



Freethinker

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"Do the Duty which lies nearest thee," which thou knowest to be a Duty! Thy second duty will already have become clearer.—THOMAS CARLYLE.

The Principle of Progress.

Decadence. Henry Sidgwick Memorial Lecture. By the Right Hon. Arthur James Balfour, M.P. Cambridge University Press.

MR. BALFOUR delivered this lecture on "Decadence" last January, and it was published not long afterwards. We have had it by us ever since, and have often wished to notice it, but the opportunity has not occurred until now, in a slight lull of more exciting controversy.

The lecture itself is a good example of Mr. Balfour's powers as a thinker and a writer. He has an easy, well-bred, well-dressed style, which exactly suits his purely critical intelligence. He only differs from so many other politicians in the fact that he is interested in studies and problems which are beyond their range. He does not appear to be burdened with convictions. He analyses and examines, but seldom commits himself to anything. Even in this lecture on *Decadence*, while he discusses other people's theories he advances none of his own. He sees the problem clearly enough, but he does not see through it; nor, indeed, does he make any serious effort in that direction.

Mr. Balfour discusses the decadence of "great communities and historic civilisations." Why have these decayed in the past? Various causes have been assigned, such as slavery and the falling off of population, but Mr. Balfour finds them all inadequate. He simply accepts the phenomenon. And he uses it, characteristically enough, to throw cold water on the hopes of the more ardent friends of human progress:—

"What grounds are there for supposing that we can escape the fate to which other races have had to submit? If for periods which, measured on the historic scale, of great duration, communities which have advanced to a certain point appear able to advance no further; if civilisations wear out, and races become effete, why should we expect to progress indefinitely, why for us alone is the doom of man to be reversed?"

Progress, we are told, is with the West; the energy of the West may some day be exhausted; and where are the barbarian sources from which Progress may be renewed? Mr. Balfour's position is really pessimistic, but his pessimism is purely of a negative character, and is therefore not very interesting. We are rather concerned with what he says by the way.

Mr. Balfour takes the case of the long decay of the Roman Empire. That there were evils in it is beyond question. But there are evils in every society. The vital question is "are these things getting better or getting worse?" In regard to most of them, in the case of the Roman Empire, it is certain that they were "getting better." Mr. Balfour's picture of the state of society at that period differs, as might be expected, from that of the common Christian fanatic or the ordinary Christian apologist:—

"In few periods have the rich been readier to spend of their private fortunes on public objects. There never

was a community in which associations for every purpose of mutual aid or enjoyment sprang more readily into existence. There never was a military monarchy less given to wars of aggression. There never was an age in which there was a more rapid advance in humanitarian ideals, or a more anxious seeking after spiritual truth. There was much discussion, there was, apart from politics, but little intolerance. Education was well endowed, and its professors held in high esteem. Physical culture was cared for. Law was becoming scientific. Research was not forgotten. What more could be reasonably expected?"

Why did that great civilisation decay and perish? No doubt there were many causes of the catastrophe. Mr. Balfour discusses some of them. But he does not mention one which Gibbon evidently regarded as of vast importance. He refers to "the thick darkness settling down over Western Europe, blotting out all but a faint and distorted vision of Græco-Roman culture," but he does not allude to Christianity as one of the principal factors in the production of this terrible obscurity. One would like to have Mr. Balfour's candid opinion on that point. He is not likely, however, to give it in a book—or in any other public utterance.

We have never been able to regard Mr. Balfour as a really religious man. He speaks of religion with respect, but only as he speaks with respect of philosophy. There is no unction, no fervor, no convincing note in what he says. Even the finest passage in his *Foundations of Belief*, on the ultimate annihilation of all man's achievements in this world under the theory of Naturalism, is more a finished piece of composition than a passionate protest or a personal lament.

The sceptical character of Mr. Balfour's mind becomes more obvious in his remarks on what we may call the Principle of Progress:—

"If in the last hundred years the whole material setting of civilised life has altered, we owe it neither to politicians nor to political institutions. We owe it to the combined efforts of those who have advanced science and those who have applied it. If our outlook upon the Universe has suffered modifications in detail so great and so numerous that they amount collectively to a revolution, it is to men of science we owe it, not to theologians or philosophers. On these indeed new and weighty responsibilities are being cast. They have to harmonise and to coordinate, to prevent the new from being one-sided, to preserve the valuable essence of what is old. But science is the great instrument of social change, all the greater because its object is not change but knowledge; and its silent appropriation of this dominant function, amid the din of political and religious strife, is the most vital of all the revolutions which have marked the development of modern civilisation."

This is admirably put, and it has our entire concurrence. We have often said that man's growing intelligence is the supreme agent in his political and social progress. In an article written twenty-two years ago, we observed:—

"Volcanoes, earthquakes, and tornadoes are only passing sputters. Rain and sunshine blow the grass and ripen the corn through the silent hours; and the very mountains, unhurt by avalanches, are invisibly decomposed by the air, and carried away by running water. Everywhere the hard is moulded by the soft; and if you want to move the world, do not emulate Napoleon's thunders or Draco's laws, but work with the grey pulp of the brain, and everything will yield to its impress."

Hood was very much under, not over, the mark when he sang that "Evil is wrought by want of thought, as well as by want of heart." Zola was near the very heart of truth when he made the great calm scientist in *Paris*—who was Berthelot in disguise—serenely inform the men of bombs and violence that he, the man of ideas, was the *true* revolutionist. His work lasted; theirs was a noisy sputter, and was soon forgotten.

Now if science, which means intellect applied to realities, is the great instrument of social change, and the motive principle of progress, does it not follow that supernatural religion, which always openly or surreptitiously opposes intellect, is the great instrument of conservatism and the motive principle of reaction?

In an interesting note at the end of his lecture, Mr. Balfour deals with the question of exceptional ability as necessary to maintain social progress, and he notes the fact that more men of genius appear in one generation than in another. Something is due to the greater opportunity which genius meets with in vigorous and exciting times, and this points to the conclusion that "some kind of widespread exhilaration or excitement is required in order to enable any community to extract the best results from the raw material transmitted to it by natural inheritance." Some people will argue anything, and they may contend that religion supplies this exhilaration. But the value of excitement all depends on the direction in which those who experience it are looking. Religious excitement stimulates men to march towards the past; intellectual excitement stimulates them to march towards the future. We thus see what is the true Principle of Progress.

G. W. FOOTE.

The Ethical "Ought."

IN my two articles on the International Moral Education Congress I left untouched several points raised by speakers, for the reason that they raised distinct ethical problems that might well be reserved for separate treatment. One of these questions was the inducements necessary for people to act in a desirable manner, the writers contending that religion alone supplied a satisfactory incentive. The non-religious incentive was not challenged on account of its worth, but on account of its assumed inadequacy. It might suffice for some—it would not do for all; whereas the religious incentive would, or could, cover all cases. "Faith in a personal God," said the Rev. Dr. Lyttelton, "is hard to acquire. But faith in an abstract moral ideal to brace the human will and give it strength when every fall weakens it, is practically impossible to acquire." So, too, the Rev. S. F. Smith, while admitting that the secular ideal may "evoke a response from good and noble natures, "yet it fails in other cases" because "practically the only inducement that Secularism has at its disposal for this purpose is the old Stoic maxim, 'Do the right because it is the right,' " and "with natures less noble, or positively inclined to evil, this motive has little force."

Now, before coming to any detailed criticism of these statements, it may not be amiss to point out that the question of a conscious sanction of morality is very largely an academic one. In actual life it seldom arises; and when it does it is usually with those whose organic impulses may safely be trusted to lead them aright. The man who acts in a negatively moral manner—*i.e.*, does not steal, does not assault another, or refrains from annoyance; or in a positively moral manner—*i.e.*, helping a person in distress, saving a life, or performing various acts of beneficence—in the vast majority of cases is acting in obedience to impulses that he does not stay to analyse. If he did so, he probably might not act at all, or the occasion for action would have gone by the time a decision had been reached. The

causes of conduct are seldom on the surface; their seat is in the huge area of sub-consciousness, and their origin is to be found in the insistent operation of social forces that careful analysis—and not always that—may disclose.

Nor would it be wholly wise if people were constantly analysing the sanctions, real or assumed, of conduct. As an occasional exercise it may be useful enough; as an habitual exercise its benefits are not so apparent. For example, the whole set of feelings that cluster round marriage are unquestionably based upon pure sex-hunger. The object nature has in view (I may be excused the anthropomorphism of the phrase) is the perpetuation of the species. This is secured in the higher animals by the attraction of the sexes. But in the course of evolution numerous other feelings become associated with this primary one, and in such a manner that the mere feeling of sex sinks below consciousness. Still, it is there, and remains the foundation of the rest. But with all this it hardly needs much discussion to make the consideration convincing that constant reflection that the admiration of male and female beauty, the delight of companionship, and the affection for children, are nothing more than elaborated outcomes of mere sex-feeling, would scarcely tend to elevate marriage or family life. What is true in this respect may be taken to be more or less true of all those moral feelings the grounds of which lie buried in the more obscure recesses of our nature.

Still less healthy—decidedly unhealthy, in fact—is the tendency of Christian teachers to brood upon the "nature of sin" and the defects of our "sinful nature." The first thing, we are often told, is to convince man of his sinfulness. Not at all; the first right thing is to convince man of at least his capacity for goodness, and the less said about his sinfulness the better. A person no more acquires moral health by brooding upon his sinfulness than he gains physical health by dwelling upon the number of diseases he is cursed with. There are large numbers of people who could not read through an encyclopædia of diseases without finding themselves afflicted with a fair proportion of the number described. The effects of those preachers and writers who are always dwelling upon "sin" are equally marked, and in the wrong direction. It is good to put Satan behind us, but to do so and then face round and for ever after walk backward is to destroy all benefit from the manœuvre. An inquiry might also be here made upon the harm done by constant expressions of ethical aspiration, upon the moral energy that finds its vent in mere expression that otherwise might find expression in the more profitable direction of action. I refrain from this inquiry, however, for the present.

We may now return to the two expressions quoted above. Both of these gentlemen might agree with much that has been said, and both of them might argue that even though those who need a conscious moral incentive are exceptions, these exceptions have to be dealt with. How would, or how could, Secularism deal with such cases? I may, I think, best answer this question by asking another. How will the religious person deal with such cases? He will hold up as an incentive the love of God, the personality of Jesus, or, on a lower plane, the fear of punishment or the hope of reward in a future life. Well, but suppose these fail? That they do fail in numerous cases is obvious. In some cases they fail because of a perception of the intellectual weakness of the beliefs upon which such appeals are based, in others because of sheer callousness to all appeal. But they do fail. Suppose, then, an undesirable character is told that he ought to act in a certain way from love of God, admiration of Jesus, or fear of future punishment. And suppose he replies, as many do in substance, I do not believe in God; or, I do not care about the love of God; or, I prefer to enjoy myself in my own way now, and will risk any punishment hereafter; what happens then? Is not the religious teacher baffled? Is he not in exactly the same position as the non-believing teacher who,

after insisting upon his incentives to right conduct, meets with an equally unfriendly response? Both instances occur, and any objection based on this argument to the validity of the one incentive must apply equally to the other.

