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PRICE TWOPENCE

And this is the blessed and peaceful life of man, when all his emotions are in unison with reason and truth.
—SAINT AUGUSTINE.

The Providential Hand.

RELIGIOUS people should never object to the doctrine of Providence. If there be a God there *must* be a Providence. It is idle to argue, as some Theists do, that God governs the universe by general laws, and that there is no such thing as particular Providence. John Wesley transfixed this sophistry with the spear of logic. All generals are made up of particulars, and do not exist without them; consequently there cannot be a general Providence without a particular Providence; in other words, a general Providence is no Providence at all.

God, therefore, if such a being exists, is directly and absolutely responsible for all that has happened in connection with the earthquake in South Italy. The lost and the saved were both in his almighty hand. If he closed it and crushed one to death, and tossed another into a place of security, he did as he pleased; and those who are saved are quite right in thanking him for pleasing to save them. Many have been doing this publicly, and their action is quite consistent with the doctrine professed by all Christendom. But they overlook the other side of the picture. They forget that if God is to be praised for the saved he is to be cursed for the lost. If he is to be thanked for sparing a minority he is to be blamed for destroying the majority. And when it is remembered *how* the majority were destroyed, what an awful tragedy it was, with every conceivable form of mental and bodily suffering, the character of this Deity stands out in bold relief, not as a benevolent being with occasional moments of weakness, but as a malignant being with occasional moments of relenting. We venture to say that the author of this desolating earthquake, with its quick murder and slow torture of two hundred thousand women and children, comes as near as possible to the conception of a Devil. We fail to see, indeed, how any Devil could have improved upon the performance.

There is something else that these survivors of a frightful calamity overlook. *Why* were they saved? *Why* were others lost? Have they the monstrous vanity to suppose that they were exempted from the general fate on account of their special virtues? Are they impudent enough to suppose that not one man, woman, or child amongst the myriads who perished was as good as themselves? We can hardly believe it. They probably have never thought about the matter at all. If they did think about it for a moment they would alter their attitude. Unless they were incurably and even insanely selfish, they would recognise that their God had acted wickedly, and they would refuse to worship him any longer. "I will call no being good," said John Stuart Mill, "who is not what I mean when I apply that epithet to my fellow-men; and if such a being can sentence me to hell for so refusing, to hell I will go."

To worship such a God is itself a crime. His hell is filled with victims, and his heaven with slaves.

We appeal to Mr. Doresa, the British subject who gave such an interesting account of his escape. He is evidently a decent, wholesome human being; his heart seems to be in the right place. But his head swims now and then. "It was simply by the mercy of God," he says, "that I was not killed with the hundreds of thousands of other victims." Does he not see the logical antithesis, that if God's mercy spared him God's cruelty killed the others? According to the theory involved in this gentleman's words, God determined the force and direction of the earthquake, designed every death and every survival, planned every blow and every agony. How can he worship such a being? We put it to him in all sincerity.

Rev. Monsignor O'Kelley, special correspondent of the *Daily Mirror*, exclaims—"Merciful God. What horrors!" As if mercy and horrors went well together! As if a merciful God would permit horrors! Unless he cannot prevent them.—in which case he is *not* God.

The *English Churchman* goes one better still. It undertakes to suggest *why* God has played the devil with Calabria and Sicily,—*why* he has slain a multitude of human beings, ranging from decrepit old age to helpless infancy, with every circumstance of revolting barbarity. According to our pious contemporary, these things "speak in awful tones the power of God's providential hand at a time when His Name, and even His Being, are becoming almost universally denied." This appears to us to take the cake for imbecility. It is suggested that God killed people wholesale in one part of the world in order to frighten people in another part of the world; that he massacred the innocent in order to warn the guilty; that he destroyed the most thorough-going believers in Europe in order to remind the infidels that his eye is upon them. The Archbishop of Messina is slain by his cathedral in order to apprise the editor of the *Freethinker* in London that he had better join the Church of Christ. These people first make their God a devil, and then them make him a lunatic.

We have proceeded hitherto on the theory that the leaders of religion are honest, that they are victims of the superstitions they teach. We now wish to make a qualification. They are *not* all honest. Some of them are perfectly dishonest. They practise upon human credulity for their own profit and aggrandisement. And it has always been one of their tricks to represent their own enemies as the enemies of God. David took advantage of the famine to slay Saul's sons, as guilty of bringing that sign of God's displeasure on Israel, but really as possible pretenders to the throne. It would suit the clergy admirably if the people could be got to believe that God killed believers as a warning to unbelievers; for the people, in that case, would take care that there were very few unbelievers to be warned. We incline to think that the *English Churchman* is strictly attending to business. Similar notes are being struck in other parts of Europe. The Pope himself is working this policy for all it is worth. Very likely he will find it advantageous, for religion rests on ignorance and terror; but fortunately the unbelievers are too many to be exterminated easily.

G. W. FOOTE.

The Truth About Free Will.—II.

(Continued from p. 5.)

ACCORDING to Professor William James, it is a "radical mistake" to suppose that the juice has long ago been squeezed out of the Free Will controversy. The Professor is further of opinion that there is no subject on which inventive genius has a better chance of breaking new ground. One can only regret that Professor James did not see fit to exercise his unquestionable ability in indicating the nature of the ground still untouched. As it is, this writer's chapter on "The Will" in his chief work* is a most disappointing performance, giving readers the impression of a man clear-sighted enough to see all the weakness of the indeterminist position, and yet anxious to make out a case on its behalf. The expressed belief that the question of Free Will is "insoluble on strictly psychologic grounds"† is particularly unfortunate, and this is accentuated by the statement that the writer's preference for "free-will" is based entirely upon ethical grounds. As a matter of fact, "free-will" is not an ethical question at all. It is biological and psychological, and only ethical in the sense that all phases of life, and therefore all problems, are more or less inter-related.

Human ingenuity in the shape of philosophic subtlety may succeed in so utilising modern knowledge as to present *excuses* for the indeterminist position, but it lies in the nature of the case that increased scientific knowledge can give no support to an essentially unscientific position. The essentials of the conditions, *pro* and *con.*, were long ago stated; and much of what is added serves only to confuse the real question in dispute. What is really needed is a plain statement of the essential points, free from misleading language and non-essential issues. The number of people who care to follow out a philosophical argument is always comparatively small, and when this argument happens to be clothed in a more or less old-fashioned terminology this number is still further reduced.

The recent revival of interest in the question might be taken as a more hopeful sign were it not that the bulk of the interest is primarily due to the belief that a particular propaganda may be either helped or hindered thereby. The revival, however, serves as a reminder that between a theoretically scientific age and a people whose thinking is scientific there exists a wide distinction. On the one side we see the principle of causation generally accepted, and on the other—often in the same persons—there is an acquiescence in a theory of the will that is a plain negation of causation. People may not be conscious of the contradiction, but it is there none the less. Probably the fact that conceptions long current acquire a kind of vested interest in one's intellectual outfit is responsible for the fact, as it may also explain why there is always a fairly strong influence on the unscientific side of every disputed question.

As with most disputed questions of long standing, the question of origin and history has a most important bearing on a right understanding of the "free-will" problem. On what grounds is it affirmed that the "will" is free in the sense that nothing else is that is known to us? Material nature obviously presents a sequence that admits of generalisation and prediction. A very large part of the phenomena attaching to the human organism admittedly fall within the same category. We are conversant with phrases like biological laws, physical laws, and even with the laws of mental life. But in one direction alone a distinction is made. It is affirmed that voluntary actions are the unconditional products of absolutely free beings, and are what they are, not because of those limiting conditions that determine other actions, but because of the fortuitous selection of an undetermined will.

Stated in this way—and it is difficult to state the "free-will" position with less injustice to its upholders—one can soon get upon the track of those conditions to which this belief owes its origin. The conception of causation, so prevalent in modern times, is of necessarily scanty extent amongst primitive peoples. It is nowhere absent, because there are certain experiences so insistent that a dim perception of causation must have been early established. The connection between a blow and a wound, between a fire and warmth, in all cases where the sequence is simple and obvious, the idea of causation would find some play. But in the case of human actions—particularly of voluntary ones—the connection of these with any assignable cause or causes is neither simple nor obvious. Even with ourselves it is a matter of difficulty—often quite impossible—to trace actions back to their causes. With primitive man this inevitable difficulty is accentuated by a theory of things which gives a more or less autonomous "soul" to every phenomenon or group of phenomena. There is no question that man's earliest theory of things is volitional. And although a very limited amount of knowledge and reflection abolishes the crudest form of this theory, in its general outlines it persists for a long period, and is not even now extinct. One after another the "soul" or "will" that determines the motion of the planets, the shape and structure of inanimate objects, the movement or growth of plants, is surrendered. The same conclusion is reached even with a host of phenomena connected with the human organism. But the most intricate problem of all remains—that of the human mind. And, ejected from every other vantage ground, the volitional theory finds a last refuge here. Yet there can be no reasonable doubt but that the belief in a "will" undetermined by surrounding conditions is at best a survival of the primitive theory of things. To those who think in a really scientific manner the principle of causation cannot be limited in its application. It is either universal or useless. Either the whole of natural phenomena represents an unknown sequence or the whole of modern science is based upon a delusion, and a rational interpretation of the universe an impossibility. The "souls" that once determined everything in physics, in astronomy, in chemistry, in biology, have now disappeared. A "will" acting independently of determining conditions stands as almost the sole representative of a once universal form of thought, and its ultimate fate is foreshadowed in the whole history of the human mind.

The fact that the human mind does not in any generation start *de novo*, but necessarily philosophises upon the material accumulated by earlier generations, accounts for the circumstance that we are able to trace primitive modes of thinking among people who have reached a stage of conscious philosophic speculation. The notion of a "soul" or a "will" as something not to be brought under the same category of causation as phenomena in general thus meets us in early Greek speculation, and has persisted down to our own day. Taking certain things for granted, philosophers have very largely devoted their energies to devising forms of expression for them so that they would not be in too glaring disharmony with contemporary knowledge. Once this primitive conception had gained a foothold in speculative philosophy many causes combined to give it permanence, although it is highly significant that in nearly every case where philosophers have deliberately designed their work upon the basis of contemporary knowledge the belief in "free-will" has been discarded.

The persistence of interest in the Free Will controversy has, however, been due more to theology than to either psychological or ethical interest. Given the belief in a God as sole creator and governor of the world, and there is one of two ways in which he may affect mankind. Either he induces men to carry out his wishes by an appeal to their reason or their fears, or he has so arranged matters that certain events will come to pass at a given time, human

* *Principles of Psychology*, vol. ii., chap. xxvi.

