

THE Freethinker

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A true Christian does not examine what he is told to believe. It is like taking a bitter pill. If you chew it you will never swallow it.—CHAMFORT.

Hunting Skunks.

If you get into a strange bed, especially in hot weather by the seaside, and find your sleep prevented or interrupted by other occupiers who contribute nothing towards the rent, you are bound to do something. You get a wet thumb, if you can, over the liveliest disturbers of your peace; but you have to be more careful with the slower ones; you must drop them into their doom without impairing their personal identity, for their perfume is even worse than their bite. It is sometimes better to let them alone than run fresh risks. In the same way, one reads, the hunter has to be on his guard against bringing down a skunk by mistake; for if he kills one of them it haunts his olfactory nerves for days afterwards.

This should be remembered by those who are moved to ask me to squelch some orthodox creature who has been making free with my reputation. Hercules cleaned out the Augean stable, but his friends and admirers must have avoided him for a considerable time after the completion of that labor. A period was required for disinfection. And it would be the same with me if I hunted down the Christian skunks who soil my name in public places. I might prove my respectability, but I should make myself intolerable.

It is a curious thing—and yet not so curious when one considers it more closely—that the “defence” of Christianity has such a deteriorating effect upon the character. It may be, of course, that “Christian Evidences” find a man a blackguard; at any rate, they generally leave him so. These men (I am glad there are no women amongst them) wallow in personalities, and tread in the filthiest puddles of slander. Their own religion is the last thing they ever talk about. Their stock-in-trade consists of feeble calumnies on every leading Freethinker. My position naturally secures me a fair share of their attentions. They accuse me of every crime in the Newgate Calendar, with one exception. They do not accuse me of murder, because it involves the production of a corpse.

This sort of thing is very trying to some Freethinkers' nerves. They must pardon me, however, for taking it more serenely. In a certain sense it is flattering. Those who are most calumniated are the most hated, and those who are the most hated are the most dreaded. Christian libels are, therefore, a testimony to your effectiveness. Moreover, one only wastes one's time, besides spoiling one's temper, in pursuing these exponents of Christian charity. Settle one of them to-day, and another takes his place to-morrow. For, after all, Christian lies about Freethinkers are told for profit as well as malice. The object is to keep credulous people from listening to those who might free them from superstition; and this means prolonging the life of the good old business of theology.

Gaizot was once attacked with gross personalities in the French Chamber. His answer was brief.

“Your insults,” he said, “do not rise to the level of my disdain.” It was far better than a reply in kind.

A Freethinker once came to me in great distress. He had heard a Christian Evidence lecturer say some abominable things about me. One of them was that I had run away with another man's wife. “Whose wife was it?” I asked with a smile. But my distressed friend couldn't take it in that way. So I gave him my private card. “That is where I live,” I said, “and if you *must* do something, give the fellow my address, and ask him to go and tell Mrs. Foote.”

As for libel actions, I have always avoided them. Mr. J. M. Robertson tried one some years ago, and the result will probably satisfy him for a lifetime. A notorious heretic or reformer is, in my opinion, a fool to take his character into court and leave it at the mercy of popular prejudice in the jury-box and on the bench. If he loses his action he will be in a worse position than if he had not started it. If he wins it he may be made ridiculous by infinitesimal damages. He stands to lose more than he stands to gain, and sensible men will keep out of such ventures. Those who champion unpopular causes must put up with calumny. It is a penalty of their position. The best of them cannot escape it. Ingersoll was one of the best and noblest men who ever lived. His fine character was a proverb in the best American circles. Yet look at the beastly budget written by a pious ruffian called Braden, and published in England by the unspeakable Johnny Kensit. It is enough to make any decent person vomit, yet it seems to delight the faithful.

Freethinkers should try to possess their souls in patience. It was ever thus. Piety and vituperation were always allied. Their connection is even older than Christianity. Lucian, in one of his witty dialogues, so brilliantly translated by Froude, represents the champion of the gods addressing his opponent in a debate in what we may call the ancient and modern fashion:—

“Oh! oh! you are sarcastic, are you! you grave-digger! you wretch! you abomination! you goal-bird! you cess-pool! we know where you came from; your mother was a whore; and you killed your brother and seduced your friend's wife; you are an adulterer, a sodomite, a glutton, and a beast. Stay till I can thrash you. Stay, I say, villain, abhorred villain.”

Mark Pattison, in his essay on Joseph Scaliger, gives a striking account of the Catholic attack on that great scholar, written by Carolus Scribonius, rector of the Jesuit College at Antwerp. Pattison says it was “one of the most shamelessly beastly books which have ever disgraced the printing-press.” He calls it a “cesspool” of “filthy imputations” without an attempt at evidence, and without the slightest merit as a composition. But its author was a defender of the Church, and that was enough. It gave fragrance to a cesspool. Scaliger replied—and that was his mistake. Powerful and complete as his reply was, it “had no success with the public. An answer never has. It is the privilege of slander that it does not admit of being removed, but attains its end by being uttered.” Throw mud enough, the proverb says, and some of it will stick. The Christians have taken this proverb to their hearts.

G. W. FOOTE.

The Nature of Religion.—I.

