

# THE Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

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PRICE TWOPENCE

*We are our own devils. We drive ourselves out of our Edens.*—GOETHE.

## Various Matters.

To fight the bigots at Camberwell, who have excluded the *Freethinker* from all the Free Library reading-rooms in the borough, a Free Speech Defence League has been hurriedly formed, and in its name a public meeting will be held in the Dulwich Baths on Tuesday evening, March 2. Councillor A. B. Moss and Councillor Brooks signed the application, and it passed immediately. Councillor Moss will take the chair on March 2, and I believe he will be able to bring one or two other Councillors on the platform with him. I shall be on the platform myself as one of the speakers, and I daresay I shall be able to bring Mr. Cohen and Mr. Lloyd along with me. They are regular contributors to the *Freethinker* and are pretty nearly as much involved in its character as I am. They will naturally be concerned to defend this journal against the charge of injuring the "best interests" of the "young people" who read it.

The great hall of the Dulwich Baths holds about two thousand. We ought to have it filled on that evening, filled to overflowing, and filled with a sympathetic audience. An appeal must therefore be made to every *Freethinker* in Camberwell not only to attend himself, but to get other liberal-minded people to do likewise. Miss Vance is looking after the printing and general advertising. I beg all my friends, all who value the existence and esteem the character of this journal, all who love mental liberty, all who believe in equal rights of citizenship for the holders of every variety of opinion; I beg them all, I say, to give Miss Vance all the assistance they can in circulating the small printed announcements, and even in displaying posters. They can obtain the printed matter they require by applying to her at 2 Newcastle-street, E.C. A postcard will do—and it saves time and trouble.

The object of this meeting is larger than the life, the merits or the demerits, of any particular journal. A serious protest is to be made against municipal exclusiveness. A demand is to be made that the Town Council shall cease attempting to discriminate between various organs of public opinion, that it shall no longer show partiality to some and hostility to others. It will be submitted that the Town Council is elected to look after the civic interests, and not the religious interests, of the ratepayers; that the thoroughfares it has to keep in good repair are not those leading to heaven or hell.

There will be another opportunity of referring to this matter next week. And now I want to speak on another topic.

I was very sorry to disappoint the fine audience at Kentish Town on Sunday evening. My place was taken at very brief notice by Mr. A. B. Moss, who has acted so well in the Camberwell business, and who delivered a rattling lecture which was highly appreciated. This is the first time I have disappointed an audience for a long while. The fact is I really could not face the music on Sunday night. Had I been living in London, I might have hazarded

a drive in a four-wheeler, and trusted to my natural strength to triumph over indisposition on the platform. But I could not undergo sitting for a full hour and a half in a freezing slow train stopping at every station. The fact is, I was confined to my bedroom and in the hands of the doctor, who strongly advised me to run no risk. I have been suffering again for some time from my old enemy *insomnia*, which weakens one's powers of resistance to any attack. I felt a nasty cold coming on during Friday, and it developed so that for some twenty-four hours I had quite a diabolical time. But I rallied wonderfully on Sunday evening, and was very much better on Monday. I have been in the editorial chair all to-day (Tuesday), and I believe I shall certainly be able to fulfil my engagement at Glasgow on Sunday. But I see I shall have to be careful. I must try to slacken the pace a bit, and get away for a week's rest and change as soon as possible. I have been going at a great rate lately.

My pen has not been inactive in this week's *Freethinker*, but I am too "knocked" to write my usual front article. So the "Challenge of Secularism" has to wait again. I hope to do it ample justice next week.

G. W. FOOTE.

## Where is the Kingdom of Heaven?

BY L. K. WASHBURN.

INASMUCH as Jesus had so much to say about the kingdom of heaven, it does not seem impertinent to inquire where this kingdom is situated, and what it is like. It is not on earth, we are positive, not in Europe, Asia, Africa or America. We might infer, from some of the language of Jesus, that it was above our heads, up somewhere, and that the person referred to as his father by Jesus was the ruler thereof.

More than once Jesus refers to his father as being in heaven, and, in his famous prayer, he addresses "Our Father which art in heaven."

He tells us who shall and who shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. He was evidently familiar with this place and with its customs. It was of no use to offer the "righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees" as the price of admission to this kingdom. A person would have to do better than that or remain outside the gates. Jesus had evidently bought up the house, or had the sole privilege of selling the tickets to the entertainment. It was not his kingdom, it was his father's, and he pretended to have parental authority for his statements.

Jesus did not always use clear language. He sometimes spoke in parables. He seemed to think that muddy water was deep water. He employed words to hide his ignorance rather than to show his knowledge. When we have to guess what a person means it makes no particular difference what he means.

Jesus did upon several occasions tell in his way what heaven was like. At one time he likened it to "ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom." Five of the virgins were wise and five were not, that is, five took oil for their lamps and five did not. While the virgins



were asleep a cry was heard, announcing the coming of the bridegroom. Then they arose to trim their lamps, but only five would burn. While those who had no oil went to buy some the bridegroom came, and the five wise virgins went in to the marriage and the other five were shut out. Jesus winds up his parable with these words: "Watch, therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the son of man cometh." This story teaches that the one who is up and coming gets the most benefits, but what light it sheds on the problem of the kingdom of heaven we fail to see.

This parable is bad enough, but the second is worse. Jesus next tells us that "the kingdom of heaven is like a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants and delivered unto them his goods. To one he gave five talents, to another two, and to the third one; to every man according to his ability." After the man had started on his journey the servants considered what to do with their master's money. The one who had received five talents doubled his money by good investments, and had ten; the one who received two talents doubled his, and had four; while he who was given one talent hid his, for he was afraid of the market, and when his master returned from his journey gave him back what he had received. The man was pleased with the two who had loaned his money at excessive rates of interest, and called them faithful servants; but the one who feared to invest his master's money lest he might lose it was abused by his master and kicked out into darkness. The Jew in Jesus inspired this parable. But what is the meaning of it? That the man who robs his brother in the name of usury is nobler than the man who will not take advantage of his fellows.

The kingdom of heaven, according to this story, is driving a sharp bargain, taking unlawful interest of those whose necessities compel them to borrow money, getting more than is deserved—that is, it is a place for sharpers, robbers, thieves, and cut-throats.

We find it hard to see any sense in such foolish parables. If Jesus talked in this fashion, little wonder that he was looked upon as a lunatic. No one could find out what the kingdom of heaven was from such language. It might be a stock-exchange, a money-mart, or a den of thieves.

The kingdom of heaven is also the kingdom of God. God was in his kingdom; God was in heaven; and yet Jesus told the Pharisees that "the kingdom of God is within you." In the light of the two parables to which we have referred, what is the kingdom of God, or of heaven, which can be within man? If Jesus knew of what he was speaking, and had any fair comprehension of the meaning of words, when he prayed to his "father which art in heaven" he prayed to God in man.

There is only a religious meaning to the word "heaven" as employed by Jesus. It means nothing sensible, nothing tangible, nothing that can be understood or reduced to a fact. It is a word that hangs in the air.

The kingdom of heaven is everywhere—which is nowhere. It is a phrase used to deceive the ignorant. Persons who talk sense have no use for the word. When a priest says a soul has gone to heaven he is simply talking through his hat. He does not know what he means. He employs the theological vocabulary which he has been taught. What he says is parrot talk.

If there is a kingdom of heaven no one knows where it is or what it is like, from anything in the Bible.—*Truthseeker* (New York).

The first woman was an afterthought. She was not included in the original scheme of things, but was thrown in as a make-weight. What a strange compliment to the fair sex! There was more gallantry in Robert Burns, who said that Nature "First tried her 'prentice hand on man, And then she made the lasses, O."—*G. W. Foote*.

## Mr. Runciman and Secular Education.

THE intention of the Government on the education question is still undisclosed. The only light on the situation is that cast by a recent speech of the Minister of Education, Mr. Runciman, which, while it may please certain sections of the Christian world, will have the reverse effect on all lovers of social justice and educational progress. The good feature of his speech was the pronouncement that he was not prepared to make again the same attempt he had previously made, and failed. This, however, was an individual expression; it was only "as far as I am concerned," and a Government that has occupied so ridiculous a position for so long might probably find another Education Minister with a conveniently accommodating nature. Mr. Runciman also said that he had undertaken "the dreadful task of trying to get religious people to come to some sort of agreement," and that "of all the thankless tasks any man could undertake, that of trying to get religious people to agree with one another seemed to be the greatest." Well, if Mr. Runciman has learned this from his experience, he will not have lived in vain. What he has yet to learn is that where religious feelings are concerned, considerations of reason and justice, such as obtain in other directions, lose their influence. And this is true, not only of the people with whom the negotiations were held, but also of Mr. Runciman himself.

Mr. Runciman congratulated himself and the Government that they had advanced the controversy a stage. In one sense this is true, but not in the sense Mr. Runciman intended. It has advanced the controversy by the inevitable circumstance of bringing us a step nearer the end; but, as *any* more would have done this, there does not seem need for special thankfulness. It has also advanced it by once more showing the utter hopelessness of trying to secure educational peace by methods such as those attempted. Each of the rival religious bodies in the State is trying to get the same thing at the public expense, and each is resolved not to give way to the other. In this state of affairs, any compromise that might be reached would only mean a brief pause in the fighting. The compromise would be broken just as soon as either of the two parties found it profitable to commence active warfare. And even though the almost miraculous were achieved, and the sects permanently agreed upon some form of compromise, a growing body of public opinion, that declines to be exploited in the interests of sectarianism, would still have to be reckoned with.

Mr. Runciman said that "among the many things that emerged from the controversy was the fact that the bulk of the English people and the responsible governors, and an enormous preponderance of persons also in the Nonconformist and Established Churches, were perfectly well satisfied with simple Bible teaching given in the Council schools." Now I do not assert that the bulk of the English are either satisfied or dissatisfied with Bible teaching in the schools, but I do assert that this did not emerge from the controversy, for the simple reason that it was never in it. The people have never really been asked whether they desired to retain religious teaching in the schools or not. It is quite possible that if they were asked they might decide as Mr. Runciman says they would decide, but they have never had the issue placed squarely before them. And it must be remembered that the largest working-class organization in the country—the Trades Union Congress—by a practically unanimous vote decided in favor of a system of exclusively secular instruction in State schools.

And, if I understand the position of the Church of England, an "enormous preponderance" of its members are certainly not satisfied with simple Bible instruction in the schools. For years members of this Church have been striving to get more than Bible teaching in State schools; had they not so striven the compromise of 1870 would still hold the field.



They may submit to simple Bible teaching, but that is a very different thing to their being satisfied with it. Of the Nonconformists I am not so sure, because it happens that simple Bible teaching comes nearer to their religion than it does to that of Churchmen or Roman Catholics, and so they may easily be more content with it. But if there be an "enormous preponderance" of these who want Bible teaching at the cost of the State and at the expense of those who do not believe in the Bible, then it is only a proof of what little principle these opponents of the State patronage of religion and champions of religious equality possess. But Mr. Runciman, being a Nonconformist himself, may be better acquainted with the lack of principle among his fellow religionists than I am.