† *Principles*, vol. ii., p. 572.

effort being one of the agencies contributing to that end. The first leaves man "free" within certain limitations, the latter leads straight to the Christian doctrine of predestination. Either position, from the standpoint of apologetics, has its disadvantages. The first limits the power of God, the second casts grave doubts upon his wisdom and goodness. The fact that this is so may serve to explain why, with other reasons of a more personal character, Christian writers have taken up at one time the position of Free Will, and at another time that of Determinism. It will also explain why to-day, with science in so complete an ascendancy in the realm of thought, and when the moral sense of mankind revolts from worshipping a deity who deliberately designed, among other things, all the evil and suffering we see, Christian writers of to-day have seized upon the obscure phenomena of the human mind as affording a refuge for their primitive and anti-scientific theory of an undetermined "will."

On the Christian side, if we except Paul's teachings on pre-destination, the first great Christian writer against the freedom of the will was Augustine. The only man, according to him, who ever possessed Free Will was Adam. He chose evil, and committed the race by his choice. Like many later Christian writers he denied man's natural ability to do good. All the good he did came from "Grace," and grace is given, not for any merit, but purely as a gift from God. With certain qualifications Thomas Aquinas, the great doctor, follows St. Augustine in his belief in pre-destination. He allowed that merit, on the part of human beings, would, to some extent, determine whether "Grace" should be bestowed upon them or not. This concession was, however, corrected by Calvin, who denies that the goodness or badness of man has anything to do with his pre-destination to either heaven or hell. God dooms some to one place and some to the other simply because he chooses to do so. Zwingli asserted, in denying the freedom of the will, that God was "the author, mover, and impeller to sin." Martin Luther declared that man's will was like a horse ridden by either God or the Devil, and that man had no power to choose who the rider should be. Later still, Jonathan Edwards wrote, in defence of his Christian faith, one of the most powerful and subtle arguments ever penned in favor of Determinism. And in addition to these views of individuals, with others that might be added, we have the declaration of the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Church of England Catechism, both of which explicitly assert that man's will is utterly powerless to accomplish good works. Under these circumstances it is curious that we should now find Christian theologians vigorously denouncing Determinism as in the highest degree immoral, and upholding "free-will" as an essential portion of Christian teaching.

C. COHEN.

(To be continued.)

Materialism in the Churches.

No system of philosophy has ever succeeded, or ever will succeed, in satisfactorily solving the riddle of the Universe. The "inexplicability of the last ground and final connections of things" is an acknowledged fact in every serious school of thought. This is specially true of the philosophy known as Materialism. To say of this school, as it has repeatedly been said, that "its real nature consists in an equally confident and naive assertion that not only the world in general, but the processes of life and thought in particular, can be explained on purely mechanical principles is to be guilty of grossly and inexcusably misrepresenting it. One who used to be systematically decried as a "crass Materialist," Ludwig Büchner, assures us that not even in his wildest days did he dream of claiming the ability to explain the Universe on any principle whatever. All that great

thinker thought fit to do was to point out that Materialism "is no more inconvenienced" by the inexplicability of Nature than "its philosophic opponent, Spiritualism, which is just as little, and perhaps less, able to give that explanation by means of the spiritual principle it alleges."

Let it be distinctly understood, then, that whatever Materialism is, it has never had the presumption to characterise itself as the annihilation of mystery. What, then, is Materialism, and what does it attempt to do? For a correct answer to this question we must on no account apply to theology or to any form of metaphysics. If you open your *Encyclopædia Britannica*, in its ninth or tenth edition, the first thing that strikes you is the absence of an article on Materialism, and the second, that nearly all definitions of the term, contained therein, are supplied by Idealists, who are bound to be more or less influenced by their prejudice against it. If you listen to the popular preacher you will find Materialism fiercely denounced, but never actually defined, and on examination of the words employed you will discover that what he really decries is not Materialism at all, but selfishness and sensualism. As a matter of fact, scientific Materialism has no connection whatever with our manner of life, or with the spirit and tone of social conduct. Materialism, in the only sense in which it is advocated by scientific Freethought, signifies the theory that the only ultimate reality in the Universe is matter, and that apart from matter there are no such things as life, thought, mind, and spirit. According to this theory, matter is the source and substance of all things. Now, it is a noteworthy fact that scientific Materialists are often idealists in morals, while many materialists in the pulpit sense are scientific Idealists.

Now, what arguments can be adduced against Materialism as scientifically defined? Professor A. S. Peake, D.D., of the Manchester University, in an essay, entitled, "Why I cannot be a Materialist," speaks slightly of this school of philosophy. Although admitting that the triumphs of physical science have made it a "favorite theory," he says:—

"In spite, however, of the attractiveness which Materialism possesses for the scientist, it is not likely that it will permanently maintain its ground. Some, no doubt, accept it and cleave to it, but it is more likely to be a temporary stage of thought among those who are really concerned to think out the questions that are involved."

Dr. Peake seems to labor under the delusion that Materialism is a product of the latter half of the nineteenth century, whereas, in reality, it is one of the oldest philosophies in the world. Its founder was Democritus, a contemporary of Socrates. So far is it from being a "temporary stage of thought," that for five centuries after Plato and Aristotle it was the dominant philosophical school. It was the central contention of the Stoics during that period that "only Body exists." Eventually Stoicism was forcibly suppressed by Christianity. For a thousand years Materialism remained in a state of suspended animation. With the revival of learning it slowly came to life again. Immanuel Kant started life as a Materialist, and some of his earliest books were decidedly materialistic in their tone and tendency. Indeed, at no period of his life could Kant be set down as a consistent Idealist. The great Diderot was a Materialist, and some of the most brilliant declamations in Holbach's *Système de la Nature*—that "Bible of Atheism"—were from his pen. For the last forty years the overwhelming majority of scientific men have been Materialists; and they are becoming such in increasing numbers every day. Thus Materialism is seen to be anything but a "temporary stage of thought."

We now come to Dr. Peake's objections to it. This professional theologian bases one objection on the scientific conception as to the constitution of matter. Materialism, according to him, "is opposed to the doctrine of the conservation of energy." We confess our utter inability to perceive the relevancy of this argument.

"It has often been pointed out," he says, "that we cannot account for the production of thought on materialistic principles if the law of the conservation of energy is true. This law assures us that the total stock of energy in the physical Universe remains the same. For if, as a Materialist has told us, the brain secretes thought, this physical process ought to involve the transformation of energy into thought, and the consequent reduction of other forms of energy. But the truth is that the energy remains the same, and the thought thus produced is an additional product."

Dr. Peake's main error here is that he regards thought as a new product, as an addition to the sum total of energy. Thought cannot be proved to be anything of the kind. Thought has no existence whatever except in imagination. When the brain thinks no new substance or entity is brought into being. Thinking is only a form of motion in the grey bed of the brain. As Büchner puts it, "it is an expression for the action of the ganglionic cells contained therein, and so represents the highest psychic activity of which the brain is capable."

But this, Dr. Peake declares, is "unthinkable." Why unthinkable? It is not unthinkable, because it has been thought by men as capable of thinking as the Professor himself, and it is constantly being thought by innumerable scientists of the first rank. "It is impossible to conceive the transition from matter to thought," Dr. Peake adds. We reply that it is impossible to conceive that a man who knows anything about science could pen such a sentence. There is no transition from matter to thought; no first-class scientist ever said that the brain "secretes" thought; that ideas and feelings are things produced, brought into being by an act of creation performed by, the brain is not merely a pure fancy, and wildly fantastic at that, but utterly inconceivable. We frankly acknowledge that the thinking process is an insoluble mystery, but we also contend that all thinking is done by the brain, and that the quality of the thought corresponds to the quality and quantity of the organ of thought.

Dr. Peake is guilty of reckless inconsistency. With one breath he tells us how inconceivable it is that the brain should be able to think, and with another that we do not and cannot know what matter is. If matter is unknown and unknowable, on what ground of reason does the Professor pronounce it incapable of thought? He ought to have known exactly what it is and what it can do before venturing on such a momentous declaration. He quotes from Mr. Whetham, with evident approval, the opinion that "the ultimate explanation of the simplest fact remains, apparently forever, unattainable," and then immediately goes on to affirm, with an omniscient air, how impossible it is to "imagine that the mere motion of particles of matter, even matter so endowed with sensitiveness as the brain, could produce thought," thought and matter being so "entirely incommensurable," having "no common factor to bind them together." Thinking is a mystery, but equally so is the fact that matter should, under specific conditions, be alive. Thought is not one whit more inexplicable than life, and yet matter does live, and matter does think.

From the admission that the nature of matter is unknown to us the Professor proceeds to show that matter itself may be an illusion and our life on earth a dream. Then he jumps to the conclusion that "though every thought we have be false, a thinking mind is necessary to think them." But where does this thinking mind spring from? Where is its place of abode? What happens to it during sleep and other spells of physical unconsciousness? Dr. Peake brings it on the stage without any warning or introduction, and makes it accountable for everything. And this unknown and intangible "thinking mind" is dragged in to do a task which matter "can never achieve." Dr. Peake does not know what matter is, but he does know exactly what matter can and cannot do. He has no idea what mind is or when and how it comes, but he has the clearest possible conception of the mind's functions.

Dr. Peake ends his article in the usual pious fashion. In the wildest dogmatic manner he dismisses Materialism without pronouncing the benediction upon it. The dismissal words are these: "The supreme thing in the Universe is not matter, but spirit, and it is for the sake of spirit that matter ultimately exists." This is the pulpit style to perfection. Where is the proof? The moment you show us spirit distinct from and independent of matter we will believe you. We can show you matter without consciousness and without mind, and we can trace for you the gradual process by which consciousness and mind were eventually evolved. You say, "We know nothing of matter except through mind," and we beg to remind you of the converse, that we know nothing of mind except through matter. That is tit for tat, and more, because with our evolved mind we can watch the slow evolution of mind through countless generations of plant and animal life; and we challenge you to explain this unutterably wonderful process on any theory of the prior and independent existence of mind. What we behold is, not mind creating matter, but matter blossoming into mind; not God making man, but man converting his own shadow into God and then falling down and hugging it, saying, "I am thy child." The highest we know is matter living, thinking, feeling, loving. Show us a higher, and it sufficeth us.

J. T. LLOYD.

The Universe His Monument.