IT is one of the many signs of the times that Messrs. Constable should have issued in their "Religions Ancient and Modern" series, and at the popular price of one shilling, a book like Professor Leuba's *Psychological Origin and the Nature of Religion*. At such a price a book must have a public, and a large public. Publishers are not in business as philanthropists, and they at least must have grounds for believing that a sufficient number of people are interested in the subject to bear the expense of publication, and also, one may assume, that the opinions expressed will not raise the storm they would have raised awhile ago. Moreover the book is, I repeat, published at a popular price and intended for popular perusal. And such publications indicate that rational views on religion can no longer be regarded as the special luxury of the educated and the well-to-do. They are becoming the mental possession of the people; and this marks an important step in the disintegration of religious belief. The political function of religion has always been—as some of its professors are candid enough to tell us—to keep the people "in order," and when it can no longer do this there is no political reason for keeping it alive. Intellectual and moral reasons disappeared long since.

Some of Professor Leuba's conclusions may give rise to a difference of opinion among anthropologists, particularly his views on the relation between magic and religion; but the gratifying feature of this little work is that it gives a perfectly natural and scientific account of the origin of religion. And it too often escapes observation that, notwithstanding differences of opinion among those who have investigated religion from the point of view of comparative anthropology, there is a very substantial agreement that all religions—ancient and modern, savage and civilised—owe their origin to an interpretation of events that is now discarded by all civilised people. Had it been possible for primitive man to have had our knowledge, religion would never have existed. But, with no better basis than the delusions of primitive humanity, religion has continued to exist; while we have the curious spectacle of many educated persons accepting the results of anthropological research, and at the same time gravely discussing the "reasons" for and against religious beliefs, as though any amount of reasoning could give a basis of fact to that which rests on a foundation of illusion. In the light of science the whole history of religion is nothing more than the record of the development of a great delusion, a delusion that can never transcend its origin. The various stages of its development may possess a certain psychological or sociological value, but that is all.

One's surprise at the perpetuation of this delusion may be diminished by the reflection that the period during which we have possessed anything like an exact knowledge of the working of natural forces is, after all, but an infinitesimal part of the time during which the human race has been in existence. Three or four centuries at most covers the period during which such knowledge has been available, and of this period—small as it is in relation to the hundreds of generations during which superstition has reigned unchallenged—a knowledge of the laws of mental life belongs only to the latter portion. Nor must it be overlooked that exact scientific knowledge was for long in the possession of a highly privileged class only, while even to-day large masses of the population are under the domination of superstitious beliefs and practices. The belief that thirteen is an unlucky number, that a horseshoe brings luck, the extent to which astrology and palmistry flourishes, the instances of witchcraft that crop up every now and again, all bear testimony to the vast mass of superstition still with us. The primitive mind is still alive and active, disguised though it may be by a veneer of civilisation and a superficial education.

And it is to this latent superstition that religion appeals and in which it finds support. Bearing in mind, then, how very recent scientific knowledge is, and that only yesterday did it begin to permeate the mass of the population, one's surprise at the perpetuation of religion is considerably diminished. One feels astonishment rather than with such an enormous dead weight against it, so much has been done to check religion, and in so short a time.

It is a favorite method of many writers to define religion, not in accordance with a comprehensive survey of facts, but in such a way that it will harmonise with the writer's own prepossessions on the subject, or so they may at least save the name, even though they may reject the thing. To this class of definition belong Matthew Arnold's famous definition of religion as "morality touched with emotion," Professor J. R. Seeley's statement that we are entitled to call religion "any habitual and permanent admiration," or the common definition of religion as consisting of a devotion to an ideal. Professor Leuba properly rules out such definitions as untrue and useless. As he says, "the function of words is to delimitate, one defeats the purpose of language by stretching the meaning of a word until it has lost all precision and unity of meaning." A definition that covers everything may, for all the good it does, as well not cover anything.

One is also pleased to find Professor Leuba dismissing as due to a faulty psychology, as well as being a misrepresentation of the facts, descriptions of religion involving the manifestations of new powers or the birth of a spiritual life. He rightly says that "there are neither specifically religious motives, nor specifically religious feelings. Any and every human need and longing may, at some stage or other, become a spring of religion, and, conversely, the feelings and emotions met with in religion appear also in non-religious experiences." That there are no such things as specifically religious feelings is, indeed, one of the proofs that religion is the result of a primitive misinterpretation of phenomena that later knowledge has shown to be susceptible of an altogether different explanation. The uselessness, not to say the absurdity, of such expressions as "The Religion of Ethics," is seen in the fact that one can with equal justification speak of the Religion of Atheism, and when a word can be used to cover two such things as Religion and Atheism, its value as an expression of thought has quite departed.

So far as one can see, there are only two reasons for people continuing the use of the word religion, after giving up all that is really essential to religious belief. One is the use of a word from sheer conservatism. When, for example, Thomas Paine said, "to do good is my religion," it is difficult to see what other reason there was for calling a maxim of conduct a religion, except that morals having for so long been a department of religion, there had grown up the habit of giving that name to one's supreme rule of life. But this can only be in any sense justifiable so long as we believe morality to be a department of religion or based on religion. When we no longer believe this to be the case, it is clearly wrong to talk of the religion of morality, when all we mean is morality alone. And the other reason for the use of this word is the ill repute religious people have attached to those who are without religion. Once upon a time, it was no use unless one had the right religion. Nowadays, any religion carries with it a certain guarantee of conventional respectability. Not to have some religion puts one outside the pale of toleration. And as with some supernatural religion—which is the only genuine article—is impossible these may save their face by claiming a "religion of ethics," a "religion of brotherhood," a "religion of anything, so long as they get into line with others by claiming the name.

