation confessed to some noticeable nervous affection before experiencing conversion. They saw visions, they felt depressed, they lost their appetite, had noises in the ears, swimings in the head, or were generally "out of sorts." Moreover—and this is distinctly stated by Professor Starbuck—the investigation showed that conversion was distinctly a phenomenon of adolescence. All were converted between the ages of twelve and twenty-five. It was during the period in which the organism reaches maturity, when new organs and new functions are being developed, when new feelings are experienced, and when the larger social self is developed that religion is experienced.

Now, if the *Daily News* writer will so far condescend as to try and understand the full bearing of what he writes about, he will discover that the same period that accounts for the "religious awakening" is also the period when people are most susceptible to epilepsy, to insanity, or to alcoholism. Sir James Crichton Brown says that 90 per cent. of the confirmed drunkards in this country began their career of drunkenness before they were twenty-five years of age. Now here is a pretty problem for the *Daily News* to tackle. During exactly the same period there is manifested a susceptibility to epilepsy, insanity, alcoholism, and religion. Are we to arbitrarily select the latter and say that this alone cannot be explained without calling in the supernatural, or are we to find some common factor that will cover all the four cases? An unprejudiced mind would not hesitate for a moment in its decision. For the

explanation really lies on the surface, and it has been indicated by no less an authority on nervous disorders than Dr. Charles Meriner. He has pointed out that the new, vague, formless feelings experienced by the individual during this period are exactly those which form the raw material out of which the professional religionist manufactures the much-talked-of religious consciousness. The organism, which is then in a condition of physical and emotional instability, falls, according to its pre-disposition and circumstances, under here the influence of alcohol, there under the influence of religion, or under some special stress that ends in an insane asylum. Really, if the *Daily News* had appreciated the results of Starbuck's work, I fancy it would have kept his name out of the discussion.

Now I do not mean for a moment that religion came into existence in this manner. The origin of religion is another question, and it is one that in its substantial features is now settled. But abnormal nervous states, at times deliberately evoked, have always served as the facts to which, in civilised, or semi-civilised times, religions have appealed for support. The sun-stroke of St. Paul, the visions resulting from the self-maceration of monks and nuns, the hypnotic suggestion of the revival meeting, the insanity of an Evan Roberts, the misdirection of the feelings of the young man or woman approaching maturity, are the facts to which religious writers appeal, in their real or assumed ignorance, to substantiate their claims.

There are, in fact, no religious feelings, *per se*; there are no religious instincts, *per se*. There are numerous feelings, both normal and abnormal, which ignorance or craft explains as being religious—that is all. The Atheist, survival of the Victorian era though he be, does not deny the existence of any of the feelings upon which religionists base their claims. He simply points out that they have misunderstood their real nature. His offence to the religious world is not that he denies the existence of these feelings, but that he understands them. What a pity it is the *Daily News* cannot be brought to the same point of comprehension.

C. COHEN.

### Mysticism.

THE connection between supernatural religion and mystery is the closest conceivable. It was the awakened sense of mystery in primitive man that brought religion into being, and afterwards continued to nurse it until it reached full stature, and began to dominate man's whole life. Insensitiveness to the mystery in which existence is shrouded is generally accompanied by a flabby religious faith and dispirited religious practices, or by no religion at all. On the other hand, where mystery has fanned religion into vigorous activity, that which from the beginning had been looked upon as a well-shielded secret is declared to have become known. Paul again and again assures his readers that "by revelation was made known unto him the mystery," "the mystery of God," or "the mystery of his will." This indicates the last stage in the evolution of religion. To the orthodox divines of the Christian Church there has been no mystery. The revelation spoken of by Paul completely annihilated the incomprehensible. It is true that the framers of the Athanasian Creed formally recognised the incomprehensibility of the Divine Nature, but they immediately proceeded to define and describe it in the minutest fashion, as if it presented no difficulty of any kind. All the mystery acknowledged by organised Christianity is mystery revealed. Paul claimed to be able to "speak the wisdom of God, even the hidden wisdom," and to speak it "in a mystery," whatever that may mean. He was anxious that the Ephesians should "perceive my understanding in the mystery of Christ." From this there was only a step to the conception of the Church as the custodian of "the mystery of Christ";

and it was out of this idea that Catholicism sprang, with all its pomp and glory. But the mystery that is no mystery ere long loses all its charm, and tends to paralyse the sense of the supernatural. It serves to weaken and deaden what is called spirituality, and to introduce hard formalism into ecclesiastical ministrations as well as into the devotions of the people.

Now, it was as a protest against such deadness and formalism that mysticism first entered the Church; and, in reality, it was only an attempted return to the original and most fascinating form of religion. The mystics felt that, to retain its charm for the masses, religion must always consist in an undefined delight in the unknown and unknowable, and make its supreme appeal, not to the intellect, but to the feelings. Now, what is mysticism? Coleridge says: "When a man refers to inward feelings and experiences, of which mankind at large are not conscious, as evidences of the truth of any opinion, such a man I call a mystic." "Mysticism," says Professor Fisher, of Yale University, "is the assumption that to the individual there are vouchsafed visions of truth exceeding the limits of the written Revelation." Of course, the system so-called has passed through many phases. At first it was a philosophy, and then a religion, outside Christianity, and known as Neoplatonism. As a religion, Neoplatonism was a formidable rival of Christianity, and for a time it was doubtful which of the two would survive. Its greatest representatives were Plotinus and Porphyry. About the end of the fifth century, however, Neoplatonism entered the Christian Church by means of forgeries. Some writer, whose identity is unknown, contrived to pass off his own productions as those of Dionysius, the Areopagite, who was believed to have been Bishop of Athens in the first century. This Pseudo-Dionysius was clearly a Neoplatonist of the mystical order, and his writings, so fraudulently introduced, exerted a powerful influence on the life of the Church. In the ninth century these Pseudo-Dionysian writings were introduced into the Western Church in a Latin translation by John Scotus Erigena, one of the keenest thinkers of the Middle Ages. Erigena was at once a scholastic and a mystic. According to him, God does not belong to any known categories, but is the predicateless Being, and may not improperly be called Nothing. And yet this Nothing is described as the only real existence. What we style existence is merely a manifestation of Nothing. The beginning of all things, and also the end, is Nothing. Who made you? Nothing. What will you be a hundred years hence? Nothing. Such is mysticism as expounded by the learned Irishman of the ninth century.

It is not necessary to trace its history any further. Professor Andrew Seth declares that the above "are the permanent outlines of what may be called the philosophy of mysticism," and that "it is remarkable with how little variation they are repeated from age to age." Even the New Theology is here in all its integrity and glory. What Mr. Campbell teaches has been taught a million times before. Logically, mysticism and Pantheism are identical. It is all very well to state that mysticism "differs from Pantheism in that its inmost motive is religious," but that does not do away with the fact that philosophically they are but two names for the same thing. "The thought that is most intensely present with the mystic is that of a supreme, all-pervading, and indwelling power, in whom all things are one"; and this power is one with all things. Eckhart employs strong and strange terms to express this thought:—

"I am as necessary to God as God is necessary to me. In my knowledge and love God knows and loves himself. The eye with which I see God is the same eye with which God sees me. My eye and God's eye are one eye. God has begotten me from eternity that I may be Father and beget him who begat me."

One may hear practically identical language in the City Temple any Thursday or Sunday. It is Pan-

theism pure and simple. "There is no chasm between man and God—he on that side and I on this," exclaims Eckhart again; "God and I are one in the act of perceiving him." "The Universe is one, and it lives," cries another; "there is nothing but God." This is often called "Spiritual Monism," because God, Universal Spirit or Substance, is the only Reality, all else being but phenomena, appearances, passing shadows.

Now, this is only a philosophy, and, as such, harmless enough; but when it is harnessed into the service of religion it becomes the source of much evil. When we study its religious history we find that its tendency has always been to engender distaste for and hatred of matter and material interests. For example, we learn that Plotinus declined to name his parents and his birthplace, and was actually ashamed of his own body. To him matter was inherently sinful and hateful, although a manifestation of the Universal Substance. Bernard of Clairvaux, whose mysticism, Mr. Campbell claims, "is certainly not open to the charge of having resulted in loss of mental vigor or moral intensity," yet "rejected as filth all that shines bright or sounds sweet to the ear." Pascal enjoined the renunciation of every pleasure. Another made it his rule to renounce all that was agreeable to the senses, and to embrace all that was repulsive. It may be admitted that the New Theologians of to-day are, in this respect, more reasonable, or more human, than their forerunners. But even in their case, the mystic religion is, from a logical point of view, the quintessence of all absurdity. We concede that their "inmost motive" is intensely religious; but we also maintain that the adoption of such a motive logically necessitates the abandonment of their mystic philosophy. Spinoza was perfectly consistent in that he denied the reality of the finite category; but the religious mystic admits the reality of the finite, and says that we must "think of the finite consciousness as the infinite itself under one of its aspects." Now, mark, this same mystic had already observed that "we cannot speak of the finite consciousness as a part of the infinite, or of the infinite as the sum of all finites." Does this mean that the whole of the infinite is present in every finite consciousness? If so, wherein does the finite differ from the infinite? If not, what on earth does the preacher understand by an "aspect" of the infinite? Surely, here we have confusion upon confusion.

