

THE Freethinker

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Comedy, or the Comic element, is the specific for the poison of delusion.—GEORGE MEREDITH.

Rev. James Adderley Protests.

THE following letter from the Rev. James Adderley, the well-known Christian Socialist, reached the *Freethinker* office on Tuesday morning; and, as this front page was the only part of the paper left open then, I insert it here with my reply:—

“TO THE EDITOR OF ‘THE FREETHINKER.’

SIR,—I am not at all annoyed to hear that I have earned your thanks, though it is a little galling for one who has always tried to be fair to Secularists to be so misinterpreted. I may note, to begin with, that the title of my letter, ‘The Civic Solution,’ was not my own. Mine was ‘Mr. Chesterton and Dr. Clifford.’ I was merely dealing with the question raised by those two gentlemen as to whether the ‘Secular solution’ or the ‘Bible as literature solution’ were the best. Personally, I think the Secular solution is the fairest and the most logical, but it seems that the nation at present will not have it. So I suggest that, under these circumstances, it is best to keep our present method of ‘Cowper-Templeism,’ but to improve it. Surely, if we have ‘Cowper-Templeism,’ it is best to have it as good as possible. When I talk of ‘responsible leaders’ I mean responsible to the State, not responsible to their own churches. I want experts in religious teaching. Just as I should prefer experts in cookery to draw up a culinary syllabus. You entirely wrong me in supposing that I am on the make for the Anglican Church. If I were, I should not support Cowper-Templeism, which most Anglicans hate. You try to make your readers infer from the quotations from my letter, and your own imaginary deductions from them, that I am animated by a great hatred of secularists. I was not treating of that subject in my letter, but not at all because I want to ignore it. Whenever I have written on the subject I have always urged that the secularists should be treated fairly, just as the Roman Catholics or any others who cannot see their way to come in with a national solution. When, for instance, I believed in trying the ‘facilities’ plan, I urged that secularists should have facilities too; and, if over that plan is tried, I shall urge it again. I have also always pleaded that the Conscience Clause should be made a reality, which at present it is not, and that no sort of stigma should attach to any children who are withdrawn from religious instruction. On the general question of our attitude to secularists, my membership of many years in the Guild of St. Matthew should be a guarantee that I am not actuated by the horrible feelings which you seem to take for granted that I am. I have subscribed to the anti-Blasphemy Laws’ agitation, and I am ready to do so again; and I should be sorry to speak of any secularists in the way your correspondents in this one number of the *Freethinker* speak about Christians.

As to the impossibility of Christian leaders agreeing on a syllabus, I don’t think it is proved yet. If, at any time, it is absolutely proved, then, of course, we must have the Secular solution, which, as I have already said, is the most logical.

JAMES ADDERLEY.

Let me say, first of all, that I should be sorry to treat Mr. Adderley with any gratuitous incivility. I had seen him described as “Father” Adderley so often, that I thought he liked it; but it appears that I was mistaken on this point, so I cry “Peccavi!” and promise not to offend again.

I cannot plead guilty, however, of laying to his charge “a great hatred of secularists” or any other “horrible feelings.” He spoke of a possible agreement between the “religious leaders” of the various Christian Churches to prepare a plan of “Simple Bible Teaching” for the elementary schools; I said that, in my opinion, this was *not* possible,—giving reasons for that conclusion; and I added that the only thing the leaders of rival Churches ever really agree about is “the robbery and oppression of unbelievers.” To this statement, as a general proposition, I still adhere. I am quite willing to believe that Mr. Adderley is an exception, just as I cheerfully admit that Cardinal Newman refused to sign a memorial against Charles Bradlaugh’s admission to parliament. But one exception no more disproves a general rule than one swallow makes a summer. In spite of Newman’s refusal, the Catholic Church did oppose Bradlaugh’s entrance to the House of Commons, and in spite of Mr. Adderley’s desire to “be fair to Secularists,” the religious leaders in England are more than willing to see Secularists insulted and oppressed. It is certainly creditable to Mr. Adderley that he is for the abolition of the Blasphemy Laws, but he knows very well that the “religious leaders” in England have never lifted a finger, or breathed a word, against that branch of Christian Protection.

It is also creditable to Mr. Adderley that he wishes to make the Conscience Clause a reality. But he really ought to see that this cannot possibly be done under the present system. Mr. Birrell justly called it a sham under existing conditions. He proposed to mark the attendance lists after the religious lesson, and allow the children withdrawn from religious instruction to remain at home until 9.15. That was the only good thing in his Education Bill, and of course it was lost. It was, however, an authoritative admission that the arrangement now in force is a sinister hypocrisy.

Now for the important point at issue. Mr. Adderley pleaded for a plan of “Simple Bible Teaching” to be prepared by “responsible religious leaders” for use in the public schools. I replied that Catholic, Anglican, and Nonconformist would never agree on such a plan; and that, even if they did, it would be promoting Christianity at the expense of non-Christians. Mr. Adderley recognises this; he admits that Secular Education is the ideal solution; but he says that the people will not have it—without stating when it was offered them, and also without stating that the Trade Union Congress has year after year declared in favor of Secular Education by overwhelming majorities. Mr. Adderley assumes that we *must* have Cowper-Templeism,—that is, undenominational Christian teaching, and he argues that “it is best to have it as good as possible.” But that is surely a question for Christians. To offer Freethinkers the best kind of Cowper-Templeism is like offering them the best kind of burglary. They want their own property and their own rights.

G. W. FOOTE.

P.S.—I suppose your repeated inverted commas when you call me ‘Father’ is also intended to gibbet me as a mediæval monster. I may inform you that it is only a nickname, given me chiefly by Protestants who dislike me, and has no more meaning than the ‘Honorable,’ which absurd title the State insists on also giving me.”

Religion and Opinion.

MANY persons are in the habit of thinking of the religious bigot as hard, unyielding, and severe. So far as his relation to others is concerned, he may be; but in relation to his own feelings he is quite the reverse. Here he is all tenderness and susceptibility. The opinions and feelings of others, when they do not run upon lines identical with his own, are assailed with the utmost ferocity and with the least possible consideration. When his own are attacked he demands every gentleness and consideration. He will attack the Freethinker with ridicule, with sarcasm, and—with less justification—with abuse. If the Freethinker retorts in kind he is solemnly reminded that he is dealing with a sacred subject, and has no right to outrage people's feelings by attacking their religious beliefs. He has repeated this so often that he really believes it. Not only does he believe it himself, but by dint of reiteration he has induced many who do not agree with his religious views to believe it also. There are scores of non-religious people who, if they are driven to avow their non-belief, do so as if it were something of which to be almost ashamed. They admit it with an indicated hope that they will be dealt with as mercifully as possible.

The belief that religious opinions are worthy of a special measure of respect is in itself proof of what has been said. It provides a sanctuary for bigotry and an authoritative platform for intolerance. Religious opinions are no more deserving of respect than are opinions about the British Constitution. And they are certainly not so important. My opinion about the British Constitution may lead me to say or do things that will materially affect the lives of all around me. But my opinions about God, whether right or wrong, leave everybody, so far as all earthly purposes are concerned, quite unaffected. We do, it is true, respect our own opinions; but this is because they are our own. And if we respect like opinions in other people it is only by a fictitious extension of our own personality.

Now I deny that any opinion, as an opinion, is entitled to respect. All opinions, as such, are upon an absolute equality—a man's opinion concerning the most "sacred" subject being no more deserving of respect than his opinion concerning the equator. All that does deserve respect is the right of each to hold and express any opinion he or she possesses. There is a clear reason in social utility for this; but there is neither social utility nor common sense in respecting opinions merely because their possessor chooses to cover them with the cloak of religion. And it is precisely this right of each to hold and express opinion that the believer declines to respect. Nay, he does not so much consciously decline this, as the thought of such a thing scarce enters his head. His opinion that I, as a Freethinker, am a source of moral and social corruption deserves to be treated with all deference, and may be shouted from the housetops. My opinion that I am nothing of the kind, but am at least as good as a Christian, must be expressed with all due deference to the feelings of the believer—if, indeed, I am graciously allowed to express it at all. If Freethinkers succeed in inducing the authorities to open a museum or a library, or permit concerts on Sunday, that is an outrage on the feelings of Christians. But Freethinkers may be debarred from all these pleasures, and may have their "day of rest" made hideous by church bells, street-corner preaching, and Salvation Army bands, without it being considered that their feelings suffer to any extent whatever.

The truth is that the Freethinker who "outrages" religious feeling by expressing his opinions concerning religious beliefs is acting upon a much higher moral principle than is ever reached by the average Christian. To him opinion is something that counts for too much in the progress of the race for it to be put aside as of no consequence. Every opinion brings with it its responsibilities, and the responsi-

bilities of unbelief are at least as important as those connected with a set of opinions that have nothing to commend them but their antiquity. I cordially admire the Christian who feels it to be his duty to preach his belief abroad; but it is not a duty that should be confined to himself. It is incumbent upon everyone to brand a thing a lie once they have convinced themselves that it is so. The plea that the time is not ripe for so acting is the evasion of a grave responsibility. "Not ripe" only means not quite safe; nothing more. But the proper time to call a lie by its name is when it is seen to be a lie, not to wait until there are enough singers to make a respectable chorus. Religious belief does not of necessity involve this attitude; but it is deeply implanted in the nature of Freethought.

And just as the Freethinker's attack on religious opinion is dictated by a higher sense of duty than that implied in Christianity, so the Christian claim that religious opinions deserve a special measure of respect is fundamentally an attempt to force a lower morality upon the unbeliever. It is asking him to obliterate his sense of the distinction between true and false, and to treat a lie with the same respect he properly reserves for the truth. The issue has been well put by Dr. Thomas Arnold—the famous father of a still more famous son. He says:—

"To tax anyone with want of reverence because he pays no respect to what we venerate, is either irrelevant or is a mere confusion. The fact, so far as it is true, is no reproach, but an honor; because to reverence all persons and all things is absolutely wrong; reverence shown to that which does not deserve it, is no virtue; no, not even an amiable weakness, but a plain folly and sin. But if it be meant that he is wanting in proper reverence, not respecting what is really to be respected, that is assuming the whole question at issue, because what we call divine he calls an idol; and so, supposing that we are in the right, we are bound to fall down and worship; so, supposing him to be in the right, he is no less bound to pull it to the ground and destroy it."

The claim that religious opinions are deserving of a special measure of respect is as injurious in practice as it is ridiculous in theory. For in practice this involves the suppression of all opinion hostile to religion. From the construing of the expression of opinions hostile to religion as undesirable, to the suppression of such opinions by punishing those who hold them, is an easy and natural step. And it is one that Christianity has always been willing and eager to take. It has suppressed opinion systematically, continuously, and by every means within its power. But you can only protect an established opinion from attack at the price of cultivating intellectual cowardice and hypocrisy. Conformity is secured by robbing the nation of that which is most vital to its well-being and development. Religious health is consequently only another aspect of social disease. By making it unpleasant for people to investigate received opinion, error becomes firmly established and hypocrisy the marked social characteristic. Not an hypocrisy that is an expression of a conscious dissimulation; that is a comparatively healthy state, and denotes at least the capacity for seeing the real thing. The hypocrisy generated is of the kind that, although there is a total divorce between profession and practice, there is an almost total unconsciousness of the fact that we are all the time living a lie. It is an hypocrisy that is unconscious, ingrained, organic, secured by a process of elimination that has been at work for many generations.