Mr. Runciman then went on to point out that the secular solution, which many of his friends had urged him to adopt, would not satisfy either Roman Catholics or numbers of Churchmen and Nonconformists. Probably not; but this is beside the real question at issue. The overthrow of the Roman Church in Britain did not please Roman Catholics, the disestablishment of the Irish Church did not please Churchmen, and the disestablishment of the Church in England and Wales would please them still less. Yet Mr. Runciman approves of the first two, and would support the last. And as no compromise that could be reached would please all Christians, the fact that many of them would be displeased with Secular Education is not a very conclusive argument against it. Moreover, it is surely a strange doctrine that statesmen are only to do that which pleases everybody—or at least please a sufficiently large number to return them to power. This, I imagine, is what Mr. Runciman has at the back of his mind; and, if so, it is an opportunism quite divorced from moral considerations. Some concern for justice all round should be shown, even by politicians. The people could be taught to expect justice from politicians, but they will never develop that desirable expectancy until politicians do their best to educate the electorate in this direction.

"What does the secular solution mean?" asked Mr. Runciman. "Does it mean that there is to be no prayer in our schools, but simple Bible teaching only? Do the supporters of the secular solution wish to exclude the Bible from the schools? If that were the proposal, I, for one, need not discuss it any further, for I would never be a party to its exclusion." Now this last expression is interesting from a personal point of view; from any other it is quite out of place. Evidently Mr. Runciman regards himself as a champion of the Bible in the schools, and as a private individual he has every right to play that part. But as a Minister of State he represents, and takes money for representing, not merely British Bibliolators, but the community as a whole. As a Minister, and more particularly as a Nonconformist, he has nothing whatever to do with religion, or with satisfying religious desires. If he cares to officiate in some chapel during off hours, let him do so; he may then air his religion as long as he pleases; but to use his political office to foster religion is a monstrous abuse of his position. Fortunately, were he driven to political martyrdom by the approach of Secular Education, other men might be found who would fill his office without penalising the non-religions for the benefit of the pious.

What the Secular Solution means may be easily stated. It certainly does not mean opening the school with prayer, since whether people pray or not, or what they shall pray, is no concern whatever of the State. Nor does it mean keeping the Bible, as the Bible, in the schools. If the Bible is there it must be upon the same footing as all other books, with teachers trained to use it or refer to it as they would use or refer to any other volume. The Secular Solution means confining the State to its legitimate functions, taxing the community in order to minister to its common needs, teaching only that which we all believe in common, and leaving all such speculative subjects as are by their very nature

incapable of verification to be looked after by such as are interested in them. This measures out justice to all, and keeps the State to a real neutrality in matters of religious belief. It is, moreover, an endeavor quite in accord with the best tendencies of the age, and I do not imagine that even the threatened retirement of Mr. Runciman will be enough to prevent this tendency realising itself.

Mr. Runciman is of opinion that "below the surface the English people are a religious people, and they would not consent to turning the Bible out of the schools." Personally, I feel inclined to be more complimentary to the English people than is Mr. Runciman, and to say that the English can be brought to act as sensibly and as justly as any other provided they are educated along the right lines. But when responsible Ministers mistake their position for the rostrum of a chapel, and go about the country telling people of the evils that will result from keeping religion out of the public schools, their desire to keep it in is far more evidence of misdirected education than of sincere religious conviction. And, again, I have to point out that if the people are not inclined to act justly, it is the duty of those who pose as their leaders to correct this fault as quickly as they may. Moreover, when one is told that any Government that went in for the Secular Solution would "deserve a first-class thrashing at the polls," we are again listening to the chapel advocate rather than to a responsible statesman desirous of acting justly towards his countrymen. A Government that went in for Secular Education might be beaten at the polls, but there are still people living who think an honorable death preferable to a dishonored life.

Mr. Runciman's ability for speaking authoritatively on the psychology of the English people is well shown by his reply to those who think it enough for teachers to instruct their pupils in "truth, justice, purity, altruism, true patriotism, self-control, and charity." He says it would be impossible "to prevent the Biblical bases of the maxims from creeping out in the course of the teaching." The "Biblical bases"! Why, these qualities have no more their necessary bases in the Bible than in Andersen's fairy tales. Mr. Runciman is positively more uninstructed in this matter than are numbers of the clergy—or he pretends to be so. All these qualities are social qualities, and actually are taught without the aid of the Bible, just as they are exemplified in the lives of those who are without any belief in its authority. This belated Bibliolatry of some of our public men is one of the most depressing features of English life. For when the leaders are such, what can one expect from the rank and file? A year that is witnessing the centenary of the birth of Charles Darwin also witnesses expressions from a Minister of Education better suited to the eighteenth century than to the twentieth. Really it makes one face Mr. Runciman's retirement with equanimity—almost with hope.

C. COHEN.

### The God-Seeing Faculty.

NOTHING is more palpable than the utter lack of unanimity among theologians on any point whatever. Not only are they in the habit of contradicting one another, they are quite as much given to disagreeing with themselves at different times and in altered connections. For example, some argue that Christianity is "an essentially reasonable thing," and can be successfully vindicated at reason's bar, while others treat it as altogether above reason, and as incapable of being either understood or judged by the intellect. It is also found that the same divine will, on different occasions and for different purposes, champion each of those absolutely irreconcilable positions. In the *Christian World* for February 11, "J. B." affirms that the intellect has its limitations. "We do not touch God by reason," he says. "Our intelligence



is a machine which, marvellous as are its powers, does not succeed in reaching the final reality." This is a significant admission. As intelligent beings, we are not religious. Did we follow our reason we would never believe in God. Logic leaves us Atheists. On these limitations of reason "J. B." is most emphatic. He says:—

"Our intelligence cannot find for us the *Ding an sich*, the thing in itself. We get the spiritual values in another way. It is through the soul's necessities, by its unformulated instincts, we gain the certitude of God, of freedom, and of immortality, which the unaided speculative intellect is powerless to attain."

"J. B." lays great stress on the statement that these God-discerning instincts are "unformulated." He asserts that the "unformulated is the biggest, the most influential thing in us." Thus instinct is exalted above reason, and this in opposition to Coleridge, who observes that "instinct in a rational, responsible, and self-conscious animal is understanding." What these "unformulated instincts" are "J. B." does not inform us, any more than he tells us what there is deeper than thought from which thought comes, or what there is greater than religion, of which all religions are but so many inadequate expressions. He believes in some "spiritual reality that is at once in man and beyond him, and that strives in various ways to possess and to form him." This "spiritual reality, in varying intensities, at different periods of history, presses upon humanity, seeking admission, claiming acquaintance, and bringing new features into the life of the race."

It is clear that, in "J. B.'s" argument, everything depends upon the existence of this spiritual reality. Without it religion would be impossible. "It is in us to begin with," our essayist declares, "or there could never have been any response to the outside appeal. The religious leaders, in whom this reality works most powerfully, in offering its message to their fellows, are thereby asserting their belief in the essentially spiritual nature of man. Without that their Gospel would be an absurdity. It would be an orator exhorting a congregation of trees; a musician seeking fame from stocks and stones." "And the genuine prophet feels sure of it, even in what seem the least likely quarters." Here "J. B." makes two unfortunate quotations, neither of which serves his case in the least. The first is from Lecky, to the effect that "Methodism planted a fervid and enduring religious sentiment in the midst of the most brutal and neglected portions of the population." The second is from Justin McCarthy's *Four Georges*, and conveys precisely the same idea. According to Lecky and Mr. McCarthy, the Methodist Revival *planted* something in the minds of the people, or caused to stream in upon them something they did not previously possess. "J. B.'s" point, however, is that Wesley and Whitefields could not have kindled the revival had not the best part of it been already *in* the people.

Now, the first criticism to be passed upon the teaching of our essayist is that it is contrary to the Scriptures. The doctrine of the essentially spiritual nature of man is a heretical innovation. According to the apostle Paul, man is not by nature a spiritual being, but has spirituality conferred upon him by an act of supernatural grace. It is the Christian alone who may be described as a spiritual man, all others being characterised as natural men. The contrast between the two types (1 Cor. ii. 14-16) is very great, so great that the natural man can never become spiritual except by undergoing a second birth. The spiritual instinct, which "J. B." declares to be in every man, is by Paul regarded as a special endowment granted only to believers in Christ.

The strongest objection to "J. B.'s" theory, however, is that it is not true to life. It is a very serious matter for a theologian to give an apostle the lie, but it is a more serious business still when he contradicts the testimony of everyday facts. One fact ignored by the theory under discussion is that every man is born without this so-called spiritual instinct. Man does not take to religion as the bird does to fly-

ing or the fish to swimming. The religious life never begins instinctively, but always as the result of long and laborious training. The child breathes by instinct, but he must be taught to believe in God and to pray. His body's necessity leads him to seek for his mother's breast, but his soul's needs do not direct him to God for satisfaction. Indeed, he does not even suspect that he has a soul until his teachers assure him of the alleged fact.

It is a fallacy to say that man has an instinctive longing for God. It would be much nearer the truth to say that he has an instinctive longing to get rid of and forget God after he has learned to believe in him. Read the Old Testament and you will learn that the Jews' besetting sin was forgetfulness of Jehovah; and the apostle Paul informs us that the Pagan world of his day was wholly without God. The chief complaint of the very best Christians of all ages against themselves has been that they were constantly tempted to turn away from their Heavenly Father and live without a thought of him. Even "J. B." himself admits that "there are breadths of European society to-day, godless," an admission which discredits his theory. Of course, the absence of God to him means emptiness; but how are we to account for the absence on the assumption that man possesses a spiritual instinct? Certain birds must migrate when the time comes; they cannot disregard their instincts; yet man is represented as disobeying the instinct that would drive him to, and keep him in close touch with God. Here is the statement:—

"Men having lost the place which the life of the spirit brings are trying to fill themselves with substitutes. Civilisation is a scene of enormous activities at its circumference, with a desolate emptiness at its centre. Our science is bankrupt of spiritual satisfaction. Its only revelation is of its own powerlessness to help us. The foaming activities of society are emptier still."

What that extract brings into prominence is the absolute impotence of man's spiritual instinct, an impotence so complete as to form a conclusive proof of its non-existence. Does "J. B." not know that the civilisation which he so fiercely vilifies and the society which he so utterly despises, are often gloried in as Christian products? We do not pronounce his estimate of either false; but we do wish to emphasise the fact that had it not been for Christianity we would not have had either in its present condition, and that what is wrong with both is not the absence but the presence of the belief in God.

