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PRICE TWOPENCE

Act from affection, and think in order to act.—COMTE.

Faith: Real and Artificial.

MR. ROBERT HICHENS, the novelist, has been writing from the scene of the great earthquake to the *Daily Telegraph*, under the heading of "A Lovely and a Cruel Land." Towards the end of his article he joins the professional theologians in asking why the catastrophe happened. It does not seem to occur to him—perhaps because he is a novelist—that a proper answer to this question must come from science and not from religion. Earthquake shocks are pretty frequent on this globe, although they are not always destructive; and the reasons for them assigned by scientific men do not include any reference to the mental and moral character of the people who live where they occur. If the worst earthquake zones were inhabitant by perfect saints it would make no difference to the earth's behavior. Those who believe otherwise should try the experiment in one of the very worst districts. In the meanwhile, we may remind them of one of the sensible things in the New Testament. We are told that God "sendeth his rain alike upon the just and the unjust." The text is obviously metaphorical, the "rain" standing for all the processes of nature.

Mr. Hichens, however, as a novelist, writing for a newspaper which boasts of the "largest circulation" in a country which is peopled, as Carlyle said, by forty millions "mostly fools," cannot bother himself about the teachings of science. He must give the reins to imagination, and appeal to the well-developed bump of wonder on the heads of his readers. In doing this he relieves himself of responsibility by repeating the superstitious cackle he hears around him. There is always plenty of such stuff knocking about when people are terrified and "chastened" by calamity. When people are badly frightened the shibboleths of religion spring naturally to their lips. A French lady gathers her skirts together if she sees a mouse, and exclaims *Mon Dieu!* If a man tells you that his wife has fallen downstairs and broken both her legs, you naturally say, "Good God!" Wherever human beings see mischief they detect the presence of a "One Above." A friend was telling us last week of a Calais newspaper, with a large circulation, which prints brief reports of accidents, disasters, and bad news generally, under the heading (in French, of course) of "The Finger of God." Similarly, in ancient Egypt, when Pharaoh's magicians saw the land swarming with billions of those many-footed minute creatures immortalised by Robert Burns, they felt both disgusted and defeated, and crying "This is the finger of God!" they gave up the competition with Moses and Aaron. They recognised the immediate and overwhelming presence of Jehovah. We need not wonder, then, that the superstitious people in the world, should attribute the earthquake to supernatural causes. It appears that midnight Mass was celebrated at Messina on the eve of Christmas Day, and the Bambino was carried in procession through the streets; and it was the custom for men to play cards while sitting

up waiting for the ceremonies. And this is what happened:—

"In Messina, on the great night of the dying year, a number of men—so it is said—who had lost their money at the Sicilian game of *sette e mezza*, came out furious from one of the big cafés or clubs just as the Bambino was passing. Probably half drunk and maddened by their losses, they set upon the Bambino. They insulted, they spat upon, they threw down and trampled over the Bambino. These men were Messinese, and three days later, in less than a minute, Messina was blotted out. This is a rumor that is passing through Sicily, and that I have heard from the lips of several Sicilians."

Fancy rubbish like this being written by an eminent English novelist, and printed in a leading English newspaper, so many years after the great Charles Darwin went to his grave! It looks as if the superstition of the mob (of all classes) could never be touched; as if it might still be possible to repeat what Christianity did all those centuries ago,—to hurl the ignorant, credulous multitude at the minority of educated, thoughtful people, and overwhelm them in an irretrievable ruin.

What a God this sort of conception represents! A handful of hooligans fall upon a wooden "Holy Child," and the Deity wipes out the whole city of Messina in consequence. That is his way of showing his displeasure. He includes the few guilty and the many innocent in a common massacre. To punish a dozen delinquents he involves a hundred thousand guiltless persons in a general holocaust. Is it possible to conceive a bloodier sacrifice to an angry and vengeful God?

We do not think for a moment that Mr. Robert Hichens believes the superstitious nonsense he records. We should be surprised if the proprietor and staff of the *Daily Telegraph* believed a word of it. One writes, and the others edit, print, and publish *what sells*. It does not appear to us that there is any real belief in religion left amongst the ruling and commercial classes in this country. We have just been reading the report of the trial of two "Peculiar People" at the Old Bailey. These poor people read the Bible and believe it. This is more than we should like to say of the judge who presided at their trial and sentenced them to three months' hard labor for treating their sick child as the New Testament tells them to. Mr. Justice Grantham spoke of Christ as "our Savior," but that is the language of convention. When the prisoner said "I did pray, and God heard my prayer," his lordship sneered, "Maybe; at any rate the child died." Just as if millions of children do not die (with doctors to help) after their mothers have prayed for them. When the defendants referred to the King's recovery from typhoid fever, while he was Prince of Wales, in answer to the nation's prayers, his lordship sneered again that "Sir William Gull had something to do with the recovery." Now it is difficult to believe that Mr. Justice Grantham is of opinion that God Almighty could not save "Albert Edward" without the assistance of Sir William Gull. We conclude, therefore, that he does not really believe in the efficacy of prayer. He is only a nominal Christian, like most of those who practically control England. And this is one of the greatest dangers of the age. We have to fight, not an honest faith, but a hypocritical conspiracy.

G. W. FOOTE.

The Truth About Free Will.—IV.

(Continued from p. 36.)

ALL that can be found in any act of "will" is, then, a desire accompanied by consciousness of an end. Or, to put the same thing in another way, we have first a sensation, next a desire, then the consciousness of an end and the means of realising it, and, finally, action. To the physiological and psychological processes that culminate in action we give the name of motive. Properly, a motive that does not issue in action is not a motive at all; it is a mere desire. And apart from the presence of desire, or a number of desires (the importance of this last will be seen when dealing with deliberation and choice), "will" simply does not exist. It is a pure abstraction, having no more an existence apart from the particular motive that finds expression than "tree" has an existence apart from a particular tree. "Physiologically, as Dr. Maudsley says,

"we cannot choose but reject *the will*.....As physiologists we have to deal with volition as a function of the supreme centres, following reflection, varying in quantity and quality as its cause varies, strengthened by education and exercise, enfeebled by disuse, decaying with decay of structure.....We have to deal with will, not as a single undecomposable faculty unaffected by bodily conditions, but as a result of organic changes in the supreme centres, affected as certainly and seriously by disorders of them as our motor faculties are by disorders of their centres."

So far I have, I hope, cleared away all confusion in the use of the words "freedom" and "will." If, instead of the phrase "freedom of will," we spoke of "uncaused volitions," the absurdity of the indeterminist position would be patent to nearly all. But by an illegitimate use of the word "freedom," and by taking an abstract word like "will," and converting it into a concrete entity, believers in indeterminism succeed in confusing both themselves and those who listen to them. If I have succeeded in making this much plain, I shall have done something. In what remains I have to pass in review the principal arguments used by the opponents of the doctrine of Determinism.

The first argument that meets us is that of the testimony of consciousness. Professor Sidgwick said that this argument—"the immediate affirmation of consciousness in the moment of deliberate action"—was the only one of real value. Many other writers agree with him in this, and therefore it is as well to look at it closely.

Now I admit that in some directions the testimony of consciousness is absolute. That I feel hot or cold, experience a painful or a pleasant sensation, is a direct deliverance of consciousness, which does not admit of question. Consciousness will not directly tell me *why* I feel hot or cold, or why I have a painful sensation, or what is its cause. In fact, when we do depend upon a direct deliverance of consciousness for this information, we may be as often right as wrong.* In short, consciousness does not tell us, and cannot tell us, the causes of our sensations. For this information we are thrown back upon observation, experience, experiment. We must, then, be quite sure when we interrogate consciousness that it is upon a subject on which it is competent to pass judgment.

Fairly interrogated, what is it that consciousness tells us? All it gives us is a consciousness of choice. This no Determinist has ever denied or dreamed of denying. In any voluntary action I am aware of having made a choice, and this is really all. The real question in dispute, how I came to choose this particular thing or course of conduct, it leaves completely untouched. Consciousness tells us that out of several motives, any one of which *might* have prevailed under different conditions, one actually

has prevailed. It tells us absolutely nothing of the conditions that resulted in the prevalence of that particular motive. Instead of telling us that we have acted in opposition to the strongest motive—which is the indeterminist position—consciousness simply reveals which motive is the strongest. We are conscious that other motives were present; we are also conscious that *under different conditions* any one of the conquered motives might have prevailed; but to say that we could, therefore, have acted differently without varying the conditions is to say that which is wholly absurd. When it is said that we could have decided differently, we have really displaced the actual conditions by imaginary ones. As Mill puts it, we could have acted differently had we preferred to do so. This no one disputes. What the indeterminist says is that we could have chosen one course while preferring another; and this no one capable of clear scientific thinking will assert. But we are still completely in the dark as to why one choice is made rather than another, or what are the conditions that gave birth to the motives of which we are conscious.

Consciousness, then, can only testify to the reality of its own states; no more. It can tell us nothing of the causes of those states. Consciousness could not tell us even that man had a brain, nor of the close connection between mental states and the condition of the bodily organs. The chief factor in conduct—habit—lies outside its region altogether. In most cases we act as we have been in the habit of acting, and the sum of all our previous actions is expressed in our conduct at any given moment. Every action we perform lays the foundation of a habit, and with every repetition of that action we find its performance easier. Indeed, it is in the region of the unconscious, or sub-conscious, that we have to principally look for the determining causes of conduct, and of this territory consciousness can tell us no more than a ripple on the surface of a river can tell us of its depths.

But, it is said, there is a consciousness of deliberation—what are we to say of this? Is this also a delusion? Not at all. Deliberation and choice are both facts; one implies the other. Neither deliberation nor choice are, however, essential to voluntary action.* Voluntary action, in its simplest and most familiar form, is that in which the action follows immediately on the impulse. Deliberation, and ultimately choice, occurs when the mind is possessed by a number of motives in place of one, or when no single motive of all of which we are conscious is strong enough to result in immediate action. Illustration and analysis will make this clear.

Sitting in my room on a fine day, I am conscious of a desire to take a walk. But, at the same time, I am also conscious of a number of other feelings based upon various considerations. There is the fact of leaving the task I am engaged on, the trouble of dressing, the consideration that once out I may wish that I had stayed in, the fear that my work may be delayed; these and other considerations give rise to quite a variety of desires, which serve to prevent my at once acting upon the primary desire for a walk. This contest of desires results in hesitation and deliberation. Imagination begins to play, ideal feelings are aroused, and eventually a choice is made. I decide on the walk. Now what is that that has occurred? My first desire for a walk, unable for a time to overcome the resistance of the other mental states aroused, has gained strength by gathering around itself a representation of all the advantages of going out, of sufficient strength to overcome all opposition. Had the conviction that it would rain shortly, or that my presence at home would be needed, been sufficiently strong, a different motive altogether would have held the field. Not only is this what does occur, but it is impossible to clearly

* The testimony of consciousness that we feel a pain in the finger, the toe, or in other parts of the body, is conclusive proof of the fallacious nature of its testimony.

