

THE Freethinker

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PRICE TWOPENCE

The man who is worthy of being a leader of men will never complain of the stupidity of his helpers, of the ingratitude of mankind, nor of the inappreciation of the public. These things are all a part of the great game of life, and to meet them and not go down before them in discouragement and defeat is the final proof of power.

—ETHEL HUBBARD.

Rome or Atheism.

SINCE the days of famous Tractarian movement at Oxford, which culminated in the secession of Newman, Manning and others from the Church of England, the Roman Catholic Church has made great and steady advance in the chief land of "No Popery." It may be true, as Gladstone once remarked, that Rome has grown richer in acres than in men; but this simply means that her converts are made among the rich and well-to-do rather than among the poorer classes of the community. After all allowances and explanations, the fact is palpable that she has vastly increased her strength and improved her position. Her churches, colleges, and schools have multiplied; her priests have become numerous, and they walk the streets with no particular air of humility; her dignitaries are enterprising, astute, and successful; and wealth—the great secret of organisation and influence—appears to flow with ever-increasing volume into her coffers.

Meanwhile the "No Popery" cry has died down in England. Occasionally a faint broken-winded protest against the Scarlet Whore sounds from a Low Church pulpit or a Nonconformist platform; but the Roman Catholic Church is generally recognised as a sound portion of the religious life of the country. It would be false to say that the late Cardinal Manning was respected *because* of his Catholicism; he made himself popular by being, or professing to be, a friend of the democratic movement towards better conditions of life for the masses of the people. Yet the way in which the public tolerated his haughty claims to precedence, shows that the old hatred of Rome is practically dead amongst the English people.

Much of this altered state of things is undoubtedly due to Catholic Emancipation. While the Papists were under a legal stigma, their martyr spirit was necessarily cherished; but something more than this is needed for the success of a Church in an old, complex society. "Respectability" stood aloof, with timidity and vacillation, and all the elements that "let I dare not wait upon I would." But when the legal stigma was removed, those of the upper and "respectable" classes who desired a Faith unadulterated with Reason, a Faith of antiquity and gorgeous ritual and superb dogmatism, were free to gravitate towards the Holy Mother Church from whom their forefathers had parted in anger and contempt.

Cardinal Manning's successor was perhaps indiscreet, but certainly not otherwise wanting in sagacity, in saying that he looked upon the High Church party as an ally of Rome. No treaty has been signed; there is, indeed, a certain attitude of hostility to Rome on the part of High Churchmen; but to the eyes of less

subtle laymen there is a very slender difference between these ostensible rivals.

Cardinal Vaughan, late Catholic Archbishop of Westminster, told a newspaper interviewer that the High Church party was "doing a great service" to Rome. "It is true," he said, "they arrest some who would otherwise come over, yet on the whole they are doing our work." Nearly all the old controversies have died out, and Catholic doctrines "are now taught where they were formerly denounced." "England herself," said Dr. Vaughan, "will never, I think, be Catholic throughout, but her main religion will be so without a doubt."

Such a triumphant note is calculated to arouse reflection. "Twenty years ago," said Newman in a sermon on "The Pope and the Revolution," preached in 1866, "twenty years ago, we were a mere collection of individuals; but Pope Pius has brought us together, has given us bishops, and created out of us a body politic, which (please God), as time goes on, will play an important part in Christendom." Forty-two years more have elapsed, and the Catholic Church is playing that "important part" in England. Sermons against her are no longer preached at Court by Protestant divines. Dr. Cumming's name is now antediluvian. Royalty sends a gracious message of condolence on the death of a Manning. Catholic organisations are reckoned with by statesmen, and although we have no ambassador at the Vatican, it is an open secret that political negotiations have more than once been surreptitiously carried on between the British Government and the Pope.

Looking beyond our own country, we see the Romish Church everywhere holding its own and in some places positively advancing. She is bound but not crippled in France; she has come unimpaired out of her tremendous struggle with Bismarck in Germany; in the United States of America she is already threatening the Constitution.

Was it not Macaulay who remarked that the Roman Catholic Church had survived every shock, including that of the Reformation, and emerged from every trial with her vital powers uninjured. "And she may still exist," the historian exclaimed, "in undiminished vigor, when some traveller from New Zealand shall, in the midst of a vast solitude, take his stand on the broken arch of London Bridge to sketch the ruins of St. Paul's."

The Roman Catholic Church has an immense advantage over Protestant bodies. She has been troubled with heresies and dissensions, but she has always purged herself and maintained her ecclesiastical and dogmatic continuity. Protestantism, on the other hand, appealing as it does to private judgment, at least in the interpretation of Scripture—and to that extent applying the solvent of reason to the mysteries of faith—is ever breaking up into a wider diversity of sects, and sliding down into the gulf of Rationalism. Nor is this all. Protestantism has its *Churches*, but Roman Catholicism is *the Church*. Her organisation is a perfect model of strength and efficiency. The celibacy of her priests secures their absolute devotion to her interests. She is republican in the selection of her agents, and imperial in her use of them. She combines the aspiration and enthusiasm of democracy with the power and foresight of a dictatorship. Thus she moves to her ends with incomparable force and decision.

Protestantism has merely abandoned some of the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church; it has added nothing, and its partial appeal to reason only opens the flood-gates of Scepticism. They are grievously mistaken who imagine that either Revelation or Natural Religion can stand upon a purely intellectual basis. Not in any court of reason can miracles, immortality, future rewards and punishments, or even Theism, be successfully established. This is practically admitted by Protestants, or why is Revelation necessary? But how is Revelation anything but a perplexity and an absurdity, if a book like the Bible is put into the hands of the people for individual interpretation? Let the discord of Protestantism answer this question. Such a Revelation as the Christian Scriptures is useless, nay misleading, without a divinely appointed interpreter; and thus the Roman Catholic looks upon his Church as "the living voice of God."

Atheism makes a clean sweep of supernaturalism, of which the Roman Catholic Church is (at least in Christendom) the historic and logical champion. Between these two mortal enemies the war has been covertly going on for centuries. Where it is most critical, as in France, the struggle is open and undisguised. So it will be everywhere. Protestant sects will fall "between the fell incensed points of mighty opposites." Some of their members will go over to Rome; others will go over to Atheism. The process in fact is already obvious to men of discernment. Yes, the illogical sectaries will disappear, and leave the field to the two great logical protagonists of Faith and Reason, who march steadily forward to their Armageddon.

The victory of the one or the other will decide the fate of modern civilisation. The combatants will not fight for a platonic triumph, but for practical sovereignty. It is *ideas* that govern the world. Faith moulds society in one fashion, and Reason in another. They cannot sign a treaty or make a truce; they must fight to the bitter end; for the issue involves not only the *beliefs*, but the *lives*, the hopes and fears, the rights and duties, the character and happiness, of a countless posterity.

G. W. FOOTE.

Materialism.

SEVERAL weeks ago particular attention was directed in these columns to the use of the word "materialism" by religious writers. The word itself is always in evidence in discussions between religionists and their opponents, and if it were always used in a commonly-understood sense no objection could be raised. But the truth is that it is used in at least three distinct senses—the popular or ethical sense, the philosophic, and the scientific. And the whole art of its use by the average religious controversialist consists in implying an ethical censure while conducting a scientific or a philosophical discussion. Whether materialism be spelt with a capital letter or not matters little, the different senses of the word are present in the mind of both reader and writer, and it is upon this calculated confusion that religious writers and speakers depend.

Let us take first of all the ethical significance of the word. Popularly a materialist is one who is wholly given up to sensual gratification, a person of low ideals, one who deliberately pursues his own immediate welfare with little or no concern for that of other people. Perhaps the last people to answer this description are those who are known to the world as Freethinkers. To begin with, the mere fact of their being known as such is *prima facie* evidence of their being something above the average of humanity. That they should avow opinions which opens them to misrepresentation or ill-treatment, that in addition they should strive by arduous propaganda to convince their fellows of what they believe to be error, proves beyond all cavil the presence of an element of unselfishness not so common that the world can profitably

afford to set it on one side. Their ideal, instead of being of a low, selfish character, is the direct reverse, for it is not one that, to the ordinary person, yields any direct or immediate profit. Few people are able to take any very great interest in the pursuit of abstract truth; a question of an increase in the size of an organisation, which satisfies egotism, or of an improvement in wages, or housing, or conditions of employment may be easily appreciated, but the desire for intellectual salvation, careless of aught else, is woefully weak with average humanity. Moreover, one of the stock arguments against the Freethought position has always been that in destroying the belief in a God and a future life we destroy all the incentives to morality and remove all checks upon sensuality.

Very easily the Freethinker might retort that in the objectionable sense of the word the greatest materialists are to be found amongst the religious. The whole system of religion is essentially sensuous. It consists far more in an appeal to the senses of the multitude than aught else. And sensuousness has been a strong feature of by far the majority of great religious leaders. That which seems at first sight the very antithesis of sensuousness—the asceticism of the monk—is in truth the strongest evidence of its dominance. A man whose passion for sensual gratification is not out of all proportion to his other desires does not become an ascetic. His various parts and qualities work together with the harmonious regularity of a well-constructed machine. But when this is not the case, when we have a person with whom the allurements of sense are almost overpoweringly strong, we have as a result the actual sensualist on the one side, and the ascetic with his inverted sensualism, to whom the gratification of the senses appeals as the most dominant of all forces, upon the other—two characteristics commonly combined in great religious personalities. So, too, with the whole of Christian symbolism. The crucified Savior, the conceptions of heaven and hell, the hymns dwelling upon the "blood of the Lamb" are all so many illustrations of how extremely "materialistic" Christianity is. Nor is it without significance that it is precisely those nations which are most aggressive in their profession of Christian faith that are most devoted to the pursuit of material wealth, and who have developed least the more idealistic side of life. Charles Lamb said he felt like saying grace whenever he sat down to read Shakespeare. Had he not lived among a people who confined their formal thanks to the Deity for their eating and drinking, the witticism would never have been born.

When dealing with scientific materialism the religionist is no less in error. Here he is fond of asserting that materialism is dead. He does not condescend to say *what* materialism is dead, nor does he usually tell us what he understands by materialism. When he does so far favor us with a description of what he understands by materialism he usually selects the form in which it was present a century or so ago, and then proceeds to show that scientific men to-day would not endorse this presentation of it; and with each fresh scientific discovery, the X rays, radium, etc., we have a chorus from the interested press, and from the quite as ignorant newspaper paragraphist, that materialism has received its death blow; the truth being that materialism is all the time being placed upon a firmer and less assailable basis.

What is the essence of the materialist position? To read many writers set upon demolishing "materialism" one would imagine that it was solely concerned with some special theory of "matter," and that if that theory were demolished all that its opponents contend for is established beyond cavil. It is true that, historically, materialism came into prominence associated with a certain theory of "matter," but this was a mere accident. The imperfect psychology which taught that man actually knew objective reality, supported a theory which gave to this reality the name of "matter." Philo-

sophically, this theory of matter as an objective reality was killed by Bishop Berkeley, and subsequent scientific study has done nothing to revive it. That we know only states of consciousness—however much we may infer beyond—is certain; and all who have bitten the Berkeleyan file, to quote Huxley, have only succeeded in breaking their teeth on it.