To science the extract does a gross injustice. It is true that science does not administer "spiritual satisfaction," in the supernatural sense; but it fails to supply it simply because it does not believe in it, or in any human need of it. Its fundamental teaching is that man is only the highest and noblest of the animals, differing from the rest, not in nature, but merely in degrees; that his belief in supernatural beings and forces marks at once the brilliancy of his imagination and the depth of his ignorance; and that in proportion as his knowledge increases the number of his superstitions diminishes and his outlook upon life becomes more reasonable and practical. But it is monstrously false to declare that the only revelation of science "is of its own powerlessness to help us." As a matter of fact science not only claims to be able to help us, but actually does help us in most substantial ways. It has already shown us the path of life, and it is rapidly discovering how we may walk in it with both safety and delight. The doctrine of evolution, which is the greatest of all scientific discoveries, has, for the first time, assigned to man his true place in Nature, and is now teaching him how to occupy that place efficiently and profitably. Evolution and supernatural religion have literally nothing in common, and they who accord wholehearted hospitality to the former usually turn their backs upon the latter. That is exactly how Darwin himself acted. Science relieved him of his religious faith. Beginning life as a deeply religious man he ended it as a pure Agnostic. No one can



honestly be a thoroughgoing evolutionist, in Darwin's sense, and remain a believer in a God of infinite power and boundless love. Evolution politely bows all deities out of existence, and shows how the belief in them arose, in primitive times, as the outcome of adopting unenlightened and false interpretations of wholly natural phenomena.

The belief in God and immortality originated in the childhood of the race. The same belief originates to-day in the childhood of individuals, and those who do not acquire it in the days of their youth go through life without it. There are thousands of adults in Great Britain to-day who have never possessed it. The spiritual instinct so confidently spoken of by "J. B." as a real possession of the race they have never felt or known for a single moment. The sense of God is not an instinct, but an acquirement; not a necessity of our nature, but an excrescent appendage due to a long process of formal instruction, which can only be cut off with the sharpened knife of reason. What is needed is, not a religious revival, for which "J. B." is so ardently yearning, but the acquisition of knowledge, together with the development and application of that practical wisdom which without knowledge is impossible.

J. T. LLOYD.

### An Echo of the Past.

In your kind reference to me lately you said my memory went back to the days of Charles Southwell. Yes, that is true. When I was a boy his lectures attracted crowded audiences, and in those days there was plenty of Christian opposition, and his sharp, witty tongue doubtless made him many enemies. He was arrested in Bristol and charged with blasphemy. In the course of his evidence he was asked if he believed in God? He replied "No." That answer procured him twelve months' imprisonment in Bristol Gaol. He well knew the risk he ran, but he gave an honest reply.

There was an old gentleman by the name of Thomas Whiting (a retired ironmonger) that worshipped Mr. Southwell, and although his residence was about two miles from the Gaol, he took him a hot dinner every day for the twelve months. A very practical way of showing his friendly feeling.

Mr. Whiting had been a soldier in his young days, and fought at the battle of Waterloo. As he was a strong Secularist, it was very galling to him to be marched to church every Sunday, as he preferred taking long walks in the country, and studying nature. Therefore he made a respectful protest to his commanding officer, and asked to be kindly exempted from church attendance.

This was regarded as a dreadful offence. In those intolerant and ignorant days a soldier was considered a machine, never to think, but simply obey orders; and a man that objected to go to church was nothing less than an outlaw! The officer was so surprised that he sent an account of it to the Duke of Wellington.

"The Iron Duke" was a severe martinet, and had a "short and easy method" with malcontents. He sent orders that Whiting was to be flogged, and this brutal sentence was actually carried out, and Whiting bore the scars on his back until his death. I have heard him speak of it various times.

I remember when the Duke of Wellington died, and Mr. Whiting exclaimed fiercely, "I always hoped I should live to see the old villain out"—and he may be excused for his resentment.

I knew him for many years, and always found him a very good man,—thoughtful, intelligent, and kind-hearted, although he was flogged to make him know that Christianity was a religion of love.

W. H. MORRISH.

### Acid Drops.

England is a Christian country. We have an Established Church with some thirty thousand parsons, and what are called Free Churches with some twenty thousand more. Religious teaching is given in nearly all our elementary schools, and Catholics, Anglicans, and Nonconformists fight to keep it there. Morality without religion is declared to be pernicious or impossible, and Secular Education is declared to be the highway to hell. And what is the result of all this religion? It is generally admitted that in many respects we have about the lowest population in the whole civilised world. They drink and gamble, they are brutally behaved, and any silliness tickles them into applause. In spite of all the Christian talk about "peace," the average Englishman is the worst Jingo in Europe. Any twopenny-halfpenny song with "soldiers and sailors" in it throws him into a patriotic ecstasy. Quite recently the papers gravely announced that a new Territorial song was to be introduced by Miss Somebody at the Adelphi Theatre. They thought it necessary to give the names of the writer of the words and the composer of the music. After all this apparatus of publicity, it was comical from one point of view, and sickening from another, to read what was evidently considered the finest verse of this patriotic ditty. Here it is:—

"They'll do what they're wanted to,  
For they're built for work, not show,  
And when called to fight or die,  
They will give us cause to cry:  
'Gallant Teddy Boys, bravo!'"

We say nothing about the *substance* of this doggerel. But just look at its *form*. Why, its mean stupidity of expression is beyond the range of criticism. A shrug of the shoulders is the only possible comment. It is only a modern Christian nation that could tolerate such despicable stuff. No student of antiquity could possibly imagine Greeks or Romans cheering this Adelphi ditty. Even the Jews, who put so much savagery into their warlike psalms, were incapable of sinking so low as this. Their savagery was savage; it was not merely idiotic; and thus it could inspire literature. We have had Christianity in England for ever so many hundreds of years, and this "Territorial" song is what it has brought us to.

The Imperial Sunday Alliance is the grandiose name of a new organisation started by those three great friends of the people, the (Anglican) Archbishop of Canterbury, the (Catholic) Archbishop of Westminster, and the (Nonconformist) President of the Free Church Council. Davidson, Bourne, and Lidgett are to be trusted when they talk of "liberty" as the Devil is when he goes about selling holy water. They yearn over the "industrial workers in every department of labor" and long to help them. But how? By securing a better observance of "the Lord's Day, commonly called Sunday." We all know what these gentlemen mean by a better observance of the Lord's Day. They want to rob Sunday of every secular attraction. They want to make it the Lord's Day indeed. And the Lord's Day simply means *their* day. Every sensible person knows what they are after,—and also what to expect from the first subscribers to this Alliance, such as Lord Kinnaird, Canon Otley, and the Duke of Norfolk.

"Rest and worship" is what these clerical gentlemen desire to promote on Sunday. As for "rest," let them make a start themselves on that day; and as for "worship," let them leave every man and woman to do his own share of it in his or her own way. "Rest" can better be looked after by the Trade Unions than by the Clerical Unions. And no doubt they know it. What they are really after is the "worship."

The Puritan Sunday in New England was the pattern which many clericals would copy in Old England if they could. Mrs. Earle, in her *Sabbath in Puritan New England*, gives some pretty illustrations of those good old times. In 1670, two lovers, John Lewis and Sarah Chapman, were tried for sitting together on the Lord's Day under an apple tree. Jonathan and Susannah Smith were each fined five shillings for smiling on the Lord's Day during service. Captain Kemble, of Boston, in 1656, was put in the stocks for two hours for his "lewd and unseemly behavior." He had just returned home after an absence of three years, and he kissed his wife on the doorstep of his house—forgetting it was the Holy Sabbath.

Professor J. H. Muirhead writes in the current issue of the *Hibbert Journal* on the recent International Moral Education Congress. He points out, as was indicated in these columns at the time, that the presence on the platform of the



Hon. Edward Lyttleton, Dr. Gow, Father Maher, Father Smith, etc., "seemed sufficient guarantee that the discussion would move within the limits of orthodoxy." Had the chairman had his way, the discussion would have been confined within these limits; but, as Mr. Muirhead says, somewhat contemptuously, men had not come from the universities of France, Germany, and Japan "to discuss the moral efficacy of the reading of the Greek Testament as a substitute for systematic religious and moral instruction." The caustic character of the comment is quite justifiable; but it was humiliating to some delegates to feel that, with one exception, the only people who saved the Congress being converted into a howling farce, or an organised parade of British hypocrisy, were the foreign visitors. Unfortunately, as these addresses were delivered in either French or German, their value was lost to many in the gathering. One thing was clear; and this was that when the promoters of the Congress arranged for so liberal a display of religious professionalism, even putting a clergyman in the chair, it paved the way for disaster. And if future Congresses are not to be more of a fiasco than the last—at least upon this aspect of the question—some very different arrangements will have to be made. Meanwhile we trust that the bold speeches of the foreign visitors will induce Professor Muirhead himself to take up a more definite attitude on the subject than he has thought fit to do up to the present. One must either eliminate supernaturalism from our educational system or retain it. Any attempt to harmonise it with the scientific view of things is to try to achieve the impossible and to enact the absurd.

Mrs. Carrie Nation thinks the English clergy ought to lend her their pulpits. She tells an interviewer that she has not been defeated in England. "If I have been defeated," she adds, "it has been by the Devil, and by his servants, the clergy of your country." Carrie soon sizes them up.

King Edward has sent £100 to the Salvation Army. He has also sent £100 to the Church Army. This prevents jealousy. King Edward understands them—to that extent.

It has been said that women have no sense of humor. This is not true—for one recollects Jane Austen and George Eliot. But it would be better if women had a keener sense of humor on certain occasions. The more serious a thing is the more we should be on our guard against being too serious. From the sublime to the ridiculous is only a step. And ridicule kills. Mrs. Fawcett and Lady Frances Balfour ought not to have issued that strange appeal on behalf of the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies. "We invite all Suffragists," they said in a letter to the London press, "to attend afternoon service in Westminster Abbey on Monday, February 15, the day before the opening of Parliament, in order to make that service in effect one of intercession for the furtherance of our cause during the present Session of Parliament." Had this call to prayer been issued by Tariff Reformers or Free Traders everybody would have laughed. When it issued by ladies we are all supposed to keep our faces. But the ladies might recollect that we are free to smile inwardly. They might even be asked whether they are playing the game fairly. Is it a square deal to bring supernatural allies into a political struggle? And suppose "the Lord" turns out to be against female suffrage. Won't they be sorry then that they called his attention to the subject?

Mr. W. T. Stead is a very clever man, but his wits seem to desert him the moment he thinks of "the beyond." He has had a "test conditions" performance at his house by Mr. and Mrs. Tomson, who have been appearing twice a day at the Hippodrome. The lady does the old cabinet trick, but apparently with some improvements. She goes into a cabinet, which contains nothing, after being searched to see that she contains nothing—at least these were the written conditions at Mr. Stead's, and when in the empty cabinet she produces lots of flowers and ferns, besides various "figures" all dressed in white. These "figures" made a great impression on Mr. Stead, and he appears to have recognised one of them as his dead son; which is pathetic, but not convincing. Sir Oliver Lodge, who assisted at the "test conditions" performance at Mr. Stead's, and who has a large stock of the "will to believe," is quite unable to see anything supernatural in it. He is utterly unable to explain how the phenomena were brought about, but he is "quite decisive that there is nothing whatever about the phenomena to justify him in attributing them to a supernormal cause." Two other gentlemen who were present "are equally convinced that the whole thing was a product of very clever trickery." But this view does not

satisfy Mr. Stead. His imagination caught a glimpse of "my own son" and his intellect danced after it. *Voilà tout!* as the French say.