The nature of this process has been well pointed out by Mr. Francis Galton in the following passage:—

"The policy of the religious world in Europe... having first captured all the gentle natures and condemned them to celibacy, made another sweep of her [the Church's] huge nets.... to catch those who were the most fearless, truth-seeking, and intelligent in their modes of thought, and therefore the most suitable parents of a high civilisation, and put a strong check not a direct stop, to their progeny. Those she reserved

on these occasions, to breed the generations of the future, were the servile, the indifferent, and again, the stupid. Thus as she.....brutalised human nature by her system of celibacy applied to the gentle, she demoralised it by her system of persecution of the intelligent, the sincere, the free. It is enough to make the blood boil to think of the blind folly that has caused the foremost nations of struggling humanity to be the heirs of such hateful ancestry, and that has so bred our instincts as to keep them in an unnecessarily long continued antagonism with the essential requirements of a steadily advancing civilisation.*

The truth of the above is seen in the light of the calculation that in three hundred years—1471-1781—no less than 82,000 persons were burnt, and 291,000 imprisoned, for religious offences in Spain alone. Probably other countries could not show so heavy a record as this, but substantially the same work was being carried on all over Europe. And, modified considerably by changed conditions, the policy is still pursued. To protect religious opinions from criticism and attack, the Christian Churches have deliberately depleted the race—so far as they could—of the finer and more valuable types of mind and character. And beyond those actually reached by the arm of persecution, there has been the benumbing effects upon the rest of the population. And when the record of Christianity's misdeeds is finally and accurately written, this will stand out as its greatest crime against civilisation. Its greatest crime has been, not the burning of men at the stake or the imprisonment of others in a Christian dungeon. Its crowning crime has been in the lower type of mind and character it has encouraged, in the hypocrisy that it has made almost a second character. In Pagan Rome it was said that one priest could not meet another without a smile. If Christian can meet Christian to-day with a grave face, it is only because the selective influence of Christianity has developed a type that lacks the wit to perceive the absurdity of the current creed.

C. COHEN.

Fear and Religion.

NOMINALLY, the Bible is the infallible text-book of the Christian Church, although in reality it is nothing of the kind. In Protestantism, it is the only official court of appeal, the one authoritative arbitrator in all matters of controversy, the sole rule of faith and conduct. And yet neither in Catholicism, nor even in Protestantism, do the Holy Scriptures practically occupy the place of honor theoretically assigned to them. Everything depends upon interpretation, and interpretation is determined according to the exigencies of time and place. If it is not convenient, or expedient, to take a Biblical passage literally, there is nothing to prevent its being treated symbolically. Whenever Origen experienced any difficulty in accepting a verse as it stood, he did not hesitate to give it an allegorical turn. The truth is that the Bible has been, and is being, subjected to all sorts of cruel torture in order to force it into supporting any wild and silly vagaries cherished by its professional worshippers.

It is an old saying that "fear first made the gods," and the truth of it is beyond question. In all religions the deities are objects of fear, and the underlying motive of all religious ceremonies is the desire to propitiate or conciliate them. It is taken for granted that for some reason or other they are angry with us, and disposed to do us harm. Indeed, it is safe to state that most religions originated in ignorance touched with fear. If we read the Old Testament, we find that Judaism was a religion whose fervor was kindled by its terrors. Jehovah was a deity who planted his arrows in men and set his terrors in array against them (Job vi. 4). In Psalm xc. 11 Jehovah is asked, "Who knoweth the power of thine anger, and thy wrath according to

the fear that is due unto thee?" In Malachi i. 6 the Lord of Hosts is represented as inquiring, "If I be a master, where is my fear?" "The fear of God" and "the fear of the Lord" are terms that occur nearly forty times, while the exhortation to "fear God," to "fear the Lord," or to "fear him" is repeated about sixty times. Jehovah was to be served with fear, and any rejoicing allowed in his presence had to be tempered with trembling. The fear of the Lord was wisdom, or "the beginning of knowledge."

Thus the keynote of Judaism was fear. But we are assured that Christianity is pre-eminently a religion of love. It is true that it enjoins love, but the commandment to love is based on the commandment to fear. Jesus spoke of God as the sole object of fear (Matthew x. 28). The disciples were people who walked "in the fear of the Lord" (Acts ix. 31). Peter advised his readers to "pass the time of their sojourn here in fear" (1 Peter i. 17). Holiness was to be perfected "in the fear of the Lord" (2 Cor. vii. 1). Christians were to subject themselves "one to another in the fear of Christ" (Eph. v. 21). They were also to work out their "own salvation with fear and trembling" (Phil. ii. 12). Their duty, according to Peter, was to "love the brotherhood" and "fear God" (1 Peter ii. 17). The best thing that could be said of Cornelius was that he was "a devout man, and one that feared God" (Acts x. i.). Paul admitted that he persuaded men because he knew the "terrors" or "the fear of the Lord" (2 Cor. v. 11). The author of Hebrews exhorted his readers to have grace whereby they might "offer service, well-pleasing to God, with reverence and godly fear" (Hebrews xii. 28).

Is it not now clear that Christianity, as well as Judaism, is rooted and grounded in fear? And is it not incontrovertible that a religion so rooted and grounded is of necessity incapable of developing the highest and noblest character? A Christian writer of note frankly admits that "fear has played a great part in the history of Christianity; often, indeed, a malign part." But he endeavors to shield Christianity by asserting that "barbaric peoples translated the Biblical symbolisms after their own manner, imagining that God tortured his creatures as they did their fellows." This defence is, however, utterly futile, because there is absolutely no evidence that the New Testament passages quoted above are so many "symbolisms." Is it conceivable that Paul was speaking symbolically when he said, "Let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God"? Was Jesus talking symbolically only when he threatened unbelievers in himself with hell-fire? In Hebrews we read of "a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and a fierceness of fire which shall devour the adversaries," and the "much sorer punishment" that shall overtake him "who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the spirit of grace"—are all these solemn expressions to be piously juggled with and dismissed as mere "symbolisms"? The writer just mentioned says that "all through there was a revolt against these crude interpretations"; but, in reality, the revolt was not against "crude interpretations," but against ignorant and barbarous ideas, or against a religion that was founded on injustice and cruelty. The New Testament appeals to fear, not as holding an inferior place, and as passing, but as an essential and permanent element of the religious life, in which alone holiness, which the theologians allege means character, could be perfected. It is true that the apostle John describes perfect love as casting out fear, but that expression stands absolutely alone in the New Testament, and does not in the least discredit or modify the meaning of the uniform teaching ascribed to Jesus and Peter and Paul and the author of the Acts. Indeed, John's own teaching cannot be judged in the light of that solitary utterance, for we find that both in the Epistles and the Gospel attributed to him he regards men's eternal destiny as wholly dependent upon their attitude to Jesus Christ.

* Hereditary Genius, p. 358.

"He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life; but he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." Such is John's language, and it is in full harmony with the rest of the New Testament. The God of the Bible rewards believers with the joys of heaven, but tortures unbelievers in the depth of hell. If the Bible is really the Word of God, fully two-thirds of all the countless myriads of mankind who have passed into the unseen world are at this moment, and shall be forever, writhing with indescribable agony in the flames of hell.

We hold that such a religion is degrading and demoralising in its influence upon those who profess it. Take the apostle John, "the disciple whom Jesus loved," the New Testament type of the saint,—what did the love of God do for him? Did it inspire him to love and help his brother-man, or only his brother-believer? According to Irenæus he lived at Ephesus down to the reign of Trajan. One day, when he went to bathe at the public baths, he saw Cerinthus within, and rushed away in great haste, as if from a poisonous snake, saying "Let us flee lest the room should indeed fall in, for Cerinthus, the enemy of the truth, is within." The fact to be noted is that, whether that story be true or not, Irenæus, Bishop of Lyons, did not see in it anything unworthy of, or inconsistent with, Christian character. As a matter of fact, neither the Fatherhood of God nor the Brotherhood of Man is a New Testament doctrine. The Divine Fatherhood only embraces believers, and they alone are brethren. For all others, "it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." Like Zeus in the *Prometheus Bound* of Aeschylus, the Christian Deity is a tyrant, who heaps blessedness upon obsequious flatterers, or cringing slaves, but sentences all others to eternal banishment in the outer darkness, where there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth for ever.

It is all very well to say that "in mediæval literature one of the astonishing things is the coolness with which men took the ecclesiastic fulminations"; but we must not forget that those "ecclesiastical fulminations" were but paraphrases of those contained in the New Testament. The priests who manipulated the horrors of hell in the Dark Ages, which yet constituted Faith's most brilliant period, were but degenerate successors of the apostles, and their degeneracy was largely traceable to the malign influence of the apostolic doctrine which they professionally believed and proclaimed. The New Theologians will have none of the orthodox hell; but they do not seem to realise that in rejecting it they reject what they still speak of as the Word of God. We are told that "Rabelais, who turned hell into a jest, had his predecessors," and he has also had his successors; but all alike must be classed among the enemies of the Cross of Christ. In reality, they who revolt against the doctrine of hell revolt against the God who is said to have prepared it for the Devil and his angels. The arguments against the Christian doctrine of rewards and punishments apply with equal force to the whole conception of salvation by faith, or through the merits of another. Even on the assumption that faith in Christ develops goodness, it is goodness bought at too great a cost, and by no means of the best type. But we are strongly of conviction that faith in Christ is not a root that grows into a tree of goodness. Character often springs up in spite of it, but never by means of it.

Fear of supernatural beings and forces is a child of ignorance, and is now at last passing away. One well says:—

"When we think of the sheer suffering that fear has caused; when we remember what have been its breeding-grounds; how it has flourished on ignorance, on superstition, on cruelty and tyranny, we are apt to regard it as wholly evil, and its extirpation as one of the highest goods."

Wholly evil it undoubtedly is in all its supernatural forms. The only wholesome fear is that of misreading Nature and misunderstanding her laws; the fear of missing life's chief boons through indolence

and inattention; the fear of falling behind in the struggle for self-expression and perfect adjustment to the environment; the fear, not of Nature herself, but of disharmony with her; the fear that engenders courage to face the storm undaunted, to fight the battle without flinching, to shoulder the burden without fainting, and to sing the victor's song in the midst of the conflict. This fear breeds self-confidence, and reaches out for that knowledge of the conditions and possibilities of life which blossoms into serene peace and fruitful joy, and enables us to sing with George Meredith,—

"Laughter! O thou reviver of sick Earth!
Good for the spirit, good
For body, thou! to both art wine and bread."

J. T. LLOYD.

Secular Education in Australia.