Almost equally faulty are those definitions of religion that treat it as due to a conscious effort to explain the mysteries of existence. No stranger lapse ever occurred to a great thinker than that which overlooked Herbert Spencer when he described

religion as consisting in a worship of the Unknowable, or as due to a desire to explain a mystery ever pressing for interpretation. Granting the existence of an Unknowable, the sense of its presence belongs the later stages of mental evolution, not to the earlier. The metaphysical and mystical theories of religion are indications of its disintegration, not signs of its youthful beginnings. Primitive man believed in ghosts and gods in much the same manner as he believed in other things, and his worship of them is for very concrete reasons—a veritable cupboard-love—not because he is conscious of any mystery pressing for interpretation. The absence of speculation, even of a lively curiosity in the primitive mind, has been very clearly pointed out by Spencer, and in his sketches of the evolution of religion, he leaves no room whatever for any sense of an Unknowable or similar transcendent vagary. Such conceptions as those of a "spiritual" as opposed to a material existence, of soul as opposed to body, are quite foreign to the mind of early mankind. These distinctions arise as the result of knowledge and speculation operating upon inherited beliefs. If primitive man may be credited with a philosophy, and if one may use the word in a purely convenient sense, he is a monist, not a dualist or a pluralist. The soul, or double, he believes in is similar in kind to the body he sees; the unseen forces he credits with activities beneficent or malevolent are of the same kind and nature as those with which he is acquainted. To read our conceptions of these things into the mind of primitive man because we use *our* words to explain his thoughts is a procedure that is both unphilosophical and injurious. Owing to this being done, people fail to understand religion in either its primitive or modern form. Man's earliest conception of things in general is vague and indefinite. Later he distinguishes differences, qualitative and quantitative, his conception of things become more definite, and distinctions are set up that lay the foundations of both science and philosophy.

C. COHEN.

(To be continued.)

Why is Christianity Vanishing?

It appears that the Rev. Dr. Aked, of New York, declared recently that "Christianity in England was rapidly approaching vanishing point." In the September number of the *Quiver*, several clergymen discuss that statement, and express their own views on the subject. The evangelical Bishop of Durham regretfully admits that the power of Christian belief is "ebbing," and assigns various reasons for the deplorable fact. Both he and Prebendary Eardley-Wilmot hold motor-cars, bicycles, and the week-end excursions largely responsible for emptying the churches, and reducing the number of Sunday-school teachers. Some of the writers maintain that "general" Christianity, whatever that may be, is by no means declining. The Rev. Bernard Snell acknowledges that there is decay, and puts the chief blame on the antiquated vocabulary of the pulpit, which in numerous instances is nothing but "sounding brass." The Rev. Dinsdale T. Young is of opinion that "there are full churches wherever there is a living Gospel." Dr. Clifford says that Christianity is not at all declining, but only changing. "I have no evidence," says Canon M'Cormick, "that it is declining generally"; but he is bound to recognise the fact that it can never hope to win the people who are wicked enough to criticise it. All these reverend gentlemen are agreed that a decay of some sort is undoubtedly taking place, though they differ as to the cause or causes of it. For some reason or other, Christianity in England, whether "general" or "particular" matters but little, "is rapidly approaching vanishing point." Dr. Clifford, as usual, juggles with words; but, surely, in a Divinely-given and infallible religion, any change must mean decay, and decay is the pro-

cess of dissolution. In the Catholic Church Christianity undergoes no change; and yet it is undeniable that in all Catholic countries Christianity is gradually losing ground, not "rapidly" but steadily "approaching vanishing point." Why?

The first point to be emphasised is that, when Christianity appeared, it was in no true sense a new religion, but merely a new name. It is a radical mistake to imagine that Jesus of Nazareth founded a religion. As a distinct cult Christianity is much later than Jesus. If he ever lived and were to revisit the earth now, nothing would surprise him more than to be told that the religion which bears his name sprang from him, and that in it he occupies a supreme position as an object of worship. In the Gospels there is no trace of Christianity, although they contain one or two of its essential elements, unrelated and unorganised. In the Epistles Jesus Christ is a name about which are clustered ideas which were part of the religious literature of the time. As Harnack says, "the soul, God, knowledge, expiation, asceticism, redemption, eternal life, with individualism and with humanity substituted for nationality—these were the sublime thoughts which were living and operative, partly as the precipitate of deep inward and outward movements, partly as the outcome of great souls and their toil, partly as one result of the sublimation of all cults which took place during the imperial age," and the founders of Christianity incorporated them with Christ's name, thereby converting Christ into a mythical, supernatural being. These "sublime thoughts" had been derived from all parts of the world, from India, Persia, Babylonia, Egypt, and Greece, and were the common property of the entire religious world at the commencement of our era. These ideas began to circulate everywhere "when Persia ruled supreme from India to Cyrene, about 500 B.C." There is no longer any doubt as to the Indian influence, for "Indians served in the Persian army, and India was the richest province of Persia. Figures of Indians have now been found in Memphis, certainly dating from 200 B.C., and probably also earlier."