But, on the assumption that the finite is the "infinite under one of its aspects," how is it possible for the infinite to be separated from, or at variance with, itself under that aspect? If finite man is infinite God "under one of his aspects," does it not follow that to say that finite man is a sinner is equivalent to saying that infinite God is a sinner "under one of his aspects"? If man is selfish, so of necessity is the Deity, for, according to Mr. Campbell himself, "God in man is God as man," and "properly speaking there is no other man." Logically, this is unmitigated nonsense, and Mr. Campbell frankly admits it. Why, then, indulge in such absurd teaching? In answering this question Mr. Campbell is again frankness itself, and gives his whole case away. His words are worth quoting:—

"I face the antinomy, and fall back upon the position of the mystics, who begin by asserting the oneness of finite and infinite, and then setting out to realise it. You may call this begging the question; but if so I am willing to concede you your triumph. Human thought will never be satisfied without affirming the essential unity of all being; but no sooner has it done so than it finds itself compelled to postulate difference, in order to make religious experience real, and allow for aspiration and endeavor" (the italics are our own).

We now hold the whole problem in the hollow of our hand. If the Pantheistic philosophy is held to be true, as well as logical, religious experience is unreal, and there is no room for aspiration and endeavor. Philosophically, Mr. Campbell is an avowed mystical Pantheist; but religiously, he cannot quite break with the orthodox Church. His logic and his faith

are at enmity, and there is no possibility of reconciling them; but come what may, Mr. Campbell must cherish at least the shadow of the great historic faith. And we do not blame him.

After all, is it not true that what Mr. Campbell characterises as "Materialistic Monism" is freer from illogicalities, contradictions, anachronisms, and absurdities than the "Spiritual Monism" which Mr. Campbell intellectually cherishes and emotionally rejects? No system explains the Universe; but does not mystical Pantheism, with a dash of Christianity thrown in, increase and intensify its incomprehensibility, without yielding any real benefit whatever?

J. T. LLOYD.

## Was Jesus a God?

BY L. K. WASHBURN.

WHEN do gods begin to show their divinity? When they are babes, or when they are adolescents, or when they are adults? We are given to understand that Jesus was a God before he was born, that in his mother's womb his divine origin was declared, and that his heavenly father sent angels to proclaim the birth of his son. All of this has to be received on the statement of the writers of the Gospels. These authors have been dead two thousand years, according to orthodox authority, therefore it is impossible to summon them into court for the purpose of cross-examining them. Of course, men could lie in those days as well as at the present time, and perhaps a little better, for lies paid bigger dividends then than they do now. But inasmuch as Jesus himself made no manifestation of his divine character, while yet a baby, we are forced to conclude that it was a mother's love alone that saw divinity in the baby-face of her child.

Any mother might be forgiven for having a similar vision.

Now, what we would like to know is this: Did God have to grow up before he could be God—that is, before he could be a full-fledged divinity? Baby-gods could hardly be expected to swing the divine power in its almightiness. Neither would a boy-god have the strength and wisdom of a grown-up deity. If God was already all-powerful, what did he want to be born on earth in the form of a man for? What could he gain by doing so?

We realise that we are discussing an exceedingly difficult and complicated question. If gods are expected to be born as Jesus was born, and to do the things that Jesus did, then, as a matter of course, he fills the bill of being divine. But who has the measure of God? Who knows that Jesus left divine footprints on the ground when he walked thereon, or that such footprints vanished when the waves sank into calm when he walked upon the sea?

How long was Jesus man before he became God? In what way, and by what process, did he get rid of his humanity, of what his mother gave him of her being before his body radiated only divinity? If Jesus was God, what was his father? No universe is large enough for two gods. Deity is not twins.

If there is a divine family, a number of gods, then we face another and greater perplexity.

The whole Christian Church depends upon the belief that Jesus was God. We can found a school, a college, a state, a nation, upon human power and human wisdom, but a church is a divine institution, and must have God to stand upon. It is the Christian Church that teaches the divinity of Jesus, because its success depends upon this dogma being accepted by men and women. There is nothing in geometry, in chemistry, in mathematics, that requires a god for authority. It is only religion that must have a theological basis.

The writers of the New Testament bring Jesus to us with his hands filled with miracles, and say: Could man walk on the sea, raise the dead to life, give sight to the blind, change water into wine, and

heal the incurable? The world has answered, No! and believed that Jesus was God.

This age reads the story in the Gospels, and says: Jesus never did the things recorded in them, and rejects the dogma of his divinity.

The only sane ground to stand upon is, that a miracle was never performed on the earth, and that every claim made upon their authority is false.

—*Truthseeker* (New York.)

### Let Us Forget It.

By Louis Duehez, in "To-Morrow," Chicago.

IF there is any word that should be discarded from the vocabulary of thinkers along scientific and philosophical lines it is that of "God." It is used by scientists and philosophers to explain "the power back of things," "the first cause," etc., and though knowing its allegorical origin they still insist on throwing it off on to the ignorant public, whose mind already is burdened with tradition and the love of the mystical. It may be noticed in conversation with orthodox people that, in trying to show that all philosophers still believe there is a Supreme Power at the helm of the Universe, they point out thinkers (many of them recognised leaders of science) who use the word "God" in explaining that which they do not know. It seems logical to think that this is a mistake, for the orthodox mind knowing nothing about science takes from that that "even the greatest men believe there is a Supreme Power, even if they do not accept Christ as a Savior." Voltaire, Paine, and Ingersoll used the word "God" to explain that which was beyond their comprehension, and even Spencer called it the "unknowable." Let us drop the word—it deserves no place in fundamental thinking, except to point to its own origin and allegorical meaning.

The fact is, as every man and woman versed in science knows, that the so-called "God" or "Supreme Power" plays no part in the running of the Universe. From burnt cinder to solar system, from protozoa to man, all is the result of the action and interaction of material and intellectual forces, following the line of the least resistance—all is self-sufficient and self-sustaining.

Mind developed from the battling of purely physical energies in inorganic nature, ideas, morality, religion, and institutions as we have them to-day developed from the struggle for existence between intellectual energies based upon material conditions, following the law of internal repetition (the registered impressions of all the individual's ancestors) and the perfection of the social organism will follow out the same unchangeable law—it will develop from the struggle for existence between institutions, the fittest will survive while the unfit will perish. Therefore, why use the word "God" to explain time, space, the first cause, etc., a meaningless term, with no bearing or relation to human life—its only function to-day is to confuse the absorbing mind reaching out after higher truth. Let us forget it.

The Rev. Francis J. Hall, D.D., in his new work, *Authority, Ecclesiastical and Biblical*, says that the "inspiration of Scripture is full, absolute, and plenary in every part," that the "Bible is the word of God in all its parts and for all time," and that it "has permanent, equal, and divine authority throughout." Will Professor Hall kindly tell us wherein lies the inspiration, divinity, or authority of Genesis xix. 30-38? The Holy Book contains many other passages of that revolting nature; and yet, according to Dr. Hall's absurd contention, every one of them is Divinely inspired, and possesses a "permanent and equal authority." Surely theological madness has here surpassed itself, which is saying a great deal.

Sir J. Compton-Rickett, M.P., told the Claremont Hall people, on a recent Sunday evening, that a necessity is laid upon God to redeem the world, that his boundless love imposes on him a solemn obligation to that effect, and, further, that he suffers "eternal pain" in the attempt to be true to himself. Is this comedy or tragedy, or a mixture of both? Or was our preaching knight trying to bamboozle his hearers with the oft-repeated fiction, which many, through the frequent repetition, half believe to be true?

### RUSKIN ON THE COMMANDMENTS.

It is very comic the way people have of being so particular about the second and fourth commandments, and breaking all the rest with the greatest comfort. For me, I try to keep all the rest rather carefully, and let the second and fourth take care of themselves.—*Hortus Inclusus*, p. 58.

### Acid Drops.

A leading American preacher is over in London for his summer vacation. His name is Dr. S. Parkes Cadman, and he hails from New York. The dear *Daily News* has interviewed him, and he denies that there is any "rebirth of religion in the United States." "The statement," he says, "is not true. I wish it was. Religion as a driving force in human conduct is not showing that vitality which we all hope to see." Even the New Theology is not mending matters. Dr. Cadman says "it is not taken seriously in America." We are glad to have this reverend gentleman's assurances. We judge him to be one of the good old school; for he wound up by telling his interviewer that "the future of the world lies in the hands of the English-speaking peoples." Which is the regular pious and conceited Nonconformist note.

The dear *Daily News* devoted a leading article to this subject. Dr. Cadman, it said, might be right as to America, but things were different in England. Religious sentiment and religious aspiration were appearing again "in circles where religion has long been regarded as a mere aberration of the human intellect." This is a general statement, but our pious contemporary condescended to be more particular. "The Atheist," it said, "or even the determined agnostic, is now a mere survival of the Victorian era." Thus does the dear *Daily News* go on bamboozling its Chapel readers. Its motive may be a good one—in its way. We beg to remind it, however, of Revelation xxi. 8.

There is a serious shortage of clergymen in the Church of England—principally curates, we guess. Nearly 6,000 vacancies are craving for men of God to fill them, and the men of God don't show a coming-on disposition. The matter is so serious that a special committee has been sitting upon it, and the result is now printed in the form of a report. It appears that, twenty years ago, the number of deacons ordained (in 1886) was 814, and that the number ordained in 1907 was only 587. The growth of the population during the twenty years should have been met by an increase of 100 clergymen a year—or a total of 20,000; there has been no increase at all, however, but an actual shortage of 5,324. At this rate, the Church will be something like a skeleton Black Army in another twenty years. It is perishing for want of men.

What a chance for the ladies! Lots of them could fill pulpits very well. They have brains enough for that, anyhow. We do not see how this could be disputed by their bitterest critics. Besides, it is a nice genteel occupation that would just suit a number of well-educated young women who cannot find "ladylike" positions in the present overstocked labor-market. We make the idea a present to the Suffragettes. Couldn't they get up some rousing demonstrations at St. Paul's and Westminster Abbey, and demand "Pulpits for Women"? The motto would look fine on a banner.