The truth is, that so far as conduct is the outcome of a consciously perceived incentive, some belief from which it is derived is necessarily assumed. If a person believes that a belief in God forms the only possible basis of morality, one may impose commands in the name of that belief. If he does not, any injunction on that basis falls on deaf ears. If, on the other hand, he believes that morality is a social product, and that the justification of conduct lies in its ministering to the well-being of society, in which well-being he as an individual shares, the command rests on a different basis. But in either case the imperativeness of the command is derived from a belief implied or stated. The form really is, "Do so and so because you believe so and so." Of course, in either case the command may fail to elicit an adequate response; and when this is so, from lack of development or other causes, all that can be done is to evoke the coercive or protective action of society against an anti-social force.

The only other aspect of the subject raised in the statements of Dr. Lyttleton and the Rev. S. F. Smith is that of the comparative value of the secular and the religious incentive. Dr. Lyttleton asserts that while faith in a personal God is hard, faith in an abstract moral ideal is impossible. I do not agree. Faith in a personal God is becoming a matter of increasing difficulty; in fact, an impossibility to the really modern mind. Faith in a moral ideal, difficult though it may be to acquire, is yet supported by innumerable instances of daily life; in fact, in the life of all our fellow creatures. The one is a broad stream fed by innumerable rivulets, the other represents an ancient watercourse cut off from its source, and diminishing daily in volume.

The Rev. S. F. Smith unconsciously bears testimony to the final extinction of the religious sanction. He admits that the secular ideal is fit for "good and noble natures," and presumably sees the chief use of religion in dealing with moral cripples. Personally, I do not believe that a recognition of the force of the secular ideal requires any greater nobility of nature than the average man or woman daily displays. Of course, great natures will make more of any ideal than will poorly-endowed ones, but that is quite another aspect of the matter. The important thing is that each, so far as they are capable of appreciating any ideal, can appreciate the secular sanction as far as their nature will permit. And, like most other things, appetite grows by what it feeds on.

But it is certainly not right to say that the only inducement Secularism has at its disposal is the maxim, "Do the right because it is right." Right is right because of certain consequences of doing right, and Secularism is under no delusions as to what these consequences are. The only justification for right conduct, the only consideration that makes conduct of one kind right and of another kind wrong, is its effect upon the welfare of the individual and upon society as a whole. There is not, and cannot be, any other justification, and all systems have to come to this in the end. The secular teacher of morals has at his disposal, therefore, all the really valid influences that the religionist has. He knows their nature and he can appeal to their influence. Their action can be enforced in numerous ways, and studied in innumerable directions. The meanest intellect can appreciate them to the extent of its capacity, and the greatest cannot get beyond the scope of their operation. This may, as I have said, prove inoperative in some cases, but where character fails to respond to the influence of a force as varied in its manifestations as is human nature, a religious belief incapable of proof, and rapidly losing its hold on the modern mind, is not likely to succeed.

C. COHEN.

"How May Christianity be Defended To-Day?"

IN a remarkable article, under the above title, which appears in the current number of the *Hibbert Journal*, the Rev. Professor McGiffert, of Union Theological Seminary, New York, indulges in observations so unique and novel that it may be worth while to discuss them somewhat in detail. Dr. McGiffert is honest enough to acknowledge without the least hesitation that the Christian apologetics of the past are now utterly valueless, and that if Christianity is to commend itself to the twentieth century it must do so by an entirely new method. This is a profoundly significant concession. It implies not only that the defence of Christianity was inadequate and erroneous, but also that Christianity itself was radically misunderstood and misrepresented in all ages of its history prior to our own. According to Dr. McGiffert, Christianity "stands primarily for the promotion of the Kingdom of God in this earth,—that is, the reign of sympathy and service among men." That "the number of Christians holding this belief is very large and constantly increasing" proves nothing. It is true that modern Christians disbelieve many of the things the fathers believed, because modern knowledge has made belief in them impossible; but it does not follow that what modern Christians believe constitutes Christianity as its founder or founders understood it. Professor McGiffert is not prepared to admit that traditional Christianity is false. What he repeats again and again is that the points emphasised in orthodox Christianity are no longer of any practical importance. "It is evident," he says, "that a new age has dawned in the history of Christianity, and the old apologetic is out-of-date, not because it attempts to prove so many unbelievable things, but because it attempts to prove so many things in which men have no interest. Much mattered in other days which does not matter now. An apologetic which is to be of any value to-day must defend the things that matter to-day, and only those." This is true enough in itself; but let us see how it applies.

I. What Professor McGiffert calls "the reign of sympathy and service among men" is doubtless an ideal worthy of recognition and adoption: "it is not only worthful but supreme." But we cannot conceal the fact that this ideal is not a product of Christianity. Indeed, some of its stoutest advocates have been equally intrepid opponents of Christianity. Thomas Paine was a zealous social and political reformer, but he was quite as zealous in his rejection of the Christian religion. For him ethics and the Gospel of Christ were two wholly different things; and he rejected the latter not because the things it emphasised were unimportant, but because they were unbelievable.

II. Professor McGiffert is quite right when he affirms that "the highest thing a man can do is to put himself and his talents at the service of the community, to help those who need help, to enrich the common life of man by all that he can give it, whether of art, or science, or learning, or wealth, or physical strength, or moral goodness, or ethical ideals." He is also right when he declares that "if all good men can be enlisted in the promotion of this end, it matters little what they call themselves, Christians, Jews, Ethical Culturists, Humanitarians, Freethinkers, Agnostics, or Atheists." But the Professor falls into a fundamental error when he undertakes to show that the ideal of sympathy and service among men is pre-eminently the ideal insisted on by Christianity. Christianity insists on nothing of the kind. In the Gospels and the Epistles the note of universal human service is not once sounded. Jesus was an intensely Jewish character, supremely devoted to the interests of his own nation, and strongly disinclined to render any service whatever to outsiders except under protest. The only brotherhood advocated by the Apostles was to lie within the circle of

the saints. Man as man was not recognised, nor was any provision made to secure his welfare except by making him a child of God in Jesus Christ. It was for the Church alone that the Deity cared, it was for the Church that Christ suffered and died and rose again, while the world outside lay in the darkness of sin and guilt, and was to be hated and shunned by the children of the kingdom. The Brotherhood of Man is not a New Testament doctrine, nor has it ever been taught by the orthodox Christian Churches as a fundamental truth of the Gospel. To say that "to promote the reign of sympathy and service among men was the controlling purpose of Christ himself, and must be the controlling purpose of Christianity if it would be true to him," is to read into the New Testament what its writers never even dreamed of, and what never occurred to the Church until it was forced upon her from without. It was only after the idea of universal human sympathy and service got into the air, and began to occupy the minds of naturally philanthropic people outside, that it dawned upon the theologians to claim it as a pre-eminently Christian idea, embodied in Christianity from the beginning, though unrecognised until these latter days. "Fortunately," says Dr. McGiffert, "modern study of Jesus has made this very clear, and we are recognising with a unanimity never reached in other days that it was for this Jesus labored, and for this he summoned men to follow him, and so inaugurated the great movement which bears his name, *all unconscious though he may have been of what it was to lead to*" (the italics are our own). We are not surprised, therefore, at finding the Professor speaking thus:—

"It is necessary to make clear that this is the one essential thing in Christianity in such a sense that the man who stands for this principle is truly Christian even though he rejects all else that commonly goes by the name of Christian, and that a man who avows himself a Christian thereby commits himself at least to this one great purpose, whatever else he may support or repudiate. If we succeed in showing this both to men without and men within the Church, we shall commend Christianity to those who share the one supreme ideal, and we shall rally to the support of that ideal those to whom Christianity is dear. We shall thus at the same time promote the credit of Christianity and multiply the forces making for the realisation of the ideal we have most at heart."

The business of present-day apologists is to convince the world that what Christianity has just borrowed and appropriated from modern knowledge has been the one essential element in itself all along, the one all-important feature in the life and teaching of Jesus Christ.

III. In this way every good man may be claimed as a Christian. "To live Christianly is to give oneself to the promotion of the end for which Christ lived, whatever one's religious faith or lack of faith." This is a highly convenient and useful policy. All good men, though they may be devoting their whole life to the dethronement and destruction of Christianity, are yet to be gloried in as Christians. Having thus proved to his own satisfaction, though probably to very few others, that "the promotion of the reign of sympathy and service among men" was the one essential thing dwelt upon by Jesus himself, Professor McGiffert proceeds to "show that the purpose which Jesus made his own, and which we recognise as supreme, is the purpose of God himself, the Christian God." Being a Professor of theology in an orthodox college, Dr. McGiffert no doubt cherishes "the traditional belief in the pre-existence and deity of Christ," which belief, he claims in the present article, "represents a sound instinct":—

"Christians to-day may recognise that the traditional doctrine is defective, and may see that there are other and perhaps better ways of conserving the interest which it has conserved. But Christian instinct demands that in some way the connection shall be made and the Divine basis found, and so Christian apologetic maintains that the idea which it has shown to be supreme and Christian is Divine, that it represents the will and purpose of God. Maintaining this, there is added to the conviction of its worth faith in its realisation. To

effort is joined confidence, to devotion assurance. This is the essential nature of Christian faith. Not that God is the Creator of the world, the absolute substance, the unifying principle of existence, the *summum bonum*, the all-pervading spirit, but that he is will and power for the promotion of the Christian purpose."

This cumulative argument is now before us in its completeness. The ideal of "the reign of sympathy and service among men" is declared to be supreme, Christian, and Divine. We, on the other hand, claim this ideal as an exclusively human discovery—a discovery of the ancient Stoic philosophers, and a re-discovery of modern science. We deny that it has ever been an essential principle either in the teaching of Jesus or in the creeds of the Church. The Church adopted it only when it was irresistibly borne in upon her that without it her days were numbered. And now, having borrowed or stolen it from without, she proudly exclaims: "It is my own most vital possession; it has lain within me unperceived all through the centuries as a priceless legacy from my Lord. Yes, it is my own property indeed, and I am the only agent that can make it profitable to the world." Such is the Church's claim, and we meet it with the contention that, had it been valid, it would have verified itself in history long ago. Had the ideal come from a God who had or was will and power for its actualisation, and had it been entrusted for realisation to a being on earth with Godhead in him dwelling, it would not have lain hidden and idle and unfulfilled for nigh two thousand years. To define God as "will and power for the promotion of the Christian purpose" is to suggest the strongest of all arguments against his objective existence. Surely Professor McGiffert's suggested defence of Christianity to-day falls utterly to the ground.

J. T. LLOYD.

The "Dev Dharm": An Atheistic Religion.