Those who look for ideas instead of names, and who study a subject with some sense of historical perspective, will realise that "materialism" historically stands for a certain conception of world forces as opposed to the spiritualistic theory of things. This latter theory postulated a dualism that is to-day sadly out of fashion even among anti-materialists. On the one side was the world of matter, inert, dead, and incapable of development unless unoperated on from without. This force was supplied by a world of spirit free from the laws that controlled matter, existing quite independent of it, and to which was due all the changes through which matter passed. It was this dualistic conception that barred the development of a sound science, and it was against this that materialism waned. In conducting this warfare various theories of the nature of "matter" and "force" have been framed and modified or discarded just as more exact knowledge demanded, but the essential position of the scientific "materialist" has remained unchanged.

This position, as against spiritualism, is that whether we use the name matter, force, or even spirit, or merely refer to the unknown, nature is one, and contains in itself the potentialities of all its varied manifestations. And as against Theism, the whole issue is that between mechanical causation and an external directive intelligence. If there is reason to believe that natural forces are adequate to the production of all we see around us, and that all phenomena are linked together in terms of necessary causation, then the materialistic position is fully justified. If, on the other hand, there is reason for assuming the operations of a directive intelligence, the materialistic position breaks down utterly. This is the essential issue, and all talk of whether "matter" *per se* really exists is, apart from its philosophic interest, wide of the mark.

Now if anyone will calmly review the history and method of modern science they will see how wild is the talk of the overthrow of materialism. The theory of a supernatural force explained nothing, led to nothing, and only served to obstruct the way to an understanding of natural processes. In the world of science all speculations and calculations are based upon the assumption that all we have to deal with is natural forces, and that these are of a constant and calculable character. Even those scientific workers who make a profession of some sort of spiritualistic belief, once the profession is made straightway return to the methods of the most convinced materialist. Whenever and wherever the theories of men of science break down, the mishap is rightly attributed to want of knowledge—a defect that all believe the future will remedy. So completely has the materialistic conception of things triumphed that spiritualists themselves feel their impotence and hasten to adopt its principles. "God," they now tell us, is not an extra cosmical force acting in a purely arbitrary manner, but part and parcel of the cosmic order, whose "will" is seen in phenomenal law. They do not realise, apparently, that in taking up this position they have really given up their case. A God who is inseparable from the cosmic order, who is so completely identified with natural law that whether we speak of natural causation or "God's will" makes no difference, is not a God worth bothering about. Certainly it is not the God of historical Theism, least of all of Christian Theism. A God who has so fallen from his high estate as to become merged in the natural order of things, and to have no existence apart from natural forces, may as well be non-existent altogether. The only interest of such a theory to the student of science is the

admission that the materialist has been right all along, that all we have to deal with, because all we can deal with, are natural, calculable forces, and that all else is mere idle speculation. In the act of announcing the destruction of materialism, the spiritualist acknowledge to supremacy. Science has not only wrested the domain of nature from the control of the gods, it has made the gods themselves wear its livery and bear testimony to its rule.

C. COHEN.

John Fiske on Immortality.

AS is well known, it is now the custom of the so-called progressive school of Christian apologists to claim the science of to-day as an ally of religion. The science of yesterday may have been Agnostic, Atheistic, even ferociously hostile to all forms of theology and religion; but the direct opposite is true of the new and wiser science of the present. Living scientists are declared to have outgrown "the rather arrogant tone some of their immediate predecessors in the eighties—the Huxley period—used to take on matters of religion." Then we are confidently referred to "so distinguished an evolutionist as Professor John Fiske," to Lord Kelvin, to Sir Oliver Lodge, and sometimes to Dr. Russel Wallace, as first-class scientists who are scientifically friendly towards the Christian religion, if not actual professors of it. Readers of this journal are perfectly well aware of the utter hollowness and hypocrisy of such a reference so far as Lord Kelvin and Sir Oliver are concerned. But as they may not be so well instructed with regards to John Fiske, it may be worth while to consider the service to religion which he is alleged to have rendered.

John Fiske was an American of distinction who, strictly speaking, was not a scientist at all, but a literary man who made it one of his missions to popularise the philosophy of Herbert Spencer. Born at Hartford in 1842, he soon proved to be a lad of exceptional potentialities. Like Macaulay, he had a prodigious memory, and at seven years of age was a miracle of a Latin scholar, while at eight he knew his Plato quite intimately and had read Shakespeare from end to end. At nine he "wrote a history of the world from the time of Moses down to the date of his own birth, giving a list of the greatest men who had ever lived, with a brief mention of what they had done, with the date of their birth and death." By the time he was sixteen he could compose in Spanish, read and speak German, write Dantesque poems in Italian, discuss the Hebrew text of the Old Testament, and interpret the mysteries of Sanscrit. The story of his youthful learning reminds us forcibly of that of John Stuart Mill's.

When he entered Harvard University he was as great a scholar as most of its Professors, and while there he was the marvel of the institution. Many prophesied of him that his fame would far outshine that of Newton and Humboldt. After spending six years at Harvard he settled down as a lawyer. No one ever understood law more thoroughly than John Fiske did; but as a lawyer he turned out a miserable failure. Then he tried journalism, and failed at that also. Next he became *locum tenens* for a history lecturer at Harvard, and thereafter served several other lecturers in the same capacity. Meantime, he read widely and deeply in science, making the works of Darwin, Wallace, and Spencer his special study. Finally, he was appointed assistant Librarian of the University, which office he held for the space of seven years. During this time he had delivered from time to time at the University were expanded and published in two large volumes under the title of *Outlines of Cosmic Philosophy*. This was his only great work, and it became exceedingly popular throughout the United States, and was for a time in high favor in Great Britain as well.

Fiske never fulfilled the promises of his youth. He never ripened into a scientist of the first magnitude. In his *Outlines of Cosmic Philosophy* there was only one original idea, namely, that "the extent of mental development in any animal is in proportion to its infancy, or the length of time involved in its reaching physical maturity." This was frankly admitted by himself. Why such a man missed being the first and greatest American scientist is no concern of the present writer. The truth is that his contribution to scientific knowledge was practically nil. He was not a discoverer of great ideas or facts, but a successful distributor of ideas and facts discovered by others.

Now, that Fiske was a firm believer in religion is undeniable, but it is equally certain that he was in no sense orthodox. In an essay on the *Gospels* he indulges in the most destructive criticism, and Joseph Cook, the once famous Boston lecturer, never had his methods of defending the Faith more ruthlessly handled than by the author of the *Outlines of Cosmic Philosophy*. His reasons for leaving the Christian Church intact were peculiar, to say the least, but he never spoke of it as indispensable to the world's progress. The point to be noted is, however, that Fiske never founded on science a single argument for religion. In this respect both he and Sir Oliver Lodge occupy precisely the same position.

Yet in a recently published sermon the Rev. Dr. Warschauer claims John Fiske the scientist as a most valuable supporter of the doctrine of immortality. These are the words employed:—

"So distinguished an evolutionist as Professor John Fiske ridiculed the notion that consciousness was merely a function of the brain, as perhaps the most colossal instance of baseless assumption known to the history of philosophy. The same writer gave it as his mature and deliberate opinion that 'in the course of evolution there is no more philosophical difficulty in man's acquiring immortal life than in his acquiring the erect posture or articulate speech.'"

It is universally agreed among scientists that the connection between the brain and the generation of thoughts and feelings is as yet an insoluble mystery. None ever spoke more emphatically on that point than Tyndall and Huxley; and strangely enough we find the following language in Fiske's own lecture on immortality:—

"We have no more warrant in experience for supposing consciousness to exist without a nervous system than we have for supposing the properties of water to exist in a world destitute of hydrogen and oxygen."

Fiske waxes hilariously merry over Moleschott's oft-quoted aphorism, "No thought without phosphorus"; but any fool can see that when the distinguished Dutchman uttered that exclamation he was only indulging in a bit of rhetoric, and that what he meant was this: "No thought without a brain"—a saying which drew from Fiske this strange expression: "If you refer to the present life, most erudite professor, your remark is true, but hardly novel or startling; if you refer to any condition of things subsequent to death, pray where did you obtain your knowledge"? Of course, Moleschott referred to the present life because he did not know of any other; and surely, as a scientist, Fiske could not "refer to any condition subsequent to death," because he did not know that such a condition existed. Thus, from the scientific point of view, the aphorism, "No thought without a brain," was as true to Fiske as to Moleschott.

"But you say, What about Science?" said Dr. Warschauer. "Exactly—what about it"? And we echo the words, "Exactly—what about it," as touching immortality, even on Fiske's own showing? Listen:—

"To return to the argument that the doctrine of the survival of conscious activity apart from material conditions is unsupported by experience and is inconceivable, we may observe that it is inconceivable just because it is without foundation in experience. Our powers of conception are narrowly determined by the limits of our experience, and when that experience has never furnished us with the materials for framing a

conception we simply cannot frame it. Hence we cannot conceive of the conscious soul as entirely dissociated from any material vehicle."

Fiske, having thus fully acknowledged the validity of the argument, proceeds thus: "How much does this famous argument amount to as against the belief that the soul survives the body? The answer is, Nothing—absolutely nothing! It not only fails to disprove the validity of the belief, but it does not raise the slightest *prima facie* presumption against it." But who ever said that it does? Nevertheless, the argument does prove that experience, to which the New Theologians are everlastingly appealing as the supreme test and proof, knows nothing of the survival of the conscious soul after the death of the body, and that whatever transcends experience is inconceivable. Therefore, the belief in a future life, inasmuch as it lies outside the limits of experience, is an inconceivable and, consequently, irrational belief. "But you say, What about Science?" Exactly—what about it?

Fiske's own belief in the existence of a conscious soul inhabiting the body is, according to his own argument, unscientific, because we have no experience of the existence of such a soul. We have experience of conscious life, but never apart from the body. We know, further, that under certain bodily conditions consciousness itself is suspended. This is reasonable if "the relation of conscious intelligence to the brain is like that of music to the harp," for we know that "when the harp is broken there can be no more music"; but it is contrary to all reason if conscious intelligence, or the soul, as Fiske calls it, "is not the music, but the harper." Are we to infer that it is the music, and not the harper, that is conscious? If the harper is the conscious agent, what happens to the consciousness of the harper when the harp is—we will not say broken—but temporarily out of repairs, so that it gives forth no music? Are we to suppose that the self-consciousness of the harper ceases the moment the harp is incapacitated? If so, the harper has no experience of himself apart from the harp, and therefore, according to Fiske's own admission, the harper's survival of his harp is inconceivable, and the belief in it is unscientific.

"But you say, What about Science?" Exactly—what about it? As a native of New England, no doubt piously brought up, John Fiske may have cherished the common belief in immortality; and, simply because science could not actually disprove it, he may have continued to hold it. But to assert that science, as such, has altered its attitude to the subject, is to be guilty of misrepresentation. The attitude of science has always been, and still is, one of utter indifference, based on total ignorance.

J. T. LLOYD.

Whimshurst.

I.—DABBING WITH THE DEVIL.