Our suggestion may be called frivolity. It isn't, but some people may think it so. We will therefore be very serious. Let us look at the reasons alleged for this terrible paucity of parsons.

The first reason the committee alleges is "the theological unrest of the present day." This means, of course, that Christianity is being extensively found out, and that young men prefer honest occupations to getting a living by preaching lies. They have the world before them, and are led on by hope; and, with no one but themselves to keep, they can afford the luxury of a conscience. Young men of education give the Church the go-by, and enter more brainy and honorable professions. Which is good.

The second reason is that "party strife and divisions" have "a deterrent effect on many." But we believe this to be no reason at all. Young men are not naturally averse from excitement. There is any amount of strength in the third reason. "Numerous openings for new careers," the committee say, "have proved a counter attraction." Moreover they say:—

"There can be no doubt that the heavy outlay which a candidate has to face, with little or no possibility of self-support till after 23, proves a serious obstacle to many. There is also the further deterrent which influences the judgment of parents and friends, as well as of candidates themselves—the insecurity of the subsequent financial prospects. The prospect of a living wage during active ministry is uncertain; the prospect of an adequate pension in old age is still more uncertain. Thus the question of an increased

supply of candidates is intimately associated with the financial questions of training, maintenance, and superannuation."

There you are! That's it! We have always said so. Churches are all filled—or nearly so—with hirelings. The "call" these men get, with rare exceptions, is not to save souls, but to take a certain job for a decent consideration. We are well aware that thousands of them nowadays are poorly paid. But just look at them! Would the majority of them do better, or as well, in any other occupation? Some of them, if they lost their jobs, would have to address envelopes.

Dr. Cadman was also interviewed by the *Daily Chronicle*. By that time he was less pessimistic or more cautious. He said that he noticed in general, in both the United States and England, that "the outlook for simple, Catholic Christianity was never brighter, and though, with the loss of definite creeds, the vase may be broken, the perfume is spread." Pretty, is it not? But what a dangerous image! When the vase is broken, the perfume is certainly spread—though some people would call it spilt; but you can't get any more out of it, for the simple reason that you can't get any more into it. Truly, the vase is Christian doctrine, and Dr. Cadman sees that it is broken. Well, that is really an end of the matter. All the rest is only a question of time.

New Theology or Old Theology, they are both alike in the fundamental characteristics, as we have often pointed out. Dr. Warschauer records that during the religious discussion that took place at the Summer School of Theology in Switzerland, Mr. Rhondda Williams reported that "Robert Blatchford had recanted, renounced his Agnosticism, and publicly acknowledged belief in a Heavenly Father." In justice to Mr. Warschauer, we must point out that he merely reports the statement, and asks why, if Robert Blatchford has changed his opinions, he does not withdraw *God and My Neighbor* from circulation? We merely note the report in order to emphasise the fact that the difference between Christian sects is very superficial; at bottom they are all alike. Despite the ethical cant of the New Theology, we have here the same old Christianity, the same perverted human nature, the same old lying for the greater glory of God.

A general opinion expressed at these gatherings was that Mr. Blatchford had done "signal disservice" to Socialism by his "flippant and iconoclastic" attacks on Christianity. These attacks had deterred many from entering a movement antagonistic to their faith. We have in these columns nothing to do with the question of whether Mr. Blatchford has aided or hindered the progress of Socialism. But there are one or two aspects of the question that may be noted. What strikes one at first glance is the cool impertinence involved in the objection. Socialism developed with very little, if any, help from Christianity or Christians. When it becomes a familiar, and to some extent a popular, thing, some Christians step in, and immediately demand that all its speakers and writers should cease saying anything that would offend them. Not that they intend to adopt the same rule in relation to Socialists who are Freethinkers. On the contrary, they are at great trouble to make it plain that they intend asserting their opinions on religion on any and every occasion. But others are to remain silent, or they will forfeit the support of those liberty-loving, reforming Christians who would not think of joining any movement the writers of which lay hands on their religious opinions.

Finally, one would ask how would these exceedingly conscientious Christians have Socialists who are Freethinkers act? A man like Mr. Blatchford believes Christianity is in the way, and must be removed if his social ideals are to be realised. He must then either say honestly what he thinks, or he must play the traitor to his principles, suppress his convictions, and go on working in a direction that he believes will end in disaster. If he acts honestly, Christians, in the name of religious morality, denounce him as doing "signal disservice" to the cause, because he keeps Christians from helping who will not help so long as a man refuses to play the hypocrite in order to purchase their support. "If," they say, in substance, "you will hide your opinions and lead people to believe that you have faith in that which you reject as false, then we will hail you as reformer and work with you as a brother. We care little what your real convictions are, so long as you only express such convictions as we agree with. The great thing is not to offend us. We are the only ones that are permitted to say what we please, when we please, and how we please. All others must be silent in our presence." Whether Socialists think the support of this type of mind is a thing worth having is for themselves to decide. For our own part, we have a strong conviction that any society in which it was dominant, whether called

Socialistic or by any other name, would be intolerable to all who valued real liberty and attached any importance to self-respect.

According to Dr. Amory Bradford, the Rev. Campbell Morgan, while holding a pastorate in the Southern States of America, excluded the negroes from his mission services. Writing to the *British Weekly* in defence of Mr. Morgan, the Rev. W. Clews asks, "Why should the negro attend the white man's church, seeing that he has one of his own?" This, however, is not the point at all. The question is, Why should the negro have a church of his own among a people who boast so loudly of their feeling of brotherhood, and that they are no respecters of person? And the honest reply to this is that the negro church exists largely because the white Christian refuses to worship in the same building. And, as has been pointed out by more than one observer, religious organisations are among the most active in keeping racial antagonism alive, just as they were formerly the most active upholders of slavery. Mr. Clews also adds that if a preacher accepted a "call" to a Southern church, and began to invite colored people, he would soon have to choose between a colored and a white congregation. We do not question the truth of the statement. The curious thing is that Mr. Clews regards this as an ample justification for Christian ministers acting as they do. Being a parson, it never enters into his calculations that a man might do what was right and let the devil take the consequences. His point of view is, get a congregation, honestly if you can, but get it.

The Rev. Z. Mather is of opinion that the truth "would greatly gain if it were admitted that the story of the birth at Bethlehem, the Resurrection, and the Ascension are legendary and without historical foundation." We are also of this opinion, but whether Christianity would gain is quite another matter. Christianity without a miraculous birth, and without a resurrection and an ascension is—well, it is not Christianity at all. It is, moreover, an admission that historic Christianity has been built up and maintained on a gigantic imposture.

The Marquis Di Rudini, ex-Prime Minister of Italy, who died on the 7th inst., made no secret of his Freethought opinions. Unlike public men in this country he saw no reason for keeping them in the background in order to please bigoted religionists. According to the *Daily Chronicle* correspondent, when the court chaplain wished to have the last sacraments administered, the Marquis replied: "Since you were not summoned this can form no part of your mission. With my life history, at my age, and at so solemn a moment, I cannot renounce my Agnostic convictions." This was a deserved rebuke to the officious ecclesiastic and a fit testimony to the dying statesman's mental sincerity. In this country, where hypocrisy is enforced as one of the leading virtues, the policy is for the person himself to say nothing, while the survivors insult the dead by providing a religious funeral for one who rejected all religion while alive.

Sir P. Compton-Rickett, M.P., may be a very able man in some directions, but like many others when he starts on religion he talks nonsense. During the course of a lecture—or a sermon—in North London, he said we are driven to admit that there is a directing force in nature, a restraining influence against degeneration. By "we" he means, of course, himself and those who agree with him; the compulsion is anything but plain to scientific thinkers. The quality of his own thinking on the matter is indicated by the illustrations selected. Barbarism in nature, he says, is "ever ready to take advantage of casual neglect and to rush in upon us.....Let man retreat from any part of the soil of England and its cultivation would be effaced and the wilder life of an earlier age would reappear. So in society and in the individual, evil habits and unchecked passions would assert themselves if the Divine Grace were withdrawn."

The blinding influence of "the point of view" was never better illustrated than in this expression of belief. First of all there is the ignoring of the vital consideration that "barbarism" and "civilisation" have a value that is purely conventional and relative to ourselves. Apart from our self-created standards nature is neither more nor less perfect in any of its phases. Next we have three things—Nature, Man, God—either two of which may be in conflict with the other one. Thus, nature plus God (the plus here is purely imaginary) but minus human intelligence, makes for degeneration. Nature plus human intelligence makes for betterment. Now clearly the decisive factor here is human intelligence. Accepting Sir Compton-Rickett's decision of man and nature, the whole of the credit here has to be given to man. Left alone, God and Nature having it all their own

way, degenerate rapidly. There is evidently little credit due to God in this direction.

Human nature, says Sir Compton-Rickett, would degenerate without God. Well, but human nature does degenerate with God. How then? And what is more, as in the case of nature at large, the more the human—in this case the social—factor is withdrawn, the more marked is the degeneration. Castaways on uninhabited islands degenerate and lose with remarkable rapidity their civilised characteristics. Why is this? Surely there is not less of God there than in the middle of a crowded city. The truth is that man *can* get on very well without "God," he cannot get on at all without the company and assistance of his fellow human beings. In short, adding God to human affairs as the cause of betterment reminds one of the old recipe for making soup out of a pebble. All that one need add is a little meat, vegetables, water, and seasoning and the soup is complete.