On Christmas Day, 1642, at the hamlet of Woolsthorpe, Lincolnshire (Tennyson's country), was born a child so small that its mother used to say it might have been put into a quart mug. The child was Isaac Newton. His initial dimensions might hint to enthusiasts in the study of Eugenics (a pursuit, nevertheless, which I respect) that infant physique is not to be taken as a complete measure of value. Isaac seemed dull at his lessons, but, a school-fellow having kicked him violently in the abdomen, he took a scientific revenge by applying himself diligently to his tasks, and beating his enemy in the class. Like Galileo, he had a lifelong passion for the real, the useful, the certain and the precise. He constructed a water-clock. His kites, flying by night with lighted lanterns attached to the tails, scared the late wayfarer in the lane. A windmill having been erected at Grantham, an imitation mill, in going order, whirled its sails on a house-roof, and, on windless days, was kept going by a mouse that pattered on a tread-wheel. Builder, Isaac Newton.

His intellectual journey carried him from the Grammar-school to Trinity College, Cambridge, and thence, at the age of 22, to a Professorship of Mathematics in the same university. And now he began his immense explorations into nature, more adventurous than the travels of Marco Polo to China, or Vasco da Gama's doubling of the Cape of Storms, or the riding of knights-errant in "faery lands forlorn."

Optics first. I think every child should be made familiar with the story of Newton covering up his window, and placing his prism in an aperture of a shutter, and watching the light flash through the glass to a screen, and refract into the sevenfold color of the rainbow. The man in the dark room is so splendidly symbolic of the soul of humanity in the universe, seizing its opportunities to draw out the secrets of nature, and making dumb materials tell their tale. In Trinity College to-day stands a statue of Newton, prism in hand,—noble memorial of the discoverer who, greater than fire-giving Prometheus, caught the light in a wondrous snare and explained it. Another direction in which he pursued optical research was in the making of the first reflecting telescope. The small instrument is preserved as a revered relic by the Royal Society of London, and, in the eyes of the muse of history, is a grander object than the big reflector,—sixty feet long and

with a six-foot speculum,—constructed by Lord Rosse at Parsonstown in Ireland. Not tarrying at such triumphs, he continued his untiring observations and traced the laws of color, refraction and polarisation: and if he erred in his emission theory of light, his very error is of finely-wrought intelligence.

He studied the laws of movement,—that *anangke*, or tremendous necessity,—which governs both planet and mote. According to the first law of motion, first indicated by Kepler, and now precisely stated by Newton,—

“Every body will continue in its state of rest or of uniform motion in a straight line except in so far as it is compelled by impressed force to change that state.”

The moon, then, might travel in a straight line were it not for some impressed force which causes it to fall towards the earth, and so swing in a circular orbit as a midway result of the two motions. At what rate does it fall? Newton's reply is enshrined in his *Principia* :—

“Every body in nature attracts every other body with a force directly proportional to the product of their masses, and inversely proportional to the square of the distance between their centres.”

Inventing new methods of mathematics in his energetic attack on nature's mystery (like Archimedes, who invented a new engine of war in the midst of the siege of Syracuse), Newton mapped out the three laws of motion in general, and applied his theory of gravitation to the interpretation of tides, the vast plunges of comets through space, and the planetary ellipses. How small must most of us feel as we stand in imagination at Newton's side, and know that he understands the machinery of the heavens, and we must needs learn from him as children learn from a teacher. We have a way of talking of the age of science as if we had revealed these things for ourselves. Few of us could, if pressed, say clearly how the planets move, and how the tides, which we idly watch at the seaside, obey the attraction of the moon. Nor can we conceive of the likelihood of a time when all men will equal Newton in his capacity to understand astronomic law. It is a very striking and noble fact in our daily life that we thus put our trust in the profound minds of a few Newtons and Darwins. Such faith is essentially different from the faith in the Absolute God who merely pronounces his will. It is a faith in minds who, as it were, leave the whole course of their study on the blackboard of science free to the inspection of all, and challenging the criticism of every questioner.

In 1688, Newton was elected M.P. for Cambridge University. The voting was as follows:—Sir Robert Sawyer, 125; Mr. Newton, 122; Mr. Finch, 117. No reports of the astronomer's speeches, if any were made, have come down to us. To a man before whose eyes the mysteries of the heavens had been uncurtained, the talk and tactics of the House of Commons must sometimes have seemed like the motion of the mouse that turned the toy mill in the days of his boyhood. In 1699, he was appointed Master of the Mint; in 1703, knighted; in 1705 (and annually for twenty-five years), elected President of the Royal Society. A Parliamentary contest not long afterwards sent Newton to the bottom of the poll of four candidates. He perhaps consoled himself by the thought that the law of gravitation was not changeable like the voters of Cambridge.

Newton had faith in God and the Bible. He had a particular interest,—a “mystical fancy” he himself called it,—for the books of Daniel and Revelation. In these works we find curiosities. There are strange beasts such as bears, leopards, dragons. There are terrific battles, earthquakes, thunders, lightnings, falling stars. There are melodramatic figures on thrones, on white horses, on the waters, in the air. We hear loud voices shouting the doom of empires and the opening of new ages of the earth. Newton wrote *Observations on the Prophecies of Daniel and the Apocalypse of St. John*. Nobody considers the book of any importance to-day, while the *Principia* is now, and always will be, held as one of the master-

pieces of human reasoning. I suppose he was interested in the beasts and earthquakes of Daniel and John because they gave exercise to his love of research,—his wit in unravelling things hidden. Newton is an example of a man whose thoughts could be in one direction exact, precise, scientific; and, in another direction, go wandering into the baseless kingdom of the gods. Yet, even in the excursions into divinity, the philosopher's intellect sought to act with the accustomed methods. I cannot help smiling at Sir David Brewster's simple remark that—

“In the eleventh chapter [of the *Observations*] Sir Isaac treats with great sagacity and acuteness of the time of our Savior's birth and passion, a subject which had perplexed all preceding commentators.”

It is evident that Newton's mathematical mind was fascinated more by the chronology than the ethics of the Gospel.

For the last twenty years of his long life, Newton lived with his niece in Kensington. His silver-white hair gave him a very venerable appearance. In habit of living he was temperate; in manner, untalkative and absent-minded. He never wore glasses, and never lost more than one tooth to the day of his death. While he was economical in personal outlay, he freely gave to the poor and (as Charles Lamb would gratefully note!) to his poor relations. He used to say that they who gave away nothing till they died never gave at all. He died on March 20, 1727, and was buried in Westminster Abbey. The inscription on his monument speaks of him as an Ornament of Human Nature. Many years after his death, his Woolsthorpe house was repaired, and a marble tablet thus inscribed :—

“Sir Isaac Newton, son of John Newton, Lord of the Manor of Woolsthorpe, was born in this room on the 25th December, 1642.

Nature and Nature's laws lay hid in night,
God said ‘let Newton be,’ and all was light.”

We may feel touched by the passionate admiration expressed in the couplet, yet we must be conscious that it oversteps the line of justice. Newton did not so suddenly bring light into the human mind. He learned very much from those that went before,—from Kepler, from Galileo, from Copernicus, and from the Greek observers of ancient times, such as Hipparchus the astronomer. There is a continuity in science.

Fifty years ago last September, the people of Grantham held high festival in honor of the distinguished man born in their neighborhood. A procession was formed at the Grammar-school where Newton was educated. It moved to the spot where Lord Brougham was to unveil a statue. The most pleasing sight in the procession was a group of three boys. One carried a copy of the *Principia*, in which Newton explained the laws of motion. The second carried the reflecting telescope before-mentioned. The third bore Newton's prism. Thus they represented the young humanity which learns lessons from the old, reveres its achievements, and develops its intellectual and moral bequests. When the statue was displayed, Lord Brougham eulogised the astronomer. The most striking remark occurred near the close of the speech :—

“If you seek for a monument, lift up your eyes to the heavens which show forth his fame. Nor, when we recollect the Greek orator's exclamation, ‘The whole earth is the monument of illustrious men,’ can we stop short of declaring that the whole universe is Newton's.”

F. J. GOULD.

He who fights with the priests may make up his mind to have his good name torn and befouled by the most infamous lies and the most cutting slanders.—Heine.

Acid Drops.

Rev. Dr. J. Warschauer deserves credit for straightforwardness on the subject of the Virgin Birth. He censures a brother clerical for speaking of "a virgin birth in the heart of every man," and saying that "every moral and spiritual advance is of the nature of a virgin birth." Dr. Warschauer observes that "a virgin birth is birth from a virgin," and adds that "if we mean something quite different the resources of language should not be inadequate to set forth that meaning." "To make my own position quite clear," Dr. Warschauer concludes, "let me say that I belong to that growing minority of theologians in this country who, rightly or wrongly, regard the New Testament evidence as insufficient to establish the supernatural birth of Christ." This is well thought and well expressed, but Dr. Warschauer must pardon us for saying that he is only following in the wake of Freethinkers, who have thought and expressed the same thing for at least a hundred and fifty years. We might also venture the suggestion that if Dr. Warschauer were only to reason in that way with regard to the rest of his Christian *credo*, he would probably find it a rapidly disappearing quantity.

"What should we strive for in 1909?" was printed right across the top front of last week's *Christian Commonwealth*. The honest answer would be "A big circulation."

At last a man of God is in agreement with the *Freethinker*. The Rev. Dr. A. T. Pierson, who nearly succeeded the great Spurgeon, has expressed himself in severest condemnation of present-day Evangelism. He describes it as anything but simple, as depending on elaborate and costly machinery, on spectacular sensationalism and dramatic novelties, and as being, in short, "a business speculation." The *Freethinker* has been saying precisely the same thing for years, and it only differs from Dr. Pierson by going one step further and characterising the Church itself and its ministry as "a business speculation," and nothing more.

Mr. R. J. Campbell and Jesus Christ are in full agreement on every point, only no one knew what the former meant until the latter arose to explain him. Never before was Christianity recognised in the plenitude of its Divine significance and power. Here at last is a man who can read God's mind and will like an open book, and set the world right on every conceivable point. Praise the Lord.

Mr. Campbell gets worse and worse. His last printed sermon on "The Doctrine of Non-Resistance," preached from a text that could scarcely be misunderstood (or rather misrepresented) honestly, is one of the most foolish things we ever encountered. Listen to this: "Let the smiter smite so long as his blow falls on you alone; but strike up his arm when it falls upon the defenceless and weak." According to the City Temple gospel, it is right to defend others and wrong to defend oneself. This is worthy of Colney Hatch.

Poor professional Jesusites! How they hobble after the unemployed Carpenter of Nazareth! The late Rev. William Reynolds, of Llandeloy, Pembroke, for instance, left £30,643. He is now with Dives—looking for water.