We wish Mr. Stead had more of the practical sense of Dr. Johnson. The old lexicographer was superstitious enough in a certain way, but the objects of it had to be at a distance, and thus to make a draft upon his simple "faith." When it came to close quarters he was perfectly sensible. "Suppose," he said, "I know a man to be so lame that he is absolutely incapable to move himself, and I find him in a different room from that in which I left him, shall I puzzle myself with idle conjectures, that perhaps his nerves by some unknown change all at once become effective? No, sir, it is clear how he got into a different room—he was carried." And the Tomson flowers and figures were carried. We may not be able to tell how, but we are not to assume supernormal influences simply because we cannot see through clever conjuring.

Sir Oliver Lodge has since written to the press on his own account about that performance at Mr. Stead's. In his letter to the *Daily Chronicle* (Feb. 12) he says that from Mr. Stead's "statement it might appear as if I agreed that there was some mystery about it. This I wish to deny." We think it well to give our readers an opportunity of preserving this important part of Sir Oliver Lodge's "report" on this matter:—

"As regards my own opinion on the subject, I regard the affair as a performance, in which some flimsy and compressible white drapery and some flowers are ingeniously concealed until the time comes for producing them. I conjecture that the flowers may have been, at some early stage of the sitting, deposited under the chair; while the drapery was employed in ingenious and effective fashion. The flowers were then bestowed on the company, and the drapery once more concealed.

I am not prepared to say exactly how the drapery or the flowers were concealed, preparatory to their introduction and partial removal—though I have an idea as to the method—but to my mind there was no evidence of anything of a supernormal character. I did not indeed hear such a claim made by either of the entertainers; I prefer to assume that their desire is to show how much can be accomplished by normal means. If the exhibition of any supernormal power is claimed, then I strongly repudiate the idea.

OLIVER LODGE."

Whoso sups with the Devil must have a long spoon. And whoso enters into an "investigation" with a blind believer must be on his guard every minute.

Rev. Archibald Brown, of Spurgeon's Tabernacle, declares that "the Lord is able to make the man who is over forty a splendid witness to the saving power of his grace." Since Mr. Brown has undertaken to speak for the Lord, perhaps he will be good enough to inform us why the Lord so seldom puts his ability into practice. The reverend gentleman must know, as well as we do, that conversion at and after forty are almost literally unknown.

Rev. Charles Brown, President of the Baptist Union, in a published sermon on "Christ Hindered," animadverts on unbelief in such an ignorant, bigoted, and insulting fashion, that unbelievers who read his words cannot refrain from despising him. He charges them with having "shut up their minds" against the truth, which only shows that this man of God has "shut up his mind" against understanding their position.

"Every night of my life I have prayed for the death of that —, but God don't love me." This elegant piety is taken from a recent Central Criminal Court case. It came from the mouth of a person mentioned by a witness. What a touching belief in the efficacy of prayer! What a tribute to the influence of religion on morality!

"It has sometimes," says Sir Robert Perks, M.P., "been the lot of the Christian Church to lead the way in new fields of national enterprise and duty before politicians and statesmen recognised the obligations of the State. It was so in elementary education. It was so in connection with factory legislation and the slave trade. It seems to be the case to-day in emigration." Presumably Sir Robert Perks means by the above that the Christian Church has educated the people in the reforms indicated. If this is so, it is a very long way wide of the truth. To begin with, education, like most other things, suffered in the transition from Pagan to Christian rule. The widespread schools of the Roman Empire were almost quite obliterated; and, when new schools were established, it was more often at the instigation of the secular rulers—such as Charlemagne—than by the efforts of the Christian Church. In modern times popular education owed its rise to eighteenth-century Free-



thinkers and to the influence of the French Revolution. Unfortunately, in England it fell under the influence of Christian sects, who used it in their religious warfare and thus sowed the seeds of the evils of the last forty years. With slavery, too, far from educating the public, Christians, with the sanction of their churches, actually instituted the black slave trade. And it was Thomas Paine who, in America, penned the first public words against slavery, while Freethought France set the first example of a European state liberating its slaves. On the other side there were Bible texts and organised opposition from the Christian Church.

So far as evils of the factory system are concerned, it is again enough to point out that this system originated with Christians, and without any sort of a protest from the Churches. Outside opinion did, it is true, lead politicians; but it is in the nature of things that this should be so. As to the Churches, however, these were much too busy seeing to the imprisonment of men like Richard Carlile, and the circulation of filthy libels concerning Thomas Paine, to trouble about so insignificant a matter as the murder of young children in Christian-owned factories. As to emigration, it may be seriously questioned whether the best use a country can make of the pick of its laboring population is to transport it. Transportation was once the reward of criminality, and so far as it served to deplete the country of really criminal characters it did a certain amount of good, however unpleasant the result may have been for other people. But an organised plan which picks out the best, and utilises independence and industry as a means of getting their possessors out of the country, while leaving at home the relatively unfit, and leaving also the conditions untouched that produced this last class, is simply paving the way for greater trouble in the future. The interest of the Churches in emigration is very largely due to the semi-conscious perception that the preservation of certain types secures vested interests from attack, and satisfies the social demand that the Churches shall justify their existence by participating in a showy but ultimately useless plan of operations.

We live and learn. Darwin, says the *Christian World* oracularly, was, "in his way," a "prophet of God, and it is good to know that God now, as in ancient days, does not limit his choice of prophets to a limited ecclesiastical caste." We do not know whether God selected Charles Darwin as one of his prophets or not; but, assuming this to be the case, the choice is one the wisdom of which is very questionable. For no other single man of the nineteenth century did so much to disturb and destroy the belief in God as did the author of the *Origin of Species*. "Save me from my friends" is an expression that should be as familiar in heaven as it is on earth.

There is to be an English Church Pageant in June, representing the history of Christianity in this country. We have not been asked to suggest any of the scenes for the Pageant, and yet, without asking someone of our turn of mind to contribute, the show is certain to be incomplete. Still, without waiting for an invitation—for it is churlish to wait to be asked in order to do good—we offer one or two suggestions. A very effective tableau, for instance, might be worked up on the subject of witchcraft. Figures could be prepared showing the various methods of finding a witch, with representations of holy men of God running pins into nude women to discover the Devil's mark, or drowning them in rivers to determine the degree of their intimacy with Satan, or burning them at the stake when their guilt was established, the whole headed with the text, "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live." A procession of men and women with cropped ears, slit noses and tongues, branded foreheads, and maimed limbs—all for religious offences—would likewise be instructive. A procession of individuals representing the men and women who have been imprisoned for speaking the truth about Christianity would also have its uses. And think how impressive would be a procession consisting of the labelled representatives of each of the Christian sects in England? We do not believe for a moment that these suggestions will be acted upon by the Pageant Committee, but without the introduction of scenes of this kind the pictorial representation of English Christianity will be very incomplete.

Christianity is about the worst imposture in the world. Whenever there is a good idea in its teachings the Christians are the very last people to practise it, while all its bad teachings are carried out most punctually. Jesus said "love your enemies" and "thou shalt forgive thy brother, not seven times, but seventy times seven." These maxims are not quite practicable, but they err on the better side. And how do the Christians observe them? Here is a fair

case in point. A poor devil named Robert Driscoll was charged before Sheriff Davidson at Glasgow with stealing 7½d. from a shop. It appears that the man was driven desperate by want of employment and the hunger of his wife and children. He admitted that he had done wrong and promised not to repeat the offence. But the Sheriff—no doubt a good Christian—was not to be mollified. He said that the sum stolen was small, but the crime was very serious, and the sentence would be three months' imprisonment. The lumbug of this religion!

The Rev. Principal Forsyth is about to deliver the Congregational Lecture on "The Person of Christ." It is expected that the lecture will cover a period of six weeks. How wonderfully long-winded public speakers can be when treating of subjects concerning which they know absolutely nothing.

Mr. Runciman has been addressing a meeting of his constituents at Ravensthorpe and professing his unutterable hatred of Secular Education. We have not the slightest doubt, however, that the moment Secular Education is inevitable he will accept it with a very good grace. That is the way of politicians. Meanwhile, we may note Mr. Runciman's admission that "of all the thankless tasks that any man could undertake, that of trying to get religious people to agree with one another seemed to be the greatest." Mr. Runciman ought to have the sagacity to perceive that this very fact makes Secular Education the "only way" out of the difficulty.

Now let us hear Mr. Runciman in his "Ercles" vein:—

"The compromise having failed, it was now asserted that the secular system was the only solution of the problem; but it was not stated what was meant by secular education. He thought that a system which obliterated all religious and Scriptural influence would not be tolerated by the English people, and he, personally, would never be a party to excluding the Bible from the schools. However a secular solution was viewed, it did not advance the position an inch, and it would handicap the teacher. A Government that attempted, by a secular solution or otherwise, to turn the Bible out of our schools would deserve a first-rate thrashing at the polls."

Mr. Runciman is reported to be very "clever," but cleverness is not wisdom. He made a bigger mess of his Bill than any of his Liberal predecessors in the Education office. Even now he cannot remember that he is a responsible minister. He only recollects that he is a Nonconformist. It is a pity he does not also bear in mind that the proper place for a man who only recollects that he is a Nonconformist is the pulpit and not the House of Commons.

Two hardened criminals were guillotined lately at Albi in France. "Both the condemned men," we read, "heard Mass, drank some rum, and smoked cigarettes." Three forms of intoxication—alcohol, tobacco, and religion.

Rev. R. J. Campbell is getting like Voltaire's Habbakuk—*capable de tout*—capable of anything. The New Theology is pure sentimentalism. There is not as much logic in it as would satisfy a school-girl on any other subject. It is not surprising, therefore, that the oracle of the City Temple falls deeper and deeper into the sentimental morass. He has lately been telling a meeting of women that wives ought to be paid wages. He didn't say who was to pay them, or where the cash was to come from; but these are frivolous details to your ardent Christian reformer. Just fancy working men, earning from a pound to two pounds a week, paying their wives wages! Mr. Campbell is an upper middle-class man himself, with a large income, and it would be easy for him to do a bit of economical hocus-pocus and say to his wife, "My dear, there's a hundred year; that's your separate wages, to do as you please with, for the labor of presiding over this household." He doesn't understand the conditions of working-class households. The great majority of married working-men take their wages home and their wives do all the spending; in many cases the wives give the husbands back a little pocket-money according to circumstances. In all decent working-class households the husband gets no more wages than the wife. The wages he earns by his work outside are spent inside, on the family, and both father and mother have to scrutinise every penny of expenditure. When we come to the upper class the case is somewhat different. There is more money to be spent, and Mr. Campbell says that the woman should enjoy her share of the family income. Poor man! He doesn't know what he is talking about. As incomes rise higher and higher the woman becomes the chief expense. Heaps of men do very little more with their money than mind it. Three-fourths of the expenditure in three-fourths of all the households in this country with more than £200 a year is



expenditure by or on the women folk. We are not complaining of this; we merely state it as a fact; and the fact throws a peculiar light on Mr. Campbell's latest "Christian Socialism" nostrum. Finally, the reverend gentleman's proposal, instead of elevating the wife, would degrade her. It would turn her into a hired woman, and her husband into her employer. We are glad to think that common sense and common human affection enable the vast majority of fathers and mothers to do better than that—without Mr. Campbell's assistance. Why on earth doesn't he stick to what he understands, or to what (like Divine Immanence) doesn't matter whether he understands it or not?