The Rev. Mr. Antram, of the Ellington Baptist Church, Ramsgate, has risen to some unspeakably glorious "spiritual heights," from which he views the universe with a feeling of boundless satisfaction to himself as a British jingo. Behold him up yonder, almost out of sight, glorying in "the vast extent of British rule—eleven and a-half million square miles, with a population of nearly five hundred millions," and in all the bloody steps that led up to it, including "the smoke and storm of Trafalgar," the conquest of India, the taking of the heights of Abraham and Alma, and the subjugation and spoliation of the Matabele! What a fine specimen Mr. Antram is of the followers of the meek and lowly Jesus, of whom it was said, "He shall not strive, nor cry aloud, neither shall anyone hear his voice in the streets," and who himself said, "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth," and of the expounders of the Book which says, "All they that take the sword shall perish with the sword." And again, "Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall"! Poor man, the "heights" have turned his head.

"The Kingdom of Heaven is an ever-growing thing," cried a Primitive Methodist preacher the other day. "It is getting bigger with the centuries." That sounds magnificent; but is it borne out by facts? How much "bigger" is the Kingdom of Heaven in Christendom at the beginning of the twentieth century than it was at the close of the third? Some declare that just now it is practically dead, strangled by organised Christianity. That is the expressed opinion of the leading New Theologians, while the Freethinkers go further still and demand proof that what Jesus called the Kingdom of Heaven has ever existed anywhere.

It is amazingly easy to assert that "during the nineteenth century there were more converts to Christianity than in all the centuries before." How terribly humiliating an assertion as regards "all the centuries before," and even as regards the nineteenth. Let us take the nineteenth century. Quoting from statistics compiled by an English Church Bishop, we have the following figures: "1800, world population, 1,000,000,000, Christian population, 200,000,000; 1896, world population, 1,500,000,000, Christian population, 500,000,000." That is to say, during the nineteenth century, the world population increased by 500,000,000, the Christian population only by 300,000,000. In other words still, the increase of Christians during the period under consideration failed to keep pace with the growth of population by 200,000,000. That is not eminently complimentary to the omnipotent Savior of the world, nor is it highly encouraging to those who pretend to believe that

"Jesus shall reign where'er the sun  
Doth his successive journeys run."

Mr. R. J. Campbell talks so much that evidently he has no time or capacity to think. In a discourse on "Divine Immanence and Pantheism," which appears in the *Christian Commonwealth* for August 12, he surpasses himself in the art of befogging his subject, himself, and his audience. It is impossible to discover what he means. That he is a Pantheist is as clear as noonday; but in his endeavor to convince people that he is not, he drifts into laughably illogical and contradictory statements. What he *seems* to say is this: "Yes, I am a Pantheist, in a sense; but I hasten to inform you that my Pantheism differs from everybody else's, in that it embraces belief in a God outside and beyond the All." Is it possible to conceive of a more idiotic utterance? Can anything be more than, or transcend, the All? Such an absurdity is absolutely unthinkable.

But more ridiculous still, if possible, are his observations on human freedom. In logic, or "intellectually construed,"

he admits, free-will has no existence. There is not "a single argument present to the human mind to-day which can overthrow the case for Determinism." "Most assuredly there is not," he adds. But this doctrine destroys the vocation of the preacher, and such a catastrophe must be prevented at any cost. Though the heavens fall, the City Temple pulpit must be kept standing. So Mr. Campbell, in order to retain his pulpit, denies his wonderful Immanence theory, and says: "After all, man is not God, and God is not man; there is a separation between the two, and the object of preaching is to make them absolutely one." And to crown the ineffable silliness we have this: "No appeal to man can have force except as an appeal to the God in man, and, properly speaking, there is no other man. God *in* man is God *as* man." Fancy, God preaching to himself, converting himself, becoming reconciled with himself, and getting rid of his lower self! Indeed, this is a mad world.

The *Methodist Times*, while admitting that the Trinity "transcends human thought," does its level best to explain it. It cannot be understood, and yet the "Christian creed at this point is a perfectly rational belief, when it is not misinterpreted." That qualifying clause is indescribably fine; it could not possibly be surpassed. In the Trinity, we are told, there is a real unity, and at the same time the distinctions are real. The distinctions are these personal ones, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; but the infinitely astonishing and startling thing about them is that the Father is Father without ever begetting, the Son Son without having been begotten, and the Spirit the breath of both without ever having proceeded from either, for what the three are to-day they have always been and always shall be. Surely the *Methodist Times* deserves to be canonised.

Well done, local preacher; you may go up higher. This is what you are reported to have said, and it is so very true: "I take my text, and divide my sermon into three parts. In the first part I tell 'em what I am going to tell 'em; in the second part—well, I tell 'em; in the third part I tell 'em what I've told 'em." This is characteristic of many besides local preachers.

The Bishop of Stepney is probably almost as accurate in affirming that "Science, abandoning its confident negations, is finding its way back to God by the long but sure paths of reverence and wonder," as was another clergyman who as confidently stated that Mr. Bernard Shaw had already found God, and was on his way to Christ. Have these men *no* conscience?

Canon Newbolt told his St. Paul's audience the other Sunday that when a man follows "too unreservedly the guidance of his nature," he is sure to perish. Then clearly the blame is his who gave him his nature. If one is punished for being true to one's self, where is the justice of the Creator whose praises the Canon is always singing? If Dr. Newbolt studied psychology, and left theology alone, he would be a much wiser man.

In a prayer just published, the Deity is warned "not to expect from the little what the great alone can do." Then an item of information that really incriminates him is presented: "We have only time to be presumptuous and insolent and foolish; we have no time to gather solid wisdom." How painfully guilty the Almighty must have felt when that accusing intelligence reached his ears! Finally, he is told, in a commanding tone, "Thou wilt make time for us" to be wise and good after we have crossed the Jordan. After such a prayer, he *must* obey!

The Bishop of Missouri is an exceedingly clever and discerning man. He can tell the differences between each person in the Holy Trinity and the other two. He knows of which of them to solicit favors, and through which one those favors will reach him. The other day he singled out God the Holy Ghost, and said it was he who had fetched the Bishops from all quarters of the globe to the Pan-Anglican Congress in London, and that it was to this individual their thanks were due for such a jolly good holiday. How *very* knowing some people are—in their own esteem.

We learn from the *Christian World* that Christ has been growing through all the centuries. "The Christ of the twentieth century is larger and diviner than the Christ of the first century." We never knew before that an infinite God could add to his stature. But if the God-man has been getting larger for two millenniums, of what an enormous size

he must be to-day! The Bishop of Durham, however, assures us that he has never changed.

The *Church Times* has great faith in Mother Church, and carefully guards her honor and authority. At the same time, our contemporary is aware that the spirit of the times is hostile to her, and hints that she herself is in "danger of divesting the voice of Holy Church of its unearthliness and power to awe." Ah, yes, this "power to awe," this "unearthliness," this authority which has "behind it some disciplinary 'sanction,' some power of threatening penalty for disobedience"—this has been of unspeakable value to the Church in the past, the very secret of her supremacy; but it is passing away, never to return. The modern Englishman glories in his right and ability to decide the deepest problems "off his own bat," without asking parson's leave, or cringing before a self-important and pompous ecclesiastical court.

Blackpool boasts of its many attractions. It has just added a new one. The Bishop of Manchester is competing with niggers and pierrots on the sands. He is running two shows, and both are fairly successful. Seaside visitors have lots of time on their hands, and the Bishop dresses himself and his clergy in a fetching way. They wear their full professional costume, which gives them a chance against the other entertainers on the shore.

Birkenhead Town Council is not packed with "infidels." We understand it is full of good Christian men. But they are also men of business, and have decided by 25 votes to 14 to continue running a goods steamer on Sundays, from 10 to 10, in order to convey motor cars. The good Christian men do like this arrangement; they would rather keep the Sabbath holy—or at least make other people do so; but business is business, and, as one of them pertinently said, if Birkenhead would not carry the motors Wallasley would. What, let Wallasley get in front of us? Perish the thought! So the Lord Jesus Christ takes a back seat. Which won't trouble him very much, though, for by this time he is pretty well used to it.

The "wicked *Freethinker*" committed one crime, but that was one of the most dangerous. It was in advance of its time. But the rest of the world is picking it up a bit now. Here is the *Daily Dispatch*—of all papers!—repeating our old declaration that modern Christianity is nearly all humbug. Just listen to this:—

"A man who tried to-day to found his life, say, on the Sermon on the Mount, would probably find himself in trouble with the police before a week was over. At times we profess loudly our admiration of the teaching of Christ, but when it comes to practice, we heave hypocritical sighs over the impossibility of the ideals of that teaching, and go on the way that we have marked out for ourselves."

Even the Bishops, who stickle so for Christ's alleged teaching in the matter of divorce, are reminded that there are other teachings of his which they conveniently ignore. He taught his followers, for instance, that when they went on a journey they were to take no money in their purses. Fancy the Bishop of London going off on his six weeks' holiday in that style!

A Durham miner, Thomas Bernard Douglas, has come into a fortune, and is naturally receiving piles of begging letters. One is from a Belfast priest who only wants £1,000. Modest man! But why doesn't he ask God for the cash? Does he think God couldn't give it? Or that God knows him too well?

The "Hungry Marchers" paid a visit last Sunday to Canterbury Cathedral, and created what the *Daily News* calls "a disgraceful scene." But why *disgraceful*? They merely asked the Cathedral authorities to carry out the Sermon on the Mount.

George Wilson, aged eighteen, turned up one day at a boarding-house kept by Annie Kesner. All the luggage he had was a Bible, but he said that more was coming along, together with a "reverend gentleman," for whom as well as himself he was to engage rooms. Mrs. Kesner appears to have been impressed with the luggage that George Wilson *did* carry, and when he said that he was going to the station to fetch the rest, but unfortunately he had no money with him, she lent him twelve shillings for that purpose. When he returned in the evening, without the luggage, the lady's husband, who had grown suspicious, in spite of the Bible, suggested that he should wait until the luggage arrived. This he declined to do, on the ground that he had an important preaching engagement to attend to. But it was

ultimately discovered that the luggage was quite imaginary; and George Wilson, who ran away, was chased, captured, and given in charge. We need not follow him further. What we have to say is that Mrs. Kesner will probably beware in future of young men who carry Bibles and profess friendship with "reverend gentlemen."