* It might avoid some confusion if, instead of "voluntary action," *intentional* action was used; but as this might introduce confusion from another direction I retain the more familiar phraseology.

picture any other process. The only evidence we can have of the relative strength of desires is that one prevails over others. To say that the weaker desire prevails over the stronger is to make a statement the terms of which cannot be brought together in consciousness.

This conclusion cannot be evaded by the plea, made by Professor Ward, that it is the will which decides in favor of a particular motive, and so makes it the strongest. One need only ask, by way of reply, why does this mysterious "will" select one motive rather than another? It surely cannot be held that all motives are of an equal value, and that the decision is the result of an absolutely undetermined judgment. Such a position would be too absurd for argument. But if all motives are not of equal value, then we are bound to conclude—even upon this theory—that the "will" selects a particular motive because it is, in relation to the organism, of greater force than other motives. And in that case we are simply restating the theory of Determinism, with the addition of an autonomous "will," which helps a motive to achieve what it would have achieved without its assistance. It is, besides, an absurdity to speak of "will" or the *ego*, or self as though this was something apart from the various phases of consciousness. In the contest of desires it is myself that is involved in each aspect of the struggle. As Professor James points out, "both effort and resistance are ours, and the identification of our *self* with one of these factors is an illusion and a trick of speech."* My self and my mental states are not two distinct things, for they constitute my self, and if they are eliminated there is no "self" left to talk about.

The fact that actions performed at one time slowly, and only after deliberation, are at a subsequent period performed rapidly and automatically, is decisive proof that deliberation and choice are the equivalents of imperfectly co-ordinated mental states. From this point of view, deliberation really involves waste of energy,† although there are, of course, compensating features. Still, the whole of education tends to weaken this feeling of deliberation by the formation of habits. Morally, as a matter of fact, it is not the feeling that "I could have acted dishonestly instead of honestly had I so chosen" that marks the ethically developed character, but the performance of the right action at the right moment, without the consciousness of tendency in the contrary direction.

(To be continued.)

C. COHEN.

Commonplace Arguments.

THE taunt is often thrown in our faces that Free-thought lacks originality, that its arguments are old and threadbare, and that its methods are clumsy and ineffective. That the reproach is undeserved will be readily acknowledged by all fair-minded and unbiased persons who have any practical knowledge of dialectics. The very success of Freethought during the last two hundred years is a sufficient guarantee that both its methods and its arguments are sound and convincing. Its appeal has ever been to reason and facts; and against reason and facts nothing can permanently prevail. Four hundred years ago, superstition was apparently impregnable. It reigned supreme everywhere. It had the authority of numbers. To-day, it is tottering to the tomb. It has

lost its numerical supremacy. The arguments of Freethought have pierced its very heart, and its final overthrow is a certainty. "But your arguments have been answered a thousand times," a theologian exclaims. As a matter of fact, not one of them has ever been answered at all, and the truth of this statement is proved by the steady decay of the theology. "I have never been really hit at all," cries religion. Why, then, are you in this dying state? we reply. It is true that our arguments are old; but they are so old because they are so true. They are old, but not stale.

Indeed, Freethought has no need of fresh arguments, because no new arguments have been advanced in support of Christianity. The preachers of the Christian gospel are still repeating the ancient fallacies and falsehoods which have been exposed times without number; and as long as they continue to do this Freethinkers must repeat their old exposing assaults. For example, divines are continually boasting of the innumerable benefits which Christianity has conferred upon mankind. They never tire of issuing schedules of the mighty and beneficent changes which the advent of Christ has wrought in the world. Our reply is that history flatly refuses to support their contention. It can be proved that the coming of Christianity resulted in no moral gains to the Roman Empire, while unquestionably it did result in serious intellectual losses. Pagan philosophy contained, on the whole, a higher and nobler moral code than the New Testament. It denounced slavery, insisted on the equality and brotherhood of all men, praised justice, honesty, and love, and exhorted all to be governed by the noblest and most exalted motives. This has been proved by copious quotations again and again. And yet, only a Sunday or two ago, a popular preacher declared that when Christ was born the whole world was in moral bankruptcy and would have been utterly ruined had he not graciously taken it in hand. That sounded very like lying to the glory of God. We challenge anyone to prove that Christianity was morally superior to Paganism. We are convinced that, in the main, it was inferior. But whilst the advent of Christianity was not an ethical boon to the world, it produced a universal intellectual paralysis. It put a ban upon knowledge in order to glorify faith. It belittled the visible Universe in the attempt to magnify the invisible one.

This is a point of such vast importance that it may be profitable to expatiate upon it. For many centuries, Athens was the intellectual centre of the world. Greek culture was there to be seen at its highest and best, and there ethics was taught independently of religion. In course of time, Athens was succeeded by Alexandria and Syracuse. At Alexandria, there was a famous library that contained 700,000 volumes, "carefully tabulated and indexed." There was also a university with 14,000 students. The city was full of astronomers and mathematicians, geographers and geometers, physicists and physicians. It was here that Euclid lived and taught, that Aristarchus and Eratosthenes estimated distances and magnitudes, and that the great Hipparchus laid the foundations of astronomical science. At Syracuse, we find Archimedes, "the greatest mathematician and the greatest inventive genius of antiquity." It was he who discovered the theory of the lever, and to whom was ascribed the saying: "Had I but a fulcrum whereon to rest, I could move the earth." He assumed that the earth is round, and that the sun, not the earth, is the centre of things, thus anticipating Copernicus by nearly two thousand years. Alexandria and Syracuse were in the truest sense scientific centres. It is worthy of mention that the siphon, the ordinary hand fire-engine, the common force-pump, and even the steam-engine were all invented prior to the Christian era. But, strange to say, the science of Alexandria and Syracuse, the knowledge of Nature acquired and utilised by their philosophers, was entirely lost to the world for more than a thousand

* *Principles of Psychology*, ii. 576.

† I may be excused pointing out that nearly twenty years ago I pointed out to a number of students that not only did deliberation mean this, but that the origin of consciousness itself had to be sought in the phenomenon of an interruption of nerve currents. Where the ingoing impulse and the outgoing discharge are continuous, consciousness is not involved. It is with an interruption of the series, by the revival of numerous associated mental states, that consciousness is concerned. Recent investigators in the field of experimental psychology are now reaching a similar conclusion.

years. Carl Snyder, in his interesting work, *New Conceptions in Science*, says:—

"It was, indeed, one of the strangest lapses in history that perfectly clear and just notions respecting the form of the earth and its motion round the sun should have grown up among men, have been passed from one century to another, and then disappeared from Christendom for a thousand years. These doctrines appear to have been accepted by the earliest astronomers of Alexandria as a part of current knowledge, almost as they are to-day. Pythagoras had taught the motion of the earth in the fifth century B.C. Not this alone, but one of his pupils, Nicetas of Syracuse, clearly taught the motion of the earth on its axis as well."

In this connection Mr. Snyder quotes the following passage from Cicero's *Academica*, lib. iv., chap. xxxix.:—

"Nicetus of Syracuse, as Theophrastus says, believed that the heavens, the sun, the moon, the stars—in brief, all things above—stand still; alone, the earth, of all things in the world, moves. Because it is rapidly turning and twisting upon its axis, it gives the effect of the whole sky moving, and that the earth stands."

Now, the question is, as Mr. Snyder puts it, "whence comes it, then, that the convex lens of Nimrud's palace, the catapults and tackle of Archimedes, the force-pumps of Ctesibius, the ingenious measurements of Eratosthenes, the astronomical work of Hipparchus and Ptolemy, the dissections of Aristotle and Galen, bore so little fruit? Whence comes it that the light of the scientific method should have flamed for a time in Babylon, in Thebes, in Athens, in Alexandria, and then the world gone dark for a thousand dismal years?" Dr. Draper, as is well known, puts the whole blame on the Christian Church. It was she that extinguished the light of natural knowledge, that men might learn to walk by faith through the darkness of ignorance to an imaginary world beyond the grave. It was she that preferred "the miserable fictions of Eusebius" to the chronology of Manetho and Eratosthenes, and that pronounced the geometry of Euclid useless, and the geography of Ptolemy a blunder. And the rulers of the Church were wise in their day and generation. They perceived clearly that Christianity and Science could not coexist, and they decreed that the latter should be throttled to save the life of the former. Mr. Snyder is not in full agreement with Draper, but he too admits that "the influence of the Christian Church was evil, incomparably evil," and that "we are not out from under its baleful effects yet." And against this incomparably evil influence of the Church there was no compensating good effect.

This may be a commonplace argument, but its soundness cannot be doubted by anyone who is prepared to face the facts. What good has Christianity done in Christendom? Take the records as they stand and specify one single virtue enforced by Christianity which the world did not exhibit before Christianity was born. It is customary with the pulpit to sing the praises of what is called Christian civilisation; but Christian civilisation exists only in the imagination of such singers. There is no such thing. Civilisation has changed but little during the last four or six thousand years. Indeed, Mr. Snyder goes so far as to affirm that the "serene and healthful outlook upon life of the Greeks represents a stage of human culture that has hardly been since attained," and in this affirmation he is fully borne out by Dr. Metchnikoff. "As the curtain rises on authentic history we are introduced to a race full-brained, full-armed. And they had behind them uncounted centuries of relatively high civilisation." Even Professor Sayce concedes that civilisation is very old; and if this is true it follows that "neither mentally, morally, nor physically has the race varied greatly in six thousand and perhaps ten or fifteen thousand years." In the light of these incontestable facts Christianity stands condemned as a religion which at once has utterly failed to live up to its own pretensions, and fully succeeded in doing a maximum amount of mischief.

And now at length Christianity is being quietly but surely pushed out of the way by the very Science

which it so violently suppressed in the days of its youth. We hear continually of "the present distressing condition of the Church," of "the falling off in the attendance at public worship and other deplorable evils," and even of "some elders and younger men who go off to golf on Sundays." What we are witnessing now is superstition going out because knowledge is coming in. While the theologians are bitterly wrangling over the Virgin Birth, the Resurrection, and the nature of God, the people are deliberately turning their backs upon them and their dogmas and settling down into glad acceptance of the truths of Science.

"Not, then, to the Cæsars and Alexanders; not to the bandits and plunderers who have reddened history; neither to the dreaming Messiahs whose hallucinations have filled men's minds with empty fancies—not to these should rise our pantheons; but rather to those who, in the pursuit of science and of truth, have added to the intellectual wealth of mankind. For they are the true gods, the real gods."

J. T. LLOYD.

The Alien Goat.

IN May last year, I wrote in the *Freethinker* an article under the title of "The Fate of the Red Bush Pig." The point of this article was that European Christians have not only introduced into Liberia their ugly swine to the neglect of the handsome African pig, but have also introduced European dress, customs, etc., with disastrous effect upon the native æsthetic. The original Mandingo costume was beautiful, but it has had to give way to the frock coat and tall hat.