Now, if Christianity was not a new religion, the apostolic claim that it had been specially revealed from heaven to specially called and inspired men falls to the ground. It was never revealed at all. Its elements and thoughts were collected, borrowed, from older cults, and entwined round the name of the Nazarene, in consequence of which he came to be regarded as a god.

Another thing to be borne in mind is that Christianity triumphed by supplanting other religions. Its success consisted, not in banishing unbelief, but in substituting one set of beliefs for another. A fierce war was waged between existing cults, and the Christian came out victorious; and the weapons employed by all of them were purely carnal. Furthermore, the final issue was determined by a political accident. The emphatic point just now, however, is that, beyond doubt, the appeal of Christianity was not to the non-religious or irreligious, but to those who already possessed and practised one or more religions, which were pronounced false and injurious. And this has been true of the Christian religion from that time to this. It has never sown its seed in any virgin soil. It has never been the first religion of any people. It is a notorious supplanter, and its victories in this character are largely due to its conscienceless audacity in robbing its rivals of what it considers their noblest features, and pretending that they have always been latent qualities of its own, though never before brought to light.

A third point to be kept in mind is, that Christianity not only won its way to the chief place by strategically supplanting its rivals, but also retained it by suppressing the scientific spirit which had always co-existed with Paganism, but which was destined, if allowed free course, to discredit and supplant every supernatural religion. As soon as Christianity became the State religion under Constantine it was perceived that, in order to the continuance of its supremacy, it must reign absolutely

alone, and that every department of life must be in servile subjection to its iron rule. Hence, natural knowledge was vetoed because inimical to perfect faith, and all further scientific progress was ruthlessly arrested because it precluded the complete surrender of the reason to the Supreme Powers. Superstition can flourish only in the dark: in the light it melts clean away. Christianity, being the latest prominent development of superstition, could not have prospered side by side with free science. Realising this its leaders, having the power, gave science its quietus for thirteen hundred years. That was the Golden Age of the Christian faith. It then sat on its throne and reigned, with its foot on the neck of secular learning. The study of astronomy, geology, chemistry, and physics was sternly forbidden, and the few here and there who ventured to disregard the prohibition were not only frowned upon but actually persecuted, and, in some instances, put to death. This restriction of science characterised Protestantism as well as Catholicism. Of Copernicus, Luther said: "This fool wishes to reverse the entire science of astronomy; but sacred Scripture tells us that Joshua commanded the sun to stand still, and not the earth." Even John Wesley condemned the Copernican system as "tending towards infidelity."

Science is still under the ban of the Catholic Church and of ultra-orthodox Protestants, but happily it is no longer under the feet of either, with the result that modern knowledge is marching on to triumph, while the ancient superstition is visibly on the wane. And the most notable fact in this connection is that, while science was suppressed by Christian force, Christianity is now sinking by its own weight. Science is beautifully tolerant. When it first realised its independence, and was vigorously denounced by an impotent Church, its first temptation was to retaliate in kind upon its erstwhile gaoler; but it soon discovered that such a policy would be as useless and injurious as it was foolish and needless. To get rid of the darkness, all that is necessary is to let the light come in. To abolish superstition we are only required to establish knowledge. If "Christianity in England is rapidly approaching vanishing point," it is only because the sun of science in England is rapidly approaching its zenith. It is not because the masses of the people are becoming indifferent to their highest and most permanent interests that they are abandoning church and chapel, but because they are finding out that their highest and noblest interests are not those depicted by the parsons. They are giving up Christianity for the simple reason that in the light of their present intelligence it is no longer believable. The preacher is losing his influence because the seat of his authority has been overthrown.

The Bishop of Durham attributes the ebbing of the power of Christian belief to the "love of pleasure and the irreverent handling of Scripture"; but his lordship is entirely mistaken. Motor-cars, bicycles, the week-end habit, love of pleasure, and the irreverent handling of Scripture are not the causes, but the consequences, of the decay of religion. Take the "irreverent handling of Scripture," and you will learn that it simply means treating the Bible as a merely human product, and not as the Word of God. But why is it thus treated? Solely because to believe that it is anything else has, in the light of literary criticism, become quite impossible. The Bishop says, further, that "defection among the 'thinking and progressive' is much less than among the unthinking and unprogressive"; but here again the right-reverend gentleman is certainly wrong. It is a notorious fact that an exceedingly small percentage of our scientists, novelists, journalists, lawyers, doctors, and other highly cultured people is found among professing Christians, and this necessitates the inference that the bulk of Church members must be described as comparatively "unthinking and unprogressive."

Naturally, clergymen endeavor to blink the truth on this question. To them, the growing scepticism

of the day is a symptom of organic deterioration. The people no longer listen to them because they are morally as well as intellectually on the downgrade. We frankly admit that this attitude of theirs is wholly intelligible and, in many cases, superficially sincere; but it is none the less a totally false attitude. It is the attitude of the ostrich when danger threatens. Christianity belongs to a large group of supernatural religions, all of which are rooted in the same essential superstition, and all of which are doomed to vanish before the radiant light of truth. Happy are they who, welcoming the advent of the day, firmly turn their backs upon all the idols of the night.

J. T. LLOYD.

A Progressive Revelation.