The uselessness of "spirits" is almost proverbial. They make noises in haunted houses and play little tricks at *séances*, but they never do anything useful. They might throw light on the identity of the murderer of so many little boys and girls up and down the country, for instance, but they have never given a single wrinkle to the baffled police. Nor did they do anything for Horatio Hunt, who has just got into trouble at Leeds for stealing fifty cigars from a Kirkgate publican. Twelve years ago, it appears, he was a spiritualist lecturer in London, and "did pretty well," but since then things have gone wrong with him, and he has been in trouble for "drunkenness and obtaining food by false pretences." Cigars, of course, are a luxury, but food is a necessity, and if Horatio Hunt stole food he must have wanted it. One sympathises with him, therefore, to a certain extent. "If the spirit had given me food," he exclaimed to the magistrate, "I should not have been in this position now." Perhaps his familiar spirit will oblige him during his month's imprisonment—for the prison rations are meagre and will stand a good deal of supplementing.

Some good Christian has sent us a marked copy of the *Daily Dispatch* of August 13. It refers to the murderer of that poor little girl at Liverpool. For some curious reason—perhaps a desire to cause a sensation and see the matter in the newspapers—he took the poor child's corpse away from the cellar where it had been lying for months, and left it where it was found. He carried it in a sack, but before placing it there—if we may believe the *Daily Dispatch*—he "wrapped it in two newspaper contents-bills and a portion of a paper called *The Free Thinker*." The good Christian who sent us the *D. D.* marked this with a triumphant note. He, or she, is evidently much gratified. We suppose he, or she, regards it as a proof that the murderer is a Freethinker and a reader of this journal. But only a Christian could reason in that ridiculous way. The pieces of paper wrapped round the body may have been in the cellar of the empty house before the murder was committed. If the date is later than that, the pieces of paper may easily have been taken from a dust-heap or a newsagent's shop; or the murderer himself may be a newsagent, or in the employ of one. Moreover, he may as well be set down as a reader of the newspapers whose contents-bills he used as a reader of this journal. Even if a copy of the *Freethinker* passed through the murderer's hands, it does not at all follow that he had any sympathy with it. Hundred of copies of this journal are *given away* every week. And there is another important fact. The *Freethinker* is read by a good many Christians. We know this by the scurrilous letters, generally anonymous, we receive from them. It is read by Christian Evidence lecturers, as well as by some Christians of a more reputable character. How absurd, then, is the supposition that the Liverpool murderer must be a Freethinker! Nothing but bigotry could lead to such a conclusion.

We are not arguing, of course, that no Freethinker ever did or could commit a crime. Amongst so many thousands—coming of the human stock bred by so many centuries of Christianity—there may well be a few abnormal ones; but criminal statistics show that they are extremely few. A homicidal maniac is a kind of a freak; he may spring up anywhere; and if he happened to be a Catholic, an Anglican, a Wesleyan, or a Presbyterian, we shall never be silly enough to suggest that Catholicism, Anglicanism, Wesleyanism, or Presbyterianism produced him. We leave that sort of malicious folly to the professors of "Christian charity."

We see from a *Liverpool Express* cutting, sent us by a friendly hand, that the contents-bills used by the murderer belonged to that paper and "its city contemporary," and that, in addition to the *Freethinker* fragment, there were "fragments of two evening Liverpool papers." The miscellaneous character of these wrappings is pretty clear evidence that the murderer made no selection. He evidently took what came to hand. The *Express* says that "they probably came from a newsagents." The sack is a sugar sack, and might have come from a grocer's. These clues may lead to the murderer's arrest. We earnestly hope so. But the constable in charge of that division of police is, we fear, more successful in stopping Freethought meetings than in detecting criminals.



## Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, August 23, 6 p.m., Brockwell Park, Freethought Demonstration.

September 6, 13, 20, 27, Queen's (Minor) Hall.

October 4, Glasgow; 11, Leicester; 18, Manchester; 25, Stanley Hall, London.

## To Correspondents.

THE PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND: Previously acknowledged. Annual Subscriptions, £214 2s. 6d. Received since.—C. J. (Regent's Park), 5s.; Jas. Woodall, 6s.; W. and J. Brierley, £1; W. Muir, 2s. 6d.; J. Pattison, 2s. 6d.; J. Stewart, 2s. 6d.; J. Stewart, 2s. 6d.; J. Ralston, 2s. 6d.; J. Walker, 2s. 6d.

T. M. MOSLEY.—We do not print lectures in the *Freethinker*. We have had a lot of work behind the scenes of late, but the way will be clearer for many things shortly, including the one you mention.

G. N.—Bequests to the Secular Society, Ltd., of any kind, direct or contingent, payable forthwith or on the decease of beneficiaries under the will, are perfectly secure. Alienation of such bequests are quite impossible.

G. BRADFIELD.—We agree with you as to the value of "Abracadabra's" articles. The question of reprinting them in permanent form shall be considered. With regard to the Christian nobbling of the Socialist movement, time will show who is right. We hope you are. We fear we are. If the majority of the Independent Labor Party think as you and your Cheltenham friends do, why don't they influence their official journal in the right direction?

H. D. LEVINSON.—Mr. Horatio Bottomley, M.P., is related to the Holyoake family—not to the Bradlaugh family.

T. S. EALES.—We should prefer a printed report of the reverend gentleman's words—though we don't doubt your accuracy. We might write an "Acid Drop" on his silliness, and he might deny that he ever said anything of the kind.

R. S. YOUNG.—"Abracadabra's" articles on the Sayings of Jesus have not been reprinted in a permanent form. We may consider the possibility of publishing them separately later on. The advisability is beyond question. Some of Mr. Foote's best things written of late years will be collected before long, though not, perhaps, as a third volume of *Flowers of Freethought*.

MIDLAND FREETHINKER.—We do not discuss politics in the *Freethinker*—but peace, as you say, is every man's interest; moreover, it is an ethical as well as a political question. We deplore the ill-will which a good many writers and speakers are trying to foment between Great Britain and Germany. We may add that the idea of a German invasion of England seems to us unspeakably foolish.

L. GENTLE.—Pleased to hear that you would not miss the *Freethinker* for a good many twopences. Thanks for the good wishes of a recent convert. The paper you refer to is scarcely worth our attention. The pious editor alludes to the twelve Apostles as "a dozen fishermen"—which shows how much he knows even of his own Holy Scriptures.

J. WILLIAMSON.—Yes, it is interesting, though "off our beat" in this journal. Glad you "seem to enjoy the *Freethinker* better every time a new number is issued."

J. WOODALL.—All's well that ends well. We have done as requested.

J. RALSTON (Motherwell), sending six local subscriptions to the President's Honorarium Fund, says: "Were our purses as great as our admiration for the splendid fight you make for mental emancipation, and the energy you bestow on the great cause of Humanity, these few shillings would have been as many pounds. I have been a regular reader of the *Freethinker* now for twelve years, and my love for it has never wavered. I admire the whole-hearted way you and your contributors enter into the work."

CONSTANCE BROOKS.—The *Dispatch* figures are faked. We will deal with the whole subject shortly.

ARCHIE PYLE.—(1) No objection at all. (2) Announcement as to the N. S. S. badge will be made in due course. We cannot answer such queries by post.

W. P. BALL.—Many thanks for cuttings.

A. A.—It is a pity, as you say, to see Robert Blatchford babbling about "God" in the *Woman Worker*.

AN ATHEIST.—We had already seen and written upon the matter. Thanks all the same.

R. E. WOODWARD.—All right. Thanks.

E. GWINNELL.—How does the extra copy do any harm? You mistake our paragraph on the *Islington Gazette*. A letter, of

course, may be answered by a letter. What we complained of was the insertion of a partisan statement as an editorial report, which every journalist knows to be a dishonorable proceeding.

BRISTOLIAN.—Of course there is some fine poetry in the Bible. We have always said so. But what does that prove?

R. IRVING.—Mr. Lloyd was referring to the Christian Sunday. Our statements in *Bible Romances*, p. 9, are quite correct. We may act on your suggestion as to a popular pamphlet on the whole subject. We did not know that Charles Montagu, now in prison for obtaining money by false pretences, was one of the Brighton beach preachers, who used "frequently to denounce Mr. Foote on the Brighton front."

G. ROLEFFS.—Glad to hear the Liverpool Branch had such a delightful picnic, about forty sitting down to tea. We saw Mr. Holmes on Sunday evening, and he told us that things were going on well at Liverpool.

C. B. (Liverpool).—You mustn't epistolise on book-post wrappers. It means letter-rate charged at destination.

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

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

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## Personal.

WILL the engineer "saint" who spoke to me at the Annual Dinner about my son kindly communicate with me? In the hurry of the function I failed to take his name and address.

G. W. FOOTE.

## Sugar Plums.

Another splendid meeting assembled round the N. S. S. platform in Regent's Park on Sunday evening. It was the third of this season's course of Sunday Freethought Demonstrations. Mr. Wilson provided a carriage, instead of a brake, with a beautiful pair of horses that were the admiration of everybody. Mr. F. A. Davies acted as chairman. The other speakers were Mr. A. B. Moss, Mr. C. Cohen, and Mr. G. W. Foote. Perfect order prevailed from first to last, except for an occasional interruption by a little dark old lady who had a bad attack of orthodox Christianity, and several times assured the speakers that they were going to hell. She was borne with good-humoredly. But once when she said that she was with her Lord, Mr. Foote said that he wished she was. The demonstration lasted an hour and a half and was a triumphant success.