A chance reading of Dr. Fridtjof Nansen's *Eskimo Life* (translated in 1893 by Mr. William Archer) has afforded another and yet more melancholy example of the evil wrought by irrational intrusion from Europe. Dr. Nansen—the well-known Arctic traveller—roundly asserts that it would have been better for Greenland if Christianity had never been carried to the romantic "icy mountains" of which Bishop Heber has taught us to sing so ignorantly and so absurdly. He has no animus against the Christian faith. His charge, in effect, is that it is unsuited to the Greenland Eskimo. European missionaries are miserable failures in the science of psychology. They understand creeds, not minds. They study the Gospel, but not the moral and intellectual structure of the Eskimo character. The natives had the sense to see part of the truth themselves. They objected to certain passages of the Scriptures being translated into the Greenland tongue. For instance, the story of Jacob's treachery towards his father and brother appeared to convey undesirable ethics. They asked why, if Christianity was so important, its revelation had been delayed in Greenland till this eighteenth century. If it had arrived sooner, their forefathers might have gone to heaven. The missionaries denounced the witchcraft of the "angedkoks" (medicine-men, or so-called sorcerers) but when they themselves performed the rite of baptism, an angedkok neatly accused the missionaries of the very sin they condemned! At any rate, when the Eskimo decided to adopt the foreign method, they gave it a singular extension. A North Greenland catechist who had "received a theological education," baptised not only his human friends, but also his puppies in the name of the Trinity.

The premier missionary was Hans Egede, who went out from Norway in 1721, and more or less evangelised Greenland. The famous Count Zinsendorf later on sent three Moravian brethren on the same errand, and some remnants of their preaching survive in a few stations. But Dr. Nansen cynically remarks:—

"The peculiarity of these Hornhutt [Moravian] communities, so far as I could gather, is that in them the natives have sunk to an even greater depth of misery than elsewhere."

Hans Egede was doubtless a saint, but his manners lacked polish. He says himself he often flogged Eskimo. He and his son Paul, hearing that an angekok had uttered the seditious remark that it would be easy to deport aliens from Greenland, attacked the medicine-man and kept him in irons several days. Paul Egede gave a girl a thrashing because she was shocked at the doctrine of eternal torment. Even wicked men, she urged, sometimes forgave sinners, and why should not God? Another member of this distinguished family of missionaries, Niels Egede, held a debate with an angekok, who was difficult to convince. So, says the amiable Niels:—

"When I had tried all I could by means of persuasion and exhortation, without avail, I had recourse to my usual method, flogged him soundly and turned him out of the house."

In things material, as well as spiritual, the tastes of the missionaries and their native clients came into conflict. The Eskimo, as we have all learned in childhood, set great store by their dogs. But the Norwegian and Danish clergy who yearn for the salvation of Greenland are particularly partial to goats—presumably on account of the family need for milk. So in South Greenland the natives of several stations are forbidden to keep dogs, because the dogs chase and worry the goats. It is true that the Christian goats tear the turf from the walls and the roofs of the Greenlanders' huts, and injure the fish that are hung up to dry, etc., but the missionaries have texts available to meet any objections. And besides, the arrangement was made by the local Councils, composed both of Eskimos and missionaries. Dr. Nansen cruelly suggests that the Christian aliens not only invented these political machines, but exhibit much ability in using them to their own advantage.

In a very scathing chapter on the question "What have we achieved?" Dr. Nansen reviews the supposed benefits conferred upon the Eskimo by their European patrons. If anybody asks "What is the secret of Greenland's greatness?" his answer is at least plain. Europe gave the natives iron, and that would seem a blessed improvement upon the Stone Age. But in former times the hunters fitted ivory or stone points to their harpoons, and caught more seals than nowadays. We have provided them with fire-arms. With what result? Intoxicated with the new power thus placed in their hands, they ran amok among the reindeer, killed some 16,000 every year, selling the skins to Europeans, and leaving the carcasses to putrify. When harpooned, a seal is nearly always secured. When shot, it may escape. The rifle has almost exterminated certain species of birds, and actually lessened the hereditary skill of the Eskimo in catching seals. The Eskimo once lived adequately, though coarsely, on blubber, and now he sells these articles to the alien, and gets in exchange coffee, tobacco, bread and trifling ornaments and showy dress. The splendid native canoe (the kaiak) is degenerating, and is often left to decay on the beach for want of proper skin coverings. In the summer, the people used to go in parties to fresh quarters, carrying their belongings in "woman-boats"—comfortable boats, well protected by skins, and rowed by women. Now, these healthy jaunts are discontinued. The population has decreased since the missionary efforts of the Egede family. Consumption pursues its deadly evangel, and makes numerous converts. Previous generations, well fortified by fatty diet, suffered much less from the disease. Europe imported the small-pox into Greenland, and syphilis has appeared. They knew nothing of money till the Bible folk landed. Living on a communal basis, they suffered or prospered in companionship; and the wealthy gave of their overflow to their less fortunate neighbors. Now, the surplus is sold to Europeans, and a virtuous thrift takes the place of the old personal charity. The minds of the Eskimo, says Dr. Nansen, "are warped and enthralled by money." They can read and write, but they are less skilful in the handling of the kaiak on the seas, and accidents to hunters have increased. The

Eskimo, before the advent of the blessed Egedes, were robust heathen. Since that happy date, they have become sickly and discontented.

Is it possible, asks Dr. Nansen, to abandon the experiment so foolishly begun? Can we give back the Eskimo to their primitive conditions? One vital factor would be absent. Civilisation has sent its fleets into the Arctic waters and slaughtered in immense numbers the seals that are so indispensable to the economic life of native Greenland. Dr. Nansen wishes the Danish Government would withdraw all its representatives, and put an end to all traffic on a money basis, and leave the Eskimo to their own devices. It is a drastic remedy. It seems to me too drastic. The Europe that seduced ought not to leave the decadent tribe entirely to its fate. But it might begin a more sympathetic method of treatment. It might endeavor to restore the aboriginal customs so far as they fostered a more natural and more vigorous physical and social existence. Europe has admittedly many admirable gifts to bestow on the backward races of mankind. Let them be genuine gifts, and not means of base profit. In our museums we preserve examples of native art from all quarters of the globe. Well and good. But how much more noble it would be if we preserved the people who made these interesting objects! Nor need we preserve them in a spirit of condescension and patronage. These children of nature, more in contact with the prime source of our material life—the earth and its virgin stores—are instinct with energies that will do us good to drink in, and they possess an unspoiled fund of emotion that may revivify our jaded souls.

F. J. GOULD.

We learn from the *Methodist Times* that "Materialism is discredited for ever." It was never anything else in the eyes of a Wesleyan minister. The Materialist returns the compliment by saying that a Wesleyan minister is discredited for ever in the eyes of reason. The only difference is that religion is steadily losing ground while what is called Materialism is marching on to victory.

A Christian minister says that "attendance at our churches may for the moment be on the decline," but that "this was only a passing phase." Quite true; but the next phase will be empty churches and extinct Christianity. Reason is at last mounting its throne.

The Rev. Dr. Clifford expresses the opinion that "not one in ten of the followers of the Lord Jesus" pays the least heed to the most vital of his Master's commandments. That is to say, not one in ten of professing Christians is a real Christian. What a humiliating confession to make! What a stupendous failure preaching is, to be sure. And the failure of preaching is only an eloquent witness to the more gigantic failure of Jesus Christ.

A *Christian World* reviewer, in noting a volume of *Nature Studies*, finds much consolation in the author's conclusion that the "fundamental mysteriousness" of the universe is left untouched. So religious people are advised to read the book and remain happy. It is astonishing how fond religious people are of this "mysteriousness." They probably feel that unless they are permitted to wander about in some sort of a mental fog they will be extremely miserable. Their consolation lies not with the knowledge that science gives, but with the ignorance it is forced to admit. But, after all, "mysteries" do not exist for a sane science. There are problems; but mystery belongs to the verbal jugglery of superstition. And with the devotee of that cult "mystery" is only another name for nonsense.

On parting with their bishop, one Muldoon, who goes to another diocese, the laity of Chicago raised for his benefit the handsome sum of \$37,025. The papers state that Muldoon's reception in Rockford, the pasture new, was not only religious but civic, the "chiefs of police and fire departments" joining in the demonstration. We shall become more and more accustomed to these manifestations of the grip of the Church on the politicians, office-holders, and place-seekers, as time goes on.—*Truthseeker* (New York).

Acid Drops.

Mr. Justice Grantham has sentenced two "Peculiar People"—George Horsnell and his wife, of Fisher-street, Canning Town—to three months' hard labor for obeying the Bible instead of calling in a doctor to their four-year-old daughter who died. Surely the "hard labor" in such a case is very little short of an outrage. These poor people (the "Peculiar People" are all poor, and that is why they are despised and oppressed) are certainly acting on grounds of conscience. They are far from treating their children with common "neglect." The "neglect" they are charged with is purely technical. And if it is necessary to send them to prison, it is inhuman to subject them to gratuitous humiliation. Mr. Justice Grantham told these two honest if mistaken parents that, "it was wicked of people to let their children die rather than call in medical aid." This may be true; we neither admit it nor dispute it; but had the judge a moral right to say it when he had seen witness after witness sworn on the very book whose words the defendants pleaded in justification of their procedure? We have no hesitation in telling Mr. Justice Grantham that the "wickedness" really lies elsewhere. It lies with those who put the book which these poor people obey into the hands of children in the State schools of England as the Word of God. To thrust a book into a man's hand as divine, and then to punish him as a vulgar criminal for obeying it, is a monstrous hypocrisy. We do not mince our words. We care for nothing but the truth. And we conclude by expressing our utmost contempt for the whole body of Christians in this country who let these humble "Peculiar People" go to prison without one word of protest. We despise them all, from the Archbishop of Canterbury down to Dr. Clifford and General Booth.

Freethinkers are the only people who could possibly have a right to call these "Peculiar People" *wicked*,—and Freethinkers would never call them so. It is impossible to be wicked and honest at the same time. These people are simply mistaken. They are honest, for they faithfully act upon their mistake. They carry out what they believe. Millions of other Christians profess to believe in the divine authority of the same Book. But they don't believe in it. They *lie*—to others and to themselves. "Wicked" forsooth! It is easy enough to see where the epithet belongs.

Prophet Baxter has obtained £500 damages against the "Mint" Newspaper Company for libel. The amount might have been less if the defendants had put in a defence. Nevertheless they seem to have carried their denunciation of the Rev. Michael P. Baxter too far. We have often laughed at his "prophetic" interpretations of the Bible. He is wrong every time he prophesies, but he puts forward a fresh prophecy to take the place of the old one with the most sublime assurance, and thousands of silly people go on believing his celestial tips as if he were always right. This is the plain truth, but it is quite another thing to call him "a wicked old sinner," charge him with making money out of quack advertisements, and advise him to come to some arrangement with Smyth-Piggott at the Abode of Love. Prophet Baxter's private affairs are his own business, and his profits are no particular concern of ours. We have never troubled about them. His character as a man is not our concern either. But as a prophet, or an interpreter of Scripture in the direction of "coming events," he certainly is a "charlatan." And we don't see how his support of a soup-kitchen can possibly affect that issue.