WHIMSHURST is the name of an old-time mansion which is situated in one of the loveliest spots in England. But although its appearance is very solemn and venerable there is, nevertheless, a touch of the bizarre in it. When I first saw it I could not help comparing it to an exceedingly respectable old gentleman slightly under the influence of strong drink with his tall hat somewhat out of the perpendicular. And yet there was a suggestion of something sinister in its seeming whimsicalness. The owner of Whimshurst was quite in keeping with his peculiar residence. His name was Ezra Pukes, Ezra denoting that he belonged to the lost tribes of Israel and Pukes signifying the English branch of them. This, I must say, was not his view, but had been his father's. And nature having given him an eccentricity in mind and body he must, naturally, accentuate it by an eccentricity in dress. He considered his unusual dress as "eminently distinctive," the country folk thereabouts said it was "blamed ridic'ulous." However, Ezra Pukes troubled very little what the country folk thought of his "distinctive dress." His mission in life was to be eccentric, and eccentric he meant to be, even though the whole world should be displeased with him. Thus it was

that his gates and fences were painted differently from all other gates and fences for miles around. And sky-blue and magenta were the favorite colors of Mr. Ezra Pukes of Whimshurst.

Mr. Ezra Pukes was not particularly orthodox, notwithstanding that he was a crony of the vicar's. His distinguishing characteristic was a strong liking for mysticism, and this liking of his was much encouraged by the Rev. Theophilus Dridge who, blown from his Anglican anchorage by the winds of the Higher Criticism, was strenuously seeking a haven of refuge amidst the shoals and quicksands of human thought.

Picture those two in the comfortable library at Whimshurst, consulting all sorts of books dealing with the occult and talking *very mystically*. Through the open window near which they are seated comes the sound of rustling leaves, and the delicious perfume of sweetly-smelling flowers with which is mingled the aroma of a neighboring pinewood. The Rev. Dridge is speaking. "The invocation to the Evil One should be uttered at the hour of sunset," he says, turning over the pages of a book which is yellow with age and which smells unpleasantly of the lumber room.

"Is that so?" ejaculates Mr. Pukes.

"It is necessary to trace out on the ground a trinity of unlike triangles, in the exact centre of which one must stand before uttering the invocation."

"Is that so?" again ejaculates Mr. Pukes.

"And every precaution must be taken, for the Fiend will avail himself of the slightest opportunity to do injury to those who invoke him out of curiosity."

Mr. Pukes again emits his ejaculation of "Is that so?" then both are silent for a time. The Rev. Dridge gazes vacantly through the window at the pinewood before resuming the conversation.

"I was talking to old Smith, in the village, yesterday," he says, "and I asked him if he knew any stories about the Devil. 'That I do,' said he, 'I mind my father telling me what happened when he was a boy. It was a summer's evening, and most of the men were in the taproom of the 'Boar' taking a mug of ale after the day's work. The talk had got on running, and some of 'em were boasting what they could do. All of a sudden a stranger comes up the road, all covered with dust as if he had walked a long way, and he drops into the 'Boar' and calls for a mug of ale. As far as my father could recollect the stranger was a rare dark-looking man with black, piercing eyes. He looked like a foreigner, but could speak English like the squire."

"Who's the best runner amongst you?" he asked, looking at the argufyers after he had paid for a round of ale for 'em. 'I am,' says George Hicks, a young man who had big notions about what he could do. 'Good,' replies the stranger, 'then I'll race you across the field near by and give you a sovereign if you beat me.' 'Done,' says George Hicks; and they all trooped out to the field and climbed over the stile."

"Young boy though he was at the time, my father said he could never forget that evening. The sun had gone out of sight in the west, but the sky was all aflame and some clouds that were in it looked as if they were red hot. A few inches of mist had risen above the grass, giving the field an uncanny sort of look. And from the low-lying ground near the river came the croak, croak of the frogs."

"The landlord of the 'Boar' acted as starter, and as soon as he shouted 'Go,' away went the stranger and George Hicks like a brace of hares. And as they ran the mist rose visibly behind 'em, and before they reached the gate at the other side of the field it quite hid them from view. Suddenly the sky became grey and the mist got higher and denser. Then from the other side of the field came frightful shouts for help, which made everyone listening turn cold. But two or three who were bolder tightened up their waist-belts and went running to see what was the matter with poor George. They found him clinging to the iron catch-bolt on the top of the gate and calling for his mother like a frightened child. The stranger was nowhere to be seen. For weeks George Hicks was very ill, and when he got better he had clean forgotten all about his race with the Devil."

"Of course," says the Rev. Dridge, on concluding Old Smith's yarn, "this story is nothing more than a play of the rural imagination."

"I don't agree with you there," says Mr. Pukes, "I am very much inclined to think that the story is founded on fact. Properly considered, it is, in a mystical sense, very significant."

To this the Rev. Dridge makes no reply, but takes up his yellow-paged, stuffy-smelling book again. He quotes some more magical formulas, and again does Mr. Ezra Pukes ejaculate "Is that so?" Finally they decide to test on the lawn the efficacy of the trinity of unlike triangles and the reading backwards of the Lord's Prayer.

So about an hour before sunset the Rev. Dridge, armed with a prayer-book, and Mr. Ezra Pukes, carrying a bucket

of whitewash and brandishing a whitewash brush, appeared on the lawn. The breeze had freshened up a little and was blowing from the direction of the pinewood. Some rooks were passing overhead, cawing chucklingly as they made their way home. Clusters of gnats were dancing and swaying in the air at about a man's height from the ground, and from a plantation near by came the shrill twitterings of hundreds of starlings, sounding like the hissing of steam escaping from a safety-valve.

Mr. Pukes put down his bucket of whitewash, and dipping his brush in it proceeded, very carefully, to daub out three unlike triangles on the grass. This he soon accomplished, but whether he succeeded in obtaining the exact centre of these triangles is still a matter of considerable doubt. He and the Rev. Dridge stood surveying the triangles, and the sky had become crimson with the rays of the setting sun.

These two big children were now trembling with excitement. After some hesitation they stepped into the middle of the triangles. They felt somewhat foolish; however, both possessed a rather weak sense of humor and neither noticed the grinning face of a servant peering at them from an upper window. And now a greyness was stealing amongst the beautiful hues of sunset, and Parson Dridge, feeling exceedingly wicked, opened his prayer-book. Mr. Pukes turned pale, but looked almost ferociously serious. Then as the last trace of crimson disappeared in the western sky the rev. gentleman, slowly and solemnly, began to read the Lord's Prayer backwards. The performance was soon finished and they waited, wonderingly. In the distance they heard the rumbling of the London express, also the sound of a gun and the excited yelping of a dog. The air seemed to have turned chill. Minutes went by and nothing supernatural happened. The sudden hooting of an owl made them start fearfully. Then from Mr. Pukes's menagerie came the cry of his laughing-hyena. "Ha, Ha, Ha, Ha-a-a!" went the beast.

JAMES H. WATERS.

SOCIETY.

Society is our one tangible gain, our one roofing and flooring in a world of most uncertain structures built on morasses. Toward the laws that support it men hopeful of progress give their adhesion. If it is martyrdom, what then? Let the martyrdom be. Contumacy is animalism. And attend to me, the truer the love the readier for sacrifice! A thousand times yes. Rebellion against Society, and advocacy of Humanity, run counter. Tell me Society is the whited sepulchre, that it is blotched, hideous, hollow: and I say, add not another disfigurement to it; add to the purification of it. And you, if you answer, what can only one? I say that is the animal's answer, and applies also to politics, where the question, *what can one?* put in the relapsing tone, shows the country decaying in the individual. Society is the protection of the weaker, therefore a shield of women, who are our temple of civilisation, to be kept sacred.—Dr. Shrapnel, in George Meredith's "Beauchamp's Career."

Cast forth thy Act, thy Word, into the ever-living, ever-working Universe: it is a seed-grain that cannot die; unnoticed to-day, it will be found flourishing as a Banyan-grove (perhaps, alas, as a Hemlock forest!) after a thousand years.—Carlyle.

Truth is a good dog; but beware of barking too close to the heels of an error, lest you get your brains kicked out.—Coleridge.

John and Jimmy were two friends who differed from each other in religious belief. John, who was a Unitarian, used to twist Jimmy, who was a Catholic, about his belief in the infallibility of the Pope; and Jimmy used to retort by saying that Unitarianism was the half-way house between Christianity and Infidelity. Said Jimmy, one day, "John, are you infallible?" "No," said John. "Then how do you know the Pope is not?" said Jimmy. Jimmy then went away leaving John confounded and sore. Shortly after, Jimmy came back. "Now then, John, have you thought about that?" said he. "Yes," said John; "Jimmy, are you infallible?" "No," said Jimmy. "Then how do you know the Pope is?" said John. Shortly after this, John left the country, and on his return, after some years, he found out that his old friend had been set thinking by his remark anent infallibility, and that he was now a Secularist. Meeting him one day, he said, "Eh, Jimmy, you haven't been very hospitable." "How's that?" said Jimmy. "Why," said John, "you went from Christianity to Secularism and you never called at the half-way house."

Acid Drops.

Fools rush in where angels fear to tread. Dr. Brook, president of the National Free Church Council, falls foul of King Edward's clever telegram to the Sultan. That telegram said nothing about the past, but congratulated the Sultan on the prospect for the future. It was cornering him, as it were, in the interest of good constitutional government. The compliment, that he would be venerated by posterity, was part of the capital game. Everybody could see that it was provisional on the Sultan's correct behavior. But all this is lost upon the Rev. Dr. Brook. He brings up the "massacres" again and says he cannot venerate the Sultan. Who asked him to? The man of the world is wiser in such matters than the man of God.

Cardinal Vannutelli—called the Papal Legate, though he is not so, and never will be so—kept up the farce to the end. He began by congratulating England on its love of liberty, and he ended on the same note. In his farewell speech at Charing-cross Station he said he was "perfectly assured that the heart of England beats only for liberty." That was his little joke. Otherwise we should be suspicious of the compliment—like Phocion, who, when the audience loudly applauded him, turned to a friend and asked what folly he had spoken. When a Cardinal of "the bloody faith" pats England on the back as a liberty-loving nation, it is time to ask what blow at freedom we have been striking lately.

Dr. Barry, a well-known Catholic divine, pleads for the right of Catholics to carry the Host in public processions, and speaks of it as an "emblem." He knows very well it is nothing of the kind. It is not an emblem of the Deity, but the Deity himself. We see that the Rev. R. C. Fillingham makes the same mistake. He sees "no harm in Catholics carrying the symbol of their religion through the streets." It is no symbol at all. The holy wafer is the body of God. Mr. Fillingham is a Protestant, but he ought to know a fact like this.

Mr. Sarto (that is, Mr. Taylor), the Pope of Rome, receiving a deputation from the Congress of Young Roman Catholics, on September 17, the day after the aborted Mass procession at Westminster, rejoiced over "the splendid demonstration which the British Catholics made last week in London, where twenty thousand young men, preceded by the effigy of Christ, cried enthusiastically, 'Jesus, convert England!'" Mr. Sarto dreamt this. He was probably thinking of the twenty thousand Catholic men who, Archbishop Bourne said, were to be marshalled all along the line of the procession to keep order; which, being interpreted, means to fight Protestants or other persons who made a mock of God in the Gold Box. This very fact, if it *was* a fact, shows that Archbishop Bourne lied when he said that there were no apprehensions of disorder.