UNDER the provisions of the Referendum Bill recently introduced into the Queensland Legislative Assembly, the people of that State will soon be called upon to declare whether they wish to see religion introduced into their national system of education. A popular vote, demanded by the clerics and their supporters, is to decide whether there shall be simple Bible teaching in the schools or not; that is, whether a change—a most momentous change—shall be made in the system which for over thirty years has been secular and compulsory, which has provided a sound education for the poorest children in the State, and which has given complete satisfaction to all classes in the community save one—the class that is directly or indirectly interested in obtaining State support for religion. In Australia, as in England, the churches and chapels and Sunday-schools are rapidly losing their hold on the masses, and therefore the religious leaders are invoking the aid of the State. They demand the right to use State institutions to control the child for a few more years. "Only a little longer let us stay." I don't think the Queenslanders will listen favorably to this piteous and unmanly appeal. I do not think they will lightly make the change asked for. Could they realise the unseemly wrangling between the various sections of Christians that is now blocking all real educational effort in this country, they would certainly never consent to the priest's putting his foot across the threshold of the school door, nor would they ever allow the parson to thrust his "sacred books" into the hands of the teacher and demand that they should be taught to young Australians in the national schools, where many of the teachers are Roman Catholics, some are Jews, some Freethinkers. Is it right to ask these men to teach the Protestant religion? Is the Nonconformist the only man with a conscience? Simple Bible teaching is a form of sectarianism. It is the special form of teaching demanded by the Evangelicals. Do the Freethinkers, the Jews, the Catholics with their historic Church and holy sacraments, all count for nothing? In many parts of Australia the Catholics have for years maintained their own schools, and they have persistently demanded a subsidy for them. That subsidy has been just as persistently refused, and rightly so while there is absolute religious equality under the secular system. The claim, however, would stand on a very different basis if the State introduced Protestantism into the public schools. Queenslanders will do well to glance at the position in England. All the efforts of the contending sects here to bring about a compromise have ended in miserable failure, and the position has become so hopeless that many who had advocated simple Bible teaching in the schools are now admitting that the secular solution is the only one possible. Mr. C. W. Hole, the President of the National Union of Teachers, in a recent address declared that the only way to a peaceful settlement of the present strife was to adopt the secular system; and the *Methodist Times* of April 15, 1909, referring to his remarks, speaks of

"the steady growth of feeling in favor of an entirely secular education in the national schools." And at present the best minds in the Anglican Church are insisting that the Bible should not be taught to children except by trained instructors. In the *Hibbert Journal* for February of this year, the Right Rev. Dr. Mercer, Bishop of Tasmania, discusses the question, "Is the Old Testament a suitable basis for moral instruction?" His answer is a distinct and unqualified "No." The quibbles and subterfuges and special pleadings of such apologists as Butler, Mansel, and Keble, are scathingly dealt with, and the terrible consequences of regarding the Old Testament as a moral guide are clearly pointed out. Indeed, his lordship's passionate emphasis of these consequences, and of the difficulty of explaining to a child that the Old Testament morality is progressive, reminds one of Plato's almost heart-rending protests against teaching the children of his day that the gods were such as Homer represented them. Is it expected that a poor, untrained schoolmaster will succeed where Dean Mansel failed? An eminent English educationist, Dr. F. H. Hayward, in *The Primary Curriculum*, puts forward the literary claims of the Bible to a place in the schools. "I dream," he says, "like Matthew Arnold, that to the poor of England Isaiah may be a Demosthenes, a Jerusalem an Athens." Better a thousand times to have a Demosthenes and an Athens than a Calvin and a Smithfield, though even the "eye of Greece" and "home of art" put Socrates to death for teaching the young "false ideas about the gods," the principal of the false ideas being that the gods are never vengeful or cruel or deceitful. The difficulty, however, of separating the literary element of the Bible in its present form from the religious element, for school purposes, is seen very clearly from Dr. Hayward's own statements. For instance, speaking of the story of Elijah—the very thing that would attract and entrance the child-mind—he says that it is "not to be minutely entered into." I would respectively ask if that is the spirit of the true teacher of any subject?

The opponents of the secular system in Victoria, Queensland, and South Australia, constantly refer to it as *pernicious*—in fact, the word is repeated in this connection *ad nauseam*. In what respect, exactly, is the system pernicious? It's the old story of the tyranny of words and phrases. Violent anti-Catholics like Mr. Joseph Hocking speak of the "alarming increase of Romanism"; the Catholics speak of the "gratifying increase in the number of adherents of the true faith." If the opponents of secular education in Australia mean that the system has a tendency to reduce the privileges and emoluments of a certain section, they may be right; but if, as is probably the case, they mean to imply that morality is endangered, they are contradicted by facts. Let us compare the States that retain religious instruction with those that have adopted the secular system. *The Commonwealth Year Book* (1908; p. 764) gives the number of convictions at the Supreme Courts for the six years 1901-1906. For each of four of these years New South Wales (religious instruction) shows an increase on the preceding year, while Victoria (secular) shows an increase for only one year, and Queensland and South Australia (both secular) for two years. The magisterial convictions per 10,000 inhabitants for the same period show that in S. A. the number has been much less than half that in N. S. W. for any one of the six years. In Victoria, the average number for the period is 22.8; in N. S. W., 33.4; in Queensland, 42.2. The Commonwealth statistician, Mr. G. H. Knibbs, says that in comparing the returns from the magistrates' courts it must be remembered that in numbers of cases the breaches of law are technical or purely local. "The committals to higher courts give a better basis of comparison, although even in this connection allowance must be made for the want of uniformity in jurisdiction." Taking, then, the proportion of committals per 10,000 of population, we find that Victoria and S. A. each average less than half the

number in N. S. W., and for each of five years show a marked decrease on the preceding year, whereas N. S. W. shows an increase for each of five years. The Queensland yearly average is also slightly below that of N. S. W. West Australia (religious instruction) has a worse record than any of the other States mentioned. But that part of Australia was a Crown colony until 1890, and, as the statistician points out, there are many special circumstances to be taken into account. Returns for the whole Commonwealth—the greater part of which has had the secular system for about thirty years—show the following steady decrease in the "number of convictions for serious crime" per 10,000 persons during a period of twenty-five years:—

1881	...	...	...	69.3
1891	...	...	...	44.8
1901	...	...	...	29.1
1906	...	...	...	27.5

This steady decrease may not be due entirely to secular education. It is always necessary to guard against the fallacy of *post hoc, ergo propter hoc*. But a careful study of all the *Year Book* facts and figures bearing on education and crime for a number of years, seems to point to the education system as an important factor in moral development, so far as morality, or immorality, is indicated by criminal statistics. At any rate, the parsons and other interested opponents of the secular system keep harping on the word "pernicious," but they will not mention the exact concrete results to which they take exception, and it is most unlikely that Queensland will alter the system to please them. If what they are really concerned about is the child's immortal soul, then that is the Church's business, not the State's. The "Bible in Schools Leagues" have already made desperate efforts to crush secular education in Victoria and in South Australia, and in each State an overwhelming majority voted in favor of keeping the schools as they are. It is now Queensland's turn to decide that though her educational system may be godless, it is doing good service to the community, and that it may easily be altered for the worse.

A. D. McLAREN.

Perhaps the most demoralising effect of Christianity upon all sorts and conditions of worthless humanity within its influence is that it encourages every miscreant to continue in his evil course, by holding out to him the shameful delusion of divine forgiveness and a blessed salvation at the fag-end of a whole life devoted to any and every description of mis-doing. After a person has committed some atrocious murder and is condemned to death, he is at once consigned to his own reflection and to the canting chaplain to be befooled. As soon as the unfortunate man is convinced that he is at the end of his tether—that there is no chance of a reprieve, but not before—he becomes a most suitable plastic piece of raw human material for the chaplain to mould as he will. Being now *in extremis*, he is, in almost every instance, easily transmuted into a saint of the blessed carpenter: and the chaplain's craft is now to spread before him a rich antepast of what there is in store for him, immediately after he has leaped from the end of the tight-rope. Now, he is inspired by the chaplain to write beautiful Christian cant to his relatives in the outer world, wherein he reveals some of his blessed prospects, which, made known to him by the Holy Spirit, will soon be realised in all their spiritual transcendence. How that his heavenly Father, having nothing else to do, and only one criminal in all the world to look after, is anxiously waiting to fall on his neck and kiss him; whilst his Savior, with arms outstretched, is ready to give him the divine hug of reconciliation.—"Ralph Cricklewood."

Wherever I have made a rash statement I shall be happy to be corrected; wherever I have argued wrongly I shall be happy to be set right. But I am less amenable to appeals on the ground of "taste." They are almost invariably made by those who wish failure to one's propaganda. A fair controversialist will refrain from personalities. I have done this, and I will do no more.—G. W. Foote.

Acid Drops.

Several churches in the Eastern counties have been struck by lightning during the recent thunderstorms, including Yarmouth parish church, the belfry of which was set on fire. It is curious that "Providence" shows no respect for "the House of God" on these occasions. We invite the clergy to explain.

Harmsworth's publications are various. Some go in for piety, some for the opposite; and the owner makes a profit out of the lot. He resembles Artemus Ward in one thing. Artemus was asked what were his principles. "Princerpuls!" he replied, "I've ne'er a one; I'm in the show business." We don't carry the resemblance further. We don't mean that Harmsworth has Artemus Ward's wit.

One of the Harmsworth publications devoted to piety is the *Sunday Companion*, which, we see, gives advice—the cheapest thing in the world. A man asked what he should do; he was required by his employer to indulge in deception on pain of dismissal. The reply was—"Conscience should be obeyed before all worldly advantage." Every man should "ask himself whether he is leading the life that Christ would have him lead." But we daresay the employer himself was a Christite. Besides, if conscience should be obeyed before all worldly advantage, how would that affect the Harmsworth publications?

Commenting on the much-boomed Welsh revival that centred round the pathologic personality of Evan Roberts, the Rev. F. Jones, of Abergelo, says:—

"Although four years Wales was throbbing under its influence, which had embraced the whole community, yet at the present moment there were no more men in the churches taking part in the services than before the revival, and fewer attended the Sunday-schools, the society meetings, and the prayer meetings than six years ago. The full flowing tide had receded and left exposed to the world the wreckage of unfulfilled promises, covered by the slimy influences of decay."

This is precisely what we prophesied would occur. A contagious and intoxicating influence may overcome people for a time, and give the same appearance of vitality to a movement that stimulants confer upon a debilitated organism. But the reaction sets in, and then the artificial and unhealthy nature of the process is apparent. If Christianity were either a normal product of contemporary life, or in harmony with contemporary needs, it could be kept alive without the numerous stimulative agencies that are constantly called into play. But it fulfils neither conditions, and only puts on a semblance of life by means that are discreditable to all concerned.

A great deal is being said just now in Nonconformist papers about the Anglican Church in Wales being an "alien Church." This we are concerned neither to accept nor deny; but we take the occasion to point out that if things are to be settled on this principle, Christianity itself must be given up. For this is essentially an alien creed. It was born in the East, and the whole spirit and temper of its teaching is Eastern. Western nations did not voluntarily adopt it; it was forced upon them; and the history of Western Europe is the record of attempts made either to reject it altogether or to modify its teachings in accord with a non-Christian conception of life. To see real Christianity one has to study the lives and beliefs of those Eastern Christians who have been most secluded from Western influences. Then we begin to realise what Christianity was, and to what extent foreign influences have transformed it. "Modernism" and the "New Theology" are only the latest expressions of the influence of Western life and thought upon an essentially Eastern and alien religion.

If all the lunatics in Great Britain went to the asylums there would be an immense multiplication of those establishments. One of them, presumably at large, writes to the *Glasgow Evening Citizen*, attributing "strikes, epidemics, wars, failure of crops, and this past winter, with dull trade and a want of work" to God's anger at the "secularising of the Sabbath." This gentleman thinks "God" is as idiotic as himself.