Evidence was tendered to the effect that Baxter's "great hobby" had been "a drain on his resources." We dare say this is perfectly true. Advertising the *Freethinker* is a drain on our resources. And if Baxter's prophetic lectures, wall-bills, and pamphlets don't help to advertise the *Christian Herald*, we must be mightily mistaken. The *Christian Herald* boasts of its big circulation, and if the boasts be true it must be a very handsome property. There is no brains in it, the "copy" with which it is filled ought to be extremely cheap, it is not very large, it is not exactly printed on vellum, and there should be a considerable weekly balance on the right side of the account. Prophet Baxter may be short of many things, but it is commonly understood that he is not short of money.

Of all Christian apologies for the most disastrous earthquake on record the shallowest and silliest is that offered by Canon Scott-Holland in a sermon preached at St. Paul's. Having admitted that "we are but minute insects loosely burrowing into a thin crust of soil, hung perilously over molten gulfs of hidden fires," and having described the

earth itself as a "fretful midge" spinning "far, far down in the abyss disclosed to us by our science," he correctly states that the tragic earthquake "which fills a whole coast with dreadful death is hardly measurable as a minute incident in the immeasurable process of a thousand times a thousand years."

Up to that point the reverend gentleman was on sure ground. He was speaking scientifically in a pious tone. Then he allowed his theology to put his science to open shame. We are all dumb, he said, "in face of such a terror any speech of ours is an impertinence." But a preacher is never dumb; he cannot keep silence; and Dr. Scott-Holland proceeded to show that tragic as the earthquake was it was not the most stupendous tragedy in history. We cannot explain the mysterious earthquake, he said; but neither can we solve the deeper tragedy of the Cross of Calvary. "The most terrible hours in human history have their counterpart in the blood-sweat in the Garden, in the bleeding, tortured Figure hung on the cross." The author of the very worst natural horrors is our loving Heavenly Father, but our comfort is that he shares them with us. Could anything be more ridiculous? And yet believers in God cannot help themselves. If they talk at all on such subjects it must be sheer nonsense. In face of such catastrophes it is Atheism alone that is rational; it is Atheism alone that affords a safe refuge.

Even the *Christian World* could not refrain from shaking its head over that story of the Messina comic paper, *Il Telefono*, which made "ribald fun" of the Christmas religious observances, printed "an atrocious parody of a popular Christian hymn," and ended by calling for an earthquake,—though we are not told what for. Not unnaturally the staff of *Il Telefono* were crushed to death by the fall of the building they worked in. We hope our pious contemporary does not mean to suggest that the earthquake was God's reply to a comic paper. Such a God would be a criminal lunatic.

The *Irish Times* started a subscription for the sufferers from "the Earthquake in Sicily." In one of its lists of acknowledgments was five shillings "In thanks to a loving Heavenly Father." People in Sicily get the earthquake, and people in Ireland give God thanks.

Last week's *John Bull*, after quoting an orthodox comment on God's goodness as displayed in the earthquake from a weekly paper called the *Christian*, winding up with the assurance that "the tender mercies of the Lord are over all his works," remarked that "the *Freethinker*, in its most rollicking days, never printed such blasphemy as this." Which may be true in substance, if not in form. But does not the editor of *John Bull* know that the *Christian's* words which he prints in italics as most blasphemous are a direct quotation from the Bible? It is really the Bible, rather than the *Christian*, that is responsible for "blasphemy" such as we "never printed."

We were glad to see *John Bull* drawing attention to "Pastor" Reuben May's fresh appeals for money. He is in *Truth's* cautionary list as a "professional charity-monger," who has lived for thirty years on his alleged work, and who publishes no accounts and refuses all details. Reuben May, like all his kind, is specially strong against "infidels." It was a lying tract of this man's, called *Death's Test*, which occasioned Mr. Foote's *Infidel Death Beds*.

"Do not, I beseech you, think of God any more as a personal being like yourself," says Mr. R. J. Campbell. "Do, I beseech you, think of God more and more as a personal being," exhorts Dr. Warschauer. And these two men of God fall out, and cease to associate with each other, because they cannot agree as to whether they are the spokesmen of a person or of a thing. The joke is that neither of them has the ghost of an idea what he is talking about. The wise man is he who does not think of God at all, which all who are not paid for thinking and talking about him are often strongly tempted to do.

The editor of the *Christian Commonwealth* writes most insultingly of the Atheists and Materialists who occasionally lecture at the City Temple. He says that "so far from fearing the effect of the utterances of such men, we should give them every facility for stating their whole case, in order that their hearers may realise how unconvincing their argument is to the mind and how unsatisfying their message is to the heart." That is downright rudeness. If Dr. Drysdale and Mr. McCabe should see the impudent observation, they will not be very anxious to repeat their visits. The editor may realise one day how radically mistaken his

estimate of the effect of such lectures on most minds was. Meantime, he should cultivate good manners in reporting or commenting on City Temple lectures.

Mr. Albert Dawson congratulates the City Temple Literary Society on its liberalism in inviting Mr. McCabe, and it was a liberal action—as Christian action goes. Mr. Dawson's own comments on the lecture are, to put it mildly, funny. He puts what he considers a practical question. He cannot understand why we should battle with evil if we accept a materialistic explanation of the universe. The question is about as pertinent as asking why we should seek relief from a pain if we are convinced that it is due entirely to nerve excitation. An adequate answer would be that evil is pain, and the same reason that holds good for getting rid of a pain in any portion of our organism, holds equally good for getting rid of a pain in the body social. Mr. Dawson argues that science teaches that the earth will one day be destitute of life; why, then, bother? Well, the solid fact is that one day we shall all be dead, but we do not think that is a good argument against being happy while we are alive.

Mr. Dawson plaintively asks, "Is the game worth the candle?" seeing that *we* shall be dead when the millennium is reached. Well, but the joy of living is not put off until the millennium arrives, and therefore it will not be frustrated if it never does arrive. The joy of living lies in the *now*, with the reasonable apprehension that we shall leave the materials for happiness in the next generation unimpaired, at least, by our having lived. And, really, no one is interested in the society a few thousand years hence. Our interest lies with the generations that immediately follow us, and we are linked to them by our friends and by our children. We are not working for perfection—no one is—sensible people are working to make the getting of happiness a little easier than it might be without their exertions. And a Freethinker may be permitted to remind a Christian that in the mere doing there is adequate reward for our expenditure of energy.

One more word. Mr. Dawson says he doesn't see what chance there is in our being successful if the forces of the universe are "unintelligent and irresponsible." The two words are totally out of place in such a connection, but we may point out that the question of success or failure does not depend upon whether the universe is intelligent or unintelligent. Success and failure are both indisputable attendants on human effort. We succeed every time a wrong is righted, or an injury redressed. Life is full of successes, and it is plentifully besprinkled with failures. And one of the most noticeable of the failures of the social forces is when it produces people who can see no use in social effort unless action is consciously based upon a series of illegitimate speculations, and the perpetuation of anthropomorphic beliefs that civilised people should, long since, have outgrown.

"If only Voltaire and Tom Paine, Strauss and Renan, Hume and Bradlaugh, Ingersoll and Blatchford, could address us, what a rousing reception we would give them, and how we would heckle them!" So writes Mr. Albert Dawson on behalf of the young men of the City Temple. It doesn't occur to him that all those gentlemen (at least the dead ones) might have something better to do than talking to Campbell's "Happy Family." What is certain is that Campbell's heresy, such as it is, is all borrowed from those gentlemen—without acknowledgment.

The Essex County Football Association has warned about fifty players against playing on Sunday, against the Association's by-laws. Some of the players have been suspended. But this won't stop Sunday football. It has come to stay. Sabbatarianism has some vitality left, but it is plainly dying.

Religion sanctions anything. They have been raising the wind at a Padiham Sunday-school by means of a "kissing bush." More or less blushing young ladies dispense kisses at sixpence each,—and no reduction for a quantity. Some were perhaps dear at the price. And what decent man would like to marry one of the owners of the lips whose kisses may have been worth the purchase? We wonder how far this sort of thing is going to be carried.

Rev. Z. B. Woffendale having been challenged by Mr. Harry Boulter to debate the question "Did the Christ of the Four Gospels ever Exist?" an all-round discussion has been started in the *Islington Daily Gazette*, and we understand that well-written and pertinent letters on the Freethought side will be readily inserted. Mr. Woffendale's opening letter appeared on January 13. This gentleman's

accuracy of statement may be judged by his assertion that "Even John Stuart Mill acknowledged that Jesus Christ 'was a man charged with a special and unique commission from God, to lead mankind to truth and virtue.'" John Stuart Mill never made any such acknowledgment. Mr. Woffendale grossly misrepresents a passage in Mill's *Essay on Theism*. He ought to know better, and we believe he does; but Christian apologists were always a slippery lot.

The seven Nonconformist Churches of Pontardawe, in Wales, have put their heads together, and what little is in them, and the result is an appeal to all Christians—yea, and other folk—in the district to keep the Sabbath holy, and to set their faces sternly against buying and selling newspapers on Sunday, against pleasure-trips of all kinds, against unnecessary visits to distant friends and relatives, against gathering at street-corners during divine service, against smoking on the Lord's Day while on the way to or from the sanctuary, and against sacred concerts on Sunday nights for "worldly purposes." This is a pretty comprehensive list of Sabbath restrictions, and Pontardawe will be a lively place if they are observed. What the Nonconformist leaders really want, of course, is the destruction of all rivalry to their own business on Sunday. They are Clerical Protectionists. And the people are beginning to understand it.

Father Higley has our sympathy in protesting against the proselytising by ladies of the Bible Flower Mission amongst the patients of the Poplar and Stepney Sick Asylum. But we really don't see why more harm is done in this way to Catholics than to other people. Father Higley told his fellow Guardians that he would not have the vicar or anyone else interfering with people of the Roman Catholic persuasion. "I shall not," he added, "have a lot of tommy-rot forced down the throats of people of the Roman Catholic faith." The reverend gentleman forgets, in his indignation, that his own Church is A 1 at the business of forcing its own tommy-rot down other people's throats wherever it has the opportunity.

The Bishop of Tasmania has reached the belief that the Old Testament is hardly a suitable basis for moral instruction, because "God is continuously represented there as speaking and acting in ways which offend our moral sense." We are glad that the Bishop has got so far. He may live to see that the New Testament fails in the same way. Nothing could be more offensive to our moral sense than a God who made a hell for his own creatures. In this respect the New Testament is worse than the Old.

We see that Mr. Robert Blatchford is publishing through the Clarion Press a new pamphlet called *The New Religion*. The world has crowds of religions already. We hardly thought there was room for a new one. But it is astonishing what an itch clever men have had for this sort of production.

Mr. R. J. Campbell says that the power of the Salvation Army lies in its social work, not in its theology. That, he says, is a spent force. Quite so; but this is not all. The impression that the Army is doing a useful social work is, apart from isolated instances that are almost accidental, quite a delusion. But it is upon its social work that the Army maintains its theology; so that we have a "spent force" maintaining itself in virtue of a social work that has over and over again been shown to be a complete failure.