Is Protestantism more tolerant than Catholicism? Not one whit. Some of the letters which have recently appeared in the *Daily News* show conclusively that in this respect the one is not distinguished from the other. They are all Christians, yet how sublimely they hate one another. They will spit at one another even in heaven.

Scores of letters have appeared in the public press on the recent Roman Catholic procession, the majority, of course, from Protestants. So far as the Protestant protests are concerned, the objections to the public parade of Roman Catholicism are threefold. First, Roman Catholicism is a persecuting creed; second, it aims at political supremacy; and third, it would incite Protestants to create a breach of the peace. Each of these we agree with; but the fact of their being true does not prove that Protestantism is essentially better than Roman Catholicism, nor does it place Christianity, as a whole, in any more favorable light. It is true that Roman Catholicism is a persecuting creed, but can anyone tell us when and where Protestantism has had the chance of persecuting and has failed to take advantage of its opportunity? In the heyday of its power its persecutions were as ferocious as those of the Roman Church, and it still maintains, as far as it can, persecuting statutes in the English law, persecuting customs in social life. All that can be said in its favor is that it does not *now* persecute to the same extent that the Roman Church once did. But times have changed, and it is equally true that in England Roman Catholicism is a non-persecuting creed. The only distinction between the two is that the Roman Church still avows the intention of suppressing heresy if it gets the chance, while Protestantism, given the opportunity,

would forcibly suppress it in the name of liberty and morality.

It is also true that Roman Catholicism seeks to gain its ends by political intrigue and methods. But so do the Protestant Churches. Why, one of the great disturbing forces in political life in this country is the intrigue of Churchman against Nonconformist, Nonconformist against Churchman, and both combined, on a co-denominational basis, against the rest of the community. True, Nonconformists profess to interfere in politics—from the pulpit—as mere citizens, but the fact remains that it is the advancement of their sectarian interests by political methods that is really aimed at. The difference between them and the Roman Catholic Church is that of a religious conviction that is honest enough to say what it aims at, and one that is sufficiently ashamed to conceal its purpose, but not sufficiently attenuated to permit the duties of citizenship to come first. Nor, frankly, do we well see how things could be otherwise. A Christian who is really convinced of the supreme value of his creed cannot well resist seeking to get that creed brought before the people with all the power of the State and all the force of public opinion. As to the disturbances that might result from the conflict of Catholic and Protestant, this is just one of the many illustrations of what an anti-social force Christianity really is. The men who are always dwelling upon the love and brotherhood developed by Christian teaching are the same who announce that, unless the meeting of two particular Christian bodies is carefully regulated, murder and bloodshed will result. The necessity of the policeman's baton, when there is a likelihood of Catholic and Protestant meeting in organised array, is the best commentary upon the kind of feelings generated by Christian conviction.

By the way, why not arrange for a full-dress repetition of the procession at Covent Garden next season while the other Italian productions are in course of presentation? We present the suggestion for what it is worth to Archbishop Bourne.

The Liverpool *Porcupine* remarks that the Catholics, who complain of "persecution" because they are not allowed to do exactly as they please in the public thoroughfares of London, are not fond of allowing others the toleration which they claim for themselves. The writer of the paragraphs on this subject states that a young English Protestant, an intimate friend of his, who went to teach the English language at a school in Pampelona (Spain), was hounded out of the place by the priests simply because he was not a Catholic. They prohibited pupils from attending his classes. The English language itself stank of heresy when taught by a Protestant.

The Catholic Church yearns for the conversion of England. We don't believe it will succeed, but it is a big prize. Cardinal Manning once told a council of his co-religionists that it was their task "to subjugate and subdue, to bend and to break, the will of an imperial race." "England," he continued, "is the head of Protestantism, the centre of its movements, the stronghold of its powers. Weakened in England, it is paralysed everywhere. Conquered in England, it is conquered throughout the world. Once overthrown here it is but a war of detail. All the roads of the world meet in one point, and this point reached the whole world is open to the Church's will." A magnificent dream! But doomed to disappointment. England is something more than Protestant now. A much stronger heresy is seething within her, and the essence of the conflict has changed.

The Catholic Church is certainly gaining in England in comparison with Protestantism. Martyrdom may be the seed of every Church—and of every other cause; but something else than martyrdom is necessary to rear the seed to its ultimate growth. Some people actually thought that Catholicism would dwindle in England if it were given fair play. Coleridge, who was in some respects a really great thinker, saw the fallacy of this expectation. "It is common," he remarked in 1823, "to hear it said that, if the legal disabilities are removed, the Romish Church will lose ground in this country. I think the reverse; the Romish religion is, or, in certain hands, is capable of being made, so flattering to the passions and self-delusion of men, that it is impossible to say how far it would spread, amongst the higher orders of society especially, if the secular disadvantages now attending its profession were removed." Coleridge was right. Catholic disabilities were removed, and the result is that the Catholic Church has grown strong enough in England to be insolent to its statesmen, and to defy the whole Nonconformist party on the question of elementary education. Something of this, of course, is due to the

natural course of things; something is also due to the organising ecclesiasticism of Manning; but more is due to the Catholic Church having found a mind and personality of the first order in Newman. Even from the grave Newman sheds a lustre on Catholicism over the whole English-speaking world.

Manor's Message is the monthly organ of the Bermondsey Mission of the United Methodist Free Church. It wants £700 next month, and "believes the money will come" as "the prompting has come from God." Possibly. But we should prefer God's assurance to the Editor's.

At the recent national conference of the Young Men's Christian Associations a pessimistic speech was made by Mr. Frank Howe, London. He said that "a lowered spiritual vitality seemed in these days to characterise most religious institutions, and their association had suffered with the rest. Concessions had been made by religious organisations which had exposed them to the inroads of the world. Little progress had latterly been made in the vital religious work of the associations, and apparently there was no impelling spiritual force behind them." Another delegate said that "they had made the old mistake of trying to serve God and Mammon." We take it that the Y.M.C.A.'s are in a bad way.

It appears that the Baptists are a specially-favored folk. Dr. Newton Marshall declared at the Berlin Congress that they have "no creed binding upon them." Their "only authoritative document is the Bible as interpreted by the Holy Spirit." The only objection we have to that statement is that it reflects rather too cruelly on the Holy Spirit, because, if it is true, we are forced to the conclusion that the Holy Spirit gives one interpretation at the Metropolitan Tabernacle, and another, radically different, at Dr. Clifford's Chapel. Happy Baptists! Poor Holy Ghost!

According to Dr. Marshall, the Baptists are unique in another respect. While pretending to bow to the Bible, "as interpreted by the Holy Spirit," they yet claim that their Church is "a brotherhood in which every type of thought can find a Christian home." Despite the Holy Spirit's interpretation and infallible illumination, "a Baptist claims complete freedom of theological thought." Again we enthusiastically congratulate the Baptists, and profoundly commiserate the Holy Ghost.

The Rev. Dr. Warschauer has just preached and published a sermon on Immortality. He has nothing new to say on the subject. Like most of his tribe at present, he grossly misrepresents the attitude of Science to a future life by regarding the spiritualistic and religious utterances of Sir Oliver Lodge and the late John Fiske as possessing scientific value, which every scientist knows they do not possess. We are all familiar with Sir Oliver's famous but worthless argument for immortality—namely, that no value can ever be lost to the Universe; and this argument Dr. Warschauer summarises thus: "The soul is simply too valuable to perish." Supposing the soul exists, to whom is it valuable? Wherein does its value consist? Society loses its very best "souls" and gets on, apparently, just as well as before, if not better. After these "souls" have thus disappeared, to whom, and in what sense, are they still valuable? Dr. Warschauer cannot tell us: he can only assert, assert, assert.

But the reverend gentleman gives his whole case away when he exclaims, "We believe in the life to come because we believe in God." The present life belies the character which preachers ascribe to God, and therefore, in order to save and vindicate that character, they invent a world and a life, of the existence of which they can adduce absolutely no evidence. "If good be good," they cry, "if he be such as Jesus preached him, then —." Thus the last and only conclusive argument for immortality rests on an "if," and that "if" rests on—nothing. How marvellously shrewd and clever these modern prophets of God are! They know the unknowable, and are serenely cocksure about the things—*behind the veil!*

Mr. R. J. Campbell, in answering a question the other day, gave an illuminating exhibition of the utter incompatibility between the professional and the personal elements in his character. Speaking as a man, he frankly admitted that "the long drawn-out agony of humanity is a mystery that we have not bottomed when we have said the last word." It seemed to him that there was "such an amount of apparently purposeless pain"; he could not understand "the reason for the ruthless butcher bird when it spits a sparrow on the thorn bush"; nor could he understand "the

anguish that was to be endured sometimes by little children." "I cannot get at the bottom of that," he confessed.

So spoke the reasonable man in him. But, then, he could not forget that he was a parson, and the parsonic in him uttered itself thus: "Although I cannot escape from the conclusion that what we call evil and imperfection and pain are here because it is God's will, I am equally certain it is God's will that I should do my best to get them out, and therefore I regard pain as an evil to be fought, and if possible to be destroyed." According to that view, God is an almighty tragic comedian, who cruelly trifles with his own universe. He inflicts upon it unspeakable grief and pain and sorrow, in order to witness the futile attempts of Mr. Campbell and his like to drive them out! Surely, a serious-minded Deity would be incapable of such cruel mockery! And what a funny occupation for a clergyman to be doing his utmost to undo God's own work!

The Congress of Religions at Oxford, just concluded, has been interesting and, to those who know how to dot the i's and cross the t's of the various speakers, important. The mere recital of diverse religious customs is in itself interesting, if only as illustrating the kaleidoscopic character of human hallucination. But their great importance consists in their affiliation to the so-called higher religions; to those religions, that is, which have persisted among civilised people, and have therefore been forced to modify their outward expression. To make such a Congress really effective and thoroughly educational, the steps by which religions like Christianity have been developed from the earlier superstitions described, should be pointed out and their essential identity emphasised. As it is, the fault of the Congress is the fault of nearly all writings on the subjects. The various primitive religions are described, *their* origin in fear and ignorance is pointed out, and there the matter ends. And the unreflective religious person, after reading the descriptions, thanks God that he is not as these savages are, without the least suspicion that his own beliefs are descended from theirs and rest on no better foundation. After all, the chief value of anthropology consists in the light thrown by it on the present; and, until those engaged in the work of research, and who are recognised as authorities, point out clearly the connection between the past and the present, this value will never properly be realised.

The *Christian World*, in noticing the practically unanimous vote of the Trades Union Congress in favor of Secular Education, admits that this "stupendous majority" was made up of "men who represent the flower of the working classes whose children are educated in the elementary schools." As a matter of course, it goes on to point out that those who voted for the resolution are not "irreligious," but voted as they did because they are sick of sectarian strife. We are far from denying that this feeling had its influence in deciding the total vote, but it will hardly do for our contemporary to make the assumption that the absence of religious belief had little or nothing to do with the matter. It is just possible that the sectarian squabble gave many the opportunity to express their opinion on the subject.