Rev. Dr. Aked, of New York, says that "Christianity is not in peril." Of course it is not; who said that it was? Christianity was never in peril of any kind. It entered the world still-born, and it has been dead ever since. Men of God need not despair. The religion on which they live will never become a greater failure than it has always been.

No, Christianity is not in peril, being quite dead. All it needs is decent burial.

Dr. Aked is astray on another point. "The really educated man," he declares, "knows that the Bible is a true book than ever it was, and more valuable." According to this oracle, "the really educated man" is at once a Higher Critic and a believer in the Divine inspiration of the Bible. In other words, no one has a right to be regarded as a "really educated man" unless he agrees with Dr. Aked, which is unadulterated nonsense. All we can say is, that a "really educated man" could never utter such immoral twaddle as this parson of millionaires so frequently indulges in.

The *Christian* says that the real forces now face to face in Turkey are Christ and Mohammed. After this brilliant piece of sociological analysis it goes on to remark that "the reactionary forces are fanatical—and Mohammedan to the core. On the other hand, the young Turks have shown in a marvellous fashion how they have learned the truly Christian lessons of toleration and self-command." It adds that "the grand inspiring force in the Western world is Christianity." On the score of impudence this expression of opinion leaves little to be desired. The manner in which Mohammedanism is identified with bigoted fanaticism, and Christianity with enlightened tolerance, is charming. Historically, Mohammedanism has shown itself a far more tolerant creed than has Christianity, and, other things equal, is so still. What the young Turks really owe to Christian Europe is the series of political machinations that for years kept them from setting their own house in order, and which only the other day struck a heavy and cowardly blow at their newly established reforms. And with the air full of revelations about sweating, the constant cry of the unemployed, and the Dreadnought fever, in all probability the young Turks will decide that the less they have to do with the "grand inspiring force" of the Western world, the better.

Rev. R. J. Campbell, speaking at Wigan, denied the Socialism implied Atheism. We are not going to discuss that. It is off our beat. But when the reverend gentleman went on to say, "There are no Atheists; there never were," he was talking nonsense, and insolent nonsense too. There are millions of Atheists in Europe, and thousands in England. There are some even in Wigan. Charles Bradlaugh was a declared Atheist, and he was a greater man than Mr. Campbell will ever be.

Is it not time that Mr. Campbell talked less and thought more. He will be as empty as a squeezed orange, if he doesn't mind—and as dry.

How fond preachers are of tacking on the name of Atheism to everything that seems objectionable! It is a practice that is at least as old as Christianity, and as it is in fact wrong one may assume that it pays, and as it pays we may also assume that it will be continued. Here, for instance, Mr. R. J. Campbell, who tells us that the teaching that some criminals are irreclaimable, and that society must treat him as a degenerate, is "an expression of practical Atheism." Why Atheism, one is at a loss to perceive. If it is a fact, it is no more Atheistic than Theistic—unless Mr. Campbell means that facing facts naturally leads to Atheism. And if it not a fact, well, it is an error, and the matter ends. Besides, as a matter of historic fact, the teaching that all men, not merely the criminal, are irretrievably degraded beings, belongs to Christianity—not to Atheism.

Mr. Campbell has a word of explanation as to why he thinks that some criminals are not incurable, and this shows that he has never really troubled to think the matter out. He tells us "there is no hard and fast line between the upright character and the most degraded; the excellence of one and the depravity of the other are neither of them complete, but only a question of degree." But this is a statement that no one denies; and this does not at all connect with the problem of the incurable criminal. The worst characters has some redeeming features, as Mr. Campbell also points out; but this, again, does not touch the point. The real problem is this. Some persons have certain characteristics of an anti-social character that make their being a large a danger to others. Along with these anti-social qualities they may have certain good qualities, just as a man with an homicidal tendency may be perfectly honest or the habitual burglar fond of children. The presence of the good is not denied; it is the manifestation of the bad that raises the problem. Now in some cases—the majority in all probability—it is possible by adequate training to correct these criminal tendencies. In other cases it is

simply not possible; and all who have studied the question agree upon this. It is not, we repeat a question of Atheism or Theism; it is a question of fact; and the only responsibility of both Atheist and Theist is to have courage to face the facts. And for Mr. Campbell's benefit we may point out that it is the "practical" Atheists who first taught Christians the necessity of dealing with the criminal in a humane and scientific manner. The instruction of Christian Europe on this point dates back to Helvetius, Beccaria, and Voltaire; the first two of whom were Atheists, and the third a Deist, with a Deism of a most attenuated character. Freethinkers carried on the work, and only within recent years have Christians awakened to its importance.

The Bishop of London has given to the world an explanation of the dearth of clergymen in the Church of England, and it is quite worthy—of the Bishop of London. He says there is no real dearth of men because "If God calls any he is sure to call enough," and he says there were thousands wandering about who have been called, but are unaware of it. He further suggests that steps should be taken so that "poverty should not be a bar to any young man, in any class, being able to respond." Now here is a pretty state of affairs. Here is God calling men to become parsons, and "thousands" of them not hearing, we presume because God doesn't call loudly enough. And so our astute Bishop suggests that if the profession is made financially more attractive, more people will hear the call of God than is the case at present. Doubtless. If the "call" is accompanied by a sufficiently substantial salary, we have no doubt there will be plenty of responses. But then we can hardly all have £10,000 calls. Hence the difficulty.

The Rev. Dr. Newton Marshall magnifies Christ at a ruinous cost. "The cumbersome precepts of the Old Dispensation are there," he maintains, "to make the simple moral grandeur of Jesus shine the brighter." The morality of the Old Testament is at points so abominably low and disgusting, in order that the moral teaching of the New may benefit by the contrast. This is to make God guilty of the most culpable trifling in his dealings with mankind. A book composed on such an iniquitous principle would be an infinite and everlasting disgrace to any deity, and enough to damn for ever any religion advocated therein.

At the same time, Dr. Marshall exposes the absurdity of Dr. Clifford's oft-repeated claim that the Bible could be used merely as *literature* under a secular system of education in our Government schools. "The Bible," he says, "is a book of devotion," and can be properly used only as such. So says Dr. Clifford also, except when he is advocating his own illogical, hypocritical, and unjust notion of "civic" education.

According to the Rev. Newton H. Marshall, "the heaviest blow Christianity ever sustained was its patronage by Constantine the Great." Sheer cant! It is cant in a double direction and quality. In the first place, modern Christians apologise for the imperfections of historic Christianity by its alliance with the State. But every one of the evil features manifested by Christianity after its alliance with the State can be seen just as soon as we meet with Christianity in any organised form. It did not become intolerant because of the State; it was always that, and it made as intolerant as itself one of the most tolerant governments the world has ever seen. All that the alliance did was to enable it to be intolerant in a more thorough-going manner. It did not get from the State the appetite for quarrelling over doctrinal matters. This meets us in the pages of the New Testament itself. It was not the State that corrupted Christianity, it was Christianity that corrupted the State. As a mere government the Roman State was infinitely worse as Christian than it had ever been as Pagan. And, secondly, if Constantine had not patronised Christianity would it ever have assumed the controlling power it did assume? It is very doubtful. As a matter of fact, Christianity has never gained control in any country in the world without the power of the State, and it has never maintained its position without force. It is, we repeat, sheer cant for Christians to pretend that they do not care for the help of the State in the maintenance of their religion. There is not a Christian church in the country that does not receive State support in some shape, and they are all ready to take as much more as they can get. What some of them really complain about is that certain churches are receiving more than their share. This arouses their anger, but it does not give birth to any principle worth talking about.

It is one of the most difficult things in the world to corner Christians. They are as slippery as eels and don't care what

holes they escape through. Take this instance. They have long been used to shout that they must be right on account of their numbers, while the "infidels" must be wrong because they are "only a handful." But now they are losing in point of numbers, losing heavily, and losing every year, they are beginning to assume a very different attitude. Their new cry is, "Numbers are nothing." At the recent Spring Assembly of the Baptist Union, Dr. Campbell Morgan exclaimed: "There is a fallacy of numbers, and I wish we could get rid of statistics for twelve months." No doubt! The reverend gentleman rather blasphemously added, "It would give Jesus Christ a chance." Has it come to this? Poor Jesus Christ!

Dr. Campbell Morgan's address was on "Watching for Souls." A capital title! It beautifully suggests the cat-and-mouse policy of clericals in relation to laymen—and children especially. Poor little innocent mice! What chance have they against the old black cats?

The Rev. Harry Bisseker says that while "our words may harm men, our prayers can never do them injury." Then we would advise the reverend gentleman to confine himself in future to prayers, and to work at them in private. He may then feel perfectly certain that the persons prayed for will receive no harm; and this will also give the Lord, if he exists, a chance of doing them some good.

Amazing is the omniscience of the theologian. The following infallible declaration fell from his lips the other day: "Jesus was God become man, not God walking the earth in human form." But if the sentence means anything it means this: Jesus was not God, but a man who had previously been God. When he became man he lost his former consciousness as God, and knew himself only as man. What absolute rubbish offered as highest sense to the perplexed mind! No wonder theology has lost all its charm for the people.

A mighty revival of spiritual religion is at the door. It is going to be greatest and most glorious awakening ever experienced. Meantime, the religious life is ebbing; the churches are becoming weaker and more worldly; intelligent people are losing interest in the salvation of souls; and the pulpit thunders away unheeded. Such is the state of things, and such are the symptoms to-day; but to-morrow—Hallelujah! Praise his name for ever! We are old enough to know how to take the vain prophecy now.

To a recent issue of the *British Congregationalist*, the Rev. Ossian Davies contributes a column and a quarter of sheer nonsense about reading the Bible. He exhorts people to read it "for the sake of its Divine Author. All other books are the words of men, but this book is the word of the living God." We are to read it also "for the sake of its fine code of morality." As the volume contains several contradictory codes one wonders which of them Mr. Davies means. Then we are to read "the whole book, and not mere fragments of it." When men of sense come across such ineffable twaddle, their feeling is one of inexpressible pity for the simple-minded readers who are the dupes of such mawkish writers. Mr. Davies writes as if he had never heard of the Higher Criticism.

A prominent sky-pilot says that "even the most hardened hears the call of God when a fellow mortal makes him feel that he has seen his soul and that he believes in it." Probably; but what a tremendous problematic "when" on which to build a case! All the dupes of the parson are people trained from childhood to believe that they have "souls," and that their destiny is determined by their attitude to a personal deity. But, thanks to the growing spread of scientific knowledge, such dupes are becoming fewer every year, as the latest statistics clearly show.

The Catholic *Herald* attributes the decline of Methodism to its having "largely ceased to be a religion at all," and become "for all practical purposes a political body, devoting its influence and funds to the furtherance of certain political developments." There may be some truth in that statement; but the great falling-off in Church membership and attendance which has taken place during the last two or three years, particularly in the Baptist and Wesleyan bodies, is more directly traceable to the steady decay of Christian belief among the people generally. It is the spread of scientific knowledge and sane literary criticism that accounts for the gradual decline of the Churches; and from this disintegrating influence the Catholics are by no means immune.