THERE is no plank to which Christians in their present shipwrecked condition are clinging so desperately as to that marked "Progressive Revelation." Once their constant theme was, "The Word of the Lord abideth for ever," and nothing was insisted on more strongly than the "immutability of truth," "the fulfilling of the law" in divine revelation, "the great finalities" of Christianity, and "the beautifully simple" nature of the Scripture records. Nowadays they play quite a different tune, and we are told that revealed religion must be interpreted afresh for each generation. In other words, at one time God gave man an imperfect and untrue revelation, and it must be brought up to date. Even the defenders of the faith are wondering where the progression is going to end. Thus the *Church Times* recently said that the number of apologetic books constantly appearing was intensifying that "weariness of the flesh" which is said to be the consequence of "much study," and in the same issue the reviewer of Professor Newman Smyth's *Passing Protestantism and Coming Catholicism* writes:—

"At the end we cannot make out what he is pointing to. Protestantism is to become Catholic by eating the fruit of the tree of Liberalism. But beyond a number of what seem like newspaper cuttings about well-known Modernists, and a great deal of eloquence about the emancipation of the human intellect, we get no suggestions as to how much of the faith once for all delivered to the saints is to be discarded and how much retained."

For years we have been urging practically the same thing upon the reconcilers and progressivists. No matter how the fierce light of criticism may damage all that Christians once fought for, and, as far as they could, enforced by the strong arm of the law, whenever any view is established, or seems likely to be established, they talk about "accretions" and declare that nothing "essential" has been, or can be, touched. Yet they will never state definitely which of the beliefs of Christendom are "essentials" and which are "accretions." Some apologists say that there is no finality—a remarkable change of front after all the emphasis laid on the "great finalities"—and they seem to hold that the progressiveness of revelation is like an infinite mathematical series. In that case its limiting value is certainly zero.

In his annual address to the Lancashire Congregational Union last March, the Chairman, Rev. G. E. Cheeseman, spoke at great length on Biblical criticism:—

"The Bible was now being interpreted in the light of criticism and history rather than in the preconceived spirit of inspiration. It had been a salutary process, and had enabled them to readjust and co-ordinate their views with modern thought. The results of literary criticism and historical research had been largely to authenticate the Scripture.....There was no need to be afraid of criticism. Let it be as thorough and searching as possible—the more so the better—it could not affect their faith.....We are bound to readjust our ideas of the Bible so as to make them harmonise with these verified facts. They may be condensed under two heads—the untrustworthy character of the traditions of authorship,

these traditions themselves originally being only inferences and conjectures, and the composite character of very many books both of the Old and New Testament."

What a slab of irresistible logic! Does the reverend chairman mean by *rather than* in the above passage that "the preconceived spirit of inspiration" remains as one ground of *interpretation*? And seeing that the critics are not themselves agreed on all points, and that some of the problems they have raised await solution, will this apologist and the others who say that their faith is strengthened and deepened by criticism explain exactly in what respect it is strengthened? There is a great deal more in the address to the same effect as the part quoted, but not a single word indicating an answer to these questions. One may say with perfect fairness that the whole position could have been stated quite simply: "the critics lead and we follow; God and Christ and Bible cannot make us any better, but we can make them better." And yet the very day that the Congregational leader came forward to cheer the flock with the assurance that the disintegrating "process" is really "salutary," the Right Rev. Dr. Gore, Bishop of Birmingham, speaking on "The Christian Ministry," had a far different story to tell:—

"It was difficult to exaggerate the urgency with which these great fundamental questions had presented themselves to the minds of men, and the vast uncertainty in which a great deal of the religion of the country had been plunged. He was persuaded that there were a vast number of people—clergymen, ministers of religion, and teachers of all kinds—who were feeling the insecurity of their own position and of what they were going to teach."

As to which presentment of the situation is the more accurate there can be no room for doubt in the mind of anyone who is abreast of current apologetic writing. How on earth any other result than the present chaotic condition of Christian faith referred to by the Bishop can be expected in view of the astounding statement put forward by trained theologians, it is impossible for a man with a shred of mental freedom or honesty to imagine. Surely Protestant apologists themselves must feel that a great part of their work is entirely unconvincing to serious readers. They are trying to run away from their own shadow, and there is only one way of doing that—by staying in the dark. Witness the following reply of Rev. George Jackson, B.A., Professor of the English Bible, Victoria College, Toronto, to Rev. Dr. Carman and others who have recently questioned his orthodoxy:—

"I believe, I have never doubted, I have never once called in question, the inspiration and authority of the Bible, both Old Testament and New. At this moment I have in preparation an address to be delivered at our next monthly men's meeting on this question: 'Does the Old Testament contain a divine revelation?' and the address is intended to be from first to last one long, emphatic, unequivocal, affirmative.....The religious value of the first eleven chapters of Genesis is as much to me as it is to them, but where they see history and science, as well as truth, I can see spiritual truth alone."

What is "spiritual truth"? Are there three kinds of truth, historical, scientific, and spiritual, and if one contradicts another do they all remain true nevertheless? It is this very clever reconciling of two contradictory statements by simply throwing one overboard with the remark that it is true only in a spiritual, or a Pickwickian, sense, that is helping in the present unrest" to spread beyond all bounds. "truth" in the *Iliad*, or Herodotus, or Malthus. And unfortunately for the reconcilers their pap is getting too thin even for the rank and file.