We see that the Salvation Army last year only carried 7,000 emigrants—less than half the number carried the year before. It looks as though the public are beginning to awaken to the methods of William the Slim, and that the recent agitation is having some effect. We hope it will be permanent. One thing, however, is certain. If the number of emigrants carried by the Army does not increase, and the profits from that quarter remain comparatively small, General Booth may revise his opinion as to emigration being the only cure for unemployment.

Ten thousand people in one city in America have undertaken to try and live like Jesus for a fortnight. We have no details as to how they are going to do it, but the correct way would be to throw up their situations and live upon the charity of all who would minister to their needs. Probably all they understand by it is to tell a few less lies, and live a trifle more honestly than is usual. Of course, if it has this effect it will do good; but the idea that in so doing they are living as Jesus lived is one of the delusions to which the Christian intelligence is prone. Even as it is some of the experimenters are complaining that their neighbors prevent their doing as they would like. The neighborhood of other Christians prevents their living the Christian life. Someone

once said there never was but one Christian, and he died on the cross.

Right Reverend Doctor Crozier, Lord Bishop of Down and Connor and Dromore, preaching at Belfast on Citizen Sunday, made a melancholy announcement. "There is," he said, "an irreverent and subtle infidelity breaking out all the land over, which does not ask with what ritual we should worship God, but is there a God at all, and, if there be, what interest does he take in the concerns of men." We quite understand the right reverend gentleman's alarm. He has a large interest at stake in the threatened business.

Mr. George Meredith speaks contemptuously of "news-paper tattle." This is noted not very cheerfully in the *Daily News*, but the lack of cheerfulness passes into downright moral objection when our contemporary remembers Mr. Meredith's "many remarks derogatory to journalism as a whole." But it is a mistake to suppose that Mr. Meredith despises or condemns good journalism; by which we mean able, well-informed, and honest journalism. What he despises is bad journalism; the journalism of more or less fluent penmen who write any stuff that is in demand for the salary which hangs to it. John Morley was little else than a journalist when Mr. Meredith wrote that splendid sonnet to him; a sonnet which, we are sorry to say, he has never really earned. There has been no strength in *his* wrist to cleave a passage through the barrier rock "and lead the army of the faithful through." It is many years, indeed, since John Morley had anything to do with the army that Mr. Meredith meant.

"Principal Marshall," we read, "the new President of the Baptist Union, has a strong conviction that Baptists need stimulation in the direction of Bible study." We quite agree with him. But the "conviction" applies to others than Baptists. It is true of nearly all Christians. Most of them reverence the Bible too much to study it—and often too much even to read it. It is Freethinkers who know the Bible well. That is why they *are* Freethinkers. The cure for false worship of the Bible is to know its contents.

A music hall artist was charged at Leeds with stealing a gold watch and chain. He pleaded that he was a "victim of telepathy, hypnotism, and mesmerism." This occult defence was of no avail. The judge gave him five years' penal servitude. Are the Spiritualists and Theosophists going to take this lying down?

William Robinson, grocer, circuit preacher, and superintendent of the York-street Congregational Mission, Wolverhampton, has been in the Divorce Court as co-respondent. His adultery with the wife of Mr. James Woodall, a cabinet maker, of the same town, has resulted in a decree nisi with £300 damages. "The sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair." And the "wives" of men too, nowadays.

An old man, who describes himself as a Christian Scientist, sat listening to the Rev. E. A. Renton in the Wesleyan Chapel, Huddersfield, the sermon being on Jesus Christ's overturning of the money-changers' tables. The old man took it all in very quietly, but when the benediction was pronounced he received a call to imitate his Savior. Rising from his seat, and walking to the Communion table, he grasped two offertory boxes and scattered their contents all around. Four other boxes were dealt with in the same way, some of the coins rolling almost to the chapel doors. While this interesting performance was going on, the old box-emptier kept shouting, "You are thieves. You are robbers. This is dead robbery." Eventually he threw down the empty boxes and walked out. We wonder if this is J. C.'s second coming. We may be pretty sure, in any case, that when the pastor of that Wesleyan chapel preaches on that text again, he will see that the collection is duly safeguarded.

Excavations have been made at Jericho, and the *Daily Mail* devotes a leading article to this interesting topic. "In broad outline," our profound and accurate contemporary says, "the investigations confirm the story of the Old Testament." This is good,—very good. The Old Testament relates that Jewish priests blew down the walls of Jericho with trumpets. The investigations show that Jericho had walls. Q. E. D.

We have several times referred to the nobbling of the Socialist movement by clericals. We see that the Rev. R. J. Campbell is to lecture for the Independent Labor Party at Grimsby on January 25. His subject is "Socialism and the Kingdom of God." On the bills is an advertisement of the *Christian Commonwealth* as "the National Organ of the

Progressive League" which is associated with the Independent Labor Party on this occasion. What a rumpus there would be if members of the I. L. P. wanted it officially to get up a lecture by a prominent Freethinker on "Socialism and Atheism." But this is on all fours with the favor shown to Mr. Campbell.

Rev. R. J. Campbell says he will "have to make war on the cough" in the City Temple. We suggest that the time he spends in publicly addressing the Lord before the sermon should be utilised, during the winter, for the practical object of inducing the Great Physician to medicate the congregation's throats. If that doesn't answer, a page-boy should be sent round with "Peps" or Soothing Syrup.

Another poor Jesusite. Rev. George Ridout, of Sandhurst Rectory, Hawkhurst, Kent, left £56,923. This was a whale. The next is a minnow. Rev. F. W. Foster, of Havelock-street, Sheffield, left £5,325.

"God knows all, and that is my comfort." So wrote Mrs. M. Corbet Seymour, authoress of numerous books and stories, before committing suicide at Bradford-on-Avon. Not an Atheist, again. Dr. Torrey, please note.

Rev. T. E. Ruth, of Liverpool, says "I do not feel that God is calling me to Westbourne Park." This is the clerical-blarney way of saying that playing second-fiddle to Dr. Clifford isn't good enough.

Evan Roberts has been in London. At least the *South Wales Daily News* says so. He has been attending meetings in the Conference Hall, Eccleston-street. A room was allotted to him on the premises, where he spent most of his time in prayer. He only speaks when the spirit moves him, and it only moved him once. We thought the old mixture of devotion and swelled-headed posturing was played out, but it seems to have enough life left in it to give a few little farewell performances. There won't be another Welsh revival.

One of "Vanoc's" paragraphs in last week's *Referee* seems to show that he doesn't like our article upon him in last week's *Freethinker*. He does not mention this journal, of course, but it is not difficult to see what he is aiming at. He talks a lot of fresh nonsense about killing souls and robbing people of their faith,—which, by the way, all the Christian missionaries in the world are trying to do. He also suggests that unbelievers have bad manners, and evidently thinks his own manners are ideal,—in spite of his insolence to Haeckel. His attitude is common to religious apologists when they are worsted in argument. They generally fall back on their superior manners. But many a Gentleman Jack has stood in the dock and taken a sentence of penal servitude with a bow. His "manners" were all right, but were a poor substitute for common honesty. And "Vanoc's" *manners* are a poor substitute for common sense.

Let brotherly love continue! Catholics and Protestants hate each other rarely, and of late years Protestant hates Protestant with a most cordial detestation. Kensittes recently paid St. Savior's Church, Luton, a visit and loudly denounced the vicar, the Rev. J. C. Trevelyan, for "hearing confession." Policemen were called in to preserve order in the sacred edifice. We don't take sides in this dispute. We merely note the harmony in the household of faith.

Mr. C. Field, missionary to the Afghans, narrates an experience that is obviously true, since as a missionary it would have been to his interest to tell a different story. Whenever he began to preach, he says, someone gave the Arabic call to prayer, and the people gathered round and prayed for his conversion to Islam. He adds that a former missionary in Peshawar was firmly believed, on his retirement, to have become a convert to Islam. One can imagine the more or less good-humored contempt on the faces of the onlookers at the poor missionary being outprayed by the people he is anxious to convert.

The Rev. Ossian Davies says that no one can work his passage to heaven. It is so much nicer to receive a free ticket paid for by somebody else. The Christian motto is this: Do nothing yourself if you can get somebody to do it for you. Heaven is the home of lazybones and cowards.

Collection-plates are to be used in future instead of collection-bags at St. Mary's Church, Dover. Too many buttons have been contributed lately.

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

January 31, Manchester.
February 21, Glasgow; 28, Birmingham.

To Correspondents.

C. COHEN'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—241 High-road, Leyton.—January 24, Forest Gate. February 14, Glasgow.

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

THE PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND: Annual Subscriptions.—Previously acknowledged, £66 7s. Received since.—C. J. L., £2; C. B. A., £1 1s.; Manservant and Cook, 5s.; E. H. Charlton, £1 1s.; G. Ehrmann, £2 2s.; Dr. and Mrs. Laing, £2 2s.; W. S., £1 1s.; Mrs S., £1 1s.; J. R., £1 1s.; Mrs. R., £1 1s.; Vivian Phelip, 10s. 6d.; C. (America), £2; Richard Johnson, £5; Richard Green, £1; Mrs. Green, 10s.; M. Barnard, 2s.; Robt. Avis, £1; W. E. Pugh, 10s.

H. SHACKLETON.—Pleased to hear you "owe the *Freethinker*" so much. Headquarters would assist an effort to form an N. S. S. Branch at Keighley.

E. F. OSBORNE.—An interesting cutting, but we don't care to work over what has already been done elsewhere. Glad you think so highly of our "God in Italy."

R. T. L.—We have mentioned Mr. Bonte's letters in the *Hereford Times*. Glad to know you were the author of the capital one you enclose.

J. H. (Ireland) says: "When in London last year I got your paper and was so pleased that I have continued it ever since. I hope you will be able to continue it for many years."

P. BLOW.—We had no particulars of Mr. Lloyd's lecture at Greenwich given us; besides the *Freethinker* was out when your postcard was written, and we cannot answer such inquiries by post.

R. J. HENDERSON.—Mr. Justice Grantham's theology is dealt with elsewhere. Thanks for cuttings.

D. ASHWOOD.—We cannot answer such queries by post. You will find all you want in our *Infidel Death-Beds*, price 8d., post free 9d. Pleased to hear that you "long for each week's *Freethinker*," and do your best to push its circulation.

WELSH BRADLAUGHIAN.—Pleased to read your appreciative letter; also to have your friend's admiration for what he calls our "frankness and courage in the propagation of Freethought." We have noticed the matter of the cutting in another column.

MANSEVANT AND COOK.—Glad to hear of the "benefits" you "derive weekly from the best of all papers, the *Freethinker*." Your requests are attended to.