Mr. Campbell has been telling his City Temple congregation that "the Old Testament account of the taking of Jericho is substantially correct." He says that the excavations have revealed the walls of Jericho, so it had walls; and there were houses on the walls, so Mrs. Rahab lived in one. Argal the story in *Joshua* is historical. It reminds us of the American gentleman who visited Mount Ararat and picked up a stone there. When he returned home, and took his Bible-class again, he placed that stone on a table, and let all the scholars pass before it, so that they might look at it and remember it for the rest of their lives. "My dear children," he said to them, "whenever you hear infidels deny the truth of that beautiful story of the Flood, you can tell them that you *know* it is true, for you have seen a stone brought from the very spot."

Joshua was one of the bloodiest cut-throats in human annals. Mr. Campbell puts in a plea for him, however; we must judge him by the times in which he lived, he was working his way for righteousness, on the whole it was a good thing that he lived and fought—and butchered. "Joshua and his savage hosts," Mr. Campbell says, "were a loftier type than the society they destroyed." How does he know that? We defy him to produce a scrap of real evidence in support of this statement. The only testimony he has to the wickedness of the victims is the word of their butchers.

Christian Socialists are going it. Mr. Philip Snowden writes the political page for the front of the Campbellite weekly, and we presume he is duly paid for his journalism. And this is how he buttered his patrons last week. "The young men and women with religious instincts who have been trained in church work," he said, "I have always found to be the very salt of the active Socialist movement." They are the salt. The rest would stink without them. Such is Christian humility! But it was always a funny thing. Jesus himself said to his disciples, "Ye are the salt of the earth," and we daresay they swallowed the compliment with a fatuous smile of appreciation.

"What you need is deepening." Thus spake the Rev. John Hunter, D.D. He was addressing Christians. We agree with him.

It must not be supposed that we note all the men of God who die and leave fortunes. We merely note one now and then as the fit takes us. Having said that, we note that the Rev. Charles Pratt, of the Elms, Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Herts, left £49,516. As he died at the age of 89 he kept out of heaven as long as he could. Not that we commit ourselves to the theory that he *has* gone to heaven. If there be any truth in the Gospels he has gone to "the other place."

Christian teachers have just been advocating the temperance pledge of total abstinence. They dwelt impressively upon its numerous benefits, but not one of them seemed to be aware that such a pledge is condemned in the Bible. The apostle Paul found serious fault with the Colossians (Col. ii. 20, 21) because they subjected themselves to such "ordinances" as "Handle not, nor taste, nor touch." New Theologians often find it convenient to ignore the great Paul; but as the Old Theologians swear by him as an infallible guide, their advocacy of the teetotal pledge is an act of inexcusable disloyalty to him, and surely a grievous sin against God.

The Rev. Dr. Campbell Morgan, and the Rev. R. J. Campbell are professional men of God, though they seriously disagree as to the nature and character of their Master. A writer in the *Christian Commonwealth* tells us that the Lord failed to convert him through the preaching of the former, but succeeded in doing so, after an interval of two years, with a sermon by the latter. This fact is tendered as a valuable testimonial to the New Theology.

Rev. J. Morgan Jones, of Aberdare, a prominent New Theologian, is of opinion that the majority of the educated youth of Wales, who are declared to have turned their backs upon the chapels and denied the religion in which they were nurtured, have in reality only repudiated the Old Theology which is dominant in nearly all the chapels. This may be true in a few instances, but we believe that, on further inquiry, Mr. Jones will discover that, in the overwhelming majority of cases, the unbelief acquired at the colleges is in reference to theology *as such*, and not to any particular form of it. Scientific knowledge discourages all supernatural beliefs, because the supernatural itself is scientifically non-existent. What will doubtless prove true of Wales is that Freethought, having once entered within her borders, will permeate her all the more quickly in consequence of her having lain so long under the heels of the sternest and rigidest of orthodoxies.

The Rev. J. Morgan Gibbon is an exceptionally clever man. He has discovered that St. Paul was a Darwinian. Then the great apostle must have been poking fun at his readers when he described the fall in Eden and the subsequent introduction of death into the world, and when he spoke of the appearance of the Ideal Man in the middle of the evolutionary process. Or perhaps it was Mr. Gibbon who was enjoying a joke at the expense of his Memorial Hall audience.

There still lives in one of the Southern States of America a distinguished Presbyterian minister who continues to maintain that slavery is a Divine institution, and who condemns the emancipation of the slaves by Lincoln as one of the most gigantic mistakes in history. He speaks in the name, and by the authority of, God. And, judged by the Bible, he is undoubtedly right.

A *Daily News* reviewer, eulogising Julius Cæsar, and justly enough in our opinion, said that "He forgave his enemies in an age when forgiveness was unknown." The first half of this sentence is true. Cæsar was a man of astonishing magnanimity. But the second half of the sentence is false. Forgiveness was as well known, as well understood, and as well practised, under Paganism as it was under Christianity. The opposite view is a partisan impertinence of Christian apology.

Mr. Rhondda Williams says that the watchword of the New Theology should be "reality"; but surely Mr. Williams must know that no theology, old or new, *can* be real. At best, as well as at worst, theology is a department of metaphysics, and deals with shadows, fancies, hypotheses, dream-images, but never with realities. That is why it is decaying in this scientific age.

Whitefield's Tabernacle is run by people who understand the art of advertising. All sorts of more or less "distinguished" men and women are invited to speak there on all sorts of more or less "catching" subjects. Last Sunday they had Mr. H. B. Irving, the actor, there to speak on Abraham Lincoln. What particular qualification he has for speaking on this subject is not very obvious. Perhaps it was enough that Abraham Lincoln was an American, and Mr. H. B. Irving has visited America. Perhaps it was because Lincoln was killed by a mad actor, and Mr. Irving was an actor, if not mad. Anyhow, the actor paid his centenary tribute to the great President, and one thing he said, as reported in the *Daily Chronicle*, may interest some of our readers. "Lincoln," he said, "did not believe in any creed, he did not belong to any particular form of religion, but he was a deeply religious man. He was religious as Shakespeare was religious. He did not believe in eternal punishment, he never joined any particular church, but he felt profoundly the consciousness of that 'something which makes for righteousness.'" We prefer to assume that Mr. Irving was trying to make Lincoln's want of "religion" palatable to the audience he was addressing. Lincoln was certainly not a Christian, though there does not appear to be evidence enough to decide whether he was or was not an unbeliever in God. For our part, we are quite pleased to let the matter stand that "he was religious as Shakespeare was religious." For we know what Shakespeare was.

Rev. Arthur Gilbert Girdlestone, vicar of All Saints, Brixton, left £14,820. Not bad, for a preacher of "Blessed be ye poor."

Sir Edward Wills has made what a London Liberal paper calls a "splendid gift to Bristol." It turns out to be a cheque for £15,000 to clear off the debt on the Bishop's palace. How on earth is this a gift to Bristol? Especially to the shivering poor in that city this cold February.



### Mr. Foote's Engagements

Sunday, February 21, Secular Hall, Brunswick-street, Glasgow : at 12 (noon), "The Star of Christ in the Night of Faith"; at 6.30, "The Other Side of Death."

February 28, Birmingham.

March 7 and 14, Queen's Hall, London; 21, Woolwich.

### To Correspondents.

C. COHEN'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—241 High-road, Leyton.—February 21, North London; March 7, Woolwich.

J. T. LLOYD'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—February 21, Wood Green; 28, Glasgow. March 7, Manchester; 14, Woolwich.

THE PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND: Annual Subscriptions.—Previously acknowledged, £116 16s. 6d. Received since.—W. J. May, 10s. 6d.; J. E. T., 5s.; H. Wyllie, £1; John Sumner (2nd sub), 10s. 6d.; C. H. Wren, 5s.; P. M. Brown, 2s. 6d.; Kimberleyite, 5s.; Dr. A. J. Young, £2 2s.; H. Graham, 10s.; "Nottingham," £3; T. Thelwall, 10s.; G. D., 2s. 6d.; Reginald C. Kempe, £1; W. Banner, 2s.; F. H. C., 2s. 6d.; J. G. Dobson, 5s.; H. Tucker, 10s.; W. Palmer, 2s. 6d.

F. ROBERTS.—We hope the Co-operative Society will not be so bigoted as to exclude the *Freethinker* at the behest of a few orthodox fanatics. Thanks.

J. SMITH.—A good suggestion, but more difficult than you fancy to carry out.

J. MCVIE.—May note it next week. Thanks.

W. J. NEWBY.—Pleased to hear Wolverhampton is more liberal.

W. J. MAY writes: "It is exhilarating to know that there is at least one man on the Anti-Christian side who invariably shows a bold front. I discovered the *Freethinker* just over a year ago, and have read it regularly ever since. I have never met a paper that I so thoroughly enjoy."

A. D. C. informs us that St. Pancras Borough Council excludes both religious and anti-religious journals from its Free Library reading-room. Certainly this "works out fairly all round," but it seems to us a paltry policy, after all. If the rule were applied to all controverted questions, there would be very few papers left on the reading-room tables. Suppressing all is not quite the same thing as tolerating all.

JALLEN TUPPMAN.—You are in a rage about nothing. We never said that the man "Jacob" robbed and murdered because he was an Anarchist. He appears to have been a vulgar thief and desperado.

W. M. LEADMAN.—We quite agree with you in the main. The common-garden English press will discuss every frivolous question and ignore or damn all who discuss serious questions. That same press may be the ruin of England yet. It is steadily corrupting her inhabitants in the interest of its own profits. The real "free" press of England consists of a few papers like our own, which carry on an apostolate of ideas.

G. D.—Mr. Cohen has covered the general ground very ably in his recent articles on Free Will. We shall deal specifically with the points you refer to before long. Meanwhile you may take this to go on with, that the writer you mention is nine-tenths right and one-tenth wrong, and that in the one-tenth wrong he gives up all that is worth having to the enemy, and shows that he has not fathomed the question to the bottom, and perhaps never will, for want of a sufficient lead-line.