I HAVE just received a copy of an Indian monthly journal devoted to the propagation of *Dev Dharm*, which is described as "a religion in harmony with facts and laws of nature." The exact Hindoo title of the journal I cannot cite owing to my deplorable ignorance of the Indian vernaculars. Luckily, the journal has an English sub-title—"The Science-Grounded Religion"—and its literary activities are largely conducted in the English language. The *Dev Dharm* seems to be a highly-humanitarian and essentially—nay, pronouncedly—Atheistic religion, mingled with certain innocuous dilutions of Hindoo mysticism concerning the "Higher Soul" and the "Higher Life." It is a thousand times more rational and more human than Christianity, and infinitely superior to the demoralising imbecilities carried by the missionaries to "the heathen in his blindness."

Many of the opinions put forward in this arresting little journal are scarcely distinguishable from those which well up from the pages of the *Freethinker*. For instance, take the following editorial in the number for April, 1908:—

"Thousands of men are unable to understand that diseases are due to violation of natural laws and not due to their fate, or will of God or goddess, and thousands of people *can not* and do not *see* the truth, that the bath in a so-called sacred river has no power to purify the heart nor can any Lamb of God wash away *our sins* merely because he was hanged on the cross. They cannot see that our actions must produce their *effects*, and neither the intercession of any prophet or Son of God, nor any grace of the Merciful Heavenly Father, can really forgive our sins; for sin, like fever or cholera or consumption, is not to be forgiven but is to be cured."

This is sound secular doctrine, and the more such ideas sink in and saturate the Hindoo mind the deeper will grow its repugnance to the enslaving superstitions of Christianity.

For another illuminating passage, which shows that the Freethought view as to the part played by the Christian Church in the evolution of civilisation is shared by the *Dev Dharm*, take the following:—

"When a great man saw that the earth moved round the sun, and said that it was false to imagine that the earth was the centre round which the sun, and stars, and planets revolve, how bitterly was he persecuted! He was condemned to be burned alive. In this age, under a civilised Government such persecutions are not allowed, but abuse, and calumny, and social ostracism are employed as a means of persecution by the opponents of reform. Recently a storm of opposition has been raised in the Punjab against the *Dev Samaj* because its most venerable leader and his colleagues expose the false belief in God, which enrages the Theists of different denominations, and those among them who are of a more vindictive nature are pouring forth the vials of their wrath upon the devoted heads of the leader and workers of *Dev Samaj*. But alas! They are quite mistaken in the belief that calumnies and abuses will help to establish the tottering foundations of belief in God. Let them understand that as long as our arguments go unanswered, as they are unanswerable, so long mere abuses and jokes will not avail. The good-hearted, rational portion of humanity is sure to rally round the banner of Truth in due course of time, for evolution of thought is as true as any other phase of evolution."

Without much alteration of phrase and figure, we in England who are fighting the Freethought battle against the holy hooliganism which blusters, abuses, and calumnifies in the sacred name of "Christ and Him Crucified," can hold to the same faith as our Indian co-workers in the eventual triumph of truth and the ultimate subsidence of the creaky foundations upon which rest the old beliefs.

But perhaps the most astonishing thing to be noted is the article which appears in the same number on "The Evolution of the God-Idea and its Fruits." This also is an editorial article, signed "A. Dev. Dharm." I regret that want of space will not allow me to give more than a few extracts from this trenchant, whole-hearted attack upon the root foundation of all superstition:—

"The Theos or God-idea," says our writer, "has been, and is even to-day, a great stumbling-block for humanity in the path of its progress. The idea is man's own creation, and a natural one. To find cause for an effect is natural to man. To avoid impending dangers and difficulties, to be free from them in the future, and to seek help from without when he himself feels incapable of getting out of them, is no less natural to him. The rising and setting of the glorious sun every day, the change of seasons every year, the heavy floods at one time and the killing droughts at another, the storms of winds and rain on land and seas and the thunders of electricity in space, the birth, growth, and death of beautiful life of various grades, its functions and vitality, a world of stars above, and a bottomless and vast land and sea below full of beauty and grandeur, the recurrence of diseases the human flesh is heir to, and the spread of epidemics—all these excited his curiosity and created in him a sense of weakness, and set him to solve his problems and to ward off his troubles and diseases. With undeveloped reason and no experimental knowledge he saw a god in every awe-inspiring phenomenon in Nature.

Again, as the population inhabiting the different countries increased, and the interests of the different sections of humanity clashed, tribes, or the groups of tribes, came in conflict with each other. The hero who fought the battles of, and won the victories for, his tribes or peoples, on land or sea, naturally became their ideal and God of their future generations. A man of especial psychical powers, who cured diseases or checked an epidemic, acquired sometimes the same position.

Then prayers for his own well-being and prosperity, and sacrifices to please and appease the various gods that man's brain created, were offered in abundance. Where nature was kind and exuberant the finer sentiments and passions developed in man and found expression in poetry in praise of his God or gods. The number of man's gods thus created is simply countless.

With the development or chastening of reasoning, however, the idea of many gods in the natural objects, phenomenas, and heroes was generalised into One

Supreme, Omnipresent, Omniscient, Omnipotent God, governing and controlling the whole Universe—*i.e.*, the sum total of all that exists.

The ardent love of a particular idea carried with it the intense hatred for all other ideals, and gave birth to most harmful attitudes of the mind called bigotry. Bigotry is innate to the God-idea, and is one of the most fruitful sources of division between man and man and different classes of peoples. The God-idea being born out of the weakness and ignorance of man, it must live as long as man is weak and ignorant.

But the harmful effects of the idea are being felt in all the civilised countries. There is a great struggle in England and Australia going on in these days, that no religious education—by which they mean theological education—should be imparted to the children in State schools. America has solved the problem, and to Godless Japan the problem never presented itself."

With such ideas astir amongst the acute intellects of India, the day will soon dawn when—at any rate in the land of Buddha, another great Atheistic religionist—the Christian missionary and his Bible, and the creed associated therewith, will be swept away before the rising tide of Hindoo Freethought. It is, I know, the long-cherished idea of my friend Furnemont, the General Secretary of the International Freethought Federation, to carry the fiery cross of Freethought into India and organise the scattered Freethought elements there into one great national federation in favor of intellectual freedom. The resurgence in the Hindoo mind of the ideas set forth in the *Dev Dharm* will not only justify but, indeed, necessitate this fresh inroad upon the sacred preserves of superstition.

WM. HEAFORD.

SUMMUM BONUM.

All the breath and the bloom of the year in the bag of one bee:

All the wonder and wealth of the mine in the heart of one gem:

In the core of one pearl all the shade and shine of the sea:

Breath and bloom, shade and shine,—wonder, wealth, and—how far above them—

Truth, that's brighter than gem,

Trust, that's purer than pearl—

Brightest truth, purest trust in the universe—all were for me
In the kiss of one girl.

—Robert Browning.

The desire to be for ever as we are; the reluctance to a violent and unexperienced change, which is common to all the animated and inanimate combinations of the universe, is, indeed, the secret persuasion which has given birth to the opinions of a future state.—*Shelley*.

In every man there are two parts: the better and superior, which rules, and the worse and inferior, which serves; and the ruling part of him is always to be preferred to the subject.....The just man does not permit the several elements within him to interfere with one another, or any of them to do the work of others. He sets in order his own inner life, and is his own master and his own law, and is at peace with himself.—*Plato*.

The highest type of the orthodox Christian does not forget; neither does he learn. He neither advances nor recedes. He is a living fossil embedded in that rock called faith. He makes no effort to better his condition, because all his strength is exhausted in keeping other people from improving theirs.—*Ingersoll*.

He who considers the relations of the body and the limits of his existence, and who delivers himself from the fear of the future, renders in this way his life perfectly pleasant; and a man thus satisfied with his manner of living has no need of an eternity in which to be happy. He is not unhappy when he sees his mortal condition bring him gradually to the grave, since he sees in that a peaceful end to his course.—*Epicurus*.

Acid Drops.

Right across the front page of last week's *Christian Commonwealth*, immediately over the title, appeared the following "contents" line: "HOW I CAME TO BELIEVE IN CHRIST. BY G. BERNARD SHAW." We shan't be long now.

Mr. Shaw's lecture is ostensibly printed in full in the *C.C.*, but it ends very abruptly, and we fancy a bit of it—perhaps a good bit—has dropped off. Two pages further on there is a verbatim report of Mr. Campbell's sermon on "The Cleansing Christ." We hope this is accidental, and not personal to "G. B. S."

It does not appear from the apparently verbatim report of what Mr. Shaw said about his conversion to belief in Christ that he believes in Christ in any Christian sense of the words. On the whole, the *C. C.* seems a little "previous" with its warm congratulations. People who expected to see Robert Burns go to hell were told by him that he might turn a corner and give the Devil the slip. Mr. Shaw may turn a corner and give the pious Christians the slip just when they expect to see him come up to the penitent-form. Meanwhile we note with a smile, as "G. B. S." may do also, our pious contemporary's tribute to the "high seriousness and religious purpose" which "dominated" Mr. Shaw's lecture. It is evident, though, that he felt flattered by the applause of the City Temple audience. Shaw also was amongst the prophets. There was something in that. In response to a vote of thanks, he said: "Such a delightful audience as this does not need to thank the lecturer. It will always be a pleasure, as it is an honor, to address you." This is "G. B. S." in a new vein. The claws filed and the teeth drawn.

Mr. W. J. Bryan, the Democratic candidate for the U.S.A. Presidency, is quite as pious as the Republican candidate, and perhaps more so. He lectures a great deal on religious topics, and makes a very good thing out of the business; in fact, his income from this source is enough to make Cashier Judas's mouth water. The following extract from the statement of the secretary of the bureau that employs him is reproduced by us from the American press:—

"Mr. Bryan's regular charge at Chautauquas is the first \$250 taken at the gate and half of all the receipts above \$500, not including season tickets. For evening lectures in a course his charge is \$200 cash as a guarantee and half of all receipts at the door. For single evening lectures not in a regular course, he asks half of the gross receipts. He started out on January 6, 1907, and spoke almost every day until September 10, frequently twice a day. In addition to these, he has made a large number of political speeches."

For 175 of these addresses in 1907 he received nearly £10,000. What is it the old book says? "Godliness is great gain."

Dr. Ingram is sometimes called "the Bishop of the Poor." His income as Bishop of London is £10,000 a year—and he has published a statement showing how heavily he loses on the job. You would expect him, therefore, to be a trifle peculiar in money matters. There is, indeed, at the present time a strong complaint made against him with regard to a "living" in the City. Quite recently the Rev. R. W. Bush, vicar of St. Alphege, London-wall, died at the age of ninety. The "living" of this church is worth £990 a year, and the average congregation, exclusive of the officials, is from three to six all told. The Bishop has long been petitioned to put an end to this sinecure, and devote the £990 a year to more useful Church purposes. But immediately on the death of old Parson Bush the "Bishop of the Poor" appointed the Rev. Prebendary Glendenning Nash to this fat "living." Dr. Ingram thus perpetuates "one of the worst clerical abuses in the country," as the *Daily Chronicle* puts it. But we are not surprised at this. We are only surprised that others are surprised at it.