A. F. HAMMOND.—We have done our best to draw him, but we don't expect to succeed.

M. LAING.—Glad to have your "best wishes," as well as the household subscription.

V. J. GRIMES.—See paragraph. Thanks.

I. GENTLE writes: "I am a regular reader of the *Freethinker*, which I think gets better every week. I have experienced considerable difficulty in getting it, owing to my constantly travelling about, but I now find Messrs. Smith and Wyman can nearly always be relied on. I order two copies weekly; one I give away to a different person each week, the other I leave in the train after reading. Perhaps I have secured a few regular readers in this way." No doubt. We hope many of our readers will be as active as this correspondent in trying to push our circulation forward.

G. DINSMORE.—We have looked through the reverend gentleman's notes, and find they are not worth our attention. He either believes the story of Jonah or he doesn't. If he does, let him plainly say so; if he doesn't, he agrees with us that it is a Bible romance.

W. W. MEDLEY.—Pleased to see your attitude. Thanks for your good wishes and "sincere hope" that we "may live many years to lead the attack on superstition."

BERT GRANT.—Your first question is dealt with in our *Bible Romances*. Your second question is answered by reading any book on Mormonism. Your third question is an assertion in disguise. Your fourth question we answer by saying that most of the "phenomena" of Spiritualism are fraudulent, and that the rest admit of natural explanation.

H. P. K.—Thanks for cuttings.

G. L. SIMMONDS.—We will keep your suggestions by us. In answer to your question, it was no doubt your cutting.

W. P. BALL.—Thanks for welcome cuttings.

J. C. ELLIOTT.—How on earth does the principle that right and wrong mean conduciveness or otherwise to human welfare justify the horrors of vivisection or any form of cruelty to the lower animals? Mr. Foote has written at length on this subject in a little book published by the Humanitarian League. We advise you to read it.

T. W. HAUGHTON.—The report of Mr. Cohen's lecture in the *Northern Whig* may be poor, but it is much better than English newspapers give such addresses.

M. BARNARD.—Pleased to hear from one who has read the *Freethinker* for eight years and "looks forward with great pleasure to it every week."

W. McK.—Mr. Foote did lecture at Dunoon. The rest of the story—that he threw out a Christian he could not answer—is poor fiction.

"C." (America).—Pleased to have the good wishes and practical support of a reader so distant,—in space, not in sympathy.

J. E. LING.—We refer to *John Bull* this week. We cannot refer to Mr. Bottomley's case while it is *sub judice*. If you think over that remark of ours in Sunday night's lecture you may see its truth. Thanks for good wishes.

P. W. MADDEN.—Thanks for copy of Mr. Snell's article on "The Ethical Movement and Freethought." It seems to us, as it does to you, to abound in strange statements and confusions, but we don't propose to answer it. We have our own work to do; let the Ethicists do theirs. You can smile, as well as we can, at the extraordinary airs they often give themselves. It is a rare entertainment to spectators with a sense of humor.

B. LEGGETT.—The cutting will be useful. Pleased to know you "look forward to Thursday," when you "know you will have a few hours' respectable reading" in the *Freethinker*.

J. H. DEAN.—Order passed over to manager. Our *Infidel Death-Beds* will give you all the information you desire.

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

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

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.

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

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

Sugar Plums.

There was a finer meeting than ever at the Shoreditch Town Hall on Sunday evening, and the collection doubled,—which is an excellent sign. Mr. Foote made up for having to leave a bit early on the occasion of his first lecture. The audience had good measure, pressed down, and running over; and the laughter and applause, following spells of breathless attention, made it, as the N. S. S. secretary tells us, a "regular gala night." There was quite an ovation as the lecturer resumed his seat. Mr. H. Cowell, the chairman, genially invited questions, and many were asked, and answered.

The last of the four Shoreditch Town Hall lectures will be delivered this evening (Jan. 24) by Mr. J. T. Lloyd. We hope the local "saints" will do their utmost to give him the large audience and warm welcome to which he is entitled.

The London Freethinkers' Annual Dinner, under the auspices of the N. S. S. Executive, was a great success. Nearly a hundred and eighty sat down to an excellent repast in the Venetian Chamber at the Holborn Restaurant. This was the record for what may be called a time of peace. It reached within a dozen the number of last year, when the excitement of the "blasphemy" prosecution brought several to the Dinner who were never seen there before. The company included some provincial "saints," amongst whom we noted Mr. and Mrs. G. L. Alward, of Grimsby. A number of intending diners were kept away by indisposition, including Mr. J. T. Lloyd and Mr. Herbert Burrows, who telegraphed "good wishes for a successful gathering." One regular attendant at the Annual Dinners, Mr. W. A. Finchen, sent the President a letter of regret on account of non-attendance this year, dating from Calais, where he had been ordered by the doctor on account of a temporary breakdown. Mr. Lloyd, by the way, was not seriously ill, but confined indoors by a cold. He had attended every dinner since he joined the N. S. S. and was grieved to miss the one which he had been "looking forward with great pleasure." He wrote wishing "a record attendance and a very happy time."

There was quite a large number of ladies at the Dinner, and their bright dresses and animated faces gave a more festive touch to the assembly. Those who fancy that Freethought women must be dreadful "bluestockings" would have been undeceived if they could only have looked in for a few minutes. The ladies were "grace before meat" at the tables, and the dinner itself was all that could be desired. When it was over the tables were cleared away, and the Chamber arranged for the subsequent entertainment. Music and fun were provided by Miss Rose Dallow, Mr. A. B. Arnold,

Mr. Fredk. Lloyd, and the evergreen, side-splitting Mr. Will Edwards. The speaking was confined to a single toast and the Chairman's address. Mr. Foote's resuming his seat was the signal for an impromptu interruption. Mr. H. Cowell rose and ventured to suggest that they ought to toast the President. This was done enthusiastically, with "He's a jolly good fellow" and "Hip, hip, hurrah." The President thanked them, and congratulated them on their lungs. Then came the toast of the National Secular Society, which was humorously proposed by Mr. A. B. Moss and satisfactorily responded to by Mr. C. Cohen. The company broke up at 11.40 with "Auld Lang Syne," led by a Scotsman, Mr. J. Robertson, one of the Old Guard from the Bradlaugh days at the Hall of Science.

Miss E. M. Vance, the N. S. S. general secretary, was looking very tired before the evening was over. She has a lot of work to do in connection with the Annual Dinner, and she is not built to take such things easily. We are happy to say that she was looking more herself again three days later.

The West Ham Branch is trying to raise money towards the expenses of its Sunday evening lectures at Forest Gate Public Hall by means of a Cinderella Dance, which is to take place in the same Hall on Wednesday evening, February 3. Dancing from 7.15 till 11.45, with Mr. Quinton as M.C. Tickets 1s. each; double ticket 1s. 6d. Can be had of Mr. Vaughan, 2 Newcastle-street, E.C.

Mr. Richard Green, mayor of King's Lynn, who was elected in spite of his avowed Freethought to the highest office in the borough, writes us that urgent official business kept him and his wife from the London Freethinkers' Annual Dinner, which they had looked forward to attending. Mr. Green sends his annual subscription to the President's Honorarium Fund, with a further subscription from Mrs. Green, "who wishes to make a start this year." "Both of us," he says, "hope before very long to be in London and to hear you lecture. This we always regard as a very great treat. At the same time, we do not fail to appreciate the excellent fare we put before us every week in the *Freethinker*."

The *Globe* had a long and sensible article on "Kissing the Book." The fact was noticed by our veteran friend, Mr. F. J. Voisey, of Dartmouth, in a letter to the *Western Daily Mercury*. Mr. Voisey congratulated the *Globe* on its new-found common sense, but added that "advanced men have been advocating the same longer than this ancient paper has been in existence." But "better salvation at the eleventh hour than not at all."

"Abracadabra," whose very able, instructive, and interesting articles are highly valued by so many of our readers, has been sending us a new year's greeting. He expresses a hope that Mr. Foote "will be at the head of the Freethought party for many years to come." I trust, he also says, "the time will soon come when the *Freethinker* will more than pay its way. This best of all worlds seems to me, in many things, quite topsy-turvy. The circulation of such a rubbishing paper as ———, for instance, is steadily increasing. Why? Goodness only knows. Whenever I take it up I find it absolutely unreadable. I really cannot stand a distortion of facts—upon any subject whatever." We suggest that our esteemed contributor has really answered his own question. He will remember a famous dictum of Carlyle's about the population of this island. Of all countries in the civilised world this is about the worst for a paper that makes a purely intellectual appeal. Yet for that very reason it is all the more necessary. We believe we could have made money by taking ourselves and our paper to America; but we have always appreciated the spirit of Thomas Paine's reply to a friend who said "Where freedom is, there is my country." "Where freedom is *not*, there is *my* country," was the great man's noble answer. He meant, of course, that he was built to fight for freedom instead of tamely enjoying it.

One of the Immediate Practical Objects of the N. S. S. is the extension of the moral law to the lower animals. Not that man is to make them act morally towards him, but that he is to act morally towards them. We have pleasure, therefore, in drawing attention at the opening of a new year to the *Humanitarian*, the organ of the Humanitarian League. This little penny monthly is admirably conducted by Mr. H. S. Salt, who has an able and interesting article in the January number, entitled "A Word to 'G. K. C.' " We hope a good number of our readers, if they have not already done so, will become subscribers to the *Humanitarian* during 1909. Now is the time to make a beginning. The League's office is at 53 Chancery-lane, London, W.C.

Protestantism and Persecution.

IN the crucial matter of persecution for opinions sake, the difference between the Catholic and the Protestant is merely the difference between cruelty less cant and cruelty overflowing with cant. The records of the Catholic Church* describe the crimes and punishments of the heretic in a cold, matter-of-fact, lawyer-like style, with none of that sublime affectation of outraged religion and horrified morality which we find paraded in an English indictment for blasphemy, or in the holy unctuousness of language in which the sainted Calvin impeached, convicted, and condemned Servetus. Protestantism can never shake itself free of its original sin of bloodguiltiness, not only in reference to Servetus, but to all the long line of martyrs whom it has sacrificed either at the stake, on the scaffold, in the torture-chamber, or in prison, as victims to its mean ideal of intellectual subservience to its curious Bible-distilled faiths and fancies. Owing to this initial fault, its vaunted right of private judgment becomes a flagrant parade of hypocrisy, inasmuch as the enjoyment of liberty is made contingent upon a slavish show of conformity with Bible, creed, or tradition. In a word, Protestantism has no finality; it is merely a stage in the mental evolution of races and individuals, and has no meaning—and no honesty—except as implying a temporary halting-place for the moving caravan of human thought.