Another slice of solace to the faithful, the cheery comforter this time being the Rev. Scott Lidgett, President of the Methodists, who is reported to have said in a speech at Huntingdon last February:—

"There was no need whatever to think of surrendering fundamental beliefs which had withstood many assaults of unbelief."

But the progressivists will not tell us what the "fundamental beliefs" are, and what part of the Christian citadel is left standing. They are far too astute for that. They well know where the enunciation of details would land them, while they are painfully aware that they are not agreed themselves concerning such matters as the Fall, the Resurrection, and Inspiration. Perhaps these are not "fundamental." But about a month after this heroic effort by the Methodist champion, the *British Weekly* declared in its leading article:—

"There can be no doubt that in recent years many Christians have been affected by a kind of paralysing fear only a little short of panic."

Again, one may say that there is scarcely any room for argument or cavil as to which statement shows the true direction of the religious current.

It is amusing, though there is a tinge of pathos in the amusement, to turn from Dr. William Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible*, published about half a century ago, to the *Dictionary* by Dr. James Hastings and Dr. J. A. Selbie, published this year. In the former, the Garden of Eden is certainly a real locality, and quite an interesting account is given of the forbidden tree, which, however, cannot be botanically identified. In Hastings and Selbie one contributor declares that the story of the temptation merely symbolises "a perpetual antagonism between the human race and the repulsive reptiles which excite its instinctive antipathy." It would be easy to give numerous instances of differing interpretations, but the really important divergence from the earlier works lies in another direction. In Smith and similar writers there is a reasonable consistency throughout. In Hastings and Selbie contributor contradicts contributor with monotonous regularity. Dr. Hastings speaks of "advanced" and "conservative" scholars, and says that the *Dictionary* does not take an extreme position on either side. Fancy one adopting an "advanced" or "conservative" attitude towards revealed truth! The theologian may reply that these scholars are trying to find out what revealed truth is. In that case, God's book is in a very bad way indeed, and so is the human race whose eternal salvation is at stake. Are the faithful to accept Dr. Griffith Thomas's views on the early Biblical records or Professor George Barton's? The former says that the arguments against a primitive revelation are valid against all revelation, and he holds that the Old Testament contains a "true idea" of God, its conception of the deity being such that it can only be accounted for by predicting "something supernatural." Professor Barton, on the other hand, tells us that the leading feature of early Israelitish religion was totemism, and that Jahweh and the Baals were kindred gods. Compare, too, Dr. James Orr's remarks on the Levitical system in his article "Atonement" with A. H. McNeile's "Numbers." The latter regards the system as narrow and priestly, while Dr. Orr says it is full of spiritual significance and intended to impress upon men a sense of their sinful nature contrasted with the holiness of God. Both Professor Hugh Mackintosh in "The Person of Christ," and Dr. W. P. Paterson (considered by some the most learned theologian in Edinburgh) in "Jesus Christ," seem, in certain passages, to reject entirely the Virgin Birth, and yet in other passages in these two articles there is a note of hesitation. The Edinburgh expounder, after bringing forward, with apparent approval, all arguments against the doctrine, is, nevertheless, of opinion that "it would be rash to say that it has no value for Christian faith," and that "it is difficult for a Christian thinker to abandon the dogma without feeling puzzled and distressed by the alternative explanations which open up." It is difficult. To appreciate that difficulty aright the "Christian thinker" has only to read Dr. Paterson's article on "Jesus Christ" in Hastings and Selbie's *Dictionary of the Bible*. Many other instances of uncertainty, hesitation, and inconsistency could be given. There is no need to give them.

Such are some of the interesting points of a progressive revelation to the learned apologist. In reply

to the question, *Whither now?* he can always say, *Still evolving.* But what of the thousands of "replies" which so effectually crushed the "infidel" books and arguments of the past? They have all vanished; the original attacks remain. Meanwhile, there is a dearth of suitable candidates for holy orders.

A. D. MCLAREN.

Acid Drops.

Mr. A. E. Baugham attended the first-night performance of "Blanco Posnet" at Dublin for the *Daily News*. Naturally he condemned it. Naturally, too, considering the paper he represented, he complained of its "blasphemous and sometimes unnecessarily outspoken dialogue." *Blasphemous.* Good! Mr. Shaw is striking home.

The *Daily Chronicle* critic also admits that, while Mr. Shaw's play was received with enthusiasm, there was "a very unpleasant feeling experienced when Blanco Posnet was denouncing the Deity in terms that might suggest a horse thief."

Mr. Yeats, the Irish poet and critic, who is running the Irish National Theatre with Lady Gregory, appended a note of his own to the program of Mr. Shaw's play. This was an extraordinary proceeding, and the more so as it dealt exclusively with "The Religion of Blanco Posnet." One would have thought that the play should speak for itself on that point; or, if not, that Mr. Shaw should be left to supply the requisite explanation. But as Mr. Yeats's note was appended to the program, and we have something to say about it, we reproduce it in full:—

"The Religion of Blanco Posnet.—The meaning of Mr. Shaw's play, as I understand it, is that natural man, driven on by passion and vainglory, attempts to live as his fancy bids him, but is awakened to the knowledge of God by finding himself stopped, perhaps suddenly, by something within himself.

This something, which is God's care for man, does not temper the wind to the shorn lamb, as a false and sentimental piety would have it, but is a terrible love that awakens the soul amidst catastrophes and trains it by conquest and labor.