JOHN SOMNER writes: "I am pleased to see you are again on the warpath. Please accept the enclosed towards building up the sinews of war. More power to your arm!"

H. STEELE.—The argument from "missing links" is an argument from mere ignorance, absolutely negative, and liable to be overturned at any moment. It is not true, at least nowadays, to say that no links between man and lower animals have yet been found. We advise you to read Huxley's *Man's Place in Nature* and Aveling's *Darwin Made Easy*, both cheap books that would suit your pocket. Glad you so highly appreciated our Shore-ditch Town Hall lectures.

GEORGE BRADFELD.—A good letter of yours in the *Gloucestershire Echo*. We wish *Freethinkers* would make more use of the Press when they can. Mr. Thomas's lecture before the Cheltenham Ethical Society seems to have been very good and interesting. It reminds us that when the Ethicists go backward for "saints" they generally have to take *Freethinkers*. The statement that Voltaire "recognised an Ethical Supreme" in the Deity is open to qualification. Voltaire's Ode on the famous Lisbon Earthquake shows the presence in his mind of very grave doubts as to the "good God" of the Deists.

C. H. WREN "hopes the full amount will be realised for the President's Honorarium Fund this year" and says "it would be well if all *Freethinkers* gave their mite towards keeping the banner of 'Down with Superstition' flying."

F. H. C.—Let us know if you get any answer.

W. BANNER.—Glad you have "derived a great deal of benefit from the *Freethinker*."

N. LEVEY.—Glad to hear the news, though too full to notice it this week.

W. P. BALL.—Many thanks for cuttings.

T. THELWALL hopes all *Freethinkers* will assist our fight against the Camberwell bigots.

H. TUCKER.—Your good wishes are appreciated.

W. PALMER.—Glad to have a veteran's appreciation.

"NOTTINGHAM."—It arrived all right through Miss Vance. We are very sorry for the oversight. Much sorrier to hear that the cold weather has been so bad for your health.

H. GRAHAM subscribes to the President's Fund "as a thank-offering for the peace of mind attained by reading the *Freethinker* and, through it, kindred works."

A. J. YOUNG.—"Keeping the flag flying" is the great thing. Glad of your help.

T. M. BROWN says: "I now realise that little progress can be made till superstition is dead and buried."

R. J. HENDERSON.—Milder weather would be as acceptable to many as to yourself.

J. H. REPTON.—The "display" you suggest would cost too much for our resources. We are going on with the protest meeting.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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### Sugar Plums.

Mr. Foote's second audience at the Public Hall, St. Pancras Baths, Kentish Town, would have been a splendid one if he had been able to attend and lecture. Unfortunately he was too unwell to leave his bedroom, and a good many people who came to the meeting got to know that he was not lecturing before they could enter the hall, and a number of them went away. Even as it was, however, the audience was a fine one, and a considerable improvement on the previous Sunday's. Miss Vance had arranged with Mr. A. B. Moss, at very short notice, to take Mr. Foote's place on the platform. Mr. Moss was in his very best form, and delivered an admirable lecture. He also ably replied to three critics afterwards, one of whom was a lady. Mr. Moss deserves warm thanks for taking the President's place on the platform at such short notice, and congratulations on the fine manner in which he acquitted himself.

The following resolution was passed by the meeting on Sunday night at the close of Mr. Moss's lecture: "That this meeting of the *Freethinkers* of North London beg to convey to Mr. Foote their sympathy and regret at his indisposition, and hope that he will soon be restored to health to carry on his great work for the emancipation of mankind from the thralldom of superstition."

Mr. Cohen delivers the third and last of this Kentish Town course of lectures this evening. He ought to have a large audience.

Queen's (Minor) Hall has been engaged, under the auspices of the Secular Society, Ltd., for two special lectures by Mr. Foote on the first two Sunday evenings in March. A fuller announcement will appear in our next issue.

Before his evening lecture at Aberdare on Sunday February 7, Mr. J. T. Lloyd performed the interesting ceremony of "naming" Frank, Thomas Glyndwr, and Hypatia, children of Mr. and Mrs. George Garrett, and also



Annie May, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. John Franklyn Garrett, all of Mountain Ash.

The next "social" under the auspices of the N. S. S. Executive will be held at Anderton's Hotel on Thursday evening, March 18. By that time the weather ought to be fairly favorable for a good gathering. London "saints" should make a note of the date.

The Annual Meeting of the Secular Education League will be held next Tuesday evening, February 23, at the New Reform Club, Adelphi-terrace, London, W.C. The chair will be taken promptly at 7.30. After the routine business addresses will be delivered by prominent members of the League. Mr. Foote will be present and he hopes the Secularist members of the League will help to make a good meeting. It must be understood, of course, that only those who have paid subscriptions will be entitled to attend.

It will be seen from the appeal to Nonconformists, printed on another page of this week's *Freethinker*, that the Secular Education League is not at all idle. It is working along possible lines as they open up from time to time, and this is all it can do with its limited resources. Movements that have not a material interest behind them are always obliged to move comparatively slowly, but the movement they do make, if slow, is sure; which is the main thing, after all.

One of our esteemed American exchanges, the *Searchlight*, of Waco, Texas, reproduces Mr. Lloyd's article on "Watchman, What of the Night?" from our columns. It also reproduces Mr. Foote's first article on the earthquake in Sicily. "While thinking of this awful catastrophe," editor Shaw says, "and wondering what I ought to say, the *Freethinker* of January 10 came, in which I found the following by its editor, Mr. G. W. Foote, and not believing myself capable of saying anything as good, I have concluded to pass it on to my readers as worthy of serious and thoughtful consideration." We believe editor Shaw puts too modest a valuation on himself. But that is not a common fault with editors.

## Life and Opinions of Darwin.—V.

(Continued from p. 108.)

DARWIN'S masterpiece, in the opinion of scientists, is the *Origin of Species*. But the *Descent of Man* is more important to the general public. As applied to other forms of life, Evolution is a profoundly interesting theory; as applied to man, it revolutionises philosophy, religion, and morals.

Tracing the development of animal organisms from the ascidian, Darwin passes along the line of fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds, marsupials, mammals, and finally to the simians. "The Simiadae then branched off," he says, "into two great stems, the New World and the Old World monkeys; and from the latter, at a remote period, Man, the wonder and glory of the Universe, proceeded."

Notwithstanding that some specimens of the "wonder and glory of the universe" cannot count above the number of the fingers of one hand, while some of them live in a shocking state of bestiality, Darwin's deliverance on the origin of man was greeted with a storm of execration. "Fancy," it was exclaimed, "fancy recognising the monkey as our first cousin, and the lower animals as our distant relations! Pshaw!" The protestors forget that there is no harm in "coming from monkeys" if you have come far enough. Some of them, perhaps, had a shrewd suspicion that they had *not* come far enough; and, like *parvenus*, they were ashamed to own their poor relations.

Anticipating the distastefulness of his conclusions, Darwin pointed out that, at any rate, we were descended from barbarians; and why, he inquired, should we shrink from owning a still lower relationship?

"He who has seen a savage in his native land will not feel much shame, if forced to acknowledge that the blood of some more humble creature flows in his veins. For my own part, I would as soon be descended from that heroic little monkey, who braved his dreaded enemy to save the life of his keeper, or from that old

baboon, who descending from the mountains, carried away in triumph his young comrade from a crowd of astonished dogs—as from a savage who delights to torture his enemies, offers up bloody sacrifices, practises infanticide without remorse, treats his wives like slaves, knows no decency, and is haunted by the grossest superstitions."

A whole generation has passed since then, and Darwin's views have triumphed. The clergy still "hum" and "ha" and shake their heads, but the scientific world has accepted Darwinism with practical unanimity. Even Dr. Wallace, who at first hesitated, is now convinced. "I fully accept Mr. Darwin's conclusions," he says, "as to the essential identity of man's bodily structure with that of the higher mammalia, and his descent from some ancestral form common to man and the anthropoid apes. The evidence of such descent appears to me to be overwhelming and conclusive."

Now if Darwin's theory of the origin of man is accepted we may bid good-bye to Christianity at once. But that is not all. The continuity of development implies a common nature, from the lowest form of life to the highest. There is no break from the ascidian to man, just as there is no break from the ovum to the child; and neither in the history of the race nor in the history of the individual is there any point at which natural causes cease to be adequate, and supernatural causes are necessary to account for the phenomena. The tendency of Darwinism, says Dr. Wallace, is to "the conclusion that man's entire nature and all his faculties, whether moral, intellectual, or spiritual, have been derived from their rudiments in the lower animals, in the same manner and by the action of the same general laws as his physical structure has been derived."

Dr. Wallace sees that this is sheer materialism, and casts about for something to support his spiritualistic philosophy. He assumes three stages at which "the spirit world" intervened. First, when life appeared; second, when consciousness began; third, when man became possessed of "a number of his most characteristic and noblest faculties." All this is very ingenious, but Dr. Wallace forgets two things; first, that the "stages" he refers to are purely arbitrary, each point being approached and receded from by insensible gradations; and second, that his "spirit world" is not a *vera causa*. It is, indeed, a pure assumption; unlike such a cause as Natural Selection, which is seen to operate, and which Darwin only extended over the whole range of organic existence.

With respect to his third "stage," Dr. Wallace contends that Natural Selection does not account for the mathematical, musical, and artistic faculties. Were this true, they might still be regarded, in Weismann's phrase, as "a bye-product" of the human mind, which is so highly developed in all directions. But its truth is rather assumed than proved. Taking the mathematical faculty, for instance; Dr. Wallace makes the most of its recent developments, and the least of its early manifestations; which is a fallacy of exaggeration or false emphasis. He also underrates the mathematical faculty displayed even in the rudest warfare. There is a certain calculation of number and space in every instance. It is smaller in the savage chief than in Napoleon, but the difference is in degree and not in kind; and as the human race has always lived in a more or less militant state, the mathematical faculty *would* give its possessors an advantage in the struggle for existence; while, in more modern times, and in a state of complex civilisation, its possessors would profit by what may be called Social Selection.

Dr. Wallace has discovered a mare's nest. He may rely upon it that the basis of beauty is utility; in the mind of man as well as in architecture, or the plumage of birds, or the coloration of flowers. And we may well ask him these pertinent questions; first, why did "the spirit world" plant the mathematical, musical, and artistic faculties in man so ineffectually that, even now, they are decidedly developed in less than one per cent. of the popula-



tion; and, second, why are we to suppose a divine origin for those faculties when the moral faculties, which are quite as imperial, may be found in many species of lower animals?

We have already seen that Darwin remained a Deist after rejecting Christianity. Not only in the letter on Dr. Pusey's sermon, but in his *Autobiography*, Darwin discloses the fact that his belief in a personal God melted away after the publication of his masterpiece. Speaking of "a First Cause having an intelligent mind in some degree analogous to that of man," he says, "This conclusion was strong in my mind about the time, as far as I can remember, when I wrote the *Origin of Species*; and it is since that time that it has very gradually, with many fluctuations, become weaker." By the time he published the *Descent of Man*, in 1871, the change was conspicuous. He was then able to treat religion as a naturalist; that is, as one who stands outside it and regards it with a feeling of scientific curiosity. Not only did he trace religion back to the lowest fetishism, he also analysed the sentiment of worship in a manner which must have been highly displeasing to the orthodox.