Since the above paragraph was written a statement has appeared in the newspapers to the effect that arrangements are being made to amalgamate St. Alphege, London-wall, with St. Mary, Aldermanbury, and that the new incumbent of the former "living" undertakes to further the scheme. The joint benefice will then be £500 a year, and the saving effected will go to the support of churches in the suburbs. This is what is announced, and we shall see—what we do see. Meanwhile, we suggest that the new benefice of £500 a year will be a sufficiently handsome sinecure.

The *Christian World* talks very disreputable nonsense over the death of the Rev. John Stockwell Watts, who raised

so much money year after year for the relief of the "Liberator" victims. Over £140,000 was raised by various appeals, and another £10,000 was being appealed for at the time of Mr. Watts's death. Now we do not wish to depreciate the reverend gentleman's efforts and intentions. He meant well and he did well. What we object to is the contention that "Mr. Watts and his committee were enabled to offer a magnificently convincing apologetic for Christianity." One would think that the criminals who were responsible for the "Liberator" smash were all Freethinkers! But they were not. They were all Christians—and even ostentatious Christians. Our contemporary admits that "much of the mischief had been done in the name of religion, and the victims were in many cases elderly Christian people who had been urged by ministers and others to put the whole of their savings into companies backed by men so prominent in religious circles." Very well, then; the facts are simple, and they are these: Christians swindled other Christians to the tune of millions, drove some of them to suicide, and heaps of them to ruin—and other Christians raised some money to alleviate the worst misery of the worst victims. How on earth can this be an argument in favor of Christianity?

In another article the *Christian World* speaks of "Julian's reputed word 'Thou hast conquered, O Galilean.'" The "reputed" shows that our contemporary is aware that this famous exclamation is fabulous. But even fables are useful—to Christianity; so our contemporary writes "reputed" instead of "manufactured."

A few years ago the *Christian World* declared in favor of "the Secular Solution." But it drew back not long afterwards, and has been wobbling about ever since. It is now sneering at the High Church party for announcing, through the *Church Times*, that they "will never accept municipal Christianity," but would "prefer pure secularism to that." The High Church party means what the *Christian World* said (but did not mean) a little before the last general elections.

Why do people go to church? Simply because they are vaguely afraid of the everlasting consequences of staying away, or because they superstitiously suspect that the being in whose name the parson pretends to speak may actually exist. Those among them who are not enrolled in the book of the saved are earnestly warned of the awful danger to which they are exposed. "It is perilous," they are solemnly told, "for a man to sit in a church, where the claims of Christ are faithfully presented, and never come to a decision." The peril is, of course, that, unless they are cajoled into formally accepting Christ, they may get tired of sitting in a church, and join the great throng of people who give no support whatever to the "Lord's work."

Christians are everlastingly troubling their weary heads about imaginary things while often not in the least concerned about real difficulties and genuine sources of worry. There is a reference in the Gospels to an unforgivable sin, which nobody has ever been able to identify, and the Rev. Thomas Phillips, of Bloomsbury Chapel, tells us that crowds of disciples are in mortal fear that they have committed it unconsciously, while the sins they know they are guilty of do not cause them a moment's anxiety, because forgiveness is so easily and so cheaply secured. Indeed, it is the doctrine of forgiveness that is responsible for the morbid anxiety in the one case, and for the callous indifference in the other. Such a dogma is a delusion and a snare, and largely accounts for the moral backwardness of Christendom.

Why should Protestants find fault with Freethinkers for describing their beliefs as superstitious and unutterably absurd, when they themselves refer to Catholic beliefs in even stronger terms? Superstition is only a matter of degrees, all beliefs in the supernatural being in essence identical. The Catholics differ from Protestants merely in that they have more of the same stuff; and Freethinkers differ from both in that they have none of that peculiar commodity. The Rev. Mr. Phillips speaks of "demonstrating the absurdity of the Catholic superstitions," and Freethinkers aver that Protestants demonstrate the absurdity of their superstitions every time they hold a religious service.

The Rev. Dr. David Smith is great on the subject of prayer. He admits that God seldom gives what he is asked for in prayer; but he always gives something better. But how does Dr. Smith know that the Lord ever gives anything at all? He does not know; but he is fully aware that if he did not pretend to know his occupation would soon be gone.

The Supreme Being is no longer supreme except in name. Dr. S. D. Gordon says that he is at the mercy of his own creature—man. If man is willing he can do wonders; if man is not willing he can do nothing. What is the use of being a God on such terms? According to Dr. Gordon, the Almighty Father will do this, that, and the other "if he may, that is to say, if we will." There is no man living who would exchange places with such a Deity.

Mr. Runciman, the third President of the Board of Education under the present not very long-lived Liberal government, replies to a correspondent that they are "not without hope of securing a settlement which will embody the principles for which they contend and which they have no intention of abandoning." We have heard all this before. It is the good old *blague*. And the good old grammar.

The Liberal Churchmen in the House of Commons have been considering the present Liberal government's third—and perhaps its last—Education Bill from their own point of view. They have one face towards the Nonconformists, and one face towards the High Churchmen, and they will probably come to grief as two-faced people are apt to do. Dr. Napier, acting on their behalf, has placed upon the paper the following series of amendments:—

"(1) Compulsory Cowper-Temple teaching in all schools with facilities on at least two days a week for denominational teaching at the expense of the denomination.

(2) Alternately, secular education, modified only by denominational facilities on two mornings a week.

(3) No compulsion on the teacher to give religious teaching, whether Cowper-Temple or sectarian. But the teacher may volunteer to give either kind of teaching.

(4) The local authority to satisfy itself that any teacher so volunteering has the necessary 'knowledge and capacity.'

(5) Rent to be paid for non-provided schools.

(6) Unlimited denominationalism in schools where the parents of four-fifths of the children are of a particular religious denomination. The teachers while appointed by the local education authority are to belong to such denomination. One-tenth of the total cost of the education in such schools to be provided by 'responsible persons' and repaid to the local education authority."

The object of Churchmen, as well as Catholics, is to get denominational religious education—at the State's expense. This can only be secured in denominational schools. Most Churchmen and most Catholics see that plainly. But a certain number of half-baked Churchmen think a blend would do of Nonconformist religious education and Church religious education in the proportion, say, of five to two. We feel sure they are quite mistaken. The battle between "denominationalism" and "undenominationalism" will be fought to a finish. And behind their struggle stands Secular Education awaiting its opportunity as the only way out of the difficulty.

Dr. Clifford has been treating the English public to another of his "We will never submit" documents. His method is the same as ever. He repeats all his old fallacies and foolishness, without taking the slightest notice of what has been said by his critics. He still pretends not to know that his pet "Simple Bible Teaching" is as objectionable to Catholics, Churchmen, and Freethinkers as "Roman teaching" is to Nonconformists. His argument is pathetically simple. What he and his friends like in the way of religious instruction is justice; what they don't like in the way of religious instruction is injustice. Dr. Clifford never had any other argument than that. And it shows the measure of his intellect and the kind of his character.

Rev. Dr. Clifford, at the celebration of his jubilee last week, said that "he intended to live as long as he could." We have no doubt he will keep out of heaven as long as possible.

Lilian Whiting's definition of death as "but the opening of a door through which the man passes into the next room" in the house of life, would do very well if it were only true. Unfortunately, both the next room and the door are purely mythical. Neither the one nor the other has ever been seen, nor has there been the slightest communication between the occupants of the two adjoining rooms. That is the way with Christians: they imagine a room and then talk about it as if it actually existed.

Rev. J. G. Stevenson is an exceptionally wise man. He assures his new congregation at Beckenham that he "will never mistake the *zeit geist* for the Holy Ghost." Is that meant as a compliment to the Holy Ghost, or as a slap in the face to the *zeit geist*? The dictionary informs us that

zeit geist is the German term for the spirit of the age. Is it, then, complimentary to the Holy Ghost to say that he is not yet the spirit of the age? He is said to have arrived in the world the moment Jesus left it, and yet he has not succeeded in converting a single age into harmony with himself. Did Mr. Stevenson not perceive that his very boast was a virtual confession of the complete failure of the Christian religion?

Mr. Stevenson shows his superior wisdom in another way. He will sometimes offer "the faith of to-morrow" to people who "are hesitating about the faith of to-day." What if to-morrow will be *minus* any supernatural faith at all? Everybody knows that to-day's faith is languishing, and that the trend of the age is away from all faith. If Mr. Stevenson lives, he may experience a rough awakening.

Rev. John Reid Shannon, D.D., of America, is a preacher, and nothing is more natural than that he should think his own profession, "in nobility, in dignity, in grandeur," beyond comparison with any other calling whatsoever. Dr. Shannon is doubtless aware that the pulpit has fallen upon evil days, and that if its occupants do not speak up for it nobody else will. The truth is, however, that the disrepute or discredit of the pulpit is too deep-rooted and too widespread to be removed by the flowery rhetoric of its inmates.

The truth is leaking out through the press conspiracy of silence that there was a narrow escape from riot and bloodshed at the Procession in connection with the Eucharistic Congress. Mr. Stead admits, in the *Review of Reviews*, that Protestant fanatics were prepared to hurl the Holy Mass (in the gold chalice) into the mud. And as that, to the Catholics, would be throwing God into the mud, it is easy to guess what a fine old shindy would have followed. Catholics themselves are allowing that Mr. Asquith's action prevented an awful "sacrilege," but they save their own faces by saying that God used Mr. Asquith to overrule the original intention. Whichever way it happens these people see the finger of God.

Mr. Asquith, in reply to Mr. MacNeill, states that the Government are not prepared to introduce a Bill to remove Catholic "disabilities." We were not aware that there were any Catholic "disabilities" left of a practical character. The Coronation Oath obliges the King to denounce certain Catholic doctrines as "blasphemous and idolatrous," but King Edward cannot be crowned again, and the question will keep for a while. We may state, however, that we are quite opposed to *any* religious language at the Coronation of a new Sovereign. Of course the Catholics only pretend to be opposed to such language. They would put plenty of it—of their own variety—into the King's mouth if they were able to do so.

Father Ignatius, otherwise the Rev. Joseph Leycester Lyne, who died last week, was a Church of England clergyman who ran a monastery, and was even reputed to be a worker of miracles. But he could not perform the miracle of arresting the progress of scepticism inside his own Church. He used to denounce the "Higher Critics" as "traitors," yet his own influence dwindled and theirs increased. The fact is he was rowing against a strong tide of tendency which nothing could resist, and anyone with a decent amount of sagacity could easily see that he was foredoomed to failure. We must do him the justice, however, of saying that he was consistent. He once debated with Bradlaugh in the early days of the Hall of Science, the place being crowded to suffocation, and people even getting on the roof to listen through the open skylight windows. Father Ignatius always had a good word for Bradlaugh as an honest man. Many years after that debate he wrote a letter to the *Freethinker* giving us the same praise for honesty and consistency. We have no doubt that he was honest and consistent himself.