We can understand and respect the logical position of the Catholic Church. It claims to speak with divine authority; to hold the keys of heaven and of hell, to be the appointed and infallible interpreter of the oracles of divine wisdom, and to have the sole and exclusive cure of souls. Viewed from that position, the Church is the earthly machinery for realising man's temporal and eternal well-being, moved and controlled to procure that end by God himself; and the interposition of the individual will and thought of man in the working of that machinery is, *ex hypothesi*, not only rebellious sacrilege but presumptuous folly. As soon, however, as the Protestant—be he Calvin or Luther or the Bishop of London—denies the authority of the Catholic Church, and claims a counter right to think—on any terms—for himself, he cannot, with any spark of honesty or consistency, withhold the same right—with all its consequences—to every other individual. This, however, is an elementary truth not yet grasped by the average Protestant nor perceived by the beatific vision of the "Nonconformist Conscience," and certainly it is left still unacknowledged by the majesty of English law, in which is still enshrined that odious principle of persecution which in 1600 led the Papal Inquisition at Rome to roast Bruno alive for heresy, even as in 1553 it had already led the Protestant Inquisition at Geneva to burn Servetus to death for the self-same crime. History is there, with its pages red with blood and aglow with flame, to teach us that the Protestant crocodile is not less hungry and eager to devour the heretic than the Catholic alligator, the characteristic difference being not in the essential ferocity of the twain—*Arcades ambo* in respect of intolerance for others' opinion—but in the restricted scope, in time and space, of the followers and abettors of Calvin as compared with the breed of Torquemada.

In illustration of these observations, I cannot forbear to open again† the illuminating pages of Auguste Dide's remarkable study of Calvin.‡ The proofs are there accumulated of the indecent jubilation of the Protestant Churches of Switzerland over the prospect of roasting Servetus alive for the glory of God.

Before finally condemning Servetus to death, the Council, before whom he was tried, determined to

* Orano, *Liberi Pensatori bruciati in Roma* (Rome, 1904).

† See *Freethinker*, December 27, 1908.

‡ Miguel Servet y Calvino (F. Sempere y Cia, Editores: Valencia, 1908. Price 1 peseta).

submit the matter to the various churches in Switzerland, and obtain their several opinions as to the guilt and punishment of the offender. The consultation of the churches was not much to the liking of Calvin, who was eager for the speedy condemnation of the heretical Spaniard. Being denied, for the moment, this satisfaction, he set himself to work in order to harden the hearts of his saintly colleagues in the evangelical apostolate, and make them implacable against every appeal of mercy or toleration. He accordingly wrote to Bullinger, the head of the Church at Zurich, and to Sulzer, an influential pastor of the Church at Bale, insisting upon the culpability of Servetus and the necessity of getting rid of the blasphemer as soon as possible, at the same time imploring them, in writing to their several correspondents, to paint with glowing colors the picture of the impiety of the prisoner.

The deadly purpose of the atrabilious reformer was heartily supported by Farel, pastor of the Church at Neuchâtel. As Dide points out (p. 197), this worthy, on this occasion, performed the miracle of being even more cruel than Calvin himself. His letter, in reply to Calvin's, is a model of combined cant and ferocity. "The coming of Servetus to Geneva"—so runs the infamous epistle—"is an admirable dispensation of God. God grant he may repent, even though at the last hour! Certainly it would be a wondrous sight to see the man who sought to ruin so many souls suffering death in a sincere spirit of conversion and of edification of the spectators. Yes, the judges would show themselves cruel and hostile to Jesus Christ and his doctrine if they were to remain insensible of the horrible blasphemies with which this execrable heretic offends the majesty of God in striving to overthrow the gospel of Christ and corrupt all the Churches. But I hope that God will inspire the men, who know well how to chastise thieves and sacrilegious offenders, so that their conduct in this matter may win for them just applause; and that they will condemn to death the man who with so much obstinacy has persevered in his heresies and caused the ruin of a vast number of souls!" And this holy ghoul, unctuously breathing out flames of fire to consume the hated heretic, is to have his memory honored in the gorgeous monument which the piety of Geneva is about to erect in commemoration of the four hundredth anniversary of Calvin's inauspicious birth! Well, be it so; if Protestantism can throw no other stones than monumental and honorific ones at the memory of theological thugs like Farel, then Protestantism is past praying for.

The consultations of the Swiss Churches lasted three months. The Churches were unanimous in proclaiming the culpability of Servetus and in demonstrating "their confidence in and affection for Calvin and his colleagues."

The Church at Berne, in its reply, prayed that the faithful should be "protected from that pest." The pest was Servetus. The protection was a wall of flame with Servetus offered in holocaust.

The language of the Church at Zurich purveyed the *crème de la crème* of canting hypocrisy. Writing to the Council at Geneva, it said:—

"Against Servetus we think that you ought to display much faith and much zeal; above all, because our churches have the bad reputation in foreign lands of being heretical and favorable to heresy. But the holy Providence of God offers you in this moment an opportunity of washing your hands, as well as ours, of this injurious suspicion, providing you show yourselves vigilant and skilful in preventing the ulterior propaganda of this poison. We do not doubt that your Lordships will act in this spirit."

The Church at Schaffhouse was even more insistent than its sister church. It asked for the heretic's death, *sans phrase* and without delay.

"We cannot doubt that in your laudable prudence you will repress the attempts of Servetus in order that his blasphemies may not, like a gangrene, corrode the members of Christ's body, seeing that to employ long speeches for the purpose of destroying these errors would be to reason like a fool" (Dide, p. 199).

Anything more cynical and atrocious than this evangelical dictum it would be impossible to root out from the manuals of the Inquisition itself.

The Church at Bale opined that if Servetus should persist "in his perverse opinions he should be repressed in such a way that it would be impossible for him in the future to molest the Church of Christ." In a word, there was not a single discordant note. All the Churches were of one mind. As Dide points out (p. 200), when one cried "Kill," the other shouted "Slaughter." The voices may have been more or less strong and clear, but they all sang the same tune, a dirge for Servetus and a pæan of praise to his murderer.

Calvin, as Rillet tells us, was confident as to the result. He trusted in the effect which the letters from the Churches would produce on the minds of the judges. On the 25th of October, 1553, he wrote to his friend Bullinger—the man who said that "if Satan were to come up from hell he would talk in no other fashion than this Spaniard" (Dide, p. 10)—in these words: "I do not know what will be done with the man. I suppose, however, the Council will deliver its sentence to-morrow, and that on the following day the individual will be taken to execution" (p. 200).

The protector of the Trinity was sound in his prognostications. On the 26th of October the Council met for its final session. All the friends of Calvin were present. The libertines (a fancy name of reproach, applied by Calvin's party to the moderates in opposition) abstained from attendance, only one of its members, Perrin, being present. The verdict of the Council was as follows:—

"Having read the summary of the trial of Michael Servetus, prisoner;

Having seen the report of the persons consulted by us, and taken into consideration his great errors and blasphemies;

The Council passes sentence:

That he be taken to Champel and there burnt alive, and that he be executed to-morrow and his books burnt."

Thus mightily grew the word of God and prevailed—at Geneva.

Two years later, Perrin and fifty members of his party were condemned to be decapitated. The sentence added, "that his members were to be cut to pieces to be nailed to posts, and that, as for Perrin, before being decapitated his hand was to be lopped off." The same year Daniel Berthelier, one of the sons of the liberator of Geneva, had his head chopped off. All these horrors occurred under the omnipotent sway of Calvin, the minister of the Crucified One, and spiritual sovereign of the Protestant Rome! (Dide, p. 201.)

Thus the fanatical and cruel genius of Calvin indelibly stamped the seal of persecution upon the principles of the Reformation. As Dide very truly points out, the spirit of toleration lost all that the spirit of Calvinism gained. As soon as the influence of the Genevan Reformer was strengthened, the principle of persecution showed itself more powerful and fanatical than ever.* And this phenomenon exhibited itself even during the moments of sharp struggle with Catholicism, when prudence, as well as reason, might have suggested to the Protestants the wisdom of not imitating the violence of their Catholic antagonists. What can we think, then, of an attempt to renovate religion which left intact the barbarous cruelties of the past? In presence of the spectacle which was presented to the world by the fanaticism of a Calvin or a Farel, the historian is inclined to believe that if Protestantism had triumphed in France the Catholics would have had to run the gauntlet of massacre on some Saint Bartholomew's Day, and that the Reformers, swollen into a majority, would have crowded the prisons or fed the flames with the Catholics whom all along they so rigorously hated, even as they hated heretics and unbelievers. France and the world at large learnt its great lesson of toleration, not from

* For details as to this, see my article of December 27, 1908.

the religious reformers of the sixteenth century, but from the long line of sceptics and philosophers culminating in Voltaire, Diderot, and the Encyclopædists of the eighteenth century.

The fate of Servetus sealed the moral doom of Protestantism. The act of Calvin in 1558 established for the benefit of the Catholic Church a precedent for burning Bruno in 1600. It did more; it furnished a rough sort of moral justification for visiting upon the Reformers the Nemesis of the crimes they had perpetrated or winked at in the heyday of a mere local and temporary triumph. For it so happened that seven years after the death of Servetus, the Parliament of France, in its address to the then King, gave utterance to these singular remarks, the logical force of which no Protestant can gainsay:—

“Those who censure the rigor of the edicts of the late Kings, Francis I. and Henry II., injure without cause their honorable memory, seeing that their edicts were justified by the accusers themselves, some of whom being private persons without jurisdiction and usurpers of the authority belonging to others, have employed rigorous punishments against those whom they have adjudged heretics, like the Anabaptists, Servetus, and others.”

And thus Calvin's Swiss chickens came home to roost at Paris, to become birds of evil omen to Protestantism and messengers of disaster to France.

In finally closing Dide's splendid work, I am glad again to commend it, and the unique series of advanced publications, issued by Sempere, to which it belongs, to the readers and lovers of Spanish literature whom I have reason to know are also readers of this journal.

WILLIAM HEAFORD.

P.S.—Whilst correcting the proofs of this article, I received from M. Dide the original of his great work, *Michel Servet et Calvin* (Paris. Ernest Flammarion, Editeur, 26 rue Racine; 3 fr. 50 c.), which is already in its 4th edition. It has also been translated into Italian, in addition to the Spanish translation on which my articles were based. As M. Dide's work now publishes, for the first time, the official records of the prosecution of Servetus, which the author truly describes as one of the monstrosities of the sixteenth century, it is to be hoped that an English edition will shortly be forthcoming W. H.

The Life of Darwin.—I.

ONLY a few feet from the tomb of Sir Isaac Newton, in Westminster Abbey, lie the bones of Charles Darwin. The two men are worthy compeers in the scientific roll of fame. Newton's discovery and establishment of the law of Gravitation marked an epoch in the history of science, and the same may be said of Darwin's discovery and establishment of the law of Natural Selection. The *Principia* and the *Origin of Species* rank together as two of the most memorable monuments of scientific genius.

In a certain sense, however, Darwin's achievements are the more remarkable, because they profoundly affect our notions of man's position and destiny in the universe. The great English naturalist was of a modest and retiring disposition. He shrank from all kinds of controversy. He remarked, in one of his letters to Professor Huxley, that he felt it impossible to understand how any man could get up and make an impromptu speech in the heat of a public discussion. Nevertheless, he was demolishing the popular superstition far more effectually than the most sinewy and dexterous athletes of debate. He was quietly revolutionising the world of thought. He was infusing into the human mind the leaven of a new truth. And the new truth was tremendous in its implications. No wonder the clergy reviled and cursed it. They did not understand it any more than the Inquisitors who burnt Bruno and tortured Galileo understood the Copernican astronomy; but

they felt, with a true professional instinct, with that cunning of self-preservation which nature bestows on every species, including priests, that the Darwinian theory was fatal to their deepest dogmas, and therefore to their power, their privileges, and their profits. They had a sure intuition that Darwinism was the writing on the wall, announcing the doom of their empire; and they recognised that their authority could only be prolonged by hiding the scripture of destiny from the attention of the multitude.