"The feeling of religious devotion is a highly complex one, consisting of love, complete submission to an exalted and mysterious superior, a strong sense of dependence, fear, reverence, gratitude, hope for the future, and perhaps other elements. No being could experience so complex an emotion until advanced in his intellectual and moral faculties to at least a moderately high level. Nevertheless, we see some distant approach to this state of mind in the deep love of a dog for his master, associated with complete submission, some fear, and perhaps other feelings. The behavior of a dog when returning to his master after an absence, and, as I may add, of a monkey to his beloved keeper, is widely different from that towards their fellows. In the latter case the transports of joy appear to be somewhat less and the sense of equality is shown in every action. Professor Braubach goes so far as to maintain that a dog looks on his master as a god."

This is not very flattering, for the dog's attachment to his master is quite independent of morality; whether the dog belongs to Bill Sikes or John Howard, he displays the same devotion.

Darwin quoted with approval the statement of Sir John Lubbock that "it is not much to say that the horrible dread of unknown evil hangs like a thick cloud over savage life, and embitters every pleasure." He also referred to witchcraft, bloody sacrifices, and the ordeals of poison and fire, cautiously observing that "it is well occasionally to reflect on these superstitions, for they show us what an infinite debt of gratitude we owe to the improvement of our reason, to science, and to our accumulated knowledge"—in short, to the slow and painful civilisation of religion.

G. W. FOOTE.

(To be continued.)

## Robert Burns.

"O lyric voice, half angel and half bird,  
And all a wonder and a wild desire."

RECENTLY the third jubilee of the birth of Robert Burns was celebrated. He has been dead over a century, and his fame is far wider and more secure than when he passed away. His life is now celebrated as an important event, and his poetry is regarded as a glorious contribution to the world's literature. Admittedly Scotland's greatest poet, he has been subjected to extreme adulation from his countrymen. Had he been a lesser genius than he is, this fulsome praise would have exposed him to derision.

Oliver Wendell Holmes expressed surprise that puritanical Caledonia could take Burns to her straight-laced bosom without breaking her stays. For there was nothing of the Puritan in Burns. On the contrary, he was a Freethinker, although Christians have striven desperately to disguise the un-

welcome fact. They conceal his heresies, or they lament them as part of his "wasted life."

Burns, like Paine and Voltaire, was a Deist. Of other religion, save what flowed from a mild Theism, he scarcely showed a trace. In truth, one can scarcely call it a creed. It is mainly a name for a particular mood of sentimentalism, the expression of a state of indefinite aspiration. The Holy Willies of orthodoxy have made the basest uses of this emotionalism; but Christians cannot read Burns without unloosening the shackles of their faith. Hume's young freethinking contemporary did not merely express his dissent from Calvinism. He struck at the core of the Christian superstition. He saw plainly that priests trade on fear. He sounded a true note when he scornfully said:—

"The fear o' hell's a hangman's whip  
To haud the wretch in order."

How he lashes the rigidly righteous:—

"Sae pious and sae holy,  
Y've nought to do but mark and tell  
Your neebor's faults and folly."

And again:—

"Learn three-mile prayers, and half-mile graces,  
Wi' weel-spread looves, an' lang wry faces,  
Grunt up a solemn lengthened groan,  
And damn a' parties but your own;  
I'll warrant then ye'er nae deceiver,  
A steady, sturdy, staunch believer."

Burns never hesitated to attack the most sacred Christian beliefs.

"D'yrymple mild, D'yrymple mild, tho' your heart's like a child,  
And your life like the new driven snaw,  
Yel that winna save ye, auld Satan must have ye,  
For preaching that three's aye an' twa."

The "Merciful Great God" of the Christians excites his indignation:—

"O Thou wha in the Heavens dost dwell,  
Wha, as it pleases best thyself,  
Sends aye to Heaven and ten to Hell,  
A' for Thy glory,  
And no for any guid or ill  
They've done afore Thee!"

In the vital part of his genius Burns is original. How his love of liberty bursts out in the chorus of the "Jolly Beggars":—

"A fig for those by law protected!  
Liberty's a glorious feast!  
Courts for cowards were erected,  
Churches built to please the priest."

In speaking of Burns's poems, allusion must be made to the "Cotter's Saturday Night." This is obviously less a religious poem than the remembrance of an emotional nature recalling the old home of childhood. It does not represent the abnormal qualities of Burns's genius. Many minor bards could have written this "Cotter's Saturday Night" and yet have never risen from the lower slopes of Parnassus.

At his best, the miracle of his art baffles criticism. The real Burns is not the popular Burns. When he is inspired he leaves the mean little parlors of respectability and spreads his golden wings in the roaring skies of reality. Then his defiance is audacious and infectious:—

"The kirk and state may join, and tell  
To do such things I mauna:  
The kirk and state may gae to hell  
And I'll go to my Anna."

But Burns was so much alone, so early in the field that he could do little more than anticipate Carlyle's "Exodus from Houndsditch" or his bitter apostrophe to Christ, "Eh, man, ye've had your day!" But what he did was sufficient. The noblest quality in Burns's poetry is the eternal quality of honest indignation. It comes always with no veil of invention. It is blunt, simple as daily speech, the man talking before us. It is the better for his being angry, since it needs fire to carry a written page over a century. Even on its weaker side, when it becomes a rough humorous irony, his indignation is righteous and moving.

It is this quality that makes his "Jolly Beggars" a poem which stands alone in literature, not only



unmatched, but unmatchable. The beggars are not merely rebels. For them the laws and conventions of society have no existence. And so with Burns himself. He rises above the network of clerical authority like a skylark. And, like the bird, he may not be elegant or beautiful, but he is nothing if not delightful in influence and a magician in effect. Every Freethinker will say of him what Burns himself said in his epitaph on his friend:—

“With such as he, where'er he be,  
May I be saved or damned.”

M.

### Richard Jefferies' Death-Bed.

FREETHINKERS will be glad to know that in his recently-published *Life of Richard Jefferies\** Mr. Edward Thomas has treated the story of Jefferies' alleged “conversion” with the contempt which it deserves. After stating frankly what that story was, and how Sir Walter Besant at first gave currency to it in his *Eulogy of Richard Jefferies*, but afterwards admitted to Mr. H. S. Salt that he had come to the conclusion that Jefferies' views “never changed from the time that he wrote *The Story of My Heart*,” Mr. Thomas quotes from Mr. Salt's book a passage which shows the absurdity of setting these death-bed anecdotes against Jefferies' published statements. The following is Mr. Thomas's comment on the matter (pp. 315, 316):—

“With the interpretations that come of private grief and affection, nobody outside the family and friends of the dead is concerned. But there are some narrow sectarians who would ignore the work of Jefferies' maturity, and lay stress upon words which might be paralleled from the condemned cell. They strike him when he is down, which is a liberty hardly to be conceded to Christians, even when the opponent is a freethinker.....The last words of anyone, distorted by mortal pain and the circumstances of parting, cannot be a power, whether he dies acquiescent, or delirious, or fuddled by death, or with pain-wrung blasphemy on his lips.....”

We trust that the bigots of the *Spectator*, and of certain other papers, who treated Mr. H. S. Salt with the utmost rudeness for daring to speak the truth about Jefferies, will note what Mr. Thomas says. Mr. Bramwell Booth, in particular, who, under the heading of “Infidelity and Dishonesty,” published in the *War Cry* of May 27, 1905, some most offensive and insulting remarks about Mr. Salt, is now made to look very foolish. Mr. Booth actually had the impudence to suggest to Messrs. Longmans, as “in harmony with the high character of that great firm,” that they should add to the title-page of *The Story of My Heart* the following words:—

“Every pretence in this book which calls in question the truths of the Christian faith was recanted by the author on his death-bed. He then sought, and declared that he had found, mercy at the hands of the God he here denied.”

Well, Mr. Bramwell Booth knows by this time what likelihood there is of the “great firm” adopting his proposal. And he sees in Mr. Thomas's *Life of Jefferies* how the Salvation view of the case presents itself to a biographer who has told the story of Jefferies' life and death with the utmost diligence and impartiality in a book which seems likely to say the final word on the subject.

### The Secular Solution.

AN APPEAL BY NONCONFORMISTS TO NONCONFORMISTS.

[While not necessarily committed to every point of view expressed by the signatories of this Manifesto, the Secular Education League issues it as a valuable contribution to the discussion of the principle of Secular Education.]

EVER since the passing of the Education Act of 1902 you, as Nonconformists, have had a burning grievance. By the provisions of that Act you are taxed and rated for the support

\* *Richard Jefferies, His Life and Work.* Hutchinson & Co., London, 1909; 10s. 6d. net.

of schools where the religious teaching is contrary to your beliefs. You have no effective control of the expenditure of your money in these schools, and, though you are taxed to pay the salaries of all the teachers, you and your children are debarred by a religious test from the highest posts in the teaching profession, so far as these schools are concerned.

So keenly did you resent this unjust legislation that, when the time came for electing a new House of Commons, Nonconformist feeling throughout the country was undoubtedly one of the main factors among those which helped to return the present Government to power with a record majority. If anything might have been taken for granted, it was that within a twelvemonth at most of the General Election the grievance of Nonconformity would be redressed—that was the clear mandate with which you sent your representatives by hundreds to Westminster. If anyone could have prophesied that, after three years of Liberalism in office, the educational position would be still unchanged, that this issue would be as far from settlement as ever, that Passive Resistance would still remain as a thing in being, the forecast would have been dismissed with angry derision. Yet the seemingly impossible has happened in this instance. The Government has brought in Bill after Bill, yet in each instance only to meet with failure. Mr. McKenna's Bill shared the fate of that of Mr. Birrell, Mr. Runciman's that of Mr. McKenna's, and that in spite of the fact that each of these attempts at a solution of the difficulty went further than its predecessor in the direction of concession to your opponents. “Right of entry” and “contracting out” could hardly be accepted by you without the most serious misgivings; yet they were accepted, not light-heartedly, but in the hope and for the sake of peace. And still the desired end remains unattained, concessions and sacrifices have proved unavailing, and Nonconformity finds itself in the humiliating position of being no nearer a just settlement with a majority than with a minority in Parliament. No doubt you feel sore and indignant at the actual state of affairs; is it too much to hope that on reflection Nonconformists will read the lesson of these three years of disappointment?