The fourth and last of these Freethought Demonstrations takes place this evening (Aug. 23) at Brockwell Park. The speakers will be Messrs. Davies, Moss, Heaford, Cohen, and Foote. South London "saints" should rally in strong force around the platform, so as to check any orthodox effort at disorder. The meeting will start punctually at 6. *Punctually*, mind.

The *Truthseeker* (New York) reproduces what it calls our "fine article" on the inauguration of Secular Education in the elementary schools of Rome.

The *Journal de Charleroi*, under the standing heading of "La Libre-Pensée Internationale" (International Freethought), reproduces (in French, of course) portions of Mr. Lloyd's recent article on Sabbatarianism.

## Lamennais and Thomson.

SOMEWHERE about the year 1800 a group of Breton fisher-folk stood on the sea-wall of St. Malo and watched the tempestuous waters. A boy of eight years watched the agitated scene for some time, then glanced at the men and women around, and murmured to his companion: "They look at what I look at, but they do not see what I see." The boy was Félicité Lamennais, one day to be famous as the author of *The Words of a Believer* (*Les Paroles d'un Croyant*). He studied in Paris and in the quiet of an old granite house in the words of La Chénaie in Brittany. Passionately religious, he was ordained priest. Europe heard his name as that of a defender of the Catholic Church. Pope Leo XII. received him in amiable audience at the Vatican. His books and articles breathed orthodox enthusiasm. Honestly and zealously, he regarded himself as marked out to protect the Cross and the Church. But his heart loved more than Church and Cross. A higher cause than that of theology was to claim his life and strength. He watched the sufferings of the people. When the Revolution of 1830 broke the peace of Paris, Lamennais discovered the secret of his soul. It was the common folk that he worshiped, and for them he was prepared to lay down all that he had. So he wrote a little book, *The Words of a Believer*, which, though using a few Christian terms and phrases, and couched in the style of the Book of Daniel or of Revelation, was yet so rousing in its political purpose and its intense sympathy for the democracy that the compositors could scarcely set up the type for excitement. It consisted of short, dramatic chapters, vivid dialogues, arresting visions. For example:—

"In a room draped with black and lit by a red lamp, seven men clothed with purple, and with crowns on their heads, were sitting on seven seats of iron.

And in the middle of the room was a throne built of bones, and at the foot of the throne, as a stool, was an overturned crucifix, and before the throne a table of ebony, and on the table a vase full of red, foaming blood, and a human skull.

And the seven crowned men seemed thoughtful and sad."

The seven spectres were spirits of evil who trampled on the crucifix, drank blood from the skull, and cursed Christ, liberty, co-operation, science, thought, and all that made for order and progress. Suddenly the lamp went out; the spectres took leave of one another in the dark. Their triumph was short. The next vision shows them re-assembling in a misty spot, where water dropped in dull, monotonous thuds on the green slime. And here the seven Evil Ones related their defeat, and cursed Christ. At the end of the tragic tale, a mysterious hand dipped its finger in the black water and marked on the foreheads of the seven damned spirits the mark of eternal infamy. Such was Lamennais' mode of prophesying to the proletariat of France and the world that the forces of tyranny and exploitation were doomed. Socialism, in the Marxian or Independent Labor sense of the word, had not then risen above the European horizon; but the Apocalypse of the Abbé Lamennais had in it all the energy and protesting fury of revolutionary Socialism. The keen-eyed Church of Rome was not deceived by the Abbé's employment of such terms as God, the Holy Spirit, the Son of Man, and the rest. She detected religious heresy and economic treason. Lamennais lived a suspected and poverty-stricken existence till he died in a humble lodging in 1854. One year he spent in prison as penalty for criticising the Government of Louis Philippe. In the cells he wrote more visions, more appeals to the people. He pictured the ocean at dusk. A voice issued from the depths of the sea, and another voice from the sombre cliffs, and they mingled in one defiant shout: "The body is fettered, but the soul laughs, for it is free." In a pamphlet on *Modern Slavery* he beseeches the pity of the world on the wage-earner, who may live

so long as the capitalist employs his arm and draws profit from his labor, and must die when work fails or payment drops below the living-point. Christ himself, says Lamennais with a grim smile, would in the nineteenth century be arrested by the police as a tramp, for he "had not where to lay his head."

About twenty years after the death of Lamennais, a Scottish poet gave to the Freethought world the poem of *The City of Dreadful Night*, and this poem is now considered by the thoughtful part of the public as his masterpiece, and as one of the most remarkable utterances of the nineteenth century mind; or rather, I should say heart. Whether Thomson (B.V.) had read Lamennais' revolutionary works I do not know, but these authors appear to me to have reached the same movement from different positions of thought. Lamennais, to the last, retained some Catholic traces. Thomson was completely emancipated from theology. Both were appallingly distressed by the sorrows of humanity. No doubt "B. V." had private griefs, moral and physical, in plenty. But so have other people had private griefs, and eloquently enough have they told whatever audiences they could secure how exquisitely painful their experiences were! Thomson had a mind that was too magnanimous for this individual howling. He sang his tremendous dirge, not for himself, but for the world. To be sure, he narrates his travels in the dreadful city as one who speaks from personal memory, but every pang is common, every gloom, is shared, every sigh is that of a multitude. Therefore, he does not groan at a shrine in solitary woe. He enters the church where a few faint moon-gleams threw the shadows into sterner relief, and where a congregation wrapped in a sable atmosphere listened in silence to the preacher:—

"O melancholy Brothers, dark, dark, dark!  
O battling in black floods without an ark!  
O spectral wanderers of unholy night!  
My soul hath bled for you these sunless years,  
With bitter blood-drops running down like tears;  
O dark, dark, dark, withdrawn from joy and light!"

As soon as the Wanderer entered the City, he heard (and he repeats) the conversation of two of the hopeless inhabitants. They vanish; and he meets another couple, one of whom, wretched as his lot is, prefers to be himself to being God:—

"Who is most wretched in this dolorous place?  
I think myself; yet I would rather be  
My miserable self than He, than He  
Who formed such creatures to His own disgrace."

And when he pauses at the porch of the black cathedral, and explains to the warder of the door what brought him from the dreams of earth-life to the reality of pain in the City, the note of fellowship is distinct though heartrending:—

"From desperate fighting with a little band  
Against the powerful tyrants of our land,  
To free our brethren in their own despite,  
I wake from day-dreams to this real night."

The poem closes with the awful vision of the colossal winged woman whose statue overlooks this metropolis of sorrow. The Wanderer has even now no verses for his own cruel smart. He sees the solemn statue as the patroness of a nation:—

"The moving moon and stars from east and west  
Circle before her in the sea of air;  
Shadows and gleams glide round her solemn rest.  
Her subjects often gaze up to her there;  
The strong to drink new strength of iron endurance,  
The weak new terrors; all renewed assurance  
And confirmation of the old despair."

It is not my purpose to endorse Thomson's terrific drama as the final attitude of the human heart towards its problem. Nay rather, I should gladly assert that, thanks to the very curses which he and such as he flung at the bad elements of civilisation, and thanks to the constructive philosophers who found the place of a new world made easier by the curses, I hold a confident expectation of a progress which will happily develop from the present social order, defective as that order may appear. What I wish here to say is, how absolutely necessary it was that men of insight should see the evils that afflicted society, and not only see but speak. Lamennais

spoke with splendid energy; so splendidly that Mazzini hastened to bid him go forward in his propaganda, for the patriots of Italy were watching, "and their affection will follow you to the tomb." Lamennais was a priest, even if heretical; and naturally enough, he climbed the rocks of Calvary in order to cry woe on the rich, the politicians and the parasites. Thomson had foresworn for ever the language of the priest. His wrath at the bad aspects of the universe was as strong as that of Lamennais; but it was even more direct, more concentrated. Dispensing with the broken reed of celestialism, he damned the ills of humanity in purely human speech, and tramped, alone and disdainful of any companionship of angels, through the drear thoroughfares of the City of Night. These two voices—the voice of the French priest and the voice of the Scottish Freethinker—were typical of the hatred, strong in the earlier years of last century, yet stronger in its central years, which honest natures conceived against the disease and chaos of the body politic. Never again, I think, need the anathema be uttered so loathingly. Never again will the horror of great darkness so enwrap the souls of the noble, who wrestle for the Better Day.

Never; because these men and their comrades expressed the truth with such perfect sincerity, and with a sublime courage that was not to be found in the width of the Christian world.

F. J. GOULD.

### The Foreknowledge of Jesus.—I.

FROM our examination of the sayings ascribed to Jesus in the Gospels it has, I think, been clearly demonstrated that that much lauded personage had no more knowledge of "heavenly things" than could be gained by a study of the Hebrew scriptures in existence in his day. We now proceed to test his prophetic utterances and his alleged foreknowledge of future events. This we are able to do with absolute certainty; for we possess a threefold record of a great prediction, attributed by believers to him, concerning the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the world.

This grand prediction is found in each of the three Synoptics—Matt. xxiv., Mark xiii., and Luke xxi.—the first two accounts being almost verbally identical, and all three derived from a more primitive Gospel. I select that in the First Gospel as probably the nearest to the original Hebrew document.

#### MATTHEW XXIV.

It is related in this chapter that Jesus, after leaving the temple with his disciples, remarked of that building: "Verily, I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down." Shortly afterwards, "as he sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy second coming, and of the end of the world?"