The popular triumph of Darwinism must be the death-blow to theology. The Copernican astronomy destroyed the geocentric theory, which made the earth the centre of the universe, and all the celestial bodies its humble satellites. From that moment the false astronomy of the Bible was doomed, and its exposure was bound to throw discredit on “the Word of God.” From that moment, also, the notion was doomed that the Deity of this inconceivable universe was chiefly occupied with the fortunes of the human insects on this little planet, which is but a speck in the infinitude of space. Similarly the Darwinian biology is a sentence of doom on the natural history of the Bible. Evolution and special creation are antagonistic ideas. And if man himself has descended, or ascended, from lower forms of life; if he has been developed through thousands of generations from a branch of the Simian family; it necessarily follows that the Garden of Eden is a fairy-tale, that Adam and Eve were not the parents of the human race, that the Fall is an Oriental legend, that Original Sin is a theological libel on humanity, that the Atonement is an unintelligible dogma, and the Incarnation a relic of ancient mythology.

Let it not be forgotten, however, that Darwinism would have been impossible if geology had not prepared its way. Natural Selection wants plenty of elbow-room; Evolution requires immeasurable time. But this could not be obtained until geology had made a laughing stock of Biblical chronology. The record of the rocks reveals a chronology, not of six thousand, but of millions of years; and during a vast portion of that time life has existed, slowly ascending to higher stages, and mounting from the monad to man. It was fitting, therefore, that Darwin should dedicate his first volume to Sir Charles Lyell.

Darwin was not a polemical writer; on the contrary, his views were advanced with extreme caution. He was gifted with magnificent patience. When the *Origin of Species* was published he knew that Man was not exempted from the laws of evolution. He satisfied his conscience by remarking that “Much light will be thrown on the origin of man and his history,” and then waited twelve years before expounding his final conclusions in the *Descent of Man*. This has, indeed, been made a subject of reproach. But Darwin was surely the best judge as to how and when his theories should be published. He did his own great work in his own great way. There is no question of concealment. He gave his views to the world when they were fully ripened; and if, in a scientific treatise, he forbore to discuss the bearing of his views on the principles of current philosophy and the dogmas of popular theology, he let fall many remarks in his text and footnotes which were sufficient to show the penetrating reader that he was far from indifferent to such matters and had very definite opinions of his own. What could be more striking, what could better indicate his attitude of mind, than the fact that in the *Origin of Species* he never mentioned the book of Genesis, while in the *Descent of Man* he never alluded to Adam and Eve? Such contemptuous silence was more eloquent than the most pointed attack.

Before Darwin was born his patronymic had been made illustrious. It is a curious fact that both Darwin and Newton came of old Lincolnshire families. Newton was born in the county, but the Darwins had removed in the seventeenth century to the neighboring county of Nottingham. William

Darwin (born 1655) married the heiress of Robert Waring, of Wilsford. This lady also inherited the manor of Elston, which has remained ever since in the family. It went to the younger son of William Darwin. This Robert Darwin was the father of four sons, the youngest of whom, Erasmus Darwin, was born on December 12, 1731, at Elston Hall.

The life of Erasmus Darwin has been charmingly written by his illustrious grandson. Prefixed to the Memoir is a photographic portrait from a picture by Wright, of Derby. It shows a strong, kind face, dominated by a pair of deep-set, commanding eyes, surmounted by a firm, broad brow and finely-modelled head. The whole man looks one in a million. Gazing at the portrait, it is easy to understand his scientific eminence, his great reputation as a successful physician; his rectitude, generosity, and powers of sympathy and imagination.

Dr. Erasmus Darwin practised medicine at Derby, but his fame was widespread. While driving to and from his patients he wrote verses of remarkable polish, embodying the novel ideas with which his head fermented. They were not true poetry, although they were highly praised by Edgeworth and Hayley, and even by Cowper; but Byron was guilty of "the falsehood of extremes" in stigmatising their author as "a mighty master of unmeaning rhyme." The rhyme was certainly not unmeaning: on the contrary, there was plenty of meaning, and fresh meaning too, but it should have been expressed in prose. Erasmus Darwin had a surprising insight into the methods of nature; he threw out a multitude of pregnant hints in biology, and once or twice he nearly stumbled on the law of Natural Selection. He saw the "struggle for existence" with remarkable clearness. "The stronger locomotive animals," he wrote, "devour the weaker ones without mercy. Such is the condition of organic nature! whose first law might be expressed in the words, 'Eat or be eaten,' and which would seem to be one great slaughter-house, one universal scene of rapacity and injustice." Mr. G. H. Lewes credits him with "a profounder insight into psychology than any of his contemporaries and the majority of his successors exhibit," and says that he "deserves a place in history for that one admirable conception of psychology as subordinate to the laws of life." Dr. Maudsley bears testimony to his sagacity in regard to mental disorders; Dr. Lauder Brunton shows that he anticipated Rosenthal's theory of "catching cold"; and a dozen other illustrations might be given of his scientific prescience in chemistry, anatomy, and medicine. He was also a very advanced reformer. He believed in exercise and fresh air, and taught his sons and daughters to swim. He saw the vast importance of educating girls. He studied sanitation, pointed out how towns should be applied with pure water, and urged that sewage should be turned to use in agriculture instead of being allowed to pollute our rivers. He also sketched out a variety of useful inventions, which he was too busy to complete himself. Nor did he confine himself to practical reforms. He sympathised warmly with Howard, who was reforming our prison system; and he denounced slavery at the time when the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel held slaves in the Barbadoes, and absolutely declined to give them Christian instruction.

No one will be surprised to learn that Erasmus Darwin was a sceptic. Indeed there seems to have been a family tendency in that direction. His sister Susannah, a young lady of eighteen, writing to him at school in his boyhood, after some remarks on abstinence during Lent, said "As soon as we kill our hog I intend to take a part thereof with the Family, for I'm informed by a learned Divine that Hog's Flesh is Fish, and has been so ever since the Devil entered into them and ran into the Sea." Bright, witty Susannah! She died unmarried, and became, as Darwin says, the "very pattern of an old lady, so nice looking, so gentle, so kind, and passionately fond of flowers."

Erasmus Darwin's scepticism was of an early growth. At the age of twenty-three, in a letter to Dr. Okes, after announcing his father's death he professes a firm belief in "a superior *Ens Entium*," but rejects the notion of a special providence, and says that "general laws seem sufficient"; and while humbly hoping that God will "re-create us" after death, he plainly asserts that "the light of Nature affords us not a single argument for a future state." He has frequently been called an Atheist, but this is a mistake; he was a Deist, believing in God, but rejecting Revelation. Even Unitarianism was too orthodox for him, and he wittily called it "a feather-bed to catch a falling Christian."

His death occurred on April 10, 1802. He expired in his arm-chair "without pain or emotion of any kind." He had always hoped his end might be painless, and it proved to be so. Otherwise he was not disturbed by the thought of death. "When I think of dying," he wrote to his friend Edgeworth, "it is always without pain or fear."

Such a brief account of this extraordinary man would be inadequate to any other purpose, but it suffices to show that Darwin was himself a striking illustration of the law of heredity. Scientific boldness and religious scepticism ran in the blood of his race.

G. W. FOOTE.

(To be continued.)

THE THREE STAGES.

Each of our principal conceptions, each branch of our knowledge, passes in succession through three different theoretical states: the Theological or fictitious state, the Metaphysical or abstract state, and the Scientific or positive state. In other words, the human mind—by its very nature—makes use successively in each of its researches of three methods of philosophising, whose characters are essentially different, and even radically opposed to each other. We have first the Theological method, then the Metaphysical method, and finally the Positive method. Hence there are three kinds of philosophy or general systems of conceptions on the aggregate of phenomena, which are mutually exclusive of each other. The first is the necessary starting-point of human intelligence: the third represents its fixed and definitive state: the second is only destined to serve as a transitional method.—In the Theological state, the human mind directs its researches mainly towards the inner nature of beings, and towards the first and final causes of all the phenomena which it observes—in a word, towards Absolute Knowledge. It therefore represents these phenomena as being produced by the direct and continuous action of more or less numerous supernatural agents, whose arbitrary intervention explains all the apparent anomalies of the universe.—In the Metaphysical state, which is in reality only a simple general modification of the first state, the supernatural agents are replaced by abstract forces, real entities or personified abstractions, inherent in the different beings of the world. These entities are looked upon as capable of giving rise by themselves to all the phenomena observed, each phenomenon being explained by assigning it to its corresponding entity.—Finally, in the Positive state, the human mind, recognising the impossibility of obtaining absolute truth, gives up the search after the origin and destination of the universe and a knowledge of the final causes of phenomena. It only endeavors now to discover, by a well-combined use of reasoning and observation, the actual laws of phenomena—that is to say, their invariable relations of succession and likeness.—*Auguste Comte.*

Men make themselves, as it were, the mirror and rule of nature. It is incredible what a number of idols have been introduced into philosophy by the reduction of natural operations to a correspondence with human actions; that is, by imagining nature acts as man does, which is not much better than the heresy of the anthropomorphites, that sprung up in the cells and solitude of ignorant monks; or the opinion of Epicurus, who attributed a human figure to the gods. Velleius, the Epicurean, need not, therefore, have asked why God should have adorned the heavens with stars and lights, as master of the works. For if the grand architect had acted a human part, he would have ranged the stars into some beautiful and elegant order, as we see in the vaulted roofs of palaces; whereas we scarce find among such an infinite multitude of stars any figure either square, triangular, or rectilinear; so great a difference is there betwixt the spirit of man and the spirit of the universe.—*Bacon.*

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, J. T. Lloyd, "The Reasonableness of Unbelief."

WEST HAM BRANCH N.S.S. (Forest Gate Public (Lower) Hall, Woodgrange-road): 7.30, C. Cohen, a Lecture. Selections by the Band before lecture.

COUNTRY.

FAIRSWORTH (Secular Sunday School, Pole-lane): 6.30, Concert by E. Booth's Concert Party.

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 12 noon, Discussion Class; 6.30, Social Meeting. Burns and Paine.

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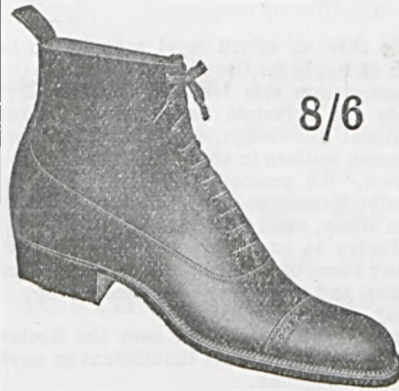
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