That lesson, to our mind, is a plain one. Free Churchmen were, in the first place, actuated by a sincere—but, as the results show, mistaken—belief that a compromise could be come to with Anglicans, on the basis of what is called simple Bible-teaching. Such a plan was bound to fail, because it overlooked the repugnance to this form of religious instruction entertained by Catholics, both Roman and Anglican, whose attitude towards religion as a subject to be taught differs fundamentally from that of Protestants. It is really this stubborn fact which has frustrated all the well-intended attempts at conciliation; and it should be obvious, after the last of a series of fiascos hardly equalled in political history, that future attempts along similar lines will be no more successful than those made in the past. Surely by this time it must be clear to all who are prepared to learn from experience that a solution of the religious difficulty by means of a compromise is impossible—even if Anglicanism and Nonconformity were the only factors to be considered.

At this juncture, then, we venture to recall to the memory of Free Churchmen some truths which, in their desire for a settlement of a long, embittered, and calamitous conflict, have been too largely forgotten.

(1) Free Churchmen believe in religious equality for all. They must therefore recognise that the issue does not rest solely between themselves and the Established Church, but that there are many others outside these particular communions who, as citizens and ratepayers, have a right to be considered. It is simply no use to legislate on the assumption that the community is made up of members of Christian Churches; still less can we imagine Free Churchmen arguing that non-Christians have, as such, no claim to elementary justice in matters affecting religious belief or disbelief. Since Christians and non-Christians alike are made to contribute to the cost of education, it is surely not to be tolerated that the latter should be penalised by having to pay for a kind of instruction which runs counter to their convictions. This is precisely the Nonconformist grievance. Is it conceivable that Nonconformists should be willing to inflict the same grievance upon others, simply because those others may happen to be in a minority?

(2) Free Churchmen are such because of their fundamental principle that the State has no business to meddle with the religious faith of its members. For this conviction they have made immense sacrifices in the past—sacrifices which are the pride and glory of Nonconformity. But if the interference of the State with the religious opinions of the citizen is not to be tolerated from the Free Church point of view, how can it be tolerable that the same State should have power to frame and impose a form of religious teaching upon its citizens in the making? And if the only proper agency for the giving of religious instruction to adults



is the Church to which they may belong, must not the same hold true of the religious instruction given to children?

Some among the most consistent and widely honored Nonconformists of the past—men like Spurgeon, Parker, and Dale—held to the view which we are expressing; and among those Nonconformist leaders who utter the same conviction to-day it may suffice to point to Dr. Robertson Nicoll and Mr. Alfred E. Hutton, M.P. *Do you not think, after all the failure and disappointment of these last three years—with the proved impossibility of establishing a form of religious teaching acceptable to all, and the obvious injustice of endowing some form unacceptable to any—you might yet once more consider the claims of the only policy which inflicts hardship on none, and which goes by the name of the Secular Solution?*

We have heard it often and glibly stated that, while this is no doubt the logical solution, "the world is not governed by logic"; but since it is very evident that the world, in this instance, declines to be governed by compromise, would it not be as well if for once logic—which in practice means fair-play for all and privilege for none—were given a chance? Again, we have heard it said with constant reiteration that "the time is not ripe" for the Secular Solution. The answer to this is that the time—as the recent vote of the Welsh Baptists shows—is rapidly ripening, and that it behoves earnest men and women, as distinct from mere political opportunists, to hasten this process. It is urged that the Secular Solution will mean that the children will grow up unacquainted with the Bible. We can only express our surprise that such a fear should fail to excite the liveliest indignation among the Churches, Free and Established alike, with their tens of thousands of Sunday-schools devoted to precisely this work; nor can we understand why the Churches should expect the State to fulfil one of their chief functions. Finally, a great deal of prejudice against the Secular Solution is due to an inexact habit of speech, which confuses *Secular Education* with *Secularism*. It should be plain, however, that the two things are absolutely different, *Secular Education* meaning solely that the teaching given in the public schools and at the public expense is to be confined to secular subjects. To imagine, say, Mr. Spurgeon in favor of propagating *Secularism* would be simply grotesque. The fact that he strongly urged the cause of *Secular Education* should save that cause from this particular misinterpretation.

Nonconformists, you have shown how great is the power you can wield. *We appeal to you, precisely because of your historic principles, to wield that power effectively by throwing your immense influence in the scale of the Secular Solution. In so doing you will be true to your best traditions. Let the State confine its activity to the secular part of education, and let parents and Churches show the reality of their religious beliefs by providing the religious part of education themselves.*

We plead, not on behalf of an abstract theory, but above all on behalf of the nation's children, who cannot but suffer educationally while the present state of warfare lasts. If the chapter of inglorious and wearing conflict is to close at last, and a new chapter of justice, peace, and educational efficiency is to open, *the Secular Solution is "the only way."*

- W. J. HENDERSON, B.A. (Baptist),  
Baptist College, Bristol.
- E. E. COLEMAN, M.A. (Baptist),  
37 Ebury-road, Sherwood-rise, Nottingham.
- R. J. CAMPBELL, M.A. (Congregational),  
City Temple, London, E.C.
- J. WARSCHAUER, M.A., Dr. Phil. (Congregational),  
Anerley-road, London, S.E.
- HUGH C. WALLACE (Congregational),  
Anerley-road, London, S.E.
- ARCHIBALD DUFF, M.A., D.D., LL.D. (Congregational),  
9 Selborne-terrace, Bradford.
- JOSEPH WOOD (Unitarian), Birmingham.
- J. PAGE HOPPS (Unitarian),  
The Roserie, Shepperton-on-Thames.
- W. COPELAND BOWIE (Unitarian),  
Essex Hall, Essex-street, Strand, London, W.C.
- JOHN DAY THOMPSON (Primitive Methodist),  
86 Palatine-road, Blackpool.
- GEORGE W. KING (Primitive Methodist),  
11 Summerseat-place, Bradford.
- SILAS K. HOCKING (Free Methodist),  
10 Avenue-road, Highgate, N.

We are so inclined to fall in with what is thoroughly commonplace, and our heart and mind become so readily callous to the beautiful and perfect, that we should do all we possibly can to preserve our susceptibility to higher influences.—*Goethe.*

## Freethought Battle not "Over" in Texas.

STEP by step the sanctified hosts of orthodoxy have engrafted upon the statute laws of different States one or another of their pet hobbies for the purpose of strangling liberty. They are daily growing more brazen in their efforts. The Sunday law amendment in Texas is an evidence of this fact. If we are to counteract their sinister influences and check these efforts at theocratic government, then Freethinkers must organise for the fray, and stand shoulder to shoulder in the pending struggle. Ere long it may be too late. Orthodoxy is never satisfied with toleration. Orthodoxy insists upon a rule or ruin policy, and no matter which end orthodoxy takes, it spells ruin and suffering for the great mass of the people.

Consider this a call to arms! Not for physical conflict, but for a mental battle that shall put to complete rout the enemies of American freedom. Freethinkers first gave freedom to the colonies. If freedom is to remain on our soil then Freethinkers of the present day must renew the fight and keep it up until the end. Stand by the organisations we now have, those that are active in prosecuting the campaign for mental liberty. Send every engine of mental war to the front. Heavy artillery is needed here. Make every shot tell. Drive them to their hiding places by pointed argument and stern fact. Let the fight be open and fair. Keep it up until a decision is reached. The *Blade* does not fear the result.

The success of bigotry and intolerance in Texas means that similar attempts will follow in other States before long. For this reason it is our fight right now. Fanaticism must be swept right out of the country. Only bigotry, born of ignorance and nursed by insolence, will presume to dictate to American citizenship in matters of religion and religious observances.

Are there any Freethinkers who live on in fancied security in their freedom, and unmindful of the freedom of others? Do you not realise that if this fanatical movement is not checked, it means a heritage of slavery and suffering for your children? Are you willing that your children should face such conditions that you might be permitted to live at least for a few short years? Would not the battle be shorter and more easily won now than than to defer action until the enemy is safely entrenched behind breastworks of law, with the machinery of government at their back to enforce their mandates?

Then hesitate no longer! Show your colors! Let the world know which side you are on. Give prurient politicians full notice of your purpose and intentions. Liberty is in danger. The deadly poison from the festering sore of religious fanaticism bids fair to infect the land. Stop it. You can do it if you will. Will you?

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

### REMEMBER.

You come not, as aforetime, to the headstone every day,  
And I, who died, I do not chide because, my friend, you play;  
Only, in playing, think of him who once was kind and dear,  
And, if you see a beauteous thing, just say, he is not here.

—*From "Ionica."*

### POETS.

Blessings be with them—eternal praise,  
Who gave us nobler loves, and nobler cares—  
The Poets, who on earth have made us heirs  
Of truth and pure delight by heavenly lays!

—*Wordsworth.*

Jehovah should have created two couples of human beings instead of one. Adam and Eve's sons must have had children by their sisters. An all-wise and all-good God would have prevented the cradle of the human race from being stained with incest.—*G. W. Foote.*

### Obituary.

We regret to see the death of the Rev. William Stoddart, M.A., of Boston, recorded in the *Inquirer*. He was a Unitarian minister, and we should judge advanced at that. He spoke out manfully for the right of Secularists to free speech when Mr. Joseph Bates was arrested and imprisoned some months ago. The *Inquirer* is mistaken in calling this "the prosecution of a local speaker for blasphemy." Mr. Bates was threatened with such a prosecution, but the authorities thought better of it. We are glad to note that one of the funeral wreaths came from the Boston Branch of the National Secular Society.



**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.**

**PUBLIC HALL** (Prince of Wales Baths, Kentish Town-road, N.W.): 7.30, C. Cohen, "Christianity, the Church, and the Social Question."

**WOOD GREEN BRANCH N. S. S.** (Alma Hall, 335 High-road, N., three doors from Commerce-road): 7, J. T. Lloyd, "Religion and Dreams."

**WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S.** (Forest Gate Public (Lower) Hall, Woodgrange-road): 7.30, F. A. Davies, "The Priest and the Child." Selections by the Band.

**COUNTRY.**

**FAILSWORTH** (Secular Sunday School, Pole-lane): 6.30, Mrs. Eddie, "Yesterday, To-Day, and To-Morrow."

**GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY** (Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): G. W. Foote, 12 noon, "The Star of Christ in the Night of Faith"; 6.30, "The Other Side of Death."

**MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S.** (Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, Charles Stewart, "A Plea for Vegetarianism."

**NEWCASTLE** (Rationalist Literary and Debating Society, Hedley's Café, corner of Clayton and Blackett streets): 7.30, G. Somerville, "First Aid." With demonstrations.

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The Council of the Malthusian League, Dr. Drysdale, Dr. Allbutt, and others, have also spoken of it in very high terms.

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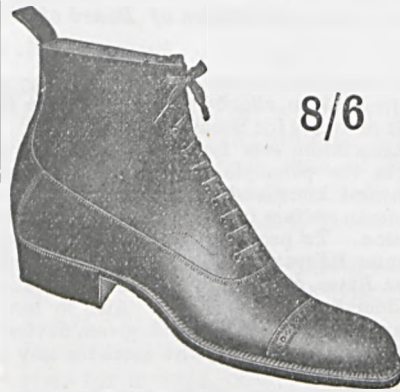
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