The Rev. A. W. Hutton, of St. Mary-le-Bow, Cheapside, evidently thinks he can still frighten intelligent people by

thundering about death and the day of judgment. "You may despise priests and scorn parsons," he says, "but you cannot cheat death. You may mock at spiritual things while you live; but when you come to die you will realise your mistake and repent too late." But this man of God forgets that those who do not believe in the spiritual do not fear death, and laugh good-naturedly at such childish appeals. Avarice is undoubtedly a great fault, but the remedy for it is not the threat of hell-fire, or the promise of heaven for renouncing it.

Rev. J. Morgan Jones, of Aberdare, writing in the *Christian Commonwealth*—a paper whose sub-editor calls us a fool for mentioning it—has a new way of dealing with Paul's cock-a-doodle-do texts against women. This gentleman argues that Paul didn't write them. Somebody else wrote them on the margin of the manuscript, and somebody else put them into a fresh copy of the text. Easy, isn't it? In the course of time the Christians will clear out everything they don't care to keep in the Bible; they will also add what they think ought to be in it; and then they will have a new Bible altogether—which will be just as inspired as the old one.

Rev. Dr. Marshall, President of the Baptist Union, is an exceptionally magnanimous servant of the Lord. His charity extendeth even unto those wicked people who do not believe in the miracles of the Old Testament. In his address from the chair, he went so far as to allow that, if any Baptist ministers, "while heartily believing in the supernatural, are disposed to maintain that some of the extraordinary events of the Old Testament were never meant to be taken literally, but poetically, or allegorically, there is surely room for the exercise of Christian tolerance in such matters." What unheard-of magnanimity! Of course, such ministers ought to be burned, as Servitus was burned by Calvin; but the Baptist Union President thinks that, on the whole, they *may* be tolerated!

In conversion the Holy Spirit enters a man's heart, kindles a fire in it, and then takes his departure. When he is gone, the man must guard the fire most carefully, or "the cares of the world, the monotony of work, even the monotony of worship, will extinguish it." Then why doesn't the Holy Ghost stay on and guard the fire himself, as Jesus said he would?

The Rev. F. J. Dymond is a Chinese missionary home on furlough, and he is said to have helped a City Temple audience to "realise the hunger for religion in China, and the effect produced on the people by the first hearing of the Gospel story." But Chinese and Japanese newspapers tell an entirely different tale, and we have the further testimony of the fact that, after so many missionaries have been working hard for so long a period, the number of converts is ridiculously small.

A religious census has been taken by the workers in connection with the Dock-street Men's Bible Class at Monkwearmouth, and the result is reported in the *Sunderland Daily Echo* of April 26. A certain section of the Monkwearmouth area has had a house-to-house visitation, with a view to ascertaining how many of the men who are householders attend either church or chapel. It was found that 154 were members of the Roman Catholic Church, and 546 connected with other Churches. No less than 1876 attend no place of worship at all. Such is the hold of Christianity upon the men in that district. Yet we daresay the 700 faithful subscribe something for the conversion of the "heathen" in foreign parts.

Talking of converting the "heathen," a curious admission was made by Chancellor Prescott, who presided at a recent meeting of the Church Missionary Society at Carlisle. He said that he had been reading Bishop Tucker's book on missionary work in Uganda, and was "much struck with the fact that the work was much more successful when an English company started operations in the locality and when the secular arm began to work." This is an old story. History shows that the "secular arm" decided the religion of every country in Europe. Conversion was never as potent as coercion.

Rev. J. Scott Lidgett has been celebrating the triumphs of the Methodist Missionary Society. Even in Italy its agents have scored successes. A good number of Catholics, including several priests, have been converted. Converted from what? Christianity. Converted to what? Christianity. Would anybody but a Methodist preacher regard this as a great gain?

There appears to have been what Gibbon would call "a large consumption of missionaries" during the massacres in the Adana district. It is reported that a hundred were burnt in a church. We congratulate them on their promotion to heaven.

Mrs. Fawcett is a pious lady. It was natural that she should make much of the fact that the Women Suffrage delegates were invited to go to St. Paul's Cathedral on Sunday afternoon and hear a man preach. But why did she point out that "this was the first time the Suffrage movement had been recognised by the Church"? This could hardly have been a compliment to the Church, from the point of view of her hearers. Besides, if the women cling to the Church, after all the warnings of history, the vote won't do them much good, even if they get it. After all, the value of a vote really depends on the voter.

Mrs. Pethick Lawrence says she was in Holloway Gaol as one of "Christ's messengers." We always knew he was fond of the ladies, but we do not read that he included one of them amongst the twelve "messengers" he sent forth to the world. He would have had to include one if Mrs. Pethick Lawrence had been in the place of "Mary."

"J. B." of the *Christian World* has made the discovery that "Shakespeare is full of theology." Does he refer to passages like Falstaff's "divinity in odd numbers"? "J. B." says that the fact that men can laugh is "proof that God is good." Is it? Nine-tenths of all the laughter in the world is at somebody's expense. Those who enjoy the laugh may feel the goodness of God. Those who have the laugh against them don't feel the goodness of God quite so intensely.

Dr. W. J. Dawson says that "God meant man to be happy." The reverend gentleman may be right, but in that case God hasn't been very successful in realising his intention.

We read in a religious weekly that "the movement for theological freedom" is showing itself amongst the Presbyterians at Cape Colony. "Theological freedom" is a good phrase. It really means religious unbelief—but it sounds a lot better. If you claim "freedom" against any man it must be to differ from him. And it is the same with respect to a Creed or a Church.

At the Albert Hall celebration of General Booth's eightieth birthday the Salvationists sang the late Mrs. Booth's favorite hymn:—

"I'm but a stranger here,
Heaven is my home;
Earth is a desert drear,
Heaven is my home."

The poetry isn't much, but the meaning is clear; and it moves us to say that if the people whose home is in heaven would only go home, the world might be more useful to those who are not "strangers" in it.

"Providence" has been active in Portugal. Many persons were killed, and more wounded, not to mention the missing, by earthquakes which have done great damage in the Beira-vente and Samorra districts. The Tagus overflowed its banks at Santarem, and the Church of Salvador is so damaged that it will have to be demolished. God is no respecter of persons—nor of buildings—not even of his own.

"God will forgive me for what I am going to do." So wrote Miss Rose Budd, the nurse who committed suicide at Bideford. Not an Atheist, evidently; though she ought to have been, according to the philosophy of Talmage, Torrey, and Co.

John Armitage, who killed that little five-year-old boy at Bishop Auckland, laid a Prayer Book on the poor child's dead body, upon a loose leaf of which was a picture of a boy in the attitude of prayer. What a hubbub there would have been if the murderer had placed the *Freethinker* or the *Age of Reason* on his victim's breast.

ANGELOLOGY.

First Youngster—"I've got a new baby brother, who come from heaven last night."

Second Youngster—"That's nothin'; my baby brother went to heaven yesterday."

First Youngster (Reflectively)—"Poto, I bet it's the same kid."

Mr. Foote's Engagements

Sunday, May 9, New Public Hall, Aberdare; at 2.30, "The Moral Failure of Christianity"; at 6.15, "God and Humanity."

To Correspondents.

THE PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND: Annual Subscriptions.—Previously acknowledged, £186 12s. 6d. Received since.—P. W. Madden, £1; "A Rachda' Felley," 2s. 6d.; W. Murray, 2s.; W. H. Deakin, £3; "Stamps," £1.

C. HATON.—Freethought appeals to but one motive. Christianity, being rich, powerful, and "respectable," appeals to many—and most of them selfish. Whoever gives to Freethought gives from pure disinterestedness. How much would Christianity get if it were reduced to that?

S. HICKS.—The best gift "Fate" can bestow upon us is the visible success of the cause. Thanks.

JACOB PRIMROSE.—Pleased you think you owe us a debt for many years' pleasant reading and enlightenment.

J. B. PALFREYMAN.—Glad to hear of "the joy" you have "received from reading the *Freethinker*."

W. CROMACK.—We hope you may have better news to send.

J. CAPON.—The "best" lecture depends a good deal on the subject. Glad you and your family thought all four "delightful."

F. M. A. writes: "Your paper gives me one of my pleasantest half-hours in the week. Your work and your character are surely carving for you a niche in history in proximity to such giants as Voltaire, Paine, Ingersoll, and Bradlaugh." The praise is too high, but we hope to earn some of it.

W. LEACH writes: "I have read the *Freethinker* from cover to cover for the last three years, and, as I said when acknowledging your gratuitous copies, I can only regret it didn't fall into my hands many years ago." This correspondent is informed that Mr. Foote hopes to go West later on in this year.

A. G. LYB.—Thanks for your letter and trouble.

M. MULLER.—We note that you are reading this journal again, after a two years' absence in France, and "like it better than ever." Sorry there is no N. S. S. Branch in Sheffield. There ought to be, and the Executive in London would help to establish one if the local "saints" would co-operate.

W. MURRAY.—Glad you were pleased to find Mr. Foote in "such splendid form" at the St. James's Hall lectures. Your hope that further lectures may be given in the same fine hall is shared by many.

W. JATHINSON.—See paragraph. Thanks.

H. J. BARRAND.—Our compliments to your father, who "is eighty years of age and enjoys the *Freethinker*." We note that you also first learnt of the paper through an advertisement in *Reynolds'*. Your suggestion, we presume, is that portraits of the editor, members of the staff, etc., should appear in our columns. We printed a number of such portraits nearly twenty years ago, but a new generation has arisen since then, and we may do it all over again.

R. J. HENDERSON.—"But the *Freethinker* will be here to-morrow, and then I'll be happy." So you say amidst your bodily troubles; and it is a handsome compliment. We really believe there is no other paper in England that has so many devoted readers.

WOOD GREEN "SAINT."—Pleased to hear that "young Rosetti" gave you "a splendid discourse" on Christianity before Christ.

T. P. C., an old Irishman, subscribes to Shilling Month in "gratitude to Mr. Foote for the weekly intellectual treat in reading the *Freethinker* kindly passed on to him by a subscriber."

APPRENTICE.—This journal costs a halfpenny by post, being a little under the two ounces. Registration is no advantage under that weight. It is difficult to say beforehand what cuttings would be useful. We must leave readers to judge by reading our "Acid Drops."

ALBERT JOHNSON.—Freethought makes a purely intellectual appeal, and cannot expect to "catch on" as rapidly as movements that promise great material advantages in a brief space of time.

MATTHEW SPROUL.—Glad to have your wife's appreciation and good wishes as well as your own. It has been delightful to us to find so many Freethinkers associating their wives with them in subscribing.

T. FISHER.—There is room for pride in reflecting that Freethought has made the grandest fight on the slenderest resources.

MR. AND MRS. SIMPSON.—Pleased to have your sympathy; but we are not built to "lose heart" in any fight—certainly not in this one.

DAVID WATT.—It is always pleasant to hear from old readers, like yourself, who have taken this journal from its first number.

W. P. BITTON.—Pleased that you and your wife "derive pleasure and instruction from reading the *Freethinker*."

G. FAULKNER.—We noted your good wish with the subscription.

G. B. MOFFATT.—Ingersoll never wrote in the *Nineteenth Century* or any other English magazine. You must be thinking of Huxley. Ingersoll replied to the Rev. Dr. Field in an American magazine, and his reply was printed in pamphlet form at our own publishing office, the title being *Faith and Fact*, and the price 2d.