Here are two more indigent apostles of poor J. C., both appearing in one morning's "Wills and Bequests." Rev. Robert Bruce, of Hurstlea, Alexandra-park, Harrogate, left £14,755. Rev. Charles Parker, of Upton House, Bitton, near Bath, honorary canon of Bristol Cathedral, left £10,491. For of such is the kingdom of heaven.

Another poor Christite! Rev. Charles Louis Rudd, aged eighty-six, of Meadowside, Twickenham, left £20,845. Even the Rev. R. C. Fillingham, that fantastic and tempestuous parson, who ought to have been a Dissenter, left £2,399. Not a fortune, but a good deal for him.

George Brest, of Poole-road corner, Wimborne, Dorset, committed the heinous offence of selling sweets and cigarettes on Sundays, December 6 and 13, 1908. Sir Richard this, Sir John that, and Colonel the other, sat upon the bench when the culprit was brought up for trial and sentence. They ordered him to pay 25s., fine and costs, and regretted they could not make it more. The chairman sapiently remarked that the wicked tradesman sold his sweets and cigarettes "because it paid to do so." Of course. He keeps a shop to keep himself. Sancho Panza would make a better judge than Sir Richard Glyn.

Nonconformists are as bad as Churchmen in one thing; they cannot even give religious instruction to paupers without payment. You would think they would give these poor creatures tips out of the guide-book to heaven for nothing. But not they. Cash down is the rule of their trade. We say this in view of the rumpus at Caxton, where the Board of Guardians have been discussing the religious interests of the people in the workhouse. It was agreed that Nonconformists had equal rights with Churchmen in the matter; so the vicar of the parish was appointed for twenty-six Sundays a year at a salary of £20, and a Baptist minister was appointed for the other twenty-six Sundays at the same salary. Nonconformity used to cry "No State religion!" Now it cries "Halves!"—and doesn't mind three-quarters.

Good Americans, such as Bret Harte, Mark Twain, and Colonel Ingersoll, have all agreed that the Chinaman is really hated, not for his vices, but for his virtues. What the average Christian white says about the yellow Heathen is not what he means. He dreads the Celestial's industry, sobriety, and thrift. White men have been known to look for work for years without finding it, while the Chinaman soon hitches on to a job. There is something fine and modest about these Celestials, with the big brainpan and the old polite civilisation. Look, for instance, at the following extract from the "In Memoriam" column of the *Liverpool Daily Post* :—

"YUEN.—In loving memory of our dear cousin, Yuen Yap, whose life was taken away from us December 4, 1908. (We mourn the loss of our dear cousin, who was well-respected as a good and peaceful man by all who know him. He leaves a wife and four children to mourn his loss at his own home. He was a member of the Chinese Society for Seamen, called the Tung Yee Tong. His occupation was a ship's cook. He had resided at Liverpool, London, and Cardiff for a period of about ten years, and had never been known to have caused any trouble during his stay.)—His cousins, Yuen Chong and Yuen Ming."

Is not this simple and natural, and therefore beautiful?

Two old men who had been excitedly anticipating their first Old Age Pension payment failed to arrive at the Blackburn Post Office on new year's morning, and it was found that they had died during the night. This is one of the sarcasms of "Providence." It reminds us of the man in the story who dropped food from his window to hungry people below; it was attached to a string, and when a starving wretch grabbed at it the philanthropist pulled it back. Such was the One Above to those poor old Blackburners.

Prophet Baxter sails along prosperously, in spite of the fact that he has foretold the end of the world so many times without its coming off. Nothing ever happens, but the mistaken prophet shifts forward the date each time, and his crowd of dupes always come up smiling. But it is not every prophet who has the luck of old Baxter. One of the tribes has just been bowled over in America, and the police "want" him; in fact, they have a warrant out for his arrest as a public nuisance. Mr. Lee Spangler did business at Nyack, in the State of New York. He persuaded a lot of people who trusted him with their minds, and apparently with their money, that the wind-up of this planet's affairs would take place on December 27, 1908. His followers sat up all the Saturday night expecting to hear the blast of Gabriel's trumpet some time in the morning. Thirty of them, all females, wore white dresses made for the occasion. Prophet Spangler appointed to meet them at a local station and go with them up the South Mountain, from the top of which they were to float up to heaven, while Gabriel blew the trumpet of doom for the wicked world in Oakhill Cemetery. But it seems that Spangler hired a buggy and made tracks for a fresh pitch. His followers waited for him till midday, when they gave the game up, and accepted sandwiches and hard-boiled eggs from sympathetic spectators, who had just enjoyed a dog-fight over the grave of one of one of the lady Spanglerites' husband.

According to the *Free Church Chronicle*, out of 20,186 non-paying guests in the prisons of England, there were only 288 Wesleyans, 84 Baptists, 66 Methodists, 69 Presbyterians, 34 Congregationalists, 4 Salvationists, 3 Bible Christians, 2 Plymouth Brethren, and 1 Quaker. But are these figures quite accurate? It is said that many prisoners put themselves down Church of England for prudential reasons, and that others are put down Church of England for not stating what denomination they belong to. Catholics, no doubt, are always Catholics. They show the largest percentage of crime, and the Quakers the smallest. Those who have the most Christianity have the most crime; those who have the least Christianity have the least crime. Which is exactly what every intelligent outsider would expect.

Baptist membership has fallen from 430,000 to 424,000, Sunday-school teachers have decreased by 100 and scholars by 8,000. Yet fifty-five new chapels have been built at a cost of £86,000. Comment is unnecessary.

Baptist members increased in Wales during 1905, when the Revival was at its height, by 32,000. Next year the increase was only 8,000, which was normal on the figures of ten years. The following year the reaction that always comes after revivals began to tell, and there was a decrease of 5,000. Last year there was a further falling off of 6,000. What price Evan Roberts now?

The Rev. F. B. Meyer says that a Christian's duty is to obey in the dark. Not his to make reply, not his to question why, but his to do and, if need be, die. God never gives his reasons, but requires obedience. That is pietism in its maddest mood. It is essentially anti-moral teaching. No wonder the majority of Christians are such muffs, and so easily fall from grace. Heroes were never nourished on such thin and sickly pap.

The Jews must be a wonderfully forbearing and forgiving race. A writer in the *Church Times* charges them with having been "all along so wilfully and wickedly blind." Some eighteen hundred years ago they are said to have crucified the Lord of Glory "as a deceiver, a magician, a malefactor, a false prophet," and to have lain ever since under a curse. Heaven has been having its revenge upon them. But now, at last, this retributive, avenging heaven is described as speaking to them in mercy, and offering them the chance of attaining to greatness by embracing the Cross. How curious, to be sure, are the ways of Providence, and how utterly past finding out. Having cruelly punished these people for doing what is claimed to have resulted in infinite blessing to the world, it is now represented as condescendingly saying to them, "Confess that you are sorry, and your past shall be blotted out."

Canon Wilson, of Worcester, is as heterodox and inconsequential as ever. Preaching at Oxford the other day on the Unchangeable Christ, he devoted his discourse to a discussion of the innumerable changes which the Savior has undergone during the last eighteen hundred years. The text and the sermon contradicted each other at every turn. But the Canon is ingenious. Christ himself remains forever the same; it is men's views of him that so constantly change. One would like to know what Christ himself, quite apart from men's views of him, is like. Will the Canon be good enough to inform us?

Dr. Wilson makes great fun of the people who are bound by the words of Scripture, and who say, "If the words are not inspired, what is?" We should never be tied down by mere words, the Canon contends. But whence did he derive his Christ except primarily from the New Testament, and how did he get at him there except by means of the words employed? If the words of the Bible are not true, then, surely there is no truth in the Book.

The late Henry Drummond gave his blessing to the doctrine of the Divine Immanence, saying, "The idea of an immanent God, which is the God of Evolution, is infinitely grander than the occasional wonder-worker, who is the God of an old theology." That may be true enough, in its way; but the New Theologians are not satisfied with one God; they want the two, the one within and the one without, though they are not agreed as to how to relate them the one to the other. If people must have a God at all, it is just as well that they should have two, to keep each other in order.

Mr. H. Hamilton Fyfe, writing in the *Daily Mail* on "The Land of the Earthquake," says that "All pious Messinians believe they are still under the special care of the Holy Mother of God." What still—after the earthquake? Mr. Fyfe states that in the cathedral of Messina is preserved a parchment letter (bogus, of course) from the Virgin Mary herself, promising to be the perpetual protectress of the people of Messina on account of their great faith. She has protected them wonderfully well. When the city is rebuilt, the inhabitants should reward her with a thanksgiving service.

The *Daily News* got its "own correspondent" very quickly at the centre of the earthquake mischief in Italy, and his first letter told the story of two refugee monks of the minor order of Capucins, who had come to grief at Reggio. One of these monks, Father Francesco da Scaliti, who spoke with tears and sobs, had the usual idea of

"Providence." "We were all in our cells at morning prayers," he said, "when we felt a very violent shock. Immediately we rushed out into the courtyard, calling upon God to save us. We saw the convent collapse, but the Almighty preserved us. Was not that a miracle?" The pious monk did not ask himself why a "miracle" was worked for them and none for the thousands who perished in the earthquake. The nuns and girl pupils of the San Vincenzo di Paola Institution were less lucky. Many of them were killed outright. Only thirty were left alive out of seventy-five girls at the Orphanage in connection with the Convent of the Visitazione. One would think that "Providence" had a partiality for monks rather than nuns. But the real truth, of course, is that Nature doesn't trouble about either. Monks and nuns both live as long as they can, and when they can't live any longer they die.

Here is a pretty story told by the *Daily News* correspondent at the scene of the earthquake in his second letter:—

"At the entrance of one of the villages I passed through which is totally wrecked, they had put up a temporary altar, and had carried thither a wooden statue of the Madonna taken from the ruins of their little church. Some peasants, men and women, knelt around it in prayer.

When the priest saw me he came forward and said, 'Are you an envoy of the Government? Please wire to Rome that all we want here is a church, a church!'

And the poor wretches had no bread, no shelter, no clothes."

The ruling passion strong in—misery.

Rev. R. J. Campbell took the opportunity, on Sunday evening at the City Temple, to say a few words about the earthquake. What he said appears to have been worthy of his flabby philosophy. His manner of justifying the ways of God to men, if we are to trust the press report, was delightfully simple. People were killed by the earthquake in Italy, but they were also killed by physical disease in London; and more people died every day than were killed in the earthquake, only we did not think of it. How pretty! But we wonder if Mr. Campbell would find any consolation in this sort of theorising if he went home some day and found his wife and daughter with their throats cut. Would he listen patiently if we told him that other people had had their throats cut, and that two deaths were nothing, after all, in the multitude of deaths happening every twenty-four hours?