Having said this much, and duly lectured other Christians on their sectarian zeal, the *C. W.* turns on the customary Nonconformist humbug. It would infinitely prefer, to Secular Education, that "the State should have nothing to do with denominational teaching, but should make provision for such teaching of the simple facts of the Bible, which is surely the basis of all Christian teaching, as would afford the various denominations a foundation on which they might themselves build their differing sectarian beliefs." Which being interpreted means that the State is to provide a form of religious instruction that will ensure every child joining *some* Christian sect, and then leave it for the sects themselves to decide what it shall be. And this is what it understands by State neutrality in religion! The State is simply to remain neutral in relation to rival Christian bodies, and to let all others go to the Devil. There is really only one method of getting Christians to act justly, and that is to destroy their belief in Christianity.

Two eminent Congregational ministers of the Old Schools, the one a theological Principal and the other a prominent pastor, are quarrelling in the *Christian World* over the meaning of the Blood of Christ, and no wonder, because the subject is one nobody knows anything about. Theological disputes are the bitterest in history, simply because they are about purely imaginary things, and so cannot be rationally settled.

Some Congregationals are engaged in an interesting hunt for a creed; others look on and wonder, while the majority ridicule the whole thing, though these also have some sort of a creed somewhere up their sleeves. Non-believing outsiders are amazed that there should be so much ado about nothing, and less than nothing.

We are always hearing of the eagerness with which the Chinese, or the Japanese, or the Hindoos listen to the "Gospel," and the thousands who are rushing to be converted. The best comment on these statements is the way in which all the missions have to be maintained with money sent from home. Here, for instance, is an appeal for a new church in South China, the total cost of which is to be £700, and all of which is to be raised by appeals to English people. Evidently the thousands of Chinese converts are not willing to contribute much towards their European joss-house

One of the British and Foreign Bible Society's agents in France gave a lady a copy of the New Testament. Soon after the lady told the agent that, as a result of reading the book, she had repaid a person five francs of which he had been wronged. We would suggest that good use of that particular copy of the New Testament might be made in this country.

Some capital is being made by the religious press over the report of the Committee of Inquiry on Moral Instruction. We have not yet had time to read the report in question, but the quotations given by some of the reviewers are anything but convincing. To ask various headmasters of schools, themselves religious, whether they believe religious and moral instruction ought to be combined is to invite an answer that one might know beforehand. The question is not what their opinion is, but whether one is necessary to the other. So also the statement of the Committee that "a large number of teachers" are convinced of the power of religion to develop a high moral ideal is inconclusive. That there should be a proportion of teachers who think otherwise is far more to the point, since it is obviously easier to keep to the beaten track than to step outside. Nor is there any reason for believing that the teaching profession acts as a corrective to vulgar prejudice on this point. An analysis of the average teacher's testimony in favor of religious instruction would, we think, show that it is, even with him, the moral and social elements associated with religion that does the work, and not religious instruction as such. And all the testimony in favor of basing moral instruction on religious teaching is vitiated by the simple fact that, save in isolated instances, it has never been otherwise. Churches, chapels, and schools have always given moral instruction, and have always based it on religion. If the long historic association has not served to produce satisfactory results, we quite fail to see how the testimony of religious persons nowadays that the association is necessary is going to alter matters.

Professor Paul Haupt read a paper before the International Congress of Religions at Oxford on the question, "Was Christ a Jew?" According to the reports in the newspapers there was very little meat on the Professor's dish and plenty of dressing. His argument seems to be that some remote ancestors of Jesus may have been Assyrian colonists in Galilee. But what on earth does it matter? Jesus of Nazareth, if he ever existed, is a nobody; for he is buried under a mountain of legend and mythology and it is impossible to dig him out. The Christ of the four gospels is clearly a fabulous figure, created by early Christian imagination during several generations. Professor Haupt will not cause a big stir with this question. He is too late.

It has now been officially declared, with a sense of extreme disappointment, that the widely-advertised and extravagantly-eulogised Theatrical Show, called the "Orient in London," recently held for the benefit of the London Missionary Society, did not add a single penny to the Foreign Missions funds. Though at the time pronounced a phenomenal success, it now seems that, in spite of all the clerical and lay booming it enjoyed in the pulpit and the press, it was a complete fiasco. And yet we are told that Christ is on the throne and rules in London!

If proof were required that the interest of the Churches in foreign missions is purely artificial, it would be furnished by the present campaign on behalf of the London Missionary Society. The most eloquent and persuasive Congregational preachers are to be stumping the country for the next few months, for the purpose of stirring up God's people to renewed zeal in parting with their money, that the depleted

coffers of the Society may be replenished. The ordinary pumps had failed to draw up the shekels from the pockets of deluded believers, and so new ones had to be employed. Will these succeed? Yes, probably—for a while. But the fact is that the Churches at large are gradually getting out of touch with missions in general, and with foreign missions in particular, because they are losing their belief in what the parsons sanctimoniously call "the eternal verities of their most holy religion."

The plain truth about missionary work is so seldom spoken that we were glad to see "the cat let out of the bag" in a recent *Daily Chronicle* review of a Life of Dr. Holman Bentley by his wife, which the Religious Tract Society publishes. "Dr. Bentley," the review concluded, "rejoiced in conversions, but labored under no delusions as to their permanency, realising well that often what a tribe wanted most was not so much Christianity as civilisation." This is exactly what we have been saying all along in the *Free-thinker*.

The Bishop of Carlisle is a bit of a discoverer. "People are simply hungering and thirsting for a revival of real living preaching, which interprets the great message and truths of the Bible in terms which satisfy modern requirements." So says his lordship. Personally, we have not noticed reports of any cases of starvation attributable to this cause; but then the bishop sees things with the eye of faith. And to lay the blame on other preachers is such a common method of accounting for the general failure of Christianity.

Who says that infallibility is claimed only by the Pope of Rome? Even Congregational parsons claim it. "We, like Peter, are fallible," exclaims the Rev. J. Morgan Gibbon, of Stamford Hill, "but our message is infallible." The Pope is only infallible when he speaks *ex-cathedra*, and Mr. Gibbon is infallible only when he delivers his message or preaches from the pulpit. What conceivable difference is there between the two popes? None; they are both equally deceived, or deceiving.

Mr. Victor Grayson still talks nonsense on the subject of religion. He would do himself more justice if he thought more and spoke less on the subject. His recent lecture at Sheffield on "Where is God?", with Mr. Robert Blatchford in the chair, was full of contradictions. One minute he was celebrating the approaching Kingdom of God, and the next minute declaring that he preferred the "humanitarian Atheist" to a "hypocritical capitalist who prayed about God"—which is, after all, not a very big compliment to the humanitarian Atheist. Mr. Grayson said he was unable to see God in the present state of society, but when Socialism had brought about a happy state of things "God would be an absolute certainty." According to the Grayson gospel, God seems to be dead or asleep at present, but is going to be very lively when the millennium arrives. What a God! Mr. Grayson had better bury him. He will find a first-rate substitute in Humanity.

An Army pensioner was charged at Aldershot with stealing potatoes to the value of fivepence, the property of the King, and with stealing broken bread from a refuse tub in the barracks. He begged not to be sent to prison or he would forfeit his pension. He was therefore fined 21s. for the potatoes and 10s. 6d. for the refuse bread. Rather a bad investment! Yet the magistrates treated him like a Rockefeller. This is a Christian country. Of course.

Forest fires made 20,000 people homeless in Minnesota. Good old "Providence."

"Cow in a restaurant" was a headline in a newspaper the other morning. We have never seen a cow in a restaurant, but we have seen pigs there, and we have no doubt they were good Christians on Sunday.

The Rev. J. D. Jones, Chairman-elect of the Congregational Union, poses as an infallible authority on the state of everybody's heart. There are those who call themselves Atheists, but, in spite of their profession, their hearts "cry out for the living God." They think they are Atheists simply because they "live on the surface." "When they get beneath the surface, to the essential needs of the human heart," their Atheism melts away, and they become humble believers. So Mr. Jones assured a London congregation the other day. It will be an item of interesting and useful information to many Atheists, and a source of never-failing consolation, that there are those who know them so much better than they know themselves.

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, September 27, Queen's (Minor) Hall, Langham-place, London, W., at 7.30, "The Atheism of Shelley." (With special reference to Francis Thompson's criticism in the Catholic *Dublin Review*.)

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

To Correspondents.

C. COHEN'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—241 High-road, Leyton.—October 4 and 11, Stanley Hall, North London; 18, Glasgow. November 15, Tyneside Sunday Lecture Society; 22, Fails-worth; 29, Birmingham.

THE PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND: Previously acknowledged. Annual Subscriptions, £243 0s. 6d. Received since.—R. Speirs, 2s. 6d.; T. Fisher, 5s.; Mrs. Fisher, 5s.; A. B. Taylor, 5s.; Albin Letts, 5s.; G. H. Folwell, 2s. 6d.; E. Pinder, 2s. 6d.; E. Pell, 1s. 6d.; Sydney A. Gimson (2nd sub.), £2 2s.; S. Leeson, £1; Owenus Ton Pentre, 5s. (2nd sub.); P. Barnard, 2s.; L. H. Hinson, 5s.; C. McKelvie, 3s.

E. PINDER.—We hope there will be good meetings in the Leicester Secular Hall this winter. Glad to hear you expect to work up a crowd for Mr. Foote's visit next month.

G. L. SIMMONDS.—We are sensible of the dangers you refer to in the doctrines and policy of the Catholic Church, but we go for our information to better authorities than those you mention.

UNCLE TIM.—(1) Not a bad suggestion, but there would be great difficulty (*too great, we fear*) in carrying it out at this end. (2) It is precisely because poor humanity is so weak, and foolish, and often vicious, that those who can be called upon to work for its improvement. We do not need any "Cheer up!" We are never downcast. We became a soldier in the war of the liberation of humanity with our eyes open. We have never looked back for a moment, and never shall—what ever lies before us. Death in a ditch could not undo what we have done. Never mind our loss of the world's big prizes. We never coveted them.

J. W. HARPER.—See paragraph. Thanks.

R. SPEIRS.—You say you "wish it was more." The wish is a kind of subscription. We have commented on Mr. Victor Grayson's utterance at Sheffield. Thanks.

F. RUSH.—(1) Ingersoll was quite right. The Church's calum-niation of leading Freethinkers is a calculated crime. It is done deliberately for business reasons. It is sheer vulgar wickedness. (2) Pleased to hear you are "all looking forward" to Mr. Foote's visit to Manchester and promise him "a grand reception."

H. MARQUIS.—It all depends on the definition of the word.

H. MYERS (Johannesburg).—We regret that we cannot answer your question. We have no information about the Philip Cohen who is preaching in your city. Why should you trouble to do other people's work?

READER OF THE "FREETHINKER".—Pickering and Inglis, Glasgow, must be graduating for an asylum. The tract they publish to prove the existence of God, by asking who made the hen that laid the first egg, is sheer imbecility. Yet the city of Glasgow boasts of its University!

OWENUS TON PENTRE.—"Evidently," you say, "no man makes a fortune by his advocacy of Freethought." We may add that any man would be a fool who expected it. And perhaps it is as well. Our movement offers no career for charlatans. We noticed H. Musgrave Reade's little story a few years ago. He was so important in the Freethought movement that we had absolutely no recollection of him.