JAS. RAILTON.—We note that you first learnt of the *Freethinker* seven years ago through an advertisement in *Reynolds'*, and have never missed a number since. We agree with you that the paper needs more advertising.

JOHN BLAND.—It is pleasant to hear from one who has read this journal from its first issue and doesn't know what he should do without it now.

RANK-AND-FILER.—Mr. Foote keeps fit for his work, which is the main thing, after all.

G. H. SOUTHERN.—Surely the opposition to Socialism is as political as Socialism itself. We intend to hold the scales quite equally in the *Freethinker*. Our special object is one that persons of various shades of political and social opinion may agree upon.

JOHN WILCOT.—Orders for literature should *not* be sent to Mr. Foote. Doing that gives him trouble and causes the sender delay. Letters have often to be forwarded to him, sometimes a considerable distance. Your letter reached him at Liverpool.

JOHN YOUNG SAYS: "I have taken and, after reading, passed on, the *Freethinker* since 1898, and shall not miss my weekly copy so long as my weekly income exceeds 2d. per week."

F. E. HASCROFT.—You are quite right. A shilling from some incomes means more than pounds from others.

F. H. CHANDLER.—A touching letter, which makes us more resolute than ever in our war against bigotry and superstition.

G. R. B.—You must always beware a little of Mr. A. E. Fletcher. He dislikes Atheism and Atheists, and is pretty sure to say something nasty, if he can, about both. Swinburne never attacked Irish Nationalists, as such; he did denounce the houghing and other maiming of cattle, and nothing too strong could be said against that infamous practice.

J. K. subscribes to Shilling Month "for untold benefits received."

W. O. FOSTER AND A. BARNETT.—You are old readers and we are pleased with your appreciation.

T. S. EALES.—Such invitations to "divine service" are too common for much comment. Not so long ago the clergy kicked people into church; now they coax them. A decided change—for the better.

J. D. SAYS: "I became converted to Freethought after hearing you lecture on 'The Beautiful Land Above' at Stanley Hall some three years ago. I went to London from Yorkshire for the week end specially to hear you, and I never regretted doing so." This correspondent has bought and distributed a good deal of Freethought literature.

H. M. REID SAYS: "I have been a reader of the *Freethinker* for a good many years; and when I return to London on Friday nights, the first thing I do after my general writing is to read your esteemed paper, which I thoroughly enjoy."

JACKDAW.—Your view is the one we have always held. The really great work—the only sound and good work, in the long run—is promoting mental liberty and freeing people's minds from superstition, with its twin curse of priestcraft. We quite agree with all you say about vastly important questions that are tabooed by the Christian conspiracy of silence. We have our own ideas on many subjects, but we devote our energies to one task.

G. SANDERSON.—There is no presumption on your part whatever. You state the plain truth in saying that "all schemes of social salvation will topple sooner or later unless built on the sure foundation of mental freedom." Our propaganda is slow but sure. Glad you have read this journal for two years "with keenest delight."

A. H. HALLEWELL.—Thanks for your efforts to promote our circulation. Shall be pleased to see you at Aberdare.

TWO TIVERTON INFIDELS.—Glad this journal is "a constant source of help and edifying enjoyment" to you. You seem to have some fine fossil preachers your way.

G. BERRY.—Glad to have your letter. See paragraph.

W. P. BALL.—Many thanks for useful cuttings.

THE STREATHAM NEWSAGENCY, High-road, Streatham, supplies the *Freethinker* and other Secular literature. Clerical objections have been made to this, but the proprietor wants business, and does not want a censorship—and his sale of this journal is increasing.

L. AND S. MATTHEWS.—Glad to have your wife's good wishes with your own.

G. WALKER.—Pleased to hear you take this journal down the pit with you and introduce it to fresh readers.

TWO RHONDA FREETHINKERS.—Shall be happy to see you at Aberdare.

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

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

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

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

Sugar Plums.

Mr. Foote delivers two lectures to-day (May 9) in the New Public Hall, Aberdare; in the afternoon at 2.30 and in the evening at 6.15. There promises to be a very large number of Freethinkers attending the lectures from all parts of South Wales. Mr. Foote's first lectures at Aberdare, just twelve months ago, appear to have made a profound impression on his Welsh audiences.

The dinner given by the reorganised Liverpool Branch in honor of the N. S. S. President, on Saturday evening, May 1, was a great success. The only drawback was the unfortunate absence of Mr. F. Bonte through indisposition. Amongst the visitors from a distance were Mr. and Mrs. F. Smallman, who were found seats on Mr. Foote's right. Mr. J. Hammond, the Branch president, occupied the chair, and discharged his duties with the ability and amiability that might be expected of him. The N. S. S., the Liverpool Branch, and "Our Guest" were toasted, in bright speeches by Mr. John Ross, Mr. L. Small, Mr. H. P. Ward, Mr. G. Roleffs, and the Chairman. Mr. Foote's health was drunk "with honors" in a scene of great enthusiasm, and his speech in response was very warmly applauded. The rest of the evening was devoted to what the reporters call "harmony." We are bound to say, quite seriously, that the company showed a remarkable amount of talent in musical entertainment. The guest of the evening was most agreeably surprised.

Sunday's meetings in the Alexandra Hall were also all that could be desired—in spite of the police restrictions on the financial side of the admission, which are obviously meant to be obstructive. The hall was crowded to suffocation in the evening, the lecturer having only about two square feet of space to stand on, and several persons being turned away in consequence of the "full up" announcement. Both of Mr. Foote's lectures were greatly relished, and a running fire of laughter and cheers was kept up by the audience from beginning to end. Mr. Hammond presided on both occasions. A pleasant feature of the proceedings was the fine rendering of good songs by two lady members.

Mr. Foote joined Mr. Hammond in begging the Liverpool Freethinkers to sink all past differences and unite loyally round the old N. S. S. flag in peace, amity, and effectiveness. An intense desire in this direction is felt by all the nearly seventy members who are already enrolled. We are perfectly certain that the desire is absolutely sincere. We therefore appeal without hesitation to all who have not yet come in to do so without further delay. It would gratify us very much to find the Liverpool Branch a hundred strong by Whit-Sunday.

May 8 is the last day for receiving notices of motion for the National Secular Society's Conference Agenda, which, according to custom, will be printed in the *Freethinker* dated May 16—a clear fortnight before the Conference.

The business sessions of the N. S. S. Conference, morning and afternoon, will be held in the Alexandra Hall. The evening public meeting will take place at the Tivoli Theatre, in Lime-street, the very centre of Liverpool. Mr. Foote will occupy the chair, and Messrs. Cohen and Lloyd will be on the list of speakers. Other names will be announced in our next issue.

Preparations are being made for the usual delegates' and visitors' luncheon after the morning session of the Conference, and for a general excursion to beautiful Welsh scenery on Whit-Monday.

It is desirable that Mr. Joseph Bates should visit the larger towns within reasonable distance of Boston. Freethinkers in Hull, Grimsby, and Nottingham are therefore invited to send their addresses to Miss E. M. Vance, the N. S. S. general secretary, at 2 Newcastle-street, London, E.C., with a view to seeing what can be done in this direction.

London Freethinkers should all be resolving to attend the Paine Centenary Celebration at St. James's Hall on Tuesday evening, June 8—the hundredth anniversary of Thomas Paine's death. Another celebration of the kind isn't likely to occur in the lifetime of any of them. It is this year or never. If they let the chance slip, they will always regret it. We must let England see that Thomas Paine is not forgotten—far from it. Of course the Celebration will be advertised, so that all admirers of Thomas Paine may know of it, but it is Freethinkers that must be relied on to furnish the bulk of the meeting.

The Paine Centenary Celebration is being organised by the National Secular Society, but it will be made as Catholic as possible, and the speakers' platform will represent all shades of sympathetic opinion. Mr. Foote, Mr. Cohen, and Mr. Lloyd are N. S. S. men. The following outside speakers have already promised to attend:—Mrs. Bradlaugh-Bonnet, Mr. George Greenwood, M.P., Mr. Herbert Burrows, and Mr. Harry Snell. Other names may be added in further announcements.

We were glad to see a sympathetic article on Thomas Paine in the last *Sunday Chronicle*, from the pen of Mr. William Purvis. It was not all that could be desired, but it was very good for a beginning. "Paine," the writer says in one passage, "may have been a forerunner of Holyoake, Bradlaugh, and Foote; but he was a vast deal more. He was a statesman-philosopher of the first order." The last statement is perfectly true. The first is unnecessary. Nobody suggests that Paine was a forerunner of anybody. He did his own great work, and in achievement stands alone; while being, of course, within the historic movement which his genius and character did so much to promote. On another point we may make a slight correction. Reference was made to the meeting in honor of Paine held at South Place Institute last Sunday, as though it were organised by the same "Freethinkers" who are organising the St. James's Hall Centenary Celebration on June 8. Mr. C. Cohen, "a well-known Hebrew member of the National Secular Society," was indeed one of the speakers on Sunday, but he was not representing the N. S. S. The South Place Ethical Society is an entirely separate and independent body, and is like some other Ethical Societies in one thing,—it rather affects to look down upon the N. S. S., although it is perfectly obvious that if Paine were writing his *Age of Reason* now he would find very little encouragement from any of the "advanced" people outside the N. S. S.

We read some months ago that Ethicists and Rationalists were going to organise some function in honor of Paine, and to invite the co-operation of the N. S. S. The invitation never came—yet we trust the N. S. S. will survive the oversight. After waiting to see what would happen, for the sake of Paine's memory, and seeing that nothing happened, the N. S. S. at last decided to organise the meeting at St. James's Hall, and to make the meeting as representative as possible, as far as the platform was concerned. Speakers belonging to other bodies than the N. S. S. have been invited. There was no time left to do more.

The following is an extract from a Cape Colony reader's letter; "Since my first introduction to your paper, about three years ago, mail day has always been eagerly awaited for the 'opponent of bigotry and superstition' to appear. . . . Allow me to congratulate you on the ability and tone of the *Freethinker* articles, and to express a hope that you may long continue your arduous work in connection with it."

Our veteran friend, Mr. J. W. de Caux, in his latest letter to us, says: "I enjoyed your articles on Swinburne very much. I think, as the years roll on, that you improve the *Freethinker* in every respect. But be careful not to overwork yourself." We know the compliment and the warning are both sincere.

A Cheltenham correspondent writes: "I am glad the *Freethinker* has been brought to my notice. Until a friend sent me a copy, I did not know that such a paper existed. I now peruse it constantly, and derive much benefit and satisfaction therefrom." We thank the friend who helped to "save a soul" in this case—and wish hundreds, or even thousands, would follow his example. How glad we should be, how easy in mind, how free from worries, how cheerfully ready for work, if every one of our readers could get us a fresh reader during 1909!

The Scottish Trade Union Congress at Dumferline, on Thursday, April 29, adopted by 51 votes to 18 a resolution in favor of Secular Education in all State-aided schools, and instructed its Parliamentary Committee to take steps to have that principle incorporated in any future Act.