The British and Russian bluejackets worked like Trojans at Messina to rescue the living and bury the dead. That is a good deal better than blazing away at each other to please fierce gentlemen who never go near the fight. It was sad in one sense, and yet delightful in another sense, to read of battleships being used as hospitals and refuges for the wounded and shelterless. They will never be put to better uses.

Ghosts meet with a bad reception at the mining village of Kirkliston, near Linlithgow. Two runners training for a Marathon race were mistaken by the villagers for ghosts, and fiercely attacked, so that one of them had to be removed in a conveyance. J. C. couldn't have engineered a successful resurrection at Kirkliston.

Noah Percy Collins, who was executed at Cardiff on December 30, for the murder of Annie Dorothy Laurence—having brutally stabbed her eleven times for refusing to kiss him—spent the night before he had to meet the hangman in tears and prayer. But shortly before seven o'clock the Roman Catholic chaplain gave him the sacrament, and from that moment he was calm and resigned. Such a sedative is the holy wafer to a troubled conscience!

Rev. Duncan McNeil, a Christian missionary, pleaded guilty at Halifax to obtaining money by false pretences. The Bench gave him twelve months, and regretted that the sentence could not be made heavier.

This man appears to have spent twenty-two of his fifty-four years in penal servitude or under police supervision. He was working in Leeds as a Christian Socialist. He posed as a great friend of Christianity. Some time ago he debated with Mr. George Weir in Victoria-square on "The Resurrection." He claimed to have debated with Mr. G. W. Foote, but that was a bit of his invention.

The Evangelical Alliance has organised a week of prayer, from January 3 to January 10, in a hundred countries. The poor Deity is to be systematically bombarded from all points

of the compass. We offer him our severe condolence. But why did he create so many blithering idiots?

Amongst the persons to be specially prayed for during this holy week are sovereigns and rulers, medical men, judges, magistrates, legislators, journalists, soldiers, sailors, and policemen. We don't see clergymen in the list. Are they past praying for?

The Evangelical Alliance has been having its "week of prayer" in what is facetiously called "every civilised country" on earth. The London "week" has been held at King's Hall, Holborn. Bombarding the Lord God Almighty with special supplications began on Monday, January 4, and was to wind up on Saturday, January 9. The first day's business was "Thanksgiving and Humiliation." We suppose the "Thanksgiving" included fervent Hallelujahs for the earthquake in Italy. The last day's business, according to program, is "Home Missions and the Jews." But we guess it will cost as much as ever to convert a live Hebrew. And as for the "speedy return to Palestine," one can only say that the members of the Evangelical Alliance are incurably optimistic.

The *People's Journal* must have a poor opinion of its readers' intellectuals. It prints a "wonderful story" of how a Mrs. Aida de Nile went out of her mind—no, no, we beg pardon, went out of her body—and careered about the universe, seeing strange sights, and coming back home at last, where she woke up again, and was so ill for many days that she nearly died. There is a portrait of the lady in the middle of the "wonderful story." She has wild eyes and wilder hair. We should say she is likely to have many such experiences.

Judge Willis is of opinion that if "the faith in Christ which Milton advocated" is extinguished in England "her doom is sealed, and she will be reckoned amongst those peoples who, having attained to the utmost height of earthly power and grandeur, have perished through forgetfulness of God." Judge Willis should recollect that "prophecy is the most gratuitous form of error." Also that Jeremiahs are nuisances. Judge Willis's business is the law, his hobby is the gospel, and his chief luxury is croaking.

Rev. W. Cairns Duncan, minister of the Second Charge of the Parish of Ayr, is suspended from the duties of the ministry while the charge against him of having immoral relations with a young unmarried lady member is investigated. The delicate investigation is being conducted privately. We tremble for poor Duncan.

There is a new church mission held in connection with St. Mary's Parish Church, Acock's Green, Birmingham. It was built by voluntary public subscriptions, and the Western Bohemians' Musical Society thought they would be able to get the use of it free for a concert in aid of a dinner for 200 poor children on January 4. But they reckoned without the vicar, the Rev. L. T. Dodd, who demanded the usual two guineas; so the concert took place at Acock's Green Institute, which was granted free. We congratulate vicar on his business spirit.

There is an old saying that men die from the fear of death. They fly from death into the arms of death. This was true in the case of William Gardner, a master plumber, of Liverpool, who committed suicide in order to escape an operation for cancer. He was seventy-five years of age, and he feared the consequences of an anaesthetic, so he asphyxiated himself by turning on the gas in his bedroom. It would be interesting to know what he thought of his chances in "the hereafter." Or did he think of them at all?

George Muller, of the famous Orphanage, left everything to the Lord. He never advertised, but that was the best game of all, for he was advertised all over the kingdom as the man who never advertised. Everybody know of him for nothing. We see that the same policy is being pursued by another Christian philanthropist at Birmingham. Mr. W. H. Dunkley has an agency of his own, which he calls "God's Army," and his chief occupation seems to be giving poor men dinners. This costs money, but Mr. Dunkley says: "I have not asked anyone for a penny, and I shall not do so, but I believe the money will be forthcoming." Very likely it will, if other newspapers report his reticence as the *Daily News* did on Monday. An editorial advertisement is better than one in the business columns.

Father John of Cronstadt is dead. He had some virtues; he spent little on himself, and he was good to the poor. At

least, that is what his friends say. According to his enemies, he was a greedy profligate. What is certain is that he was a bigot and, as far as possible, a persecutor. He did not want any other liberty in Russia than the liberty to obey the Church and the Tzar. The pious mob believed that he could work miracles, and he does not seem to have quite denied the soft impeachment. It would be impossible to improve his denunciation of Tolstoy. He was a fine hand at an anathema.

The Primitive Methodist chapel in Robert-street, Plumstead, has been burnt down. "Providence" does not take care of its own buildings.

How these Christians love one another! A reader of the *Church Times* sends a complimentary postcard to "Viator" who signs a weekly column, and has written something disrespectful of John Milton. The author of the postcard epistle says: "I should like to spit on you, but it would be a waste of good spittle." Elegance and piety in a single sentence.

Mr. Ernest Pack describes Mr. Harry Boulter (in the *Truthseeker*, New York) as "the last prisoner for blasphemy." We did not know he was imprisoned. We thought he declined the honor.

The Bishop of Mileto, speaking at the scene of the great earthquake, said: "The land has been scourged by God." The *Express* correspondent says that this remark "is indeed appropriate." It is. But we are astonished to see the *Express* publishing the fact. Truth seems to be like murder; it will out—at least, occasionally.

We don't know the religious views of Miss Evie Green and the other actresses who went to the Salvation Army social quarters at Millbank after theatre-time on the last night in 1908 and gave the destitute folk there a good supper. Such an act is kind, but it is no more; and if the ladies think differently, it would be wise to tell them that they are only playing with the social problem—as the Salvation Army itself is doing, for that matter. And why did Miss Evie Greene loosen her tongue on another subject? According to the *Westminster Gazette* report, she said: "I should like every hard-working woman who pays rates and taxes to have a vote, as apart from the silly little woman who has no mind beyond her house and her children." Now we don't intend to meddle with the question of woman suffrage, but we seriously remind this bright young lady that a quick tongue is not necessarily a sign of wisdom, and we beg to ask her whether to pay rates and taxes is a woman's highest ideal in life, or whether a hard-working woman who keeps (say) a lodging-house is, as a matter of course, a superior being to a hard-working woman who keeps a good home for her husband, probably makes a short income go a long way, and brings up half-a-dozen children to boot? It takes more than silliness to do that decently. Indeed, if the truth must be told—and it seems called for—these hard-working "silly" mothers of the race are the real "saviors of society." To put it plainly, they keep the world from rotting. And we venture to think that Miss Evie Green must have been singularly unfortunate in her own mother if she does not agree with us in her heart, whatever she may say in the greenroom or on the platform—or even at Salvation Army suppers.

An anonymous correspondent has sent us an old bill of lading, dated September 2, 1820, relating to the good ship *Emma* bound from the River Thames to Calcutta, and carrying, amongst other things, two tons six cwt. of painters' colors. This consignment was "shipped by the grace of God," the captain was "under God," and the document ended with the prayer, "And so God send the good ship to her desired port in safety." All these pious expressions are in addition to the stipulation as to "the Act of God," which is still included in bills of lading; the said Act of God being in reference to damage done to the cargo, or even its loss, by storm and shipwreck, which are considered to be infallible signs of infinite benevolence.

Reports are spread abroad of the Pope's having received visits from the Virgin Mary. There have been Popes who were visited by "Maries," but they were not "Virgins." Pope Sarto (Father Taylor) is striking out a line of his own.

Rev. A. C. Dixon, the exposed slanderer of Ingersoll, is now pastor of Moody's Church, at Chicago—and he isn't going to let it be empty. He's going to fill it, anyhow. He thinks the people will enjoy a laugh, so he has engaged raconteurs for every Sunday, to tell fanny stories and tickle the congregation into a good temper. Ingersoll could do his own humor. Dixon has to import it.

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

January 17, Shoreditch Town Hall; 31, Manchester.
February 21, Glasgow; 28, Birmingham.

To Correspondents.

C. COHEN'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—241 High-road, Leyton.—
January 10, Shoreditch Town Hall; 17, Belfast; 24, Forest Gate. February 14, Glasgow.

J. T. LLOYD'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—January 10, Failsforth; 17, Greenwich; 24, Shoreditch Town Hall; 31, Birmingham Town Hall. February 7, Aberdare; 14, West Ham; 28, Glasgow.

R. J. HENDERSON.—See "Acid Drops." Thanks.

J. R. C.—Your verse has merit, but your conception is better than your execution. You will doubtless do better with increased practice.

C. W. W.—Shall be sent as desired. Pleased to have your appreciation of our "perseverance under such difficulties" in carrying out this journal. Thanks for cutting. See "Acid Drops."

L. EHMANN.—See paragraph. Thanks.

S. WARD.—Always glad to receive cuttings providing material for an "Acid Drop."

A. HURCUM says: "I send every good wish for yourself, for all advocates and workers for mental freedom who battle under your lead, and for the success of the cause itself."

W. H. HOWARD NASH.—We inserted your letter, and we have published the reply of the writer of the article. That ends the matter, according to journalistic etiquette.

G. L. SIMMONS.—Why do you expect such heroic action from a merely commercial press?

J. PROUGH.—Your comment is correct enough, but you must not expect to find the characteristics of a thinker in Mr. Campbell, though he has brains enough to see through the cruder follies of the Christian faith—after they have become a by-word with myriads of thoughtful people. Thanks for new year's good wishes.