G. T. HILLIERS.—Pleased to hear from a young Freethinker who looks forward so much to this journal every week. Never mind the Christian Evidence vermin who pollute the atmos-phere of Parliament Hill Fields with slander of every leading Freethinker, living or dead. We are not going to advertise them here, whether male or female. They act after their kind, and the God who made them (as they say) is the God who covered Egypt with lice.

W. P. SMITH.—You will find a long and comprehensive account of the Crusades in our *Crimes of Christianity*, and the footnotes will give you references to the whole literature of the subject. The best History of the Inquisition is Lea's, but it is an expen-sive work in several volumes. A son of the late Mr. Sankey is reported to be insane. We do not know where you could get the statistics you want, except, perhaps, in some Blue Book.

L. WILLIS.—It wouldn't be likely to meet the parson's eye in the *Freethinker*. And if the clerical cad rode you down and never stopped to see how you got on, it wouldn't be likely to give him much concern if he did see it.

W. P. BALL.—Many thanks for cuttings.

L. H. HINSON thanks us and our contributors for "the many hours of real enjoyment during the three years that he has been a regular subscriber," and sends best wishes for our health and prosperity.

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

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

ORDERS for literature should be sent to the Manager of the Pioneer Press, 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., and not to the Editor.

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Sugar Plums.

The Queen's Hall audience on Sunday evening was better than before, and Mr. Foote's lecture on "The Present Position of God" was tremendously applauded. The weather was very warm and oppressive, and it was perspiring work even to sit and listen; imagine, then, the hot task of the lecturer on the platform. Mr. Davies made an excellent chairman, as usual, but no one responded to his invitation to discussion. Perhaps the weather had robbed the opposition of all energy for debate.

Mr. Foote's last Queen's Hall lecture this evening (Sept. 27) will be on "The Atheism of Shelley." A good deal has happened of late years to give great interest to this subject, and we hear that many Freethinkers are looking forward to this lecture, which should also be attractive to outsiders.

After the last Queen's Hall lecture Mr. Foote will be three Sundays away in the country. He opens the new lecture season for the Glasgow Branch on Sunday, October 4; on the following Sunday he lectures in the Leicester Secular Hall; and on the Sunday after that in the Secular Hall, Manchester. On the last Sunday in October he will wind up the course of lectures at Stanley Hall. In November, amongst other engagements, Mr. Foote will deliver two lec-tures in the Birmingham Town Hall for the local N. S. S. Branch, which has secured that grand Hall for four Sundays during the winter. The Secular Society, Limited, bears the financial responsibility for the whole course.

Another course of Sunday evening lectures, under the auspices of the Secular Society, Limited, has been arranged to take place at Stanley Hall, near the "Boston," North London, during October. Mr. Cohen will take the first two Sundays, and Mr. Lloyd the third, and Mr. Foote will be back from provincial engagements in time to wind up the course. We hope the North London "saints" will do their utmost to make these lectures successful. Printed announce-ments can be obtained of Miss Vance at 2 Newcastle-street for distribution.

Another social gathering, under the auspices of the N. S. S. Executive, has been arranged for Thursday evening, October 22, at Anderton's Hotel. London "saints" should make a note of it.

The Liverpool Branch has at length succeeded in obtain-ing a Hall for Sunday meetings, and as there is no lessee to frighten this time the police will not be able to repeat the disgraceful tactics by which the Branch was driven out of Milton Hall. Further particulars will doubtless appear in next week's *Freethinker*. Meanwhile, we may state that the Secular Society, Ltd., has undertaken to pay half the first year's rent, thus leaving the local resources to deal with furniture, fittings, and working expenses. A hundred chairs have been bought from a Congregational church for a start, largely through the ready assistance of Mr. F. Bonte; while Mr. Smitten provided the Branch, free of charge, with a good platform; and Mr. Wallen, the local lecturer, is going to give his services gratuitously for the first three months at least. We hope all the old N. S. S. Freethinkers will rally round the new flagstaff.

The Leeds Branch holds a special meeting on Wednesday, September 30, at 8, in Lockhart's Cocoa Rooms (upstairs),

Brigade, to discuss the coming winter's work. Members and unattached Freethinkers are invited to attend.

The *Catholic Times*, in an article on "Faith and Unbelief," laments the spread of "infidelity." "Never perhaps," it says, "since Christianity became the settled creed of Europe was unbelief so rampant. From all sides proof passes on us that the multitudes are lapsing from the Christian faith." There is no novelty in this announcement; still, we are glad to see it in a Catholic organ.

A good many copies of Mr. Manson's book on the Salvation Army, in the new sixpenny form, have been circulated from our publishing office through the advertisement which appears on our back page. This is very satisfactory, but we should like to do still better. We want to see this splendid criticism of Salvation Army work and methods scattered broadcast over the country. Freethinkers should help to bring this desideratum about. We appeal to them to do a little missionary work on their own account. Those who have not yet bought Mr. Manson's book should do so at once; and those who have bought and read it should advise their friends and acquaintances to get a copy. Many "saints" could even buy a few copies with the idea of converting them into sixpences by placing them in hands that would welcome them.

Another book that we desire to see circulated is Mr. Philip Vivian's *The Churches and Modern Thought*. It is a wonderful shilling's worth and ought to find thousands of purchasers. We regard it as probably the best all-round statement of the case of Reason against Faith that has ever been published. When a book like this comes along—so temperate, yet so firm; so full of information, yet so lucid; so thorough-going, yet so persuasive—it ought to be taken in hand by Freethinkers and pushed into the widest possible circulation. No one who invests in a copy of this strikingly able book will ever regret it; and no one who reads it through will hesitate to recommend it to inquiring minds that wish to know the truth.

We are glad to see a letter in the *Western Daily Mercury* from the pen of the veteran Freethinker, F. J. Voisey, of Dartmouth, on the Catholic procession at Westminster. One aspect of the case is well pointed out in the following reference to the "blasphemy" prosecution early in the present year:—

"Only a little while ago, in London, Harry Boulter, an obscure journeyman tailor, was prosecuted by the police for holding a meeting at Highbury Corner, bringing the Christian religion into contempt, and for conduct likely to cause a breach of the peace. Had it not been for Freethinkers, who defended him by eminent counsel, the cost of which ran into nearly £300, Boulter would have been hustled into gaol. I ask is not the procession of Sunday last far more likely to cause a breach of the peace than Harry Boulter's speech-making to perhaps a hundred people who were listening to him? What do we find? That the police in the case of the Roman Catholics not only are cognisant of all that would take place, but even promise them their protection. I suppose the truth of the matter is that the Catholics are wealthy and have friends in high places. Such conduct stinks in the nostrils of men who want to give a fair field and no favor to any and all beliefs."

A hit! a palpable hit!

We invite our readers to keep on sending us the names and addresses of persons to whom we may introduce the *Freethinker* by forwarding them six consecutive numbers gratuitously and post free. We mean, of course, persons who are more or less likely to wish to continue reading the paper. We have gained a good many new subscribers in this way. We know this by letters sent us on the subject. Here is a typical one just received from Motherwell: "Dear Sir,—Many thanks for copies of *Freethinker* sent me gratuitously, which I have enjoyed, and have decided to become a subscriber; so do not send any more, as I have ordered it, and shall try to introduce it to some of my friends." Now then, more addresses, please.

It would help our circulation a great deal if newsagents could be induced to display the *Freethinker* as they do other journals, especially when there is a taking article on the front page. We know of a shop in the City of London which usually sells about a dozen copies, but it sold about forty copies last week in consequence of displaying the paper in the window, where people could read our article on "Taking God for a Walk." The article "caught on" and the faces outside the window were a study.

Cardinal Gibbons' Treasonable Proposition.

THE most distinctive and revolutionary provisions of the Constitution of the United States—those which are the guarantees of religious equality—are that Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, and that no religious test shall be required of any officer under the Government. That is what the framers of our Constitution regarded as republican as opposed to ecclesiastical government, and they made the nation responsible for the maintenance of the republican form in all of the States.

Through its political spokesmen, like Bourke Cockran, Eugene Philbin, and Justice O'Brien, the claim is made that the Catholic Church is the mainstay of the Republic, and many are deceived by its pretensions. During the late centennial celebration of the establishment of that Church in this city a Protestant wrote to the *New York Sun* that as he watched the parade of thousands of Catholics he "felt a pleasurable sense of reassurance in the exhibition of a god-fearing element in the community that may be counted on for preservation of the principles that are essential to the integrity of the whole."

Such expressions show that the Catholic Church is patronised and encouraged, among other reasons, because Protestants are fools and gullibles. They do not know, having paid no attention to history, that the Catholic Church hates the distinctive principles of this Government, and is in politics for the purpose of destroying them. The perpetuity of republics depends upon the existence of two parties, one to act as a check upon the other. The Catholic Church wants but one party, and it prefers a monarchy. The principles essential to the integrity of a community like ours includes that of religious freedom, the equality of all sects and denominations before the law. The Catholic Church denounces such equality, asserting that Romanism has an exclusive right to recognition by the civil Government and that non-Catholic religions are unlawful. That is Catholic doctrine, and whatever may be the momentary policy of the Church, we know that the carrying out of this doctrine is the ultimate purpose.

Before leaving New York, whither he came on his way from Baltimore to Rome, Cardinal John Gibbons gave a statement to the press on the "evils of the times" and their remedy. As reported in the *New York World* and other newspapers, this is what he said:—

"I am much concerned over the political conditions in this country. There seems such a gradual trend towards unrighteousness in the great mass of our people in some respects that thinking men must realise that the problem must be met without delay.

There is no politics without morality. There is no morality without religion, and without religion there is no God.

The public school is the only place to begin. There are so many cunning little schemes always being devised by Atheists, unbelievers, and non-Christians to put God out of the public schools that the authorities of this country in every State should exclude Atheists and non-Christians from any office of authority."

"And what is the plan?" was asked.

"Segregate the public schools of the country. Let each denomination maintain its own school, where its Christian teachers can inculcate a love for God into the hearts of the children while teaching them other things."

"And the expense?"

"Let it be borne by the State. Let the schools be maintained from the tax funds, and each school given its portion of the funds."

Coming from the head of the Catholic hierarchy in America, this must be accepted as official. The main proposition is that the public school fund shall be divided among the religious sects; and since only Christians would be capable of carrying out the program of a more complete union of Church and State, it follows that "every State should exclude Atheists and non-Christians from any office of authority"—which is the second proposition. The

Cardinal kindly allows sects not Catholic to have their separate schools; he makes that concession because he is well aware that the Protestant sects do not want and would not establish them. The Protestant idea is to teach their religion in the public schools.

The outcome of the adoption of the Gibbons system would be the support of Catholic parochial schools by the State, which, of course, is what the Cardinal wants. His Church has such schools in all its principal parishes, and, relieved of the burden of supporting them, would go on erecting others—to be paid for finally by the State. Meanwhile, the Protestant sects might have for their use such public schools as the Romanists did not annex. The plan means the annihilation of the public school system and the substitution of religious for secular education.