Here we have two distinct questions:—

1. When should the destruction of the temple (and of Jerusalem) take place?
2. What signs should precede the second coming of Jesus and the end of the world?

The disciples assumed that the two last-named events—the second coming and the end of the world—would take place at the same time or that one would be immediately followed by the other, and Jesus in his reply, which takes up the whole chapter, implies the same thing.

If it could be shown that the prediction was really uttered by Jesus, and was made some time before the war with the Romans (A.D. 66-70), then we should have two proved facts—at least, as regards the destruction of Jerusalem—that might be said to favor the alleged divine mission of the Christian Savior. But neither of these postulates is supported by corroborative evidence of any kind. Hence, the

only logical inference is, that this so-called "prophecy" was written after the destruction of the holy city—a deduction which all known facts combine to render irresistible. Moreover, the internal evidence leads to the further inference that the original narrative—that from which, at a later day, the three Synoptists drew their accounts—was composed soon after the capture of Jerusalem and deportation of its inhabitants. After such an unlooked for catastrophe a pious Jew might well believe that the end of the world was close at hand: the original writer certainly did.

We will now look at the great prediction ascribed to Jesus. The answer to the disciples' first question—when should the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple take place?—is briefly as follows:—

1. Many should come professing to be "the Christ," and should "lead many astray."
2. There should be "wars and rumors of wars"; nation should "rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom"; there should be "famines and earthquakes in divers places"—these were "the beginning of sorrows."
3. Believers in Jesus should be persecuted and put to death, and should be "hated of all nations": later, there should be contentions, hatred, and treachery within the Church itself.
4. False prophets should arise, and "lead many astray."
5. The "gospel of the kingdom" should be preached "in the whole world" for "a testimony unto all the nations"; and then should "the end come."
6. "When therefore" believers should see "the abomination of desolation, which was spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the Holy place," they were to "flee unto the mountains," and not return to their homes.
7. Then should come upon the Jewish nation "great tribulation, such as hath not been from the beginning of the world" until that time—"No, nor ever shall be."
8. "But for the elect's sake" those days of tribulation should be "shortened."
9. There should arise "false Christs and false prophets" who should "shew great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect."

Up to this point (verse 28) the prediction has reference only to the "signs" which should precede the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple. The remaining portion has to do with the second coming of Jesus and the end of the world—which will be considered in its place in the next paper.

Now, looking at the prediction so far—that is to say at the list of "signs" that were to appear between A.D. 30 and the capture of the city by the Romans, A.D. 70—it may safely be said that the writer knew nothing of the events in the world's history that occurred during that period, save only the last—the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple. This last named event was the "great tribulation" predestined to come upon the nation, and included all the horrors and sufferings within the holy city during the siege. When reading this part of the "prophecy" it soon becomes evident that the writer was perfectly aware of the fall of the city and of the events that followed. Luke makes Jesus say:—

"But when ye see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that her desolation is at hand.....And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led captive into all the nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles" (xxi. 20, 24).

This is not the hazy, ambiguous language of prophecy: it is a statement made with the assurance resulting from a perfect knowledge of a well-known historical fact whose occurrence was a thing of the past. If we can believe Josephus, more than a million of the Jewish people perished by "the edge of the sword," or in some other manner, within Jerusalem during the long siege, and nearly a quarter of a million in other parts of Palestine; while no less than 97,000 were "led captive into all the nations," and sold into slavery. This, in the writer's opinion, was the greatest "tribulation" the nation had ever suffered, or ever would suffer.

The Gospel writers had heard of "false prophets" which should "lead many astray." Three of these are mentioned by Luke (who took them from Josephus), viz., Judas of Galilee, Theudas, and an Egyptian impostor; but the insurrection of Judas is stated to have been later than that of Theudas, though, as a matter of history, it had occurred thirty-seven years before (Acts v. 36-37; xxi. 88). It was probably with an eye on these three agitators that the Gospel writer "predicts" false prophets three times.

The only other event that may be called historical to which reference is made is "the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the Holy place." This "abomination" is mentioned three times in the Book of Daniel—Dan. ix. 27, xi. 31. and xii. 11—and in each case as a future profanation of the Jewish temple, Yahveh's "Holy place," by a wicked Gentile king. The writer of that book of fiction professed to have been a prophet who lived in the reigns of Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, Darius the Mede, and Cyrus (B.C. 588-536)—two of whom never reigned—and gives a series of pretended predictions respecting the Jewish nation from the time of Nebuchadnezzar to the end of the world. These precious predictions all come to an end in the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes (B.C. 176-164), who in B.C. 168 came with an army against Jerusalem, took the city, slaughtered the inhabitants, and attempted to change the Jewish religion. He set up a statue of the god Jupiter in Yahveh's holy temple, and caused swine to be sacrificed on Yahveh's holy altar; he also punished with death all who refused to conform to this new form of worship. This was the "abomination of desolation" predicted in the Book of Daniel, whose author lived in the reign of this Antiochus, and wrote after the event predicted.

The Gospel writer had no knowledge of the past history of the Jews, and so made the "abomination of desolation" refer to the destruction of the temple by Titus. Intelligent Jewish writers were better informed. Josephus, for instance, knew what the "abomination" of Daniel referred to, and twice mentions its fulfilment in the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes (Antiq. x. xi. 7; xii. vii. 6). The writer of the most historical book of the Hebrew scriptures—the "First book of the Maccabees"—also mentions the "abomination of desolation" set up by the Syrian king (1 Macc. i. 39, 54; ii. 45), as well as the "cleansing" of the temple and the building of a new altar three years later by Judas Maccabæus (iv. 36-51)—an event afterwards annually commemorated by the "feast of the dedication." We have thus a clear case of Jesus misleading his disciples, or, more correctly, of the original Gospel writer misleading the primitive Christians—a noteworthy example of the blind leading the blind, and conducting them safely into a ditch. And this is the Savior who is credited with making a revelation to mankind.

All the rest of the so-called "signs" are mere padding, made up from passages selected from the Jewish "holy books," and cannot be identified with any historical occurrences during the period specified. The source of these fraudulent predictions will be given in the next paper.

ABRACADABRA.

(To be continued.)

#### RUSKIN ON "THE HEREAFTER."

I was thinking over that question of yours, "What did I think?" [Of the things that shall be, "hereafter."—Ruskin's footnote.] But, my dear Susie, you might as well ask Gibbie Gellatly what *he* thought. What does it matter what any of us think? We are but simpletons, the best of us, and I am a very inconsistent and wayward simpleton. I know how to roast eggs, in the ashes, perhaps—but for the next world! Why don't you ask your squirrel what *he* thinks too? The great point—the one for all of us—is, not to take false words in our mouths, and to crack our nuts innocently through winter and rough weather.—*Hortus Inclusus*, p. 33.

#### The World of Books.

Mr. Henry S. Salt has just published (through A. C. Fifield: 44 Fleet-street—3s. 6d. nett.) a charming little book *On Cambrian and Cumbrian Hills*. Mr. Salt has been for more years than we care to count the honorary secretary of the Humanitarian League. He is not all, however, the typical, hustling, one-ideal secretary of an "advanced" organisation. He is a man of many intellectual interests, and a scholar, and a man of imagination to boot. He has a sound head, a constant heart, and a steady-burning enthusiasm in serving his convictions. There is no one for whom we have more respect, and few for whom we have as much. We have read this little book of his with great pleasure. It shows that while he is a true democrat, in the sense of appreciating human equality and wishing to help the people, he is far from having the mob-mind. And not to have the mob-mind is a distinction nowadays. Mr. Salt—and it is a thing we did not know—is a mountaineer. He loves his fellow men, in the sense of desiring to be of service to them, and of acknowledging himself to belong to their great common family, but he feels that it is possible to have too much of them at times. Men are, after all, but a part of nature; and when the enjoyment of their society palls, and leads to sheer satiety, there is the enjoyment of nature still left, and it refreshes, soothes, and elevates, bringing one back the precious serenity which is so easily lost in crowds, and proving that the greatest of all possessions is self-possession. It is in this mood that Mr. Salt has been wont to resort to the Welsh and Cumberland hills, fortyfying body and mind together. For, as he himself says:—

"It is to this mental tonic, even more than to the bracing air of the heights, that we owe the unwearied spirit which nerves us to walk more leagues upon the mountains than we could walk miles upon the plain. For in the lowlands we walk with the body only; in the highlands we walk also with the mind."

And from the lofty tone of Mr. Salt's admirably, and often beautifully, written volume we should judge that he is right.

\* \* \*

Personally, we know little about mountain climbing. We had a glorious day once with our dear old friend and colleague, J. M. Wheeler, on the Isle of Arran; and we remember the climb to the top of Goat Fell, and the great respect we had for him when we got there, and the noble prospect we viewed from his narrow summit. A good many years afterwards we went to the top of Snaefell, on the Isle of Man, and saw the whole island spread out like a map under us and around us; but we must make the ignominious confession that we patronised the electric railway on that occasion, having rather lost our climbing legs, and being in the company of friends who had never climbed at all. To a great extent, therefore, we can only follow Mr. Salt with the eye of imagination, aided by the memory of our slender experience; but we follow him well enough to see that he has had some grand, uplifting times on the hills he regards with such awe-tinged affection.

\* \* \*

Fortunately, there is something to match the mountains, and of that we have always been passionately enamored. Wordsworth puts these two together in one of his most magnificent sonnets:—

"Two Voices are there; one is of the sea,  
One of the mountains; each a mighty Voice:  
In both from age to age thou didst rejoice,  
They were thy chosen music, Liberty!"

The superb ending of that sonnet expresses all the rest. Mr. Salt has written a beautiful little book on the mountains. We wish we could write as good a one on the sea. But where is so much as the time to come from? Oh, the curse (we sometimes feel) of being an editor! Your paper comes round with the regularity of the very sun, and you cannot miss a single revolution.