T. H. BRIGGS.—We have favored the reverend gentleman with a little sarcasm, which is all he deserves, for he is really not big enough for a set denunciation. Pleased to hear from you as a recent reader, and a convert from the Church of England.

JESSE JOHNSON thinks that all the readers of the *Freethinker* should help it along by taking two copies weekly, instead of one, and sending the spare one to a friend or leaving it where it would almost certainly be read by someone, who would probably want to read it again.

H. W. MATTHEWS.—Glad to hear you have taken two *Freethinkers* weekly for the last twelve months. Thanks for fresh names for six consecutive copies. We note your intention to come up to London for the Annual Dinner, and your conviction that other "saints" who made the effort would be "amply rewarded."

R. ADCOCK.—Pleased to have your encouraging letter.

J. C. C.—Mr. Foote will write you in a few days.

G. BRADFIELD.—Kindly state what the halls are and the rent; also what the local Freethinkers could do with regard to the business arrangements of meetings.

I. CLARK.—See paragraph. Thanks.

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.

NOTICE 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.

ORDERS remitting for literature by stamps are specially requested and send halfpenny stamps.

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

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

The President's Honorarium Fund.

To the Freethinkers of Great Britain.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,— January, 1, 1909.

We the undersigned appealed to you at the beginning of 1908 in behalf of the President of the National Secular Society,—who is also Chairman of the Secular Society, Limited, and editor of the *Freethinker*. We proposed that an Honorarium Fund should be subscribed to by Freethinkers in all parts of the country, and even in other countries where he has friends and readers. We suggested that £900 might be raised for him in this way during the year. It was thought by some good supporters that this figure would never be reached, but we are happy to state that £288 12s. 8d. was received and acknowledged by December 31. This is very little short of the contemplated amount, and we venture to think that it may be exceeded in 1909.

Mr. G. W. Foote is well-known as the leader of militant Freethought in Great Britain. His time, energy, and abilities are devoted to the cause, but his income is very precarious. He receives no salary, and makes no charge for expenses, as President of the National Secular Society; for several years he has received no salary as Editor of the *Freethinker*; and he has recently taken over the paper and its adjuncts from the Freethought Publishing Company, which had come to the end of its resources. In doing this, he saddled himself with the Company's trade liabilities, which he has discharged, and with the responsibility for the future maintenance of the *Freethinker*. It will thus be seen that his necessities have increased instead of diminishing. We ask you, therefore, to subscribe more rather than less liberally to the Honorarium Fund during the new year.

There is no need to print a list of the subscriptions received during 1908, as they have all been publicly acknowledged in his paper and the cost of printing would only be a deduction from the fund.

Subscriptions for 1909 can be forwarded to either of the undersigned. Those who prefer to do so can send, as before, direct to Mr. Foote himself, at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, London, E.C.

Every subscription will be publicly acknowledged in the *Freethinker*. Subscribers who do not wish their names to appear should state the form of acknowledgment they prefer.

We conclude with the hope that there will be a prompt and generous response to this appeal. Mr. Foote's birthday is on January 11, and we should like a considerable proportion of the Honorarium Fund to be contributed by then.

Yours faithfully,
J. W. DE CAUX, J.P.,
92 St. Peter's-road, Gt. Yarmouth.
R. T. NICHOLS,
28 Park-road, Ilford.
A. J. FINCKEN,
66 Mount-Grove-road, Highbury,
London, N.

Sugar Plums.

In spite of the wretched weather there was a capital audience at the Shoreditch Town Hall on Sunday evening, when Mr. Foote inaugurated the new course of Freethought lectures there, under the auspices of the Secular Society,

The long letter which we publish this week, as having been sent to the editor of a religious journal by a well-known scientist, is perfectly *bona fide*. The writer's name is known to almost everybody. It is not printed for the reason set forth at the end of his communication.

Limited. Not only was the audience large, it was also enthusiastic, and the lecture was thoroughly appreciated and warmly cheered from beginning to end. Mr. F. A. Davies made an excellent chairman, as usual. The only drawback was that Mr. Foote had, for once in a way, to hurry off to catch his last train home, not being able to stay in London for the night, as he generally does when he lectures there on a Sunday evening. Question time had therefore to be very brief, but the meeting cheered good-humoredly when the lecturer announced that he would give them all the extra time they wanted after his second lecture on January 17.

Mr. Cohen delivers to-night's (Jan. 10) lecture at the Shoreditch Town Hall. His subject is attractive, and the local "saints" ought to be able to get him a fine audience, if they only do a little extra work in the shape of advertising.

Mr. Lloyd lectures for the Failsworth Sunday School this evening (Jan. 10). Local "saints" will please note.

This is the last announcement we can make of the London Freethinkers' Annual Dinner, under the auspices of the N. S. S. Executive, at the Holborn Restaurant on Tuesday evening, January 12. The metropolitan "saints" should make a big rally on this occasion, which helps to set the tone for the whole year's work. Those who stay away will miss a grand evening. Provincial "saints" should note this too. Some of them may be able to time intended visits to London so as to be present at the Dinner. We beg to assure them that they will have a hearty welcome. Mr. Foote takes the chair, and will be supported, as the saying is, by Messrs. Cohen, Lloyd, Davies, Roger, Heaford, Moss, and other well-known Freethinkers. There is sure to be a good dinner, followed by good vocal and instrumental music, and a few good speeches to pertinent toasts. And the whole evening—dinner, music, speeches, and all—is to be covered by one ticket at four shillings, which is the exact price of the Dinner itself. This ought to secure a positive crush in the great Venetian Chamber.

By a peculiar oversight the hour of the Annual Dinner has been overlooked. It is 7.30 sharp.

In the rout of the Labor candidates at Leeds in the November elections, it is worthy of note that the only victorious one was Councillor Bradley, who is a Secularist of many years' standing, and has fought gallantly for the right of the Secularists to sell the *Freethinker* in the parks. He has also led the way on the question of Secular Education. This should be a lesson to some of the more timid Labor men who are afraid to avow their Freethought.

By the way, in spite of the prohibition, the Leeds "saints" have sold the *Freethinker* and other Secular literature on Woodhouse Moor every Sunday that Mr. Wishart lectured, and the authorities had not the courage to prosecute.

Old Age Pensions came in with the new year. All sorts of people are being congratulated on the success of this cause. Names of its pioneers are being printed for honor in the newspapers. Nobody mentions Thomas Paine, the first pioneer who had the heart and head to conceive this plan of social justice more than a hundred years ago. He worked it out in his *Rights of Man*. For that book he never received a halfpenny, in spite of its immense circulation. He had it sold at a price (6d.) to cover the cost of production. All he got from the work was a prosecution for sedition felony, and he would certainly have been hung if he had not left England in order to take his place in the French National Assembly. Paine was of those who fight in the front for Humanity. Smaller men bring up the rear.

The following subscriptions to the President's Honorarium Fund for 1909 have been received already; that is to say, by the day of our going to press—Tuesday, January 5:—Major John C. Harris, R.E., £10; A. J. Fincken, £5; H. C., 10s.; A. Hurcum, £1 1s.; H. W. Matthews, 10s.; Stephen Edmonds, 5s.

All this talk about positive and negative work is *cant*. To call the destroyer of superstition a negationist is as senseless as to call a doctor a negationist. Both strive to expel disease; both, therefore, are working for health, and more positive work is inconceivable.

The Lesson of the Earthquake.

JOURNALISTS have a trick of blowing hot and cold at will; but they seldom exhibit this talent to such advantage as they did in commenting on the awful earthquake in Sicily. On Christmas morning practically every paper published a column of sentiment, flavored with as much Christianity as the editor thought his readers expected. A few days later the appalling catastrophe at Messina required comment. Faced with grim facts, the journalists at once forgot their piety, and the men who had been writing of the Divine Fatherhood and of the manifold blessings of Christianity suddenly became as irreligious as the most militant Freethinkers. The crib of Bethlehem no longer had any existence to them, and the empty platitudes of the Lord's Prayer had become of less importance than the snows of yesteryear. Instead, the leading articles were filled with references to the blind forces of nature and the riddle of the universe. Nor, in the circumstance, was this very surprising. Such awful facts as the Messina earthquake must make thoughtful men pause in reciting the Christian shibboleths. Few, we imagine, felt inclined to refer to a Heavenly Father at the moment when the conception implied that he was devouring his own children by tens of thousands. Their hands would be less inclined than usual to go up to "that inverted bowl we call the sky." Gentle Jesus had turned traitor—turned out to be only the murderous Moloch of the ancient Jews, who destroyed men, women, and children at pleasure.

Such horrors as this earthquake are hard to reconcile with any consolatory scheme of religion. The imposing optimism of the Christian superstition is destroyed at a blow, and crumbles as the dust now crumbles on the face of the disturbed Sicilian earth. Nonsense, indeed, must pious consolations seem at such a time as this, and more nonsensical than anything the lying assurances concerning an alleged Heavenly Father and his tender care for his little ones. Such fictions are only plausible in sweet summer months, when, before the pleased gaze of well-fed clerics on their long vacations, Etna stands up with her crown of snow against the magnificent background of infinite blue.

And, mark you, who hears the pathetic cry of humanity in anguish? Is it the thorn-crowned Jesus with his thousands of angels, or the Divine Mother with cohorts of cherubim, who comes to succor the miserable survivors? Not at all. Mankind is left to its own resources, and it is to the ready sympathy of other men and women that the unhappy victims of the earthquake have to turn in the bitterest hour of sorrow and disaster.

Such a spectacle brings home to everyone the growth and change of ideas. Knowledge has widened in ways never dreamed of in the philosophy of the Christian religion. New tones have grown into human sentiment. All the lights and shadows of life have shifted, and its whole surface has been dyed in different colors. Naturally, we are far beyond the reach of the outworn ideals. They voice different views which men have outgrown. They can make no direct response to them. At their note their minds and feelings rouse to no movement except amazement. They come like a "horn of elf-land faintly blowing," and men realise that they were meant for other ears than ours, and are but an echo from the far-off days of ignorance and bigotry.

M.

The Scientist's Answer.

[The editor of a religious weekly asked one of our leading scientific men some questions, and the scientific man replied as follows.]

DEAR SIR,—Your inquiry to hand. Everyone who has been blessed with a thimbleful of brains and who knows enough to go in when it rains is aware of the fact at the present time that this world and this vast

universe have been in existence for countless millions of years, that mankind, like all other animals, was developed into its present condition by extremely slow stages extending over millions of years. We all know that the story of the garden of Eden, the fall of man on account of a woman eating an apple, is a pure and unadulterated myth—there was no fall of man. Man's progress since the beginning of the world has always been upward and onward except for a relatively short time in one little corner of the earth—I refer to the Dark Ages when Roman Catholicism, or Christianity, as you might call it, had a grip on the throat of Europe, and the wisest, best and bravest of mankind were ignominiously burnt at the stake. Jehovah, the tribal deity of the Jews, who was so extremely jealous of other gods, seems to be the ancient God that has been taken over by the Christians.