For opposition to the scheme of the wily Cardinal we do not look to the Protestants, the most of whom, especially the leaders, assume an apologetic attitude towards Rome and are eager to express their regrets that so unfortunate an incident as the Reformation should ever have taken place. That they fell with Adam as the federal head of the race in the covenant of works they readily profess, but that they were necessarily reformed with Luther they are less insistent; and so, barring its few "errors," they look upon the Catholic Church as a desirable institution and are almost sorry they were not baptised into it. In view of its moral discipline and its attitude towards divorce they think there could be no greater misfortune than that it should not graft on the Government to the full extent of its desires. Denounced by Catholic priests as forerunners of infidelity and the apologists of moral laxity, sneered at, ridiculed, and blackguarded, they lick the foot that kicks them, and crawl a little closer to the Mother Church every time she smears them. Unless there should be an early reaction in the Protestant Church, it will in a few decades be taking its religion and its policy—everything but a papacy—from Rome.

Apart from the Freethinkers, the opponents of the Gibbons program will be found among the Jews, who show no disposition to submit to Christian teaching in the schools.

Gibbons's maxim that "there is no politics without morality, no morality without religion, and without religion no God," is worthy of Mrs. Eddy. It comes near enough to reading the same forward or backward to be identified as a discovery in Christian Science. It is twaddle. That politics can exist without morality has been proved by the politicians themselves, and by none more conclusively than by politicians bred and reared in the Roman Catholic Church. Tammany, which is next to supreme in New York politics, is Catholic. Do we need to say more? And since the Atheist has morality we know that it is not dependent on religion, while as for the rest of the maxim, its truth or falsity is immaterial. Doubtless, religion invented all gods, who are destined to depart with it.

How refreshing to hear a Catholic cardinal, a prince of chicanery and intrigue, planning to overcome the "many cunning little schemes always being devised by Atheists, unbelievers, and non-Christians"! Among those many "cunning little schemes" in the Cardinal's mind stands, first, very naturally, the Constitution of the United States, with its prohibition of a State religion and of religious tests. Other cunning schemes are the constitutions of the various States which forbid that any citizen shall be compelled to support a place of worship contrary to his conscience. Freedom of speech, of press, and of assembly are also "schemes" cunningly devised to prevent the Church from fooling all of the people all of the time. In a word, whatever stands in the way of the complete domination of State and citizen by the priests is a "scheme." A plan to put the Church in the saddle by disfranchising unbelievers is not to be called a scheme—it deserves the dignified name of a policy, and as such only needs to be presented to our officials to win respectful consideration.

It was well for Cardinal Gibbons that he had his face turned abroad when he proposed to purify politics by the election of none but Christians to office. He could not face America and preserve his gravity as he gave utterance to the thought. For what are our corrupt politicians, our boodlers and grafters, if not orthodox Christians, and a full half of them Roman Catholics at that? For the sake of having the Catechism in the schools, Cardinal Gibbons would deprive the public of the services of honest unbelievers, and make public office the private snap of dishonest men professing Christianity.

There is no relation between religion and honesty. The allies of religion are myth, fable, falsehood, lying. The associates of Freethought are science, facts, truth. Which is the more likely to produce the trustworthy public official?

A law making Freethinkers ineligible to public office could not be passed in a majority of our States. We are not quite ready for that—yet. Nevertheless the idea of Gibbons might very readily become the policy of the political bosses, and no Freethinker be elected because the politicians would not allow one to be nominated.

From developments at the nominating conventions this year we might conclude that political preferment is already closed to Freethinkers. The insinuation that Taft is an Agnostic called for no vindication of his right to his own religious opinion; it was answered with an apology. The same in the case of Sherman; while non-professing Judge Gaynor, who avowed himself a friend of religion but the adherent of no Church, was dropped suddenly, or, as *Harper's Weekly* puts it, "on went the kibosh."

Mr. Bryan's ideas run parallel with those of Cardinal Gibbons. The candidate wants regiments chaplained to suit the religion of their members; the Cardinal would provide the schools with teachers on the same theory.

This insolence of the pietists is continued, in our opinion, simply because it goes unrebuked by any large number of Freethinkers. It is our further opinion that were such a phenomenon to be observed as that one or two courageous candidates should come out and denounce the discrimination, at the same time declaring their unbelief and defying their censors, the whole theocratic crowd, put upon the defensive, would take to cover; for it cannot be that the spirit of fair play is altogether extinct in the American breast. We would like to see a candidate nominated who is ready to risk defeat on that issue. There would be more glory in it than in a victory.

Sometime it may dawn on the mind of a statesman that hypocrisy is ignoble; that it is not worth while to sell his manhood for the applause of men whose opinions on any subject but religion he holds in contempt. Then that particular statesman will say: "Yes, I am a Freethinker. I do not believe in the Christian or any other religion, but I believe in the Constitution." Unless manhood is dead, his candor would be rewarded. Unless the founders of this republic have been forgotten, Cardinal Gibbons's challenge to our system of government will be accepted and we shall know whether Washington or Rome is the source of laws for the United States.

Our friend Dr. Foote predicts that we (non-Christians) "will never wake up, know where we are at, and get busy mending our fences till they are all down and we are totally out." It looks at the moment as if we were out already, and Americanism with us.—*Truthseeker* (New York.)

Body-Snatching as a Fine Art.

"To what damned deeds religion urges men."—*Lucretius*.

PRIESTS seldom appear so disgusting as when acting the part of holy hyenas over the dead bodies of their enemies. The aged Marquis di Rudini, one of the most notable figures in Italian political life, and a well-known Freethinker, was smuggled into the

Great Lying Christian Church at the last moment, when he was unconscious. It may be pleaded that his relations were anxious for the welfare of his "soul"; but the spectacle of a Christian priest administering the sacrament to the dead body of a man who had fought against the Christian religion in the full strength of his manhood is none the less odious. The most low varlets of the Most High God did the same thing with Prince Jerome Napoleon. It was nothing to these creatures that their grim farce would, if taken seriously, give the lie to the dead man's whole life. All they cared for was that the great unthinking populace should understand that this infidel had submitted to Christ at the last. The priests performed the same awful farce over the dead body of a still greater man. The Church took formal possession of Sir Richard Burton's corpse. Whilst Burton was sound and strong, his contemptuous disgust of the creed of Christendom was wont to exhaust the whole vocabulary of his scorn. But when the living man was replaced by the helpless corpse, nothing hindered these orthodoxy body-snatchers at their ghastly death-bed revels. In England we have similar examples. The ecclesiastics buried Charles Darwin "in the sure and certain hope of a glorious resurrection," and with equal effrontery and impudence mumbled their mythological nonsense over the coffin of doubting Thomas Huxley, and of Robert Buchanan, one of the most anti-Christian of the English poets. Need we go further? Christians have made body-snatching a fine art. Like vultures which feed only on corpses, so does the Church of Christ fatten her fast-waning reputation on the dead soldiers of the Army of Liberty. It is such disgraceful and disgusting scenes as these which account for the irreconcilable enmity of Freethinkers to Clericalism.

M.

Making Religion Yellow.

(From the New York "Evening Post.")

REPORTS of the address of the Rev. "Billy" Sunday to the Presbyterian ministers of Pittsburgh, this week, bear out the study of that popular and successful evangelist which appeared recently in the *American Magazine*. They have the same easy command of the slang and vociferousness of the "bleachers" from which Mr. Sunday derived glory or shame in the days when he was a professional baseball player; the same sure sense of what will read well in sensational newspapers. He assured his clerical hearers that they were mostly "fudge-eating mollicoddles." Few clergymen, he asserted, are nowadays anything but "stiffs and salary quacks." As for professors in theological seminaries, the thing to do with them is to "stand them on their heads in mud-puddles."

Let no incredulous reader think that Mr. Sunday is merely an isolated faker. He is a recognised power in the religious life of the West. The renown of his revivalist campaigns in Western cities was what led the Pittsburgh clergy to invite him to address them; and it was doubtless their awe in the presence of one who had, as he would say, "delivered the goods" in a hundred churches, which led them to sit silent under his insults. The Rev. Mr. Sunday has swept everything before him in town after town of Illinois, Minnesota and other States. He has gathered all the Protestant denominations in a given place into his work, had them build him a "tabernacle," and in it he has held meetings three times a day for weeks at a time, kindling enthusiasm and winning converts by the hundred. Yet throughout his preaching, and, indeed, his praying, he uses every vulgarity and irreverence of language, addressing his hearers, and the Almighty, in the idiom of the saloon, the gutter, and the yellow newspaper. One Western audience he recently carried by storm with the assertion that he was going to stay in that city and preach "till hell freezes over, and then I'm going to get a pair of skates and keep on soaking it into Satan."

All this is surprising enough, but the really amazing thing remains to be told. This garrulous blackguard of the pulpit, who is all adrip with street-slang, who claps the dread Jehovah on the back, and smears the most sacred things with his coarse blotch of vulgarity—this man is admired and endorsed by religious leaders. Clergymen vie with denominational journals in lauding his wonderful works. Some of them feel compelled to disclaim approval of all his "methods," but they confess themselves stricken dumb by

his extraordinary results. He makes religion the sensation of the hour. His sacrilegious quips are echoed in the yellow newspapers, for whom he makes the best pious "copy." He gives to the Gospel an immense publicity of a kind it never enjoyed before. How, then, can those interested in the spread of Christianity fail to rejoice at the marvel of thousands of people who will not go to church, thronging to hear Mr. Sunday tell them about the religion of Christ in the language and with the reverence of a newsboy or 'longshoreman? There have been many tearful ejaculations, in connection with the Rev. "Billy" about God having chosen the foolish things of this world to confound the wise.

This defence of yellow religion sounds very like the common defence of yellow journalism. "Oh, well," people say, "we admit that it is vulgar and demoralising, but just see how it circulates!" So the Rev. Mr. Sunday grates upon fastidious Christians, but only consider how he catches the crowd! In neither case is a thought given to the necessary tendency of what is essentially indecent and blasphemous, disguise it by what name we will. It is the old fallacy of noise and numbers. Your yellow newspaper man fills the land with his strident voice; your yellow novelist sells by the hundred thousand; your yellow professor in the university has his class-room thronged, and his bizarre opinions telegraphed over the country, while his sober colleagues are deserted; your yellow politician splits the ears of the groundlings and is the greatest "headliner" of the day; therefore, why should not the yellow revivalist win money and glory and the applause of the devout? Success is the one touchstone for religion, too; and the only success worth having is shouting thousands. That old notion about the Lord being in the still small voice is absurdly obsolete. How are you going to fill a church, we should like to know, without a brass band and a vaudeville performer? This is an intensely practical age, and it is not going to be too nice in criticising a man who can show "results."

It is not really strange that religion should turn sensational. What we cultivate or run after in every other walk of life, we cannot keep out of our churches. After making culture "hustle," the next thing is to make religion "hum." The Rev. "Billy" Sunday is only a kind of prophet in the yellow wilderness. He has merely learnt the lesson of sensationalism and is applying it to the saving of souls. That he tears up, in the process, all real religion by the roots, does not matter. He has the gaping crowd; therefore, the Lord must be with him.

More Holiday Reading.

"THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER, APPOINTED TO BE READ IN CHURCHES."