The essential incidents of the play are Blanco's giving up of the stolen horse, the harlot's refusal to name the thief, and the child's death of the croup. Without the last of these Mr. Shaw's special meaning would be lost, for he wants us to understand that God's love will not do the work of the doctor or any work that man can do, for it acts by awakening the intellect and the soul, whether in the man of science, or the philosopher, or in violent Posnet."

Now, we are loth to say it, but we feel that Mr. Yeats misunderstands the matter. Blanco Posnet does not awake to the knowledge of God; a grieving mother and a sick child awaken his better nature, which is as purely natural as his worse nature, and he helps them in a way which exposes him to grave peril. This sort of thing has happened again and again. And when it happens to Blanco Posnet it doesn't make him at all pious; for as between heaven and hell he rather chooses the latter, and hopes to be damned instead of saved, having "no taste for pious company and no talent for playing the harp." What he finds is not Christian salvation but natural salvation. The good in him has been evoked from the depths by a great human call. He has looked into the eyes of a mother who fears she is losing her child; the child itself, being light-headed with the fever, got its fingers down his neck and called him Daddy; and "something came over him." Yes, it did, and it was a natural something—like the something that came over that rough minor, whose finger the baby "rastled" with, in Bret Harte's fine story of "The Outcast of Poker Flat." And being under the dominion of his better nature—the nature that knits him to his kind instead of separating him from them—Blanco Posnet becomes brave—for it is the love in us that gives us courage. When a man fights for what he loves he is undaunted. Having done his good deed, Blanco Posnet won't give away the woman who profited by it. Mr. Shaw sees straight into nature there. They may roast him alive or cut him to ribbons; he is going through the business he began, and they'll get no information out of him. As for the "boys" who want to hang him up and fill him with lead, he isn't afraid of them, for he is filled with a new fortitude. "Let them," he says, "hang me. Let them shoot. So long as they are shooting at a man and not at a snivelling skunk and softy, I can stand up to them and take all that they can give me—game." Capital! A thought like that, only grander, must have filled the mind of Giordano Bruno as he stood at the stake, and looked out

upon the sea of hostile faces, and saw the kindling of the fire that was to burn out his heroic life.

The poor sick child dies after all. The poor mother felt it become like lead in her arms as she rode to the doctor. She thought that God sent the man to her with the horse. But she doesn't understand that now. "God would never be so cruel," she says, "as to send me the horse to disappear like that." "Just what he would do," replies Blanco Posnet. Not much piety in that! "Why," he asks later on, "should He go hard on an innocent kid and go soft on a rotten thing like me?" Blanco Posnet's brother—a pious rotten-souled scoundrel—tells him that it was the Lord speaking to his soul. Whereupon his brother, who has been a blackguard, but not pious, and not rotten-souled, retorts:—

"Oh, yes: you know all about it, don't you? You're in the Lord's confidence. He wouldn't for the world do anything to shock you, would He, Boozy? Yah! what about the croup? I guess He made the croup when He was thinking of one thing; and then He made the child when He was thinking of something else; and the croup got past Him and killed the child. Some of us will have to find out how to kill the croup, I guess. I think I'll turn doctor, just on the chance of getting back on Him by doing something He couldn't do."

Not much piety there either! The conversion of Blanco Posnet takes place, but it is not a conversion to Christianity or any other form of theology. Mr. George A. Birmingham, in the *Morning Leader*, calls Mr. Shaw's play "a sermon on the working of the Spirit of God in the heart of man." He ought to know that Mr. Shaw does not believe in a personal God. He ought also to see that Blanco Posnet's last words state the real truth of the matter. He offers to shake hands with a prostitute who had tried to swear his life away with false evidence. He renews the offer, and says to her, "It's come over me again, same as when the kid touched me." *The kid touched me.* That is the real text of Mr. Shaw's sermon. We congratulate him on becoming more human as he grows older.

Mr. George Alexander told the Select Committee on Stage Plays that the Censorship was "wanted in the interests of the State to regulate and, if necessary, to prevent the public performance of plays dealing with political questions, whether at home or abroad, and wanted in the interests of the public to deal with blasphemous or indecent plays." We are sorry to hear Mr. Alexander talking such nonsense. Does he really mean that theatre managers are enterprising enough to accept a play which is likely to be found "blasphemous" or "indecent"? We mean, of course, a serious play. As long as you don't try to unsettle people's notions, or make them think, you may sail almost as near the wind as you please. Even if a theatre manager could be found to accept an "indecent" play of a serious character, is it possible that one could be found to face the odium of "blasphemy"? The very idea is absurd—and Mr. Alexander must know it as well as we do. Why didn't he say plainly (and honestly) that theatre managers approve of the Censorship because, from their point of view, it is a good business arrangement.

Shakespeare's plays would never pass the Censorship now. Theatre managers say that they would, but people who are not theatre managers know a great deal better. Look at *Othello*. Look at *Measure for Measure*, which, from the Censor's point of view, is still worse. Even *Hamlet* would probably come under the ban. The Prince of Denmark condemns his mother's "wicked haste, to post with such dexterity to incestuous sheets." Mr. Redford would never stand that. And look at the shocking "blasphemies" of *King Lear*. Mr. Thomas Hardy had to remind the pious critic who complained of his "blasphemy" in the famous ending of *Tess* that Shakespeare had been before him with the very same "blasphemy" in the greatest of the tragedies. Gifford, the editor of Ben Jonson, called Shakespeare "the coryphaeus of profanity."