The New York *Truthseeker* is now under the management of Mr. George Macdonald, the only brother of the late editor, whose death occurred so recently. The paper could not be in better hands. During the twelve months of Eugene Macdonald's fight against consumption, the burden of the work rested upon "brother George's" shoulders. Consequently there is no great change in the contents of the paper. Mr. George Macdonald is a thoroughly loyal *Freethinker*, his head is screwed on quite firmly, and he has a fluent pen and a pretty humor. We wish him every success.

Blood and Fire.

"The fruits of Christianity were religious wars, butcheries, crusades, inquisitions, extermination of the natives in America, and the introduction of African slaves in their place; and among the ancients there is nothing analogous to this, nothing that can be compared with it."—SCHOPENHAUER, *Religion and Other Essays*, 1899; p. 39.

"I come not to send peace but a sword"; and such that great Protestant reformer, Martin Luther, hoped it would ever continue when he exclaimed—"If in case, as God forbid, there should be rest and quietness, then the Gospel is at an end, for wherever that cometh it raiseth up tumults; and if not, then it is no upright Gospel. Therefore Christ says, "I come to kindle a fire on earth.""—E. P. MEREDITH, *The Prophet of Nazareth*, 1864; p. 579.

"That which you keep in your hearts, my brothers, is the slender remnant of a system which has made its red mark on history, and still lives to threaten mankind.....Take heed lest you have given soil and shelter to the seed of that awful plague which has destroyed two civilisations, and but barely failed to slay such promise of good as is now struggling to live among men."—PROFESSOR CLIFFORD, *Lectures and Essays*, 1886; p. 179.

WALKING down the street the other day, our ears were assaulted by a thunderous Boom, boom, boom, followed by the raucous blare of brass instruments; then a band, followed by a few stragglers, filed out of a side street, led by a man bearing a banner with a strange device, "Blood and Fire." It was a contingent of the Salvation Army. As we gazed on the inscription thus publicly paraded, we thought that the greatest enemy of Christianity could not have selected a more fitting motto for that religion.

Blood and Fire. Yes, that has been the means by which this pretended religion of peace and love was propagated for over a thousand years. It is by blood and fire that we mark the progress of Christianity through the centuries. Christianity first insinuates itself as a religion of love; its missionaries are meek and mild, ready to suffer all things for the sake of Christ, until they have established themselves and become sufficiently powerful; then let those look out who refuse to hear the gospel of love; it is their turn to suffer then.

When Christians argue that their religion must be inspired to account for the great success it has achieved in converting nations to a knowledge of "the truth as it is in Christ," few of them know anything of the means by which these conversions were brought about. Directly this religion became the established religion of the Roman Empire, under Constantine, it began to persecute heresy and unbelief; and when the Christians numbered only a twentieth part of the subjects of the Empire, and the great mass of the population were Pagans, Christianity was forced on the people and the temples of the Pagan gods condemned to destruction. Moshier, the ecclesiastical historian, puts it mildly when he says:—

"There is no doubt but that the victories of Constantine the Great, the fear of punishment, and the desire of pleasing this mighty conqueror and his imperial successors, were the weighty arguments that moved whole nations, as well as particular persons, to embrace Christianity."*

With increasing power the new faith became increasingly intolerant, until by the fifth century, to quote the words of Dean Milman—

"Anathema instead of benediction had almost become the general language of the Church. Religious wars, at least rare in the Pagan state of society, seemed now a new and perpetual source of human misery—a cause and a sign of the weakness and decay, and so of the inevitable dissolution, of the Roman Empire."†

Charlemagne, the great Christian hero of the Middle Ages, propagated Christianity, in the ninth century, among the Saxons with fire and sword. He decreed that those who rejected the Gospel should be put to death. The first attempt to convert the conquered Saxons, says Moshier, "was unsuccessful, because it was made without the aid of violence or threats"; but this being rectified "by the allurements of reward, by the terror of punishment, and

by the imperious language of victory, they suffered themselves to be baptised, though with inward reluctance, by the missionaries which the emperor sent among them for that purpose."* The same historian also tells us of the Huns of Pannonia "whom Charlemagne had converted to the faith, when exhausted and dejected by various defeats, they were no longer able to make head against his victorious arms, and chose rather to be Christians than slaves" (p. 170). Far from condemning this application of Blood and Fire to the conversion of the heathen, says Moshier—

"Succeeding generations, filled with a grateful sense of the famous exploits which Charlemagne had performed in the service of Christianity, canonised his memory, and turned this bloody warrior into an eminent saint."†

It is only when these methods are used against Christianity that Christians begin to appreciate the iniquity of the proceeding.

The bloodshed must have been enormous. "As the wars lasted thirty-three years, the number of the slain must be left to imagination."‡

In Poland, during the tenth century, the ruler, Miecslaus, Duke of Poland, was converted to Christianity by his wife; upon which Pope John XIII. sent a numerous train of ecclesiastics to second their efforts at converting their subjects.

"But," says Moshier, "the exhortations and endeavors of these devout missionaries, who were unacquainted with the language of the people they came to instruct, would have been entirely without effect had they not been accompanied with the edicts and penal laws, the promises and threats of Miecslaus, which dejected the courage and conquered the obstinacy of the reluctant Poles."

And he tells us that "The Christian religion was established in Russia by means every way similar to those that occasioned its propagation in Poland" (vol. i., p. 397).

During the same century King Stephen of Hungary forced his subjects, by "threatenings, rewards, and punishments," to embrace Christianity. The Danes were forced to adopt the same religion by a treaty of peace which Otho imposed upon Herald in the year 949; and Swein, King of Sweden, defeating the Norwegians, "obliged its inhabitants to abandon the gods of their ancestors, and to embrace universally the religion of Jesus."§

"In the Scandinavian countries," says J. M. Robertson, "the founding of Christianity was a life-and-death struggle, lasting in all for some two hundred and fifty years (820-1075)."||

In the twelfth century the Pomeranians were converted by conquest. In the same century, says Moshier—

"Waldemar I., King of Denmark, who acquired an immortal name by the battles he fought against the Pagan nations, such as the Slavonians, Venedi, Vandals, and others.....wherever his arms were successful there he pulled down the temples and images of the gods, destroyed their altars, laid waste their sacred groves, and substituted in their place the Christian worship, which deserved to be propagated by better means than the sword."¶

The inhabitants of the Island of Rugen were also Christianised by force, by the same conqueror. The Finlanders were commanded to embrace the Christianity of their conqueror, "which the greater part of them did, though with the greatest reluctance."

The conversion of the Livonians, we learn, was attended "with horrible scenes of cruelty and bloodshed." Albert, Canon of Bremen, became Bishop of Livonia, and entered Livonia, A.D. 1198, with a body of troops. Encamping at Riga, says Moshier, he

"instituted there, by direction of the Roman pontiff, Innocent III., the military order of the Knights Sword-Bearers, who were commissioned to dragoon the Livi-

* Moshier, vol. i., p. 315.

† Moshier, vol. i., p. 317.

‡ J. M. Robertson, *Short History of Christianity*, p. 211.

§ Moshier, vol. i., pp. 398-399-400.

|| J. M. Robertson, *Short History of Christianity*, p. 211.

¶ Moshier, vol. i., p. 502.

* Moshier, *Ecclesiastical History*, 1838; vol. i., p. 168.

† Milman, *History of Latin Christianity*, vol. i., p. 325.

nians into the profession of Christianity, and to oblige them, by force of arms, to receive the benefits of baptism. New legions were sent from Germany to second the efforts and add efficacy to the mission of these booted apostles; and they, together with the Knights Sword-Bearers, so cruelly oppressed, slaughtered, and tormented this wretched people, that exhausted at length, and unable to stand any longer firm against the arm of persecution, strengthened still by new accessions of power, they abandoned the statues of their Pagan deities, and substituted in their places the images of the saints. But while they received the blessings of the Gospel, they were, at the same time, deprived of all earthly comforts; for their lands and possessions were taken from them, with the most odious circumstances of cruelty and violence, and the knights and bishops divided the spoil.*

Berthold, another of these military bishops, was slain, sword in hand, while conducting a crusade against the Pagans. Speaking of this crusade against Livonia, Courland, and Semagulia, Alberger, in his *Antiquity of Christianity*, says:—

"For a hundred years this war raged with unmitigated ferocity. The heavier armament and greater military resources of the Sacred Sword-Bearers at length convinced the obstinate Pagan that resistance to the demands of the Pope and the Gospel would inevitably involve their nationality in extinction; and listening to the counsels of prudence rather than of pride and patriotism, they consented to believe in Jesus and be baptised."

Prussia was not Christianised until the thirteenth century, and then at the point of the sword. Alberger says:—

"Prussia, invulnerable to the secret machinations of the Holy See, and undaunted by the ferocity of the military apostles of Christ, resisted the proffers of salvation and heaven with such resolute heroism, that it threw Pope Honorius into such a paroxysm of rage that he publicly called Christendom to arms to *proselyte by military force* the obstinate Pagans. A calamitous war ensued. The Pagans determined to exhaust the resources of defence; the Christians the means of subjugation. The arts of destruction were mutually applied with consummate skill. Towns were swept from existence, communities were massacred, blood flowed in reeking torrents. Pagans accepted death rather than baptism. All the havoc and horrors of which war is pregnant were protracted in their most terrible forms for fifty-six years. The carnage of the fierce conflict was so enormous that, at length, it had so nearly depopulated the Prussian territory and exhausted the prospects of victory against the armies and resources of united Christendom, they concluded to accept the Gospel rather than total extinction."†

The Church never hesitated to condemn whole nations to extermination if they refused to accept the gospel of peace and love. For two hundred years the soldiers of Christ hurled themselves against the infidel Mohammedans, at a cost of two millions of lives. They devastated, with every circumstance of merciless atrocity, the fertile and flourishing province of Languedoc—the most cultured and civilised country in Europe, at that time—because the inhabitants would not submit to ecclesiastical authority. And we must not forget that, if the Spanish Armada had succeeded, our country would have met with the same fate.

Motley, the historian of the Dutch Republic, tells us that on February 16, 1568, "a sentence of the Holy Office condemned all the inhabitants of the Netherlands to death as heretics"; and he observes: "Three millions of people—men, women, and children—were sentenced to the scaffold in three lines."‡ Happily, the Church was unsuccessful in this blood-thirsty enterprise, but considerably more than 50,000 lives were sacrificed before the Spaniards were driven out of the Netherlands.

The Holy Inquisition burnt 31,000 at the stake, punished 290,000 more for heresy, and exiled the Moors from Spain "with circumstances of horrible barbarity," says the historian Buckle; "an act so

atrocious in itself, and so terrible in its consequences, that some writers have ascribed to it alone the subsequent ruin of Spain."*

In France, on the celebrated day of St. Bartholomew, many thousands of heretics were murdered, without warning, in the attempt to exterminate heresy, at a single blow. Later on, the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, and the Dragonnades—when whole troops of dissolute soldiers were let loose on the Protestants, and allowed to practise the most revolting cruelties—drove half a million of the most industrious inhabitants of France out of the country.

In our own country, says the historian Froude,—

"when His name had been preached for fifteen centuries there were none found who could tolerate difference of opinion on the operation of baptism, or on the nature of His presence in the Eucharist; none, or at least none but the hard-hearted children of the world. The more religious any man was, the more eager was he to put away by fire and sword all those whose convictions differed from his own."†

In the seventeenth century, missionaries introduced Christianity into Japan, persecuted the Buddhists and intrigued against the government to such an extent that the Emperor, in self-defence, prohibited its teaching, and it was suppressed at a cost of 50,000 lives.