In regard to Jesus of Nazareth. A lady missionary from China told me that the Chinese were in a deplorable condition; she said they had no definite knowledge of God. She was not sure, however, what particular God she referred to, and so I asked her if she did know of anyone who did have a definite knowledge. In reading any of the old religious books, historical or otherwise, the well-informed man is able to judge of their truth by the manner of the telling; that is, if he finds accounts in old works that are absolutely contrary to reason and impossible in the very nature of things, he knows at least that that part of the work is not true, and if it happens to be mixed up very closely with what might be true, he is very apt to throw the whole thing away. It is quite true that say about one quarter of mankind at the present moment have heard of the name of Jesus of Nazareth, and of these perhaps a quarter are believers in his divinity, or say one-sixteenth part of mankind. But religion is in a constant state of transition. Every religion has its boundary beyond which it cannot go, not only a geographical boundary but a chronological boundary. There is no country in the world that has always had the same religion. The religion that prevails in England at the present day has only existed a relatively short time, and it shows signs, at the present moment, of rapid decay. Ten thousand years is a very short time considered in geological terms, but a very long time considered in religious terms, because there is not a trace to-day of the religions of ten thousand years ago, and the religions of to-day will have all perished and be eternally forgotten in much less than ten thousand years.

Although I have been a fairly thorough student of ancient history and of the religions of the East I have been quite unable to find any trace regarding Jesus of Nazareth, he is not even mentioned in history, with one single exception however, and that is found in Josephus, which is known and acknowledged to-day to be an interpolation written in by a Roman Catholic monk. The Romans had historians, artists and statesmen at the time that Christ is supposed to have lived; their records were fairly well kept. The Jews have records which extend back for thousands of years, still neither the Romans or the Jews make any mention of Jesus of Nazareth, and since his time, if he ever had a time, nearly every square foot of the country where Christianity was first introduced has thrown it overboard and embraced Mohammedanism. The Mohammedans extirpated Christianity from three-quarters of the Christian world in a few years. Professor Draper, the historian, tells us that nine thousand millions of mankind have lived and died Mohammedans.

Of course, I am aware of the fact that there is another side of this story. Many people pretend to believe that Jesus of Nazareth was the literal son of God, that is, the son of the Jewish Jehovah, and that he was born into the world for the purpose of being crucified in order to atone for the heinous crime of a woman having eaten an apple thousands of years before; he was the atonement for this great sin, and it appears that many believe that he went

about the country sometimes on relatively friendly terms with the Devil and spent the greater part of his time casting out devils. Now as it is known that the apple story was a myth and that there was no fall of man, no atonement was necessary, and, if we know anything at the present time, we know that there is not, and never has been, a demon, a goblin or a devil in the world. Therefore, as there was no fall of man and no devils to cast out, and as I know nothing of Jesus myself, and have never met anyone who had any definite or reliable information on the subject, it is quite impossible for me to afford you any comfort in this direction.

Your next question in regard to the New Testament, how does it impress me? The New Testament appears to me to be a compilation of numerous old essays written by ignorant men in an ignorant age. The doctrine of a personal devil, a literal hell, burning with fire and brimstone, and everlasting torments to all mankind who do not believe what they regard as childish and silly absurdities, is a doctrine which ought to be repugnant to every civilised man.

"What is His influence upon humanity?" Simply nothing. But those who pretend to be his followers, whether he ever lived or not, have certainly had a great influence upon that part of the world called Europe, but very little in Asia or Africa. His followers brought on the Dark Ages, threw Europe back into barbarism and debased Europeans for more than a thousand years. They not only fought against Mohammedans, but much more among themselves, and it is estimated that fully one hundred millions of mankind lost their lives in religious strife between different kinds of Christians. And later on, two of the principal branches, the Roman Catholics and the Protestants, vied with each other in searching out and murdering old women for the impossible crime of witchcraft, because the Pope instructed his priests to use more vigilance in searching out and destroying witches, especially those that caused the bad weather, while the Protestants, not to be outdone by the Catholics, and finding these words in their infallible Bible:—"thou shalt not suffer a witch to live," joined in the pursuit, and between the two churches, fully a hundred thousand innocent old women were ignominiously burnt at the stake, some of them for causing storms at sea by stirring up soap suds with their stockings. And then we have the work of that excellent saint Torquemada in Spain and Portugal. And this is all supposed to be in the service of the gentle Jesus of Nazareth—the Church of Christ, a religion which history shows to be at least a thousand times as wicked as any other religion with which the world has been afflicted.

This letter, however, is not for publication, because if you published it the bigoted fanatics who can believe anything except the truth, would not be satisfied until they had done me some great injury. They would burn me at the stake if they had the power. But, if you wish to say anything in regard to my opinions, you will find it enclosed, short and sweet, on another sheet of paper. It only requires a moment's serious thought to make any thinking man believe exactly as I do myself.

Sincerely yours, —

Darwin on the Soul.

DR. TYLOR is not a biologist, but he is one of the greatest evolutionists of our age. His work on *Primitive Culture* is a monument of genius and research. Employing the Darwinian method, he has traced the origin and development of the belief in the existence of soul or spirit, from the mistaken interpretation of the phenomena of dreams among savages, who afford us the nearest analogue of primitive man, up to the most elaborate cultus of Brahmanism, Buddhism, or Christianity. And as Animism is the basis of all religion, two conclusions are forced upon us; first, that the supernatural in

being traced back to its primal germ of error, is not only explained but exploded; and, second, that religion is a direct legacy from our savage progenitors. Religious progress consists in mitigating the intellectual and moral crudities of primitive Animism; and religion itself, therefore, is like a soap-bubble, ever becoming more and more attenuated, until at length it disappears.

Darwin had written the *Descent of Man* before reading the great work of Dr. Tylor, and his letter to the author of the real *Natural History of Religion* is worth extracting. It is dated September 24, 1871.

"I hope you will allow me to have the pleasure of telling you how greatly I have been interested by your *Primitive Culture* now that I have finished it. It seems to me a most profound work, which will be certain to have permanent value, and to be referred to for years to come. It is wonderful how you trace Animism from the lower races up to the religious belief of the highest races. It will make me for the future look at religion—a belief in the soul, etc.—from a new point of view."

"A new point of view" is a pregnant phrase in regard to a subject of such importance. What can it mean, except that Darwin saw at last that religion began with the belief in soul, and that the belief in soul originated in the blunder of primitive men as to the "duality" of their nature?

Darwin has a very interesting footnote on this subject in his *Descent of Man*. After referring to Tylor and Lubbock, he continues:—

"Mr. Herbert Spencer accounts for the earliest forms of religious belief throughout the world by man being led through dreams, shadows, and other causes, to look at himself as a double essence, corporeal and spiritual. As the spiritual being is supposed to exist after death, and to be powerful, it is propitiated by various gifts and ceremonies, and its aid invoked. He then further shows that names or nicknames given from some animal or other object, to the early progenitors or founders of a tribe, are supposed after a long interval to represent the real progenitor of the tribe; and such animal or object is then naturally believed still to exist as a spirit, is held sacred, and worshiped as a god. Nevertheless I cannot but suspect there is a still earlier and ruder stage, when anything which manifests power or movement is thought to be endowed with some form of life, and with mental faculties analogous to our own."

This is tracing religion to the primitive source assigned to it by David Hume—"the universal tendency among mankind to conceive all beings like themselves, and to transfer to every object those qualities with which they are familiarly acquainted, and of which they are intimately conscious." In other words, Darwin begins a stage lower than Animism, in the confusion of subjective and objective such as we see in a very young child; although, of course, the worship of gods could not have obtained in that stage, since man is incapable of ascribing to nature any qualities but those he is conscious of possessing, and it is therefore impossible for him to people the external world with spirits until he has formed the notion of a spirit within himself.

Darwin was not attracted by that experiential Animism which has such a fascination for Dr. Wallace. In 1870 he attended a *séance* at the house of his brother Erasmus in Chelsea, under the auspices of a well-known medium. His account of the performance is not very flattering to Spiritualism.

"We had great fun one afternoon; for George hired a medium, who made the chairs, a flute, a bell, and candlestick, and fiery points jump about in my brother's dining-room, in a manner that astounded every one, and took away all their breaths. It was in the dark, but George and Hensley Wedgwood held the medium's hands and feet on both sides all the time. I found it so hot and tiring that I went away before all these astounding miracles, or jugglery took place. How the man could possibly do what was done passes my understanding."

The more Darwin thought over what he saw the more convinced he was that it was "all imposture." "The Lord have mercy on us all," he exclaimed, "if we have to believe in such rubbish."

Darwin has not left us any emphatic utterance as to his own belief about soul. "What Darwin thought," says Mr. Grant Allen, "I only suspect; but if we make the plain and obvious inference from all the facts and tendencies of his theories we shall be constrained to admit that modern biology lends little sanction to the popular notion of a life after death."

Writing briefly to an importunate German student, in 1879, he said "As for a future life, every man must judge for himself between conflicting vague probabilities." This reminds one of Hamlet's "shadow of a shade." First, you have no certainty, nor even a probability, but several probabilities; these are vague to begin with, and alas! they conflict with each other. Surely such language could only come from a practical unbeliever.

Like other men who were nursed in the delusion of personal immortality, Darwin had his occasional fits of dissatisfaction with the inevitable—witness the following passage from his *Autobiography*.

"With respect to immortality, nothing shows me so clearly how strong and almost instinctive a belief it is, as the consideration of the view now held by most physicists, namely, that the sun with all the planets will in time grow too cold for life, unless indeed some great body dashes into the sun and thus gives it fresh life. Believing as I do that man in the distant future will be a far more perfect creature than he now is, it is an intolerable thought that he and all other sentient beings are doomed to complete annihilation after such long-continued slow progress. To those who fully admit the immortality of the human soul, the destruction of our world will not appear so dreadful."