Football Chat prints a long letter from "A Nonconformist Parson," who writes very appropriately from Hanwell, against Sunday football. He considers Sunday recreation as "the last stage of the journey in the broad way which leadeth to destruction." He also denounces the "Iconoclasts," though without mentioning them, as "members of some Freethought Society, who play more to shock conventional ideas than for the pleasure of physical exercise." We are glad to see that the "Iconoclasts" have made so much impression. What the reverend gentleman says about them is not exactly true, but they have at least made him aware of their existence. That he turns up the whites of his eyes in horror will probably add to their amusement.

It appears from a recent action between rival manufacturers of candles for use in the Roman Catholic Church that, according to a decree of the Sacred Congregation of Rites at Rome in 1904, the Paschal candle and the two principal candles used on the altar at Mass must contain at least 65 per cent. of beeswax, but all other candles may contain only 25 per cent. This is a gross swindle of the Deity in whose honor the candles are burnt. It is shocking to defraud him of wax in this way.

It is announced in a Christian paper that the Rev. R. J. Campbell, after preaching at the City Temple on Sunday evening, November 1, will slip into his evening clothes and rush off to the Hotel Cecil, where he is due at 9 o'clock to preside over a dinner of the Vagabonds' Club in honor of Mr. Forbes Robertson and his wife (Miss Gertrude Elliott). This will shock the old-fashioned Christians; but, after all, Jesus Christ would have made a very good Vagabond; he tramped the country, and he "had not where to lay his head." Besides, there ought to be much sympathy between preachers and actors. There is a good deal of similarity between their professions. When the Rev. Dr. Talmage said some nasty things about Sarah Bernhardt, twelve years ago at New York, she shrewdly reminded him that people of the same trade should never fall out in public.

Very Rev. William Hagger Barlow, D.D., of the Deanery, Peterborough, left £27,573. We know where he is now, if the Gospel be true; in the Devil's kitchen, cooking—in the passive sense of the word.

Another parson gone to—we know where! Rev. Charles Taylor, D.D., of St. John's College, Cambridge, left £40,733.

Rev. Dr. Campbell Morgan—the preacher who has just been presented with a £1,000 motor-car—has been orating at Glasgow on behalf of the London Missionary Society. According to the *Evening Citizen*, in the first of these eloquent efforts he soared on the wings of prophecy:—

"Science, he predicted, would make such progress in the course of the next twenty-five years that scientists would no longer deny as impossible stories in the Bible which had been called miraculous."

This is very interesting. We did not know that Dr. Campbell Morgan was an authority in science—though we daresay he is as much so as his Master ever was. We may take his prophecy, however, for what it is worth; and perhaps there is a little inspiration mixed up with it. The time is coming, then, and a good many of the present inhabitants of these islands will live to see it, when science will write out certificates for the stories of Adam's rib, Lot's wife (we don't want to get mixed up with his daughters), Balaam's ass, Jonah's whale, and Mary's baby. What a noble world it will be to live in then! We suggest that if Dr. Campbell Morgan is alive then he should be crowned—with foolscap, and seated (backwards) on a donkey. In that situation he will bear at least one resemblance to his Master, who rode into Jerusalem on two donkeys—which we take it is a far more difficult than driving a motor-car.

Mr. Victor Grayson, M.P., considers himself a true follower of Christ. We have his word for it. He also aims at putting the fear of God into the hearts of politicians. We have his word for that too. Hadn't the honorable gentleman, then, better trouble the House of Commons even less than he had been troubling it until he "went a buster" and got suspended? It seems to us that his proper place is the pulpit. His pious expressions would be all right there.

John Burns spent the last week-end with the King. That's all right—as far as we are concerned. But we read that John Burns "attended divine service" with the King on Sunday morning. O John!—John!

The *South African Review* of September 11 challenged General Booth to accord it an interview on his return to Cape Town "to discuss Mr. Manson's book, and likewise the work and procedure of the Salvation Army in South Africa—more particularly in the western province of Cape Colony." This is followed by several columns of pungent criticism.

M. Pierre Lacroix, a well-to-do bachelor, eighty years of age, left £4,000 to the municipality of Amilly on condition that his instructions as to his funeral should be carried out to the letter. According to his wishes, all the "mourners" were dressed in the gayest clothes, the hearse was preceded

by a brass-band playing comic-opera selections, the coffin was lowered into the grave amidst loud cheers, and the guests were afterwards entertained at a banquet and dance in a local hotel. Such was the gay and festive old gentleman's protest against the lugubrious funerals of the religionists around him.

Canon Lambert and his wife are charged with gross cruelty to a ten-year-old girl, at the instigation of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. We say no more at present, as the case is *sub judice*.

An Irishman thought the learned professions had all the best of it. "If you're a lawyer," he said, "win or lose, you're paid. If you're a doctor—kill or cure, you're paid. If you're a priest—heaven or hell, you're paid."

Rev. F. B. Meyer deplores, as he ought to, the imprisonment of his Hindu friend, Mr. Ghandi, in Johannesburg. It appears that this gentleman, who has committed no crime except that of belonging to a race who were civilised when the ancestors of those who have sent him to prison were savages, has the indignity of hard labor put upon him, and is breaking stones and doing scavenger work. Such is the courtesy of British and Boer Christians nearly two thousand years after Christ. Mr. Meyer sadly confesses that Mr. Ghandi is "not a Christian." It might have occurred to him that, in the circumstances, Mr. Ghandi is rather proud of the fact.

Mr. Meyer winds up with the proverbial wisdom of the pulpit. "Truth," he says, "is still on the scaffold, while prejudice, fear, and selfish interests are on the throne, but there is One that keepeth watch." Good old One! He doesn't do anything else, but he keepeth watch—like a sleeping sentinel.

Mr. Tom Lidgett, of Lincoln, a well-known local preacher, was preaching the evening sermon in the Wainfleet Salvation Army Barracks on Sunday evening, when he suddenly fell back and expired. It seems to have been a case of heart failure. Had the incident occurred on a Freethought platform it would have been a "divine judgment."

A LAW-ABIDING GERMAN.

"In Switzerland this summer," said a Philadelphian, "I heard Charlemagne Tower describe the stringent police regulations of Berlin.

Mr. Tower, by way of illustration, ended with a little story.

Schmidt and Krauss met one morning in the park.

'Have you heard,' says Schmidt, 'the sad news about Muller?'

'No,' says Krauss. 'What is it?'

'Well, poor Muller went boating on the river yesterday. The boat capsized and he was drowned. The water was ten feet deep.'

'But couldn't he swim?'

'Swim? Don't you know that all persons are strictly forbidden by the police to swim in the river?'

NOT FOR HERSELF.

Nan's mother heard her crying after she had gone to bed, and, upon inquiry, learned that the child, having heard for the first time the parable of the sheep and the goats, was in terror lest she should "be a goat."

Her grandfather, a clergyman, tried to comfort Nan, and finally succeeded in convincing her that if she led a "godly, righteous and sober life," she need not fear the objectionable classification. However, the next night Nan was again the victim of her emotions, and her mother insisted that the scene of the previous night must not be repeated.

"But, oh mamma," sobbed the child, "this is different. Grandfather explained all about me, and I am not afraid for myself now. But, oh mamma, what if you should be a goat?"

The soul begins to leave the body as soon as decay sets in, and continues to remove by easy stages, during the entire process of dissolution. Its departure is quite imperceptible to the eye, but quite apparent to the nose.—"Dod Grile."

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, October 25, Stanley Hall, Junction-road, London, N. :
at 7.30, "The Other Side of Death."

November 1, Birmingham ; 8, Nelson ; 22, Stratford Town Hall ;
29, Liverpool.

To Correspondents.

C. COHEN'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—241 High-road, Leyton.—
November 15, Tyneside Sunday Lecture Society ; 22, Fails-
worth ; 29, Birmingham.

J. T. LLOYD'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—November 15, Stratford
Town Hall.

THE PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND: Previously acknowledged.
Annual Subscriptions, £271 6s. 8d. Received since.—R. L.
Lockyer, 10s. (overlooked in a previous list) ; Stretford, 5s. ;
J. E. T., 5s. ; Crowell Hill, 5s. ; J. Railton (2nd sub.), 2s. 6d. ;
W. Tipper, 5s.

H. B. DODDS.—Tuesday is too late for advertisements. See
paragraph. But matter even for paragraphs should be in by
Monday morning.

J. RAILTON.—The "saints" have been rather long in making up
that £80, but we have been used to waiting ever since we
waited twelve months for a door to open.

J. McMILLAN.—Glad to hear two friends of yours enjoyed our
evening lecture at Glasgow. Thanks for cutting. See para-
graph.

JOHN HOGAN says: "If anyone had told me a year ago that I
would be writing you a friendly letter I would have been
angry, for I was then a Catholic." He is now a Freethinker
and a reader of this journal. He was first set thinking by
seeing Christians get the worst of it in debate ; then he started
reading, and he is now "as deep in Atheism" as he ever was
in Catholicism.

H. S. D.—See paragraphs. Thanks.

OLD SUBSCRIBER.—We scarcely believe that reducing the *Free-
thinker* to a penny would lead to a commensurate increase of
circulation. We appeal to a special class of readers, and the
number of people who will really think, especially in matters
of religion, is more limited than you appear to imagine. Per-
haps there are some people who can afford a penny a week,
but not twopence ; but we are not rich enough to provide for
their case, however much we might like to. We must wait
for the Freethought millionaire to come along.

R. J. HENDERSON.—See paragraph. Thanks.

J. J. HANKS.—Rev. A. J. Waldron is nobody in particular, but
he will probably raise more doubts than he will ever allay
during his visit to Westgate.

A YOUNG INQUIRER (Manchester).—Glad to receive your letter,
and to know that your meeting with the *Freethinker* ten weeks
ago has given you so much pleasure and instruction.

G. DAVEY informs us that the *Christian Commonwealth* had the
Bernard Shaw matter all over its contents-bill last week.
"For sheer impudent trickery," he says, "this would be hard
to beat, but G. B. S. has brought it on himself. We shall all
be disappointed if he has not something vigorous to say
about it."

B. HAMMOND.—We had already dealt with the matter. Thanks,
all the same.

WALTER SUTCLIFFE.—There are hardly any scholars even inside
the Churches nowadays who accept the orthodox authorship of
the four Gospels. We cannot print long extracts from their
books in this column. Ingersoll's reference to the Evangelical
Alliance would probably be American.

W. P. BALL.—Many thanks for cuttings.

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

THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S office is at 2 Newcastle-street,
Farringdon-street, E.C.

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

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

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.

PERSONS remitting for literature by stamps are specially requested
to send *halfpenny stamps*.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing
office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year,
10s. 6d. ; half year, 5s. 3d. ; three months, 2s. 8d.