Lafcadio Hearn, the historian and interpreter of Japan, says:—

"This religion, for which thousands vainly died, had brought to Japan nothing but evil: disorders, persecutions, revolts, political troubles, and war. Even those virtues of the people which had been evolved at unutterable cost for the protection and conservation of society,—their self-denial, their faith, their loyalty, their constancy and courage—were by this black creed distorted, diverted, and transformed into forces directed to the destruction of that society..... Simply judged by its results, the Jesuit effort to Christianise Japan must be regarded as a crime against humanity, a labor of devastation, a calamity comparable only,—by reason of the misery and destruction which it wrought—to an earthquake, a tidal-wave, a volcanic eruption."‡

Nor has this evil faith lost its power to disseminate itself by fire and sword in our own time, as some Rationalists seem to suppose. It is only some sixty years since the great Taeping or Ti-ping rebellion, when, as Mr. A. J. Little truly observes, "the only *bonâ fide* convert to Protestantism, certainly made, devastated thirteen out of the eighteen provinces in his endeavors to Christianise his fellow-countrymen a little more rapidly than the missionaries were doing."§ And Mr. A. Davenport, in his *China from Within*, considers that one hundred millions is too low an estimate of the lives sacrificed by this fanatical disciple of Christ.

And yet, in spite of all this monstrous bloodshed and suffering, the missionaries are still out there trying to introduce the poison of Christian faith, and stirring the people up to murder pitch. Mr. Alexander Michie, a great authority on Chinese matters, says that the missionaries are zealous in the work of alienating the Chinese from their rulers, and encouraging them to seek the protection of foreign powers:—

"A revolution of the most vital nature is in progress, and is being pushed on with all the energy which Christian—combined with ecclesiastical and political—can throw into the work. Village is set against village, clan against clan, family against family, and a man's foes in China are too often they of his own household."¶

And he adds: "There is a perennial root of bitterness in missionary enterprise in the interior of China, which throws out shoots culminating in murder and fiendish ferocity." This was written shortly before the Boxer rebellion, which amply proved the truth of Mr. Michie's statements, for it is an indisputable fact that the Boxer rebellion was brought about more by missionary aggression than

* Moshier, vol. i., pp. 503-504.

† Alberger, *Antiquity of Christianity*; cited by Dr. G. W. Brown, *Researches in Oriental History*, 1894; p. 314.

‡ *Rise of the Dutch Republic*, vol. ii., p. 155.

* Buckle, *History of Civilization*, 1904; p. 564.

† Froude, *History of England*, vol. ix., p. 303.

‡ Japan: *An Attempt at Interpretation*, 1905; p. 359.

§ A. J. Little, *Through the Yangtse Gorges*, 1888; p. 308.

¶ *The Englishman in China*, 1900; p. 233.

any other cause. It was the missions that the Boxers went for first, and all the native Christians who refused to recant were murdered. In spite of all this, the missionaries are still hard at it, for at a public meeting held at Queen's Hall on April 20, in connection with the China Inland Mission, it was stated that, in spite of the losses by the Boxer rebellion, there were now 21,000 on the rolls of the mission. They mean to plant the Cross, even if the whole Chinese nation is exterminated during the process.

Blood and Fire. Yes, it is a good "trade-mark" for your business, General Booth. We have merely skimmed the surface of Christian history; to enter into it in detail would require volumes, and what horrors they would contain! If there were a Devil, and he invented a religion, it could not give rise to more fiendish barbarity, or more revolting cruelty than this pretended religion of love, whose God counts every hair of our heads, and who regards even the fall of a sparrow.

Compare the Christian record with that of Buddhism. As Mr. Fielding says in *The Soul of a People*,—

"No ravished country has ever borne witness to the prowess of the followers of Buddha; no murdered men have poured out their blood on their hearthstones, killed in his name; no ruined women have cursed his name to high heaven. He and his faith are clean of the stain of blood. He was the preacher of the Great Peace, of love, of charity, of compassion; and so clear is his teaching that it can never be misunderstood" (p. 88).

What a contrast to the history of the religion of Jesus!

The full tale of Christian atrocities can never be told. As Lecky remarks,—

"The memorials, indeed, of many of her persecutions are now so scanty, that it is impossible to form a complete conception of the multitude of her victims, and it is quite certain that no powers of imagination can adequately realise their sufferings."

Its triumph, he continues, "was in some districts so complete as to destroy every memorial of the contest, the most callous nature must recoil with horror from the spectacle."* A history of the crimes instigated by this evil faith should have, as a frontispiece, Vereschagin's famous picture of the Pyramid of Skulls.

"There are days," says Nietzsche,—

"when I am visited by a feeling, blacker than the blackest melancholy—contempt of man.....With a gloomy circumspection I go through the madhouse world of entire millenniums (it may be called 'Christianity,' 'Christian faith,' 'Christian church')—I care not to make mankind accountable for its insanities. But my feeling changes suddenly, and breaks out as soon as I enter the modern period, *our period*. Our age knows. What was formerly merely morbid, now has become unseemly,—it is now unseemly to be a Christian. *And here my loathing commences.*"†

Yes, our age knows, but it is only the educated portion who know—at present; they have read Lecky, Draper, Buckle, Lea, Prescott, and Motley; they know the facts of the case, and they still hypocritically bend the knee because our rulers, and the society in which they move, ordain it so. It is not these we address, but the mass of the people; and when they know the truth there will be an end to the reign of this religion of Blood and Fire. W. MANN.

These superstitious, sacred Books and creeds,
These Cults and Myths and other noxious Weeds—
So many lies are crowned in every age,
While truth beneath the tyrant's heel still bleeds.
Ay, wrong for ever is proclaimed aloud,
And strongly yoked upon a boundless crowd;
But truth is only whispered to the few
Who bury it alive without a shroud.

—Abu'l Ala (Arabic poet).

* Lecky, *History of Rationalism*, vol. ii., pp. 32, 33.
† Nietzsche, *The Antichrist*, 1899; p. 295.

Secular Instruction Only.

THE only possible solution, therefore, since all others appear to fail, is that sacrifices are bound to be made all round, and the State must disendow all sectarian and religious teaching and concern itself only with the provision of secular education. Doubtless England has not yet agreed that the State has no function either to teach religion or to have religion taught in its name; but that there is a tendency in that direction is apparent when a staunch Catholic like Mr. T. P. O'Connor, M.P., says:—

"The secular solution has one great thing to be said in its favor; he would not say it was logical, because that apparently was rather a term of opprobrium to apply to any proposal in the House. He said it was good, because it was consistent, and it was fair all round. It established no form of religious teaching of one communion over another, it excluded with equal justice and with absolute equality every form whatever of religious instruction; and if Protestants were willing to accept exclusion, Catholics could make no particular complaint; they got no worse treatment than any other body."

That all past attempts at compromise have failed does not augur well for future endeavors, since, unhappily, so many decry the simple Bible teaching as unsatisfactory; but the civic solution, sweeping aside the entire subject over which there has been a conflict, would clear the ground for a national system of schools with full local control, no "contracting out," and no creed tests. Therefore, speaking for myself, and not claiming that a single member of this Conference is in accord with me, I must say that I have been driven to the conclusion that in this solution lies the greatest measure of practical justice and equity that can be meted out to contending claims; provided always that where denominations have furnished the funds for building their schools, the public must pay a fair rent for the occupation of the premises and keep them in a satisfactory state of sanitation and repair.—Mr. C. W. Hole, *Presidential Address to the National Union of Teachers, at Morecambe, Monday, April 12, 1909.*

Shilling Month.

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National Secular Society.

REPORT OF MONTHLY EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD ON APRIL 29.

The President, Mr. G. W. Foote, in the chair. There were also present:—Messrs. J. Barry, E. Bowman, W. H. Baker, H. Cowell, C. Cohen, E. A. Charlton, W. Davy, T. Gorniot, J. T. Lloyd, J. Neate, C. Quinton, R. Rosetti, F. Schaller, S. Samuels, H. Silverstein, T. J. Thurlow, F. Wood, and the Secretary.

Minutes of previous meeting read and confirmed.

New members were received for the Liverpool and West Ham Branches, and for the Parent Society.

The Executive's motions for the Conference Agenda were prepared, also the names of Vice-Presidents for re-election. Messrs. C. Cohen and C. Quinton were elected on the Agenda Committee.

The President reported a grant of £50 from the Secular Society, Ltd., to the N. S. S.

The Secretary received instructions to arrange a Social Meeting as early as possible in May.

The meeting adjourned until May 27.

E. M. VANCK, *General Secretary.*

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, etc.

Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday and be marked "Lecture Notice," if not sent on postcard.

LONDON.**OUTDOOR.**

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Fountain): 3.15 and 6.15, C. Cohen, Lectures.

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): 3.15, Arthur B. Moss, "A New Age of Reason."

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (Ridley-road). 11.30, F. A. Davies, "Atheism."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Parliament Hill, Hampstead) 3.30, F. A. Davies, "God and Mammon."

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Outside Maryland Point Station, Stratford): 7, W. J. Ramsey, "God is Love."

WOOD GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Spouters' Corner): 11, C. Saphin, "Christianity a Moral Fraud and Social Failure."

WOOLWICH BRANCH N. S. S. (Beresford-square): 11.30, J. Marshall, a Lecture.

COUNTRY

ABERDARE BRANCH N. S. S. (Pugsley Coffee Tavern, Cardiff-street): 11, Branch Meeting. Visitors invited. Afternoon and evening, in the New Public Hall, G. W. Foote: 2.30, "The Moral Failure of Christianity"; 6.15, "God and Humanity."

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N. S. S. (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 7, H. Percy Ward, "Ghosts." Wednesday, May 12 (outside Edge-hill Church), at 8, Lecture by H. Percy Ward.

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, Agnostic, "Christian Evidence."

OUTDOOR.

EDINBURGH SECULAR SOCIETY: The Meadows, 3, a Lecture; The Mound, 6.30, a Lecture.

DALKEITH (High-street): Saturday, May 8, at 7.30, a Lecture.

LEITH (Foot of the Walk): Thursday, May 6, at 8, a Lecture.

NICHOLSON SQUARE: Monday, May 10, at 8, a Lecture.

WIGAN (Market-square): Monday, May 10, at 7.45, H. Percy Ward will lecture.

JOSEPH BATES' EAST ANGLIAN MISSION.

BOSTON BRANCH N. S. S.: Bargate Green, Sunday, May 9, at 3.30, "Secularism and Christianity."

SIDSEY (near the Church): Wednesday, May 12, 7.30, "God!"

SKEGNESS: Thursday, May 13, at 3.30, "Humanitarianism: the Religion of the Future."

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The Memorandum of Association sets forth that the Society's Objects are:—To promote the principle that human conduct should be based upon natural knowledge, and not upon super-natural belief, and that human welfare in this world is the proper end of all thought and action. To promote freedom of inquiry. To promote universal Secular Education. To promote the complete secularisation of the State, etc., etc. And to do all such lawful things as are conducive to such objects. Also to have, hold, receive, and retain any sums of money paid, given, devised, or bequeathed by any person, and to employ the same for any of the purposes of the Society.

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