\* \* \*

Mr. Salt's fine chapter on "Slag-Heap or Sanctuary?" is a noble plea for the non-defilement of the mountain scenery of this land of ours. "While we are willing to spend vast sums on grabbing other people's territory," he says, "we have not, of course, a penny to spare for the preservation of our own." Mine-owners and railway lords, and unimaginative tourists, should not be permitted to deface and defile the sanctuaries of nature. Some public-spirited rich men should take the matter up. "For it is a simple truth," Mr. Salt declares, "that the millionaire who should buy a Snowden or a Scawfell, and make free gift of it to the people, would be a benefactor for all time, and would far outstrip in lasting philanthropy any donor of churches or charities, hospitals or libraries, scholarships or seats of learning." From which

it appears that Mr. Andrew Carnegie is on the wrong track—as we can well believe. \* \* \*

Number 5 of the "Fabian Socialist Series" is Mr. Bernard Shaw's *Common-sense of Municipal Trading*, published by Field (6d. nett). This is a reprint, with a new eight-page Preface. Nobody can hope to beat Mr. Shaw in work of this kind from the Socialist point of view. Whether you agree with it entirely or not, you are bound to admit its intellectual power and persuasive eloquence. The volume should be read by all who are interested in social reform.

A very different volume is Number 2 of the "Constitution Issues," entitled *Political Socialism: a Remonstrance*, published by P. S. King & Son (1s. nett). This volume is edited by Mr. Mark H. Judge, and contains papers by members of the British Constitutional Association, including presidential addresses by Lord Balfour of Burleigh and Lord Hugh Cecil. The opposition of such men to Socialism is perhaps a thing that "goes without saying." They are so obviously interested parties. But they are able men; so are several of the other contributors; and those who wish to see both sides of the argument may read this volume and Mr. Shaw's together with profit.

### Man's Last Pilgrimage.

Out from the outer darkness of my day  
Forgotten and forlorn—I turn again  
Unto these stones, O God—thy dwelling-place—  
Unto the house I fashioned of my pain.  
My dreams of long ago—ye things of gloom  
How shrunken in the silence of your tomb—  
The hymns of my wild youth—O where are they?  
O, I am but the man who might have been:  
The genius of poor humanity.

I stand within the vestibule, alone,  
In God's great house unnoticed and unseen.  
And as I bend mine ear  
Comes a sad wail of soul  
From all the congregation: Miserable sinners!  
I hear the mocking echoes as they roll,  
Lifted—caressed—upon the organ's groan:  
Miserable sinners!

O Christ! thy worshipers look on thy priest  
And love thee wondrously.  
E'en as the shepherd drives them to and fro  
With sweet advice and kind continual feast  
Of well-paid flattery.  
They snuggle down to pray both loud and long,  
Or ease their bellies of some ancient song.  
Miserable sinners!

Hypocrites! Ye are not tyros and beginners.  
When did you once forego  
The merest modicum of your fat dinners,  
Miserable sinners?

I stand alone within the sanctum now,  
With twenty centuries of prisoned hate  
Brooding within my brow.  
Because, O Christ, didst so o'ershadow me  
That thou shouldst gain the sympathy—the life—  
My brother-brother now withholds from me.  
Hast mimicked every posture of my woe  
Born of my ignorance. But thou didst know.  
And didst thou bear my suffering and grief  
And stolid faith in thee past all belief?  
Ah no! I alone bear my own punishment.  
Thou'rt fabled to have lived a life like mine  
Under the deep blue sky of Galilee  
In lazy, lusty health—I scarce may see  
Aught of this lovely world of cruelty.  
My brain and limb are fenced in banishment,  
My every issue crushed in agony.  
Mine is no dim and distant Calvary.  
Thou art respectable, Jesu! Thy father was divine;  
I am rejected and despised of men.  
When I am fallen by the way to die  
[Did age and hunger starve and wither thee?],  
Men look and pass as though I were defiled,  
Saying, "Whence comes this man? Whose child is he?"  
None answering, save when Dame Misery  
Stretches her old lean arm to me, and bitterly  
Shrieks from the shade of my Gethsemane,  
"This is my child!"

I come from out the darkness of my day  
With twenty centuries of mud and blood  
Clinging about me now.

I stand alone; and as I bend mine ear  
I hear the echoes mocking as they roll.  
I gaze within, and 'neath the central dome  
I see the incense wafted far and near  
From golden chalices,  
Before thy myriad cross and painted effigy.  
This brave cathedral is thine empty home  
If thou shouldst come.—A thousand palaces  
Would yield thee house-room for thy scented bed—  
I have no place wherein to lay my head.  
Ah, Jesu! didst thou die in a proud sacrifice?  
Didst fear to leave this Earth for Paradise?  
You finished not my travail, but my pain  
Was suffocated in a sea of blood in thy great name.  
Ay! In a sea of my own blood and blame.  
A mighty army from far age to age  
Proclaims thy suffering.—My tears fall  
Till earth is heavy with them. O thou shame  
The tyrants of the earth, bending before thee,  
Adore thy praised name unceasingly.  
O Christ! They spit on me!  
From my just birthright I am scourged and driven.  
Jesu! They love thee while they murder me;  
Give me my place, O Christ, and keep thy Heaven.

GEORGE WOODWARD.

### Correspondence.

#### THE HAGGERSTON ELECTION.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Please allow me to thank those of my Secularist friends who helped me in my fight. Miss Vance, Mr. Cohen, Mr. Thomas Shore and others did admirable service. I was glad to be able to say an emphatic word for the disestablishment of the Church, Secular Education, and the Repeal of the Blasphemy Laws. One day I hope to be able to introduce into the House of Commons my promised Bill for the repeal of those laws.

HERBERT BURROWS.

#### ICONOCLASTS' CRICKET CLUB TENTH MATCH V. SOUTH LONDON CLUB AND INSTITUTE.

Played on our ground on Sunday, 16th inst. Result: Iconoclasts lost by 52 runs. Our opponents were a bit too strong for us, but it was a very enjoyable game. Scores: South London C. and I., 101; I. C. C., 49. Our batting was not up to the mark, but our bowling and fielding were good, Harvey with 3 wickets for 13 and Voigt with 2 for 7 having the best analyses.

H. E. VOIGT, *Captain I. C. C.*

#### FEAR-MORALITY.

And the essential idea of real virtue is that of vital human strength, which instinctively, constantly, and without motive, does what is right. You must train men to this by habit, as you would the branch of a tree; and give them instincts and manners (or morals) of purity, justice, kindness, and courage. It is the blackest sign of putrescence in a national religion, when men speak of it as if it were the only safeguard of conduct; and assume that, but for the fear of being burned, or for the hope of being rewarded, everybody would pass their lives in lying, stealing, and murdering. I think quite one of the notablest historical events of this century (perhaps the very notablest), was that council of clergymen, horror-struck at the idea of any diminution in our dread of hell, at which the last of English clergymen whom one would have expected to see in such a function, rose as the devil's advocate; to tell us how impossible it was that we could get on without him..... People should be afraid of doing wrong, and of that only. Otherwise, if they only don't do wrong for fear of being punished, they *have* done wrong in their hearts, already..... When a father sends his son out into the world—suppose as an apprentice—fancy the boy's coming home at night, and saying, "Father, I could have robbed the till to-day; but I didn't, because I thought you wouldn't like it." Do you think the father would be particularly pleased. He would answer, would he not, if he were wise and good, "My boy, though you had no father, you must not rob tills." And nothing is ever done so as really to please our Great Father, unless we would also have done it, though we had no Father to know of it.—*John Ruskin.*

**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, S. H. Allison.

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S.: Station-road, 11.30, F. Schaller. Brockwell Park, 3.15, F. Schaller; 6, Freethought Demonstration. Speakers: Messrs. G. W. Foote, C. Cohen, F. A. Davies, A. B. Moss, W. Heaford.

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S.: Ridley-road, 11.30, Mr. Schaller, "What Christians Believe."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S.: Parliament Hill, 3.30, W. J. Ramsey.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S.: Outside Maryland Point Station, Stratford, 7, Mr. Ford, "Man's Debt to Atheism."

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): Tuesdays and Thursdays, at 8, Bible Classes.

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

**OUTDOOR.**

BLACKBURN: 3 and 7, Mr. McClellan, Lectures.

EDINBURGH BRANCH N. S. S.: The Meadows, 2.30, a Lecture; The Mound, 6.30, a Lecture. Dalkieth (main street), Saturday, August 22, at 6, a Lecture.

LEEDS: Town Hall Square, Friday, August 21, at 7.30, Auberon H. Fisher, "Did Moses Write the Pentateuch?"

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N. S. S. (corner of Shiel-road and Boaler-street): Mr. Wollen, 3, "Lessons for Christians from the Life of Buddha"; 7, "Lessons for Freethinkers from the Life of Martin Luther."

WIGAN: Market Steps, Wednesday, August 19, Mr. McClellan, a Lecture.

**H. S. WISHART'S LECTURES.**

LEEDS: Saturday, August 22, Town Hall Square, at 7.30, "God Knows."

WIGAN: Sunday, August 23, Market Steps, at 11, "An Exposition of Secularism"; 3, "Good God." Lamberhead Green, Fleet-street, Pemberton, at 7, "Religion, Politics, and Religion."

LEIGH: Tuesday, August 25, Market, at 7.30, "Christianity an Enemy of Progress."

BURNLEY: Wednesday, August 26, Market, at 7.30, "Woman Cursed by Christianity." Thursday, August 27, at 7.30, "How Christianity Didn't Free the Slaves."

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