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS: Thirty words, 1s. 6d. ; every suc-
ceeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch,
4s. 6d. ; half column, £1 2s. 6d. ; column, £2 5s. Special
terms for repetitions.

Mr. Bernard Shaw Replies.

JUST as the *Freethinker* is practically made up for
the press a lengthy letter reaches me from Mr.
Bernard Shaw, with reference to my last week's
article and the matters which it raises or involves.
I cannot possibly print the letter this week without
delaying the paper, and that is, from every point of
view, a dangerous proceeding. I will therefore have
the letter set up and let Mr. Shaw have an early
proof, so that it may appear exactly as he would
have it in next week's *Freethinker*. And what I
have to say in rejoinder shall appear with it.

It ought to be said, perhaps, that Mr. Shaw con-
siderately gives me the choice of treating his letter
as private or public. I have no hesitation whatever
in giving it publicity. I think the public—*my* public,
at any rate—have some rights in this controversy.

G. W. FOOTE.

Sugar Plums.

Mr. Foote had very fine audiences at Manchester on Sun-
day. Some of his hearers travelled a considerable distance
to be present, one at least coming from as far as Crewe.
The whole of South Lancashire was represented. Mr.
Foote was in the very best form, and both were live meet-
ings from first to last. The evening meeting was particularly
enthusiastic. Mr. Rogerson acted as chairman on both occa-
sions.

Mr. Foote winds up the Stanley Hall course of lectures
this evening (Oct. 25), his subject being "The Other Side of
Death." North London "saints" should do their utmost to
get the hall crowded.

Mr. Lloyd delivered the third of the Stanley Hall course
of lectures on Sunday evening. We hear it was a fine dis-
course, and a good many strangers were present in the
audience.

This number of the *Freethinker* will be in the hands
of a good many London readers before Thursday evening,
October 22. We beg to remind them that this is the date
of the social gathering at Anderton's Hotel, Fleet-street, E.C.
The Chairman, Mr. Foote, should be able to start the pro-
ceedings punctually at 8 o'clock.

The Secular Society, Limited, which was devised and
registered by Mr. Foote ten years ago, with a view to
securing bequests, etc., for Secular purposes—a thing that
had previously been deemed impossible—has received
several legacies without the shadow of a hitch. In the early
part of the present year, it was left residuary legatee to a
considerable estate. This will not be realisable, however,
for some time. We mention this in order that the Society's
friends may not imagine that it is rolling in wealth. Dona-
tions are at any time most acceptable, and we wish the
Society could be more frequently favored in this respect.
We are happy to state that a donation of £50 has just been
received from Mr. George Payne, of Manchester. Mr. Payne
is not fond of publicity in these matters, but we have
obtained his consent to mention his gift in order "to
encourage the others."

In connection with the Sunday-school of the Newcastle
Branch of the N. S. S., two thoroughly qualified teachers
have consented to open classes for the teaching of French
and German respectively. The name and age of intending
pupils should be sent to H. B. Dodds, 182 Philip-street.
The first term opens on November 8. There are no fees.

America has produced no Freethought orator in succession
to the late Colonel Ingersoll ; at least, not yet, though the
case may, conceivably, alter at any moment. But there is
a considerable multiplication of Freethought periodicals
lately. One of these, the *Humanitarian Review*, is a
monthly. It is published at Los Angeles, California, and
ably edited by Singleton Waters Davis—who, we see by an
advertisement, is the author of an extensively and favorably
reviewed book on *A Future Life*. Some interesting articles
and paragraphs appear in the October number ; among them
is a biographical account of James Lick, who built and

endowed the great Observatory, and also built the Paine Memorial Hall at Boston. In some editorial notes, under the heading of "Current Periodicals," we notice a reference to the *Freethinker* as containing "excellent articles."

One of our antipodean exchanges is the *Examiner*, a three penny weekly, published at Christchurch, New Zealand, and edited by our old friend, Mr. W. W. Collins, who will be remembered by the older Freethinkers in England, from which he emigrated some twenty years ago. We see from the last number to hand that Mr. Collins has been replying, in the Choral Hall, to a lecture by Mrs. Besant on the previous Sunday in His Majesty's Theatre. The report of his lecture shows that he is as vigorous as ever, and just as opposed to every form of superstition, including the plausible and seductive one advocated by Mrs. Besant. Mr. Collins selects the following motto from Mr. Foote in the September number of the *Examiner*: "There are only two things in the world of any real importance—Reason and Humanity. The first is the only true guide; the second is the only true inspiration." There is also a reference to Mr. Foote's article on Secular Education being adopted by the Municipality in the schools of Rome. After quoting from what he calls our "remarkably able leader," Mr. Collins writes:—

"We do not wonder that these words flowed straight from his heart to his pen, for he knows well what it means to fight and to suffer in the battle for intellectual emancipation; none knows better, and we can not only appreciate, but join in his spontaneous outburst of gladness over this message, fraught as it is with such depths of significance to mankind the world over."

Mr. Collins deals with "Rome or Reason" in this article in his own trenchant way.

An Irish correspondent writes us an interesting letter. "I travel," he says, "over nearly all Ireland, and you have no conception of how gradually Freethought is gaining ground. I expect to be able to get you a good number of subscribers before long. I am charmed with your paper. It means going to school all the time. Your works which I have read are inspiring also, and mean support to one who in youth was taught to dread the future." Letters like this are very encouraging.

Correspondence.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Your information about the Manchester Church Congress appears to be curiously inaccurate. The speaker who contended that Biblical criticism should be confined to matters of form and authorship, and who exclaimed, "Hitherto shalt thou go, but no further," was Dr. Wace, the Dean of Canterbury. And the answering reference to Canute and the tide was actually made at the meeting by another speaker, Mr. Vernon Storr.

If "Freethinking" leads to such inaccuracy and confusion in representing other people's opinions as your paragraph displayed, I hope I may continue to be a Christian.

F. C. BURKITT.

[We did not attend the Church Congress. Naturally. The paragraph of which Professor Burkitt complains was written on the basis of a newspaper report. The inaccuracies he points out are, therefore, not primarily our own. Nor can we see that they are of very much importance. They are more technical than essential, and do not affect our criticism of Professor Burkitt. Nevertheless, we are sorry that he has any occasion for complaint.—EDITOR.]

Jesus Christ was crucified because he attempted to supersede the ritual of Moses with regulations more moral and humane—his very judge made public acknowledgment of his innocence, but a bigoted and ignorant mob demanded the deed of horror—Barabbas the murderer and traitor was released. The meek reformer Jesus was immolated to the sanguinary Deity of the Jews. Time rolled one, time changed the situations, and with them the opinions of men. The vulgar, ever in extremes, became persuaded the crucifixion of Jesus was a supernatural event. Testimonies of miracles, so frequent in unenlightened ages, were not wanting to prove that he was something divine. This belief, rolling through the lapse of ages, met with the reveries of Plato and the reasonings of Aristotle, and acquired force and extent, until the divinity of Jesus became a dogma, which to dispute was death, which to doubt was infamy.—*Shelley*.

Christianity in China.

"From whatever cause or combination of causes, missionaries of every creed—and they are numerous enough—have aroused the detestation of the people of China of all classes."—ALEXANDER MICHIE, *Missionaries in China*, p. 6.

"Seeing that the only *bonâ fide* convert to Protestantism, certainly made, devastated thirteen out of the eighteen provinces, in his endeavors to Christianise his fellow-countrymen a little more rapidly than the missionaries were doing, the Chinese may deem it fortunate that not more enthusiastic converts are made."—A. J. LITTLE, *Through the Yangtse Gorges*, 1888; p. 308.

"The Chinaman is as difficult to lead into the true path as any Jew," a Catholic priest told Dr. Morrison. "Talk to the Chinese of religion, of a God, of heaven or hell, and they yawn; speak to them of business and they are all attention."—DR. MORRISON, *An Australian in China*, 1902; pp. 121-105.

"Why should missionary ladies teach the damsels of Japan to play hockey, whilst numbers of their English sisters, in dens and cellars, slouch more than half-starved and covered with vermin, in our metropolis."—A. DAVENPORT, *China from Within*, 1904; p. 36.

WE have seen the effect of Christian missionary effort in their dealings with uncivilised tribes; let us now turn our attention to their operations among the inhabitants of a civilised country. But before dealing with China, let us see how Christianity operated in the neighboring island of Japan.

In the year 1548 St. Francis Xavier, with a few companions, arrived in Japan, on a mission to convert the Japanese to Christianity. They were received with open arms by the people, and supported and encouraged by the rulers. Murdoch, in his *History of Japan during the Century of Early Foreign Intercourse*, gives numerous instances to show, not merely the toleration, but the approval, accorded the Jesuits in Japan. This at a time when the appearance of a Buddhist or Mohammedan priest in Christian Europe would have led, not to expulsion, but to the extremity of torture and death at the stake.

All religions were equally tolerated in Japan. When the Bonzes appealed to the Emperor to banish foreign missionaries, he asked them how many different religions there were in Japan. They answered, "Thirty-five." "Well," said the Emperor, "when thirty-five religions can be tolerated, we can easily bear with thirty-six; leave the strangers in peace."*

However, the Emperor did not know the intolerant character of the new faith. The liberality extended to them in Japan had no influence whatever upon the missionaries,

"for it is recorded that in the majority of cases the conversion of a daimyo [ruler] meant the persecution of the Buddhist priests within his domains and the dispersal of their followers. In more than one case men and women were given the choice to embrace Christianity or be banished from the fief, and under such princes the Jesuits exultingly wrote home that the number of converts increased by leaps and bounds. For example, Crasset, one of the Jesuit Fathers, writes appreciatively of a Christian prince, Otombo of Bungo, as one who, after accepting the faith, showed all the Christian graces: '.....He went to the chase of the bonzes [Buddhist priests] as to that of wild beasts, and made it his singular pleasure to exterminate them from his States.'"+

Under these circumstances vast numbers of Japanese embraced the new faith; so that after a lapse of forty years we find the missionaries sending an embassy to Pope Gregory XIII., representing the adherence of Japan to the faith. But the priests went too far. Not content with religious supremacy, they began to aim at political supremacy, under the title of reformers. The Japanese rulers awoke to the situation before it was too late. "They saw," says Mr. Davenport, "that it was a life-and-death struggle for supremacy, seeing that another law than that of Japan had been introduced, and that Japanese subjects once become converts could be turned at any moment against the rule of their temporal

* A. Davenport, *China from Within*, p. 238.

† *Kobe (Japan) Chronicle*, August 28, 1904.

sovereign." They rose to the emergency; an Imperial Edict was issued in June, 1587, banishing all foreign missionaries within six months on pain of death, and ordering all crosses to be thrown down and all churches to be razed to the ground. In 1637 fell the last of the Christian strongholds. During this fifty years fifty thousand converts are said to have perished. Thus their own arrogance, intolerance, and greed for power led to the downfall of the missionaries in Japan.