Had Darwin been challenged on this passage, I think he would have admitted its ineptitude, for he was modest enough for anything. The thought that every man must die is no more intolerable than the thought that any man must die, nor is the thought that there will be a universe without the human race any more intolerable than the thought that there was a universe without the human race. On the other hand, Darwin did not allow for the fact that immortality is not synonymous with everlasting felicity. According to most theologies, indeed, the lot of the majority in the next life is not one of happiness, but one of misery; and, on any rational estimate, the annihilation of all is better than the bliss of the few and the torture of the many. Nor is it true that everyone would cheerfully accept the gift of immortality, even without the prospect of future suffering. Every Buddhist—that is, four hundred millions of the human race—looks forward to "Nirvana," the extinction of the individual life, which is thus released from the evil of existence. Even a Western philosopher, like John Stuart Mill, understood this yearning as appears from the following passage:—

"It appears to me not only possible but probable, that in a higher, and, above all, a happier condition of human life, not annihilation but immortality may be the burdensome idea; and that human nature, though pleased with the present, and by no means impatient to quit it, would find comfort and not sadness in the thought that it is not chained to a conscious existence which it cannot be insured that it will always wish to preserve."

Mr. Winwood Reade, on the other hand, indulged in the rapturous prophecy that man will some day grow perfect, migrate into space, master nature, and invent immortality. It is all a matter of taste and temperament. Both wailings and rejoicings are outside the scope of philosophy, and belong to the province of light literature.

G. W. FOOTE.

The *Baptist Times* says: "It cannot be said that the sky is radiant with hope," "many of our houses of prayer are not more than half filled," and "the churches of Jesus Christ are not an army marching to victory." The prospects are gloomy and depressing in the extreme. All this brings tears of chagrin into the eyes of our contemporary, while we regard it as one of the healthiest and most hopeful signs of the times.

The Grave of a Chinese Philosopher.

BY DR. P. CARUS.

We regret to say that *The East of Asia* magazine, published at Shanghai by the North China Herald Office, has been discontinued. We followed its publication with interest although it contained few articles that were exactly in our line. The last belated number (it bears the date of December, 1906, but did not appear until October, 1907) contains an article on the grave of the philosopher, Chou Fu Tsz, who was one of the most prominent thinkers of China. I have mentioned his name and explained his system in the pamphlet, *Chinese Philosophy* (pp. 27-30), and we are now glad to have an authentic report on the several memorials of him, written by Dr. C. F. Kupfer, who has visited the grave himself. These memorials, which are still preserved at the philosopher's tomb, are the only ones now known to exist. The place is situated where the Yang tze Kiang mingles its waters with those of Lake Poa-Yang-Hu, and lies at the northern boundary of the province Kiang-Si, a little east of the 116th degree longitude, and at about 29½ degrees in latitude.

We propose to extract from Dr. Kupfer's article a few passages. He says:—

"Fifteen li, or about five English miles, south-east of Kiukiang, near the foot of the Lü Mountains and on the south-western slope of the Oak Tree Hill, is the grave of the celebrated Chou Fu Tsz, called in Chinese Sien Chi Mu, Sienchi being the name of his birthplace. To foreigners this place has become a beautiful spot for an afternoon excursion, but to the more devout Chinese it is a sacred sanctuary.

If beauty of scenery and balmy air can add anything to the peaceful repose of departed spirits when they see their 'mortal coil' surrounded by such lavish gifts of nature, then Chou Fu Tsz can certainly have nothing to regret for having chosen this location. Sheltered from the northern winds, nestled in a little amphitheatre-like valley, surrounded by huge trees of many centuries growth, with the five thousand feet mountain peaks looming up into the clouds, and the Lotus Flower Peak near by, what more could immortal shades desire? Beautiful as it is by nature, the æsthetic taste of man has added much to its artistic, picturesque harmony.

Chou Fu Tsz was a native of Hunan, born at Sienchi in the Sung Dynasty in the year 1017 A. D. He was commonly known as Chou Tsz and spoken of as Sien Chi Sienseng, the gentleman from Sienchi. When he was but a child his father died, and his mother was so poor that she brought him to her brothers, whose family name was Chen. He was surnamed Tung I, as if he belonged to the Chen family. When his mother died she was buried by the side of her brothers' graves. Forty-four years later these graves were destroyed by a flood, and Chou Fu Tsz removed his mother's remains to their present resting-place. Two years after this he died, and was buried on the left side of his mother's grave."

Chou Fu Tsz was married twice, and his two wives are buried on the right-hand side of his mother's grave. Inscriptions indicate the places of the four persons buried there, the largest one in the middle being that of his mother, whom the sage, in true Chinese fashion, wanted even after death to hold the place of honor. She received, as is usual in China, the posthumous title of *Taichün*—i. e., "Her Great Highness."

The grave of Chou Fu Tsz has been repeatedly restored, mostly by persons of distinction, among them several prelates of Kiu Kiang, and they have taken the opportunity to immortalise their sentiments in inscriptions duly put up in different places. Of special interest, however, is the portrait of Chou Fu Tsz, which, for all we know, may be authentic. It is hung near the tablet over the grave, and is accompanied by another picture, which represents the "no-alternative bridge," over which all souls have to pass on their way to purgatory. There are two guides to lead them, called Chin Tung and Yü Nü, who are represented with lotus flowers in their hands. Another tablet represents in outline the doctrine of Chou Fu Tsz, which has been explained in detail in *Chinese Philosophy* (p. 28).

The meaning of the tablet is briefly stated as follows:—The aboriginal principle, called "the great origin" (*t'ai wih*), is pictured as a white disk at the top. It rested and it moved. Its rest produced what is called in Chinese philosophy "Yin" or the negative principle, its movement what is called "Yang" or the positive principle. Yang is represented in light, movement, and masculinity; Yin in darkness, rest, and femininity. In sets of three they constitute eight trigrams. These two principles, Yang and Yin, produced in different mixtures the five elements—fire, water, earth, wood, and metal, and from a mixture of the elements in the eight trigrams all things have ultimately originated. In the eight trigrams, as well as in the innumerable existences of creation, the aboriginal principle is immanently present.

It is typical of the Chinese that the places of highest honor are not given to their generals or statesmen, but to philosophers, moralists, and the great teachers of their civilisation.

Back of the four graves is a wall, built in the shape of a horseshoe, open in front, which is in agreement with Chinese ideas of protecting the dead against evil influences.

It is interesting to bear in mind that this beautiful spot is Chou Fu Tsz's own choice. It was at his request that his mother was buried here, and it also indicates his modesty that his own grave was at the left, while his wives are placed at the right-hand side.—"Open Court," Chicago.

Rejoice with Mrs. Ingersoll.

JUSTICE is rendered at last.

The widow and family of the great apostle of human liberty have finally triumphed after protracted and costly litigation to recover fees due to the late Colonel Ingersoll for professional services rendered under contract.

Professor Thaddeus B. Wakeman, of Coscob, Conn., writes that the United States Supreme Court, at Washington, has reversed the findings of the lower courts in the suit of Mrs. Robert G. Ingersoll, for her deceased husband's compensation in the legal settlement of the Davis estate.

Here is justice at last, for the claim was in every respect just and equitable. The estate involved millions, and Ingersoll was to have \$100,000 if he succeeded in obtaining an equitable division. The preparation and trial was difficult and long; the jury disagreed. Then Ingersoll got the parties into a negotiation for settlement, practically retried the case before them, with a result satisfactory to all concerned. Then it was claimed that because the final trial was not in court, but before, with and by and for these parties, the contract for his services was not applicable. The lower courts were confused, but now we may rejoice, not only with Mrs. Ingersoll, but with Uncle Sam, that his greatest court has been able to secure to the beloved family of the great advocate the means he had justly earned for their benefit, which the papers say will now be, with interest, about \$138,000.

—*Blue Grass Blade* (Lexington, Kentucky).

SOUL-SICKNESS.

Ascertain clearly what is wrong with you; and so far as you know any means of mending it, take those means, and have done; when you are examining yourself, never call yourself merely a "sinner"; that is very cheap abuse, and utterly useless. You may even get to like it, and be proud of it. But call yourself a liar, a coward, a sluggard, a glutton, or an evil-eyed, jealous wretch, if you indeed find yourself to be in any wise any of these. Take steady means to check yourself in whatever fault you have ascertained, and justly accused yourself of. And as soon as you are in active way of mending, you will be no more inclined to moan over an undefined corruption. For the rest, you will find it less easy to uproot faults than to choke them by gaining virtues. Do not think of your faults; still less of others' faults: in every person who comes near you look for what is good and strong: honor that; rejoice in it; and, as you can, try to imitate it; and your faults will drop off, like dead leaves, when their time comes. If, on looking back, your whole life should seem rugged as a palm-tree stem; still, never mind so long as it has been growing; and has its grand green shade of leaves, and weight of honeyed fruit, at top. And even if you cannot find much good in yourself at last, think that it does not much matter to the universe either what you were, or are; think how many people are noble, if you cannot be; and rejoice in their nobleness. An immense quantity of modern confession of sin, even when honest, is merely a sickly egotism; which will rather gloat over its own evil, than lose the centralisation of its interest in itself.—*John Ruskin*, "Ethics of the Dust."

Morality is the harmony between act and circumstances. It is the melody of conduct. Most of the intellectual giants of the world have been nursed at the sad and loving breast of Poverty. The higher you get in the scale of being, the grander, the nobler and the tenderer you will become. We are the heirs of habits and mental customs. We are molded and fashioned by our surroundings. Every effect must have had a cause, and every cause must have been an effect; therefore there could have been no first cause. Everything is right that tends to the happiness of mankind, and everything is wrong that increases the sum of human misery. True religion is not a theory—it is a practice. It is not a creed—it is a life.—*Ingersoll*.

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.

SHOREDITCH TOWN HALL: 7.30, C. Cohen "Christianity, the Churches, and the Social Question."

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Forest Gate Public (Lower) Hall, Woodgrange-road): 7.30, F. A. Davies, "Religion and Society." Selections by the Band before lecture.

COUNTRY.

EDINBURGH BRANCH N. S. S. (Rationalists' Club, 12 Hill-square): 6.30, a Lecture. Thursdays, at 8, Discussion Classes.—The Mound, 6.30, a Lecture.

FAIRFORTH (Secular Sunday School, Pole-lane): 6.30, J. T. Lloyd, "How to Make Life a Success."

LEEDS BRANCH N. S. S. (Tate's Restaurant, Vicar-lane): 8, Bert Killip, "Christianity a Begged, Borrowed, and Stolen Religion."

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N. S. S. (Central Buildings, 113 Islington): 7, Sidney Wollen, "Christ and Socialism: a Reply to Dr. Chavasse."

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, W. Sanders, "John Morley's Exposure of Liberalism."

NEWCASTLE (Rationalist Literary and Debating Society, Hedley's Café, corner of Clayton and Blckett streets): 7.30, J. Charter, "Tyneside Song Writers."

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