THIS volume is an interesting addition to the literature of the holiday season. By this time the average man will probably be tired of the humorous writings of "General" Booth, and even the Holy Bible may pall after several readings. The Prayer Book is full of quiet fun. To be appreciated, its pages should be scanned far from the madding crowd. The wisdom of the Church cannot be appreciated amid the hurry and bustle of the metropolis. It should be lazily scanned whilst the reader is stretched at length upon the grass or sand, soothed by the drowsy hum of insects or the happy laughter of children at play. There is one advantage about this book. It does not matter where you commence reading. Whether one starts with the Baptism of Infants, the Thirty-nine Articles, the Athanasian Creed, or the lugubrious Litany, or any other diversion, does not signify in the least. It has, therefore, one point of superiority over most other books.

The reader should be carefully warned that the author of this volume is true to the *Daily Mail* ideals of politics. This partially explains the lick-spittle references to Royalty, which disfigure the volume, and which are only paralleled by the disgustingly servile dedication of the Holy Bible to King Jimmy I. So extravagant is this eulogy that, as a child, we really thought the Almighty's front name was James.

There is an unexpected note of passion in the Communion Service. The denouncing of God's anger against sinners might get on a delicate reader's nerves. But, looked at from a detached standpoint, it should prove as amusing as the never-to-be-forgotten curse in "The Jackdaw of Rheims" or the rantings of a villain in a melodrama, who curses everybody on the stage, hurls maledictions at the dress circle, spits at the orchestra, and shakes his fist at the gallery.

The splenetic humor of the Communion Service makes the refrain of "miserable sinners," which recurs throughout the Litany, positively welcome as a sort of comic relief. The prayers for the Royal Family will be found useful to members of the Primrose League over the age of sixteen.

A few judicious quotations introduced into after-dinner speeches and addresses would be sure to tickle the ears of the groundlings, and evoke loud cheers.

Although this is not a Racing Calendar, there are some "Stud Farm" directions which may prove useful to the common or garden Christian. He is informed, for example, that he must not marry his grandmother. No one, except a right-reverend "Father-in-God," ever supposed that he would want to. But we will hurl the gruesome suggestion from us, and turn to a dryer and dustier subject. The Burial Service is a little unsettling. A few passages actually lead us to suppose that many persons who "turn up their toes" actually join

"that immortal fry
Of almost everybody born to die."

The exordium in the Marriage Service is also rather "strong," but doubtless those reverend gentlemen who publicly read the chaste account of Lot's daughters, and the story of the Levite's concubine, will not find it necessary to hide their blushes.

The state of the weather is an ever-green subject. The author of this volume, with great acuteness, has included prayers for rain and for fine weather, thus paying an unconscious compliment to the gentlemen in the same line of business on the Gold Coast. There are, we notice, other recipes against plague, famine, battle, murder, and sudden death, and, for what we know, "housemaid's knee." The Communion Service gives full instructions for living "the higher life." So long as a man has a bottle of shilling port and a roll, he has always the material for turning out a plaster saint. What possibilities does not the Catechism unfold? Here are the ways and means for making any child "a bower of wood and a drawer of water" for the Conservative Party.

Dismissing this instrument of torture, we turn to the Baptism of Infants, which will be found a healthy exercise with the addition of a little soap. Those of "riper years" might add a scrubbing-brush. The Athanasian Creed is worse than a "Limerick" competition. It is a four-cornered prize-puzzle in mathematics, which we must leave our readers to solve. Heigho! As the Prayer Book facetiously reminds us, we are all "miserable sinners," including Edward the Magnificent, Mr. Arthur Balfour, and that intellectual convert to the Church of England, the Rev. A. J. Waldron, a charming antagonist who so often exchanges the strong bow and the deadly arrows for the brazen lyre when he comes in contact with Freethinkers.

M.

Reviewing Alfred Baudrillart's new book, *The Catholic Church, the Renaissance, and Protestantism*, the *Church Times* does well to emphasise the fact that the Reformers were fully as intolerant as was the Church they had just left. Luther was a bigot of the worst type. He called Reason "the prostitute of Satan," and wanted all books that did not echo his views to be ruthlessly suppressed. Calvin was not one whit better, and did more mischief because he had more power. "The history of Calvinism was one of obscurantism and anti-culture." And yet, though devoid of a single shred of sympathy with the religious aspect of the Reformation, we are bound to say that at the root of the movement was that self-same spirit of revolt which in the Renaissance made for the emancipation of Reason. In reality, the Reformation accomplished a work which the Reformers themselves bitterly deplored, as the utterances of Luther and Melancthon in particular abundantly show. As a religion, it turned out a dismal failure; but its fundamental spirit of revolt, whilst fatal to piety, produced, or aided the general Renaissance in producing, an atmosphere favorable to the prosecution of scientific research and the spread of natural knowledge.

The Rev. Dr. Horton has delivered innumerable lectures and published many booklets to warn Great Britain against Catholicism, the most insidious foe of its well-being. Père Baudrillart, however, "gives figures to show that moral laxity [has always been and] is still the characteristic of Protestant countries," and makes the further statement that "moral and religious life is only kept up to a certain level in Protestant countries in virtue of principles directly opposed to the Reformation." The Père goes further still, and maintains that Protestantism is "fast becoming identified with Liberalism and Freethought" by casting theology to the wind and mixing up with all sorts of secular interests. We admit that Baudrillart's object is to defend Catholicism, or what he believes to be true religion; but his intellectual outlook is as unprejudiced as that of an ecclesiastic can well be; and it would open the eyes of some of our Protestant popes to read and ponder his lucid and well-attested arguments.

Correspondence.

THE DATE OF PAUL.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—“Abracadabra,” in concluding his excellent articles on “The Foreknowledge of Jesus,” asks “When did Paul live?” The answer to this question, as he notes, would give us an approximate date for Jesus, and might also help us to determine whether the Jesus of the Gospels can be identified (as “Abracadabra” has suggested) with the historically-mentioned Jesus who perished during the siege of Jerusalem (A.D. 70).

The fact that Paul's Epistles—unlike the Gospels—do not refer to the destruction of Jerusalem, is practically a proof that Paul wrote before A.D. 70, and therefore that he must have commenced his by no means brief career as a preacher of his crucified Christ some considerable time before the appearance of the monomaniacal Jesus who went about crying “Woe to Jerusalem.” If Jerusalem had been captured and destroyed by the time Paul wrote, he could hardly have avoided referring to a subject which would affect him so deeply as an ardently pious and patriotic Jew.

The absence in the same Pauline Epistles of references to the alleged all-important teachings, parables and miracles subsequently attributed to Jesus, and of other myths incorporated in the Gospels, similarly indicate a date earlier than the “primitive” Gospel on which our synoptical Gospels are based. This primitive Gospel was probably written soon after A.D. 70, and must have been written before A.D. 120.

In the *Freethinker* for December 29, 1907, page 826, I gave what seemed to me good reasons for believing that the reference in Josephus to the death of James “the brother of Jesus who was called the Christ,” is genuine. As the death of James is thus assignable to A.D. 62, this would, of course, give us a still earlier date for Paul's interview with James.

The generally-accepted dates for the Crucifixion and for Paul's preaching agree very well with the above considerations. If we were to assume earlier dates, we should have to face the increasing difficulty of accounting for the lapse of a longer period of time without historical notice or record of early Christianity; and we should the more effectually bar the theory of the monomaniacal Jesus of A.D. 70 being the primary or originating basis of the Jesus of the Gospels.

While Luke's Gospel and “Acts” are untrustworthy as historical records, they nevertheless afford perfectly good evidence in some respects. They certainly indicate the dates which were actually assigned to Jesus and Paul at an early period in Christian history, when the approximate dates would probably be well known to many people. Luke would ascertain the dates to the best of his ability, and would hardly care to invite contradiction by glaring errors in his chronology. His dates for Jesus agree with the chronological indications obtainable from Paul's Epistles. If Jesus died somewhere about A.D. 30, Paul's conversion might very well occur prior to A.D. 50.

My conclusion is that there are good reasons for supposing that the accepted dates for Jesus and Paul are not far wrong and that there are no valid reasons for supposing them to be flagrantly false.

W. P. BALL.

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I am sure you will allow me to correct two mistakes in your last issue. (1) The University of London and University College existed side by side, as independent and separate bodies, for seventy years; the latter as a teaching, the former as an examining and degree-granting institution. The College, which was “incorporated” in the University last year, has now, roughly, the relationship to it of an Oxford College to that University. (2) The Divinity Faculty, in which the Senate of the University (the College has nothing to do with it) has recently set up the religious knowledge certificate to which you refer, was provided for by Act of Parliament at the University's reconstruction. Every examination in this faculty must be so conducted as not to elicit any opinion of religious belief or disbelief, and the syllabus of the examination in question was drafted in such terms as in no case even to presuppose the existence of a God. Indeed, if scientific knowledge of and research into the origins of Christianity in general and Theism in particular are desirable (and I presume they are from any standpoint), nothing could be better calculated to secure them than the divinity examination at London. For example, the possession of a divinity degree or certificate would be evidence that an Agnostic lecturer had studied his subject seriously. There would not be the smallest difficulty in his taking a London D.D., if he possessed adequate knowledge and ability.

J. A. DOUGLAS

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.**

QUEEN'S (MINOR) HALL, Langham-place, London, W.: G. W. Foote, 7.30, "The Atheism of Shelley." (With special reference to Francis Thompson's criticism in the Catholic *Dublin Review*.)

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S.: Victoria Park (near the Fountain), 3.15, C. Cohen, a Lecture.

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S.: Station-road, 11.30, F. A. Davies, a Lecture. Brockwell Park, 3.15, F. R. Theakstone, a Lecture.

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S.: Ridley-road, 11.30, W. J. Ramsey, "Charles Bradlaugh."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S.: Parliament Hill, 3.30, F. A. Davies, a Lecture.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S.: Outside Maryland Point Station, Stratford, 7, W. J. Ramsey, a Lecture.

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 8.30, Bible Classes.

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, All Saints): J. T. Lloyd, 3, "The Coming and Going of Gods"; 6.30, "Free-Will or Determinism: Which?" Tea at five.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Newcastle Rationalist Literary and Debating Society): Thursday, October 1, at 8, Social Gathering and Reading by M. Weatherburn.

OUTDOOR.

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

BOSTON: Barge Green (near the Cannons), 3, Joseph Bates, a Lecture. (Circumstances permitting.)

DALKEITH: High-street, Saturday, September 26, at 7, P. Stewart, "The Salvation Army a Fraud."

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

LEEDS: Woodhouse Moor, 3, M. Sollet, a Lecture.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N. S. S. (corner of Shiel-road and Boaler-street): 3, Sidney Wollen, "Now the birth of Jesus was on this wise" (Matt. i. 18).

H. S. WISHART'S LECTURES.

LEEDS: Friday, September 25, Town Hall Square, at 7.30, "Why the Salvation Army Fails." Saturday, September 26, a Lecture. Wednesday, September 30, Lockhart's Cocoa Rooms, Briggate, at 8, a Lecture.

BURNLEY: Sunday, September 13, Market, at 11, 3, and 7, Lectures.

BOTTON: Monday, September 28, at 7.30, "God, Christ, Strikes, and Unemployment."

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