After this Japan became a closed country for two hundred years. No Japanese were allowed to leave, no foreigner to land; any person attempting to do so, and all shipwrecked persons, were either put to death or imprisoned. This lasted until 1853, when, under the guns of an American fleet, the first of a series of treaties was signed, opening the country to foreign trade.

But, though yielding to superior force for the time being, Japan began to prepare for the struggle which the natural sagacity of her rulers foresaw to be inevitable. They saw that the only right and justice recognised by the worshipers of the "Prince of Peace" was that of the sword. They prepared accordingly, and when the hour of trial came they were not found wanting. The Japanese had learnt their lesson. If they wished to preserve their independence they must exclude the foreigner, with his religion of peace. If they were forced to admit the foreigner, then they must learn to fight him with his own weapons. They did learn; and when Holy Russia, with insolent pride, disregarded the call to halt on the borders of her empire, she quickly proved to the world that patriotism, courage, and endurance were compatible with an utter ignorance of "Christ and him crucified." The Russian army was soon in full retreat and her navy at the bottom of the sea. And if Europe stands staggered at the sight of a first-class European army retreating before Asiatics, and trembles at the spectre of Asia armed and over-running Europe, who have these Europeans to thank but themselves? It is the knowledge of their iniquitous dealings with Asiatics which makes their conscience uneasy.

Let us now turn our attention to China. The Chinese have never displayed the almost preternatural sagacity and energy of the Japanese—who never made a false move in their desperate and successful struggle for freedom and nationality—in their dealings with the foreigners.

THE TAEPING REBELLION.

Everyone knows how "Chinese Gordon," at the head of the "ever-victorious army," suppressed the great Taeping rebellion in China.

The present writer, when a boy, has gazed with rapture on some of the Taeping battle-flags captured and sent home by General Gordon to a school in my native town. And when visitors came, it was my special glory to take them down by the water and show them "the fort which Gordon built," and "Fort House," where he used to live.

We were taught that the Taepings were a horde of lawless and cruel robbers, their aim being to overthrow the Imperial dynasty and set up one of their own. The Chinese Government, being unable to suppress the rebellion, requested our Government to lend them an officer capable of dealing with the situation. They recommended General—then Captain—Gordon for the post. That Gordon drilled the Chinese into efficiency, and, leading them against the Taepings, he gained the victories which gave the name of "ever-victorious" to his army, and soon suppressed the rebellion. Further, it was impressed upon us that Gordon's success was to be attributed to the fact that he was a firm believer in the Bible; that he practised prayer and trusted in God. He was held up for our admiration as a pattern and example of an ideal Christian.

Undoubtedly Gordon was a brave man; but it does not follow that he was a brave man because he was a Christian. If that were so, Gordons would be as common as blackberries, instead of the rare and

exceptional men they are. We do not remember that Christ discoursed on bravery; the only kind of bravery he enjoined was of the passive order, as in the injunctions to turn the other cheek, and the non-resistance of evil—teachings which Gordon flatly disobeyed all his life. Christ himself displayed no bravery, either in his agony at Gethsemane or in his last despairing cry from the cross. Moreover, there are plenty of men who are brave without Christianity; the Greeks and Romans were brave before Christianity existed. The Japanese have never been surpassed for their bravery, and they have rejected Christianity with contempt.

As General Gordon's friend, the Rev. R. H. Barnes, points out, "it is a mistake to say that Gordon refused 'to know any book but one, and that one the Bible.'" He says:—

"For the great ethical writers of Pagan times he had a cordial admiration, and several of them he read frequently. The writings of Epictetus he knew intimately; and anyone who looks into his well-worn copy of the *Thoughts* of Marcus Aurelius (Long's translation) will see how diligently the book must have been studied."*

So much did he admire the *Thoughts* of the great Roman emperor that he was in the habit of giving copies to his friends. And the man who has assimilated those *Thoughts*—which, the great Cardinal Barberini declared, made his soul "redder than his purple at the sight of the virtues of this Gentile"—will not require any aid from the New Testament.

Then, again, although Gordon never claimed any credit for himself, his friends have magnified what he did accomplish, and disparaged the work of other men of equal worth whose labors contributed materially to the success he achieved, and without which he might have failed altogether.

For instance, the force known by its high-flown title of the "ever-victorious army"—a name invented by the Chinese, who are adapts at bestowing these flowery titles—before Gordon was connected with it, was recruited from native Chinese by an American named Ward, who had served in the Merchant Service, and had gained experience in fighting in South America. Ward was a brave man, who drilled his Chinese soldiers to a high state of efficiency and led them in person to many a victory, and there is no doubt he would have put down the rebellion had not a bullet put an end to his career; yet Egmont Hake alludes to him and Burgevine scornfully as "ci-devant filibusters."† Gordon himself, in a letter cited in the same work, says that he wished "to show the public what they doubted, that there were English officers who could conduct operations as well as mates of ships" (p. 112).

An ungenerous and spiteful remark towards a brave and capable man killed in battle, and the fruit of whose labors Gordon was reaping. It reveals to us that the great Christian hero was of like passions with the rest of frail humanity, and was not quite exempt from the jealousy which has been described as the meanest of human failings. And after all it is an admission that Ward *did* do his work well, which in fact has never been disputed.

Mr. Alexander Michie, a great authority on things Chinese, says:—

"Ward himself was an unpretentious, cool, and daring man, reckless of his own life. During his brief campaign he was riddled with bullets, one of which, entering his mouth, destroyed the palate and impaired his speech, and before long the fatal missile reached its mark."‡

Demetrius Boulger, another authority on the subject, in his recently-published life of Sir Halliday Macartney, says: "Ward was a brave and active leader, and he was generally regretted by the Chinese, who had perfect confidence in him" (p. 62). Under the circumstances, Gordon's sneer was quite unworthy of a disciple of Marcus Aurelius.

* Rev. R. H. Barnes, *Charles George Gordon*, 1885; p. 22.

† *The Story of Chinese Gordon*, 1884; p. 50.

‡ *The Englishman in China*, 1900; vol. i., p. 382.

Upon the death of Ward, the Chinese wished to appoint Macartney to fill his place, but were forced by the British Government to accept Gordon instead. Macartney himself raised Chinese troops independently of Gordon, and furnished them with bullets for their muskets and shot for their cannon out of a small arsenal he had with infinite labor set up at Sunkiang; Gordon in this case acknowledging the assistance he received.* The fact is, Gordon came in late in the day, and reaped all the glory, a great share of which belonged to other men.

And who were the Taepings? They were Christians. Their leader, Hung Siu-tsuen, was the son of a well-to-do farmer living about thirty miles from Canton. Coming to Canton to sit for an examination, he received nine tracts from a Protestant missionary who was giving them away in the street. Upon discovering their character when he arrived home, he threw them on one side; but some years after he—on the advice of his wife's brother, who had borrowed them to see what they contained—read them and became converted. This was in 1843. He immediately began to exhort those around him to accept Christianity, and in 1846 received an invitation from J. J. Roberts, an American missionary at Canton, to come there and study. He remained with Mr. Roberts for two months, studying the new religion. Returning home, his followers rapidly increased in numbers, and, as might be expected by those who know anything of missionary teaching, they soon began to fall foul of the idols, and began persecuting the religion they formerly professed, but which they now denounced, as idolatry, in the usual intolerant style of that religion when it has the power. For this the mandarins attempted to arrest him, but he was rescued by another preacher. Emboldened by numbers and success, the Taepings now formed an army and went on the march.

All the inhabitants of the towns they captured, who refused to accept the new faith, were killed. Their leader, says Little, "modelled his action on that of the Jewish leaders, his war-cry being 'Sho Yao' ('Slay the idolators')."† They marched right through the Empire until they arrived before the walls of Nanking. "The Taeping Insurrection," says James Freeman Clarke, "has shown its religious character throughout." He observes:—

"Before the attack on Nanking, a large body of the insurgents knelt down and prayed, and then rose and fought, like the soldiers of Cromwell. The aid of a large body of rebels was refused because they did not renounce idolatry, and continued to allow the use of opium. Hymns of praise to the Heavenly Father and Elder Brother were chanted in the camp. And the head of the insurrection distinctly announced that, in case it succeeded, the Bible would be substituted in all public examinations for office in the place of Confucius."‡

The missionaries, who thought their business was booming splendidly, were enthusiastic over their new converts. Demetrius Boulger—who takes the official view that the Taepings were robbers and bandits—tells us that the missionaries "took the Taepings under their very special protection, and strained all their influence to commit our Government to the adventure of espousing the cause of these spurious Christians." But, evidently, the missionaries did not regard them as "spurious Christians," and they were in the best position to know. It is true that the Rev. J. Holmes reported against them, but as Mr. Boulger himself observes, not until "some years after the Taeping craze had been boomed by Dr. Medhurst" (p. 42).

In every household throughout the Taeping territory, the Lord's Prayer was hung up for the use of the children, printed in large black characters on a white board. An Englishman who served with them declared that—

"As a Protestant Christian, I have never yet found occasion to condemn their form of worship. The most

important part of their faith is the Holy Bible—Old and New Testaments entire. These have been printed and circulated gratuitously by the Government through the whole population of the Ti-Ping jurisdiction."*

The Sabbath was kept religiously on the seventh day. They celebrated the communion once a month by partaking of wine, and everyone admitted to their fellowship was baptised after an examination and confession of sins.

The same writer mentions the surprising friendliness of the Taepings towards foreigners, observing that they welcomed Europeans as "brethren from across the sea," claiming them as fellow-worshippers of Jesus.

Sixteen years desperate fighting passed away before the Taepings were finally suppressed, with the aid of the Christian Gordon, and their capital, Nanking, given to the flames.

It is calculated that about three times the amount of the population of England perished during the struggle. The missionary organ, *China's Millions*, for January, 1903, described what took place in the province of Gan-hwuy, as follows:—

"No idea can be conveyed to the mind of the English reader of the sufferings endured by the people of this province during the Reign of Terror. Twice did the rebel hordes sweep through its fertile valleys and plains, carrying off its possessions and multitudes of people, never to return. Those who survived these onslaughts endured fresh suffering when the rebels were driven back by the Imperial troops, who completed the destruction the rebels had commenced."

"Thirty out of thirty-nine millions were swept away, and in districts so complete was the desolation, that not a man, nor a woman, nor a child, nor a hamlet, nor a cottage, not even a hut was left to mark the site of a once flourishing place."

Mr. Davenport, who cites the above testimony, observes:—

"Seeing that thirty millions thus disappeared in one inland province, the figure of one hundred millions as the sum of all the inhabitants who lost their lives during this long rebellion, is evidently too low an estimate."†

And, as Little tells us, that he "devastated thirteen out of the eighteen provinces in his endeavor to Christianise his fellow-countrymen," the estimate is indeed low. And this was the work of one of the very few genuine converts to Christianity in China. It should be borne in mind that the Chinese were the most tolerant people in the world, as regards religion, before the introduction of Christianity, and that the Empire had been at peace for two hundred years before this outbreak, to properly appreciate the result of the introduction of the poison of Christian faith into the country.

W. MANN.

The World of Books.

City Companies spend plenty of money to very little advantage, except to doctors, nurses, and chemists, who all profit by gluttony and guzzling. We are glad to see, however, that the Goldsmiths' Company, which is better than most of the others, has made a very handsome donation of £5,000 towards the expense of producing the sixth volume of the New English Dictionary, which will be dedicated to the Goldsmiths' Company in recognition of its generosity. Dr. Murray's magnificent Dictionary is one of the glories of England and one of the wonders of the world. It leaves everything else in the way of Dictionaries far behind. Money spent on it will be devoted to scholarship as long as the English language lasts.

* * *

The *Humane Review* (quarterly) for October opens with an important article by "Lex" on the new Prevention of Crime Bill. Mr. H. S. Salt writes an interesting article on "The Poet of Pessimism"—James Thomson ("B. V.")—and argues that "the dark mood" should not be "sedulously discountenanced, as if it came direct from the source of all evil." "So long as it be genuine," Mr. Salt says, "we shall do well to pay heed to it. It stands for something; it is

* Demetrius C. Boulger, *The Life of Sir Halliday Macartney*, 1808; p. 75.

† A. J. Little, *Through the Yangtze Gorges*, p. 3.

‡ *Ten Great Religions*, 1871, p. 64.

* *History of the Ti-Ping Revolution*. By Lin-Le, vol. i., p. 306. Cited by Freeman Clarke, *Ten Great Religions*, p. 64.

† *China From Within*, 1904, p. 259.

part of us, and it is not to be arbitrarily set aside." Mr. Joseph Collinson contributes a vigorous article on "Lawlessness on the Bench." Mr. Howard Williams's article on "Milton as a Humanitarian" is very well written, interesting, and in some respects original. It closes with Shelley's superb tribute to Milton in the *Adonais*. "Whipping in India," by Hiralal Chakravarti, M.A., B.L., ought to be widely read in England. The *Humane Review* remains worthy of the great cause it represents.

* * *

The new (October) number of the *Hibbert Journal* opens with an impeachment of European civilisation in an article on "The Miscarriage of Life in the West" by P. Ramanathan, the Solicitor-General of Ceylon. What we are all in pursuit of, he says, is mere sensuousness and worldliness, the life and pleasures of the body, instead of the life and joys of the soul. Without sharing the writer's religious belief, we think there is a good deal of truth in his criticism of our hustling modern existence, whose great aim seems to be an ever-increasing hurry in all things. We succeed ever more and more in abolishing time and space—without becoming gods; and we have yet to learn the truth of that fine saying of Ruskin's that the greatest of all possessions is self-possession.

* * *

The second article in the *Hibbert Journal* is by Charles Johnston, late Bengal Civil Service, on "A Chinese Statesman's View of Religion." In this article a ridiculous attempt is made to thrust responsibility for the doctrines of God and Immortality upon Confucianism. The next article by Captain F. W. Von Herbert on "The Moslem Tradition of Jesus' Second Visit on Earth" has too much of the air of a *jeu d'esprit*. We judge that there is more of the writer in it than there is of Turkish tradition. Issa (Jesus) visits earth again after a lapse of nearly two thousand years, in order to decide where he should come again to judge the quick and the dead. He visits England, Germany, France, and Russia, and everywhere finds that those who profess to follow him do everything he taught them not to do, and nothing that he taught them to do. He gets "run in" in England for "begging"—that is, for carrying out what Christians profess to regard as divine teaching, but what the law treats as a crime. After that he goes to America, but things are even worse there, and after witnessing the cremation of a live Ethiopian he makes tracks (by a circuitous route, *via* South Africa, etc.) for Syria, the land in which his earthly life had been passed, the "cradle of his race, the promised land, the country blessed of God." There, not amongst Christians, but amongst Mohammedans, he found the old simple virtues of kindness, gentleness, and hospitality. What he had found in Christendom was the contrary of all this: "Wherever the nations called on his name he found men without honor, women without virtue, children without innocence, merchants without honesty, priests without faith, soldiers without courage, judges without justice, lawyers without law, teachers without wisdom, kings without clemency; and he discovered not one country in which, despite temples and priests, his message was not utterly ignored, as if he had never lived and taught, suffered and died."

* * *

Captain Von Herbert says there are various forms of the Issa tradition. One version he heard told round the campfire of a company of Turkish infantry in the campaign of 1877. "This version," he says, "was grotesque and obscene, and is unfit for publication in Christian countries. Its Issa was a feeble-minded fool, who, after having tried all other lands, returns to Turkey as the only soil congenial to him, the only place where idiots are still held in superstitious veneration, instead of being locked up in asylums." This is a stroke of satire worthy of Erasmus's *Praise of Folly*.

* * *

Amongst the other contents of the new *Hibbert* we note an article on "Hegel and his Method" by Professor William James, written with his usual sinewy power and fluent grace of style, and wealth of illustration; an article by another Pragmatist, F. C. S. Schiller, on "Infallibility and Toleration"—full of just observations and extremely well worth reading; an article on "A Neglected Argument for the Reality of God" by C. S. Peirce, which looks very profound, but seems to us to have very little in it; an article by Professor M'Giffert, which is dealt with by Mr. Lloyd in his leader this week; and last, but not least, the Hon. Bertrand Russell's article on "Determinism and Morals," which is one of the most sensible things we have read for a long while. He argues that it is not Determinism, but Free Will, which upsets morality, produces an ethical chaos, and destroys the sense of praise and blame. We wish the *Hibbert* would publish more articles of this description. At present it is far too much given over to long-winded metaphysics and laborious sophistications.

The Christian Religion.—I.

By ROBERT G. INGERSOLL.

I.

In the presence of eternity the mountains are as transient as the clouds.

A PROFOUND change has taken place in the world of thought. The pews are trying to set themselves somewhat above the pulpit. The layman discusses theology with the minister, and smiles. Christians excuse themselves for belonging to the church, by denying a part of the creed. The idea is abroad that they who know the most of nature believe the least about theology. The sciences are regarded as infidels, and facts as scoffers. Thousands of most excellent people avoid churches, and, with few exceptions, only those attend prayer-meetings who wish to be alone. The pulpit is losing because the people are growing.

Of course it is still claimed that we are a Christian people, indebted to something called Christianity for all the progress we have made. There is still a vast difference of opinion as to what Christianity really is, although many warring sects have been discussing that question, with fire and sword, through centuries of creed and crime. Every new sect has been denounced at its birth as illegitimate, as a something born out of orthodox wedlock, and that should have been allowed to perish on the steps where it was found. Of the relative merits of the various denominations, it is sufficient to say that each claims to be right. Among the evangelical churches there is a substantial agreement upon what they consider the fundamental truths of the gospel. These fundamental truths, as I understand them, are:

That there is a personal God, the creator of the material universe; that he made man of the dust, and woman from part of the man; that the man and woman were tempted by the devil; that they were turned out of the garden of Eden; that, about fifteen hundred years afterwards, God's patience having been exhausted by the wickedness of mankind, he drowned his children with the exception of eight persons; that afterward he selected from their descendants Abraham, and through him the Jewish people; that he gave laws to these people, and tried to govern them in all things; that he made known his will in many ways; that he wrought a vast number of miracles; that he inspired men to write the Bible; that, in the fullness of time, it having been found impossible to reform mankind, this God came upon earth as a child born of the Virgin Mary; that he lived in Palestine; that he preached for about three years, going from place to place, occasionally raising the dead, curing the blind and the halt; that he was crucified—for the crime of blasphemy, as the Jews supposed, but that, as a matter of fact, he was offered as a sacrifice for the sins of all who might have faith in him; that he was raised from the dead and ascended into heaven, where he now is, making intercession for his followers; that he will forgive the sins of all who believe on him, and that those who do not believe will be consigned to the dungeons of eternal pain. These—it may be with the addition of the sacraments of Baptism and the Last Supper—constitute what is generally known as the Christian religion.

It is most cheerfully admitted that a vast number of people not only believe these things, but hold them in exceeding reverence, and imagine them to be of the utmost importance to mankind. They regard the Bible as the only light that God has given for the guidance of his children; that it is the one star in nature's sky—the foundation of all morality, of all law, of all order, and of all individual and national progress. They regard it as the only means we have for ascertaining the will of God, the origin of man, and the destiny of the soul.

It is needless to inquire into the causes that have led so many people to believe in the inspiration of the Scriptures. In my opinion, they were and are mistaken, and the mistake has hindered, in countless ways, the civilisation of man. The Bible has been the fortress and defence of nearly every crime. No civilised country could re-enact its laws, and in many respects its moral code is abhorrent to every good and tender man. It is admitted that many of its precepts are pure, that many of its laws are wise and just, and that many of its statements are absolutely true.

Without desiring to hurt the feelings of anybody, I propose to give a few reasons for thinking that a few passages, at least, in the Old Testament are the product of a barbarous people.

(To be continued.)

We believe the world was created out of nothing, but we don't know how the nothing was held together, and don't think it could be done again.—"Dod Grile."

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.

STANLEY HALL (Junction-road, N., opposite Tufnell Park "Tube" Station): 7.30, G. W. Foote, "The Other Side of Death."

OUTDOOR.

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S.: Station-road, 11.30, a Lecture. Brockwell Park, 3.15, a Lecture.

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

WEST LONDON BRANCH N. S. S.: Hyde Park (near Marble Arch), 11.30, F. A. Davies, "Christ."

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

COUNTRY.

BOSTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Corn Exchange, Market-place): 7.30, Joseph Bates, "Why I am an Atheist." Pianoforte Selections before Lecture by Miss E. V. Smith.

EDINBURGH BRANCH N. S. S. (Rationalists' Club, 12 Hill-square): 6.30, Business meeting.

FALLSWORTH (Secular Sunday School, Pole-lane): 6.30, Bert Killip, "The Materialist Conception of History."

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): H. S. Wishart, 12 noon, "Christism, Socialism, Secularism"; 6.30, "New Gods for Old."

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N. S. S. (Central Buildings, 113 Islington): Sydney Wollen, 3, "Socialism and Jesus Christ"; 7, "The Salvation Army, Theologically and Socially Exposed."

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, C. Willis, "Psychic Influences: with Clairvoyant Demonstrations." Discussion.

NEWCASTLE (Rationalist Literary and Debating Society, Lockhart's Cathedral Café): Thursday, October 29, at 8, W. Wright, "Some Paradoxes."

OUTDOOR.

DALKEITH: High-street, Saturday, October 24, at 7, a Lecture. EDINBURGH BRANCH N. S. S.: The Meadows, 3, a Lecture.

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Friday, October 30, "The Salvation Army Exposed."

Saturday, October 31, "Why Does the 'Army' Fail?"

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