Mr. G. K. Chesterton's book on Mr. G. Bernard Shaw was reviewed in last week's *Nation* by Mr. Shaw himself. There is a certain piquancy about this, and the review was of the same character. Mr. Shaw says that he has been trying—apparently in vain—to teach Mr. Chesterton several things, and amongst them this,—"that the man who gives to reason and logic the attributes and authority of the will—the Rationalist—is the most hopeless of fools." This is pretty strong, and not very civil. But let the galled jade wince. We do not label ourselves Rationalist, and we do not seek to put reason in the place of will, nor do we think we could succeed if we tried to. Reason enlightens, and will (we can't stop to explain the term) acts. So much has always been known. It is not a discovery of Mr. Shaw's, or of his school—if he has a school.

The writer of a good article on "The Importance of Art" in last week's *Nation* remarked that—"Ideas are dangerous only when they reach a crowd. Nobody minded the preaching of Deism by cultivated peers in costly and difficult books in the eighteenth century. It was Tom Paine who was sent to prison, not for his opinions, but for his power to popularise them." The remark is true, but the statement about Paine is inaccurate. His only imprisonment was in France during the Terror. Williams, Eaton, Carlile, and a host of other brave men were imprisoned in England for publishing the *Age of Reason*. But not Paine himself. When he left France he went to America and died there.

Rev. A. P. Kirkpatrick has been telling the Putney Branch of the Church of England Men's Society that there is going to be "a gigantic struggle between Christianity and an Atheistic civilisation—a struggle greater than any in which Christianity has yet taken part, because the enemy will be more subtle and deadly in its methods." We believe the reverend gentleman is about right. His mistake is supposing that Christianity is going to win.

The sub-editor of the *New Theology* weekly has been spending a holiday in Hungary. He found that "dukes and priests" were making a fine thing out of the most poverty-stricken districts. One priest, he says,—but it looks incredible—drew £50,000 a year from villages of women and children; villages from which men have been driven by destitution, and where the wages average three shillings a week. Very sad, of course; but what did the *New Theology* gentleman expect? It was ever thus—and ever will be while it is possible. Priestcraft exploits people to the last farthing, and the basis of priestcraft is religion. Take that away and the priest disappears. There is no other way of getting rid of him.

Rev. Robert Mashiter, of the Grange, Hurstpierpoint, left £32,259 3s. 6d. Left it—because he could not carry it away. He was one of the poor Carpenter's apostles. "Blessed be ye poor" did not bother him; but he found that "godliness is great gain."

Rev. Canon Arthur Sutton, late acting chaplain to the forces, left £216,686. Another apostle of "the poor Carpenter."

Mr. A. E. Fletcher is always up to something. He now calls Tolstoy "the great Socialist." Tolstoy is not a Socialist. Mr. Fletcher should try to understand what he writes about. It wouldn't matter to us, of course, if Tolstoy were a Socialist, as we have nothing to do with political "isms" in the *Freethinker*. But we are fond of accuracy, and we think it of importance that Tolstoy should not be misrepresented. Mr. Fletcher has a religious object in claiming Tolstoy as a Socialist. That is why we take him to task.

An excited preacher declared that "one of the grandest features of Christianity is its cosmopolitanism," and that therefore "it finds a home everywhere and is everywhere at home." Had the man of God given the subject a moment's serious thought, he would have realised that he was talking sheer nonsense. Where is Christianity "at home" to-day? The West is turning it out of doors, and the East refuses to give it lodgment. It is becoming a homeless wanderer on the face of the earth. Christendom sends missionaries to Heathendom; but she warns them not to tell the Heathen that the religion offered to them has been a complete failure in the land from which it comes.

At the beginning, it was predicted that Christianity would "run" society on "eternal lines." Now it is confessed that Christianity is to survive it must be "run" on "modern lines." What a humiliating change of front.

The *Methodist Times* frankly admits that Sir Oliver Lodge has suffered contradiction and discredit in the ranks of scientists because, with honest heart and honest mind, he has sought to render "the Christian Church a service. And yet, on the ground of what Sir Oliver has done, we are told that science is at last supporting, instead of attacking, the Christian faith. Flattering lies are told that humiliating truths may be suppressed.

We are told that the scientist "has never discredited a single essential Christian doctrine, has not stormed a solitary outwork of Christian morality, or of Christian hope." A more barefaced falsehood has never been uttered. The science of criticism has completely shattered the claim of infallibility so confidently set up by New Testament

writers. It has also exposed the mythical and legendary character of a large portion of New Testament narrative. The science of history has given the lie direct to most of the predictions said to have been indulged in by Jesus, prominent among which is that of his Second Coming. It has also proved that the collapse of such prophecies is tantamount to the total failure of the Christian religion. The science of ethics has made it clear that the moral teaching attributed to Jesus is incapable of conversion into practice. We therefore ask, which essential doctrine or hope of Christianity is there that some science or other has not discredited? We know of none.

The preacher says that the scientist "has never replied a word to the anxious heart which says, 'Oh that I knew where I might find God, that I might come even unto his seat.'" It is true that science has never answered such a question in the affirmative; but it has abundantly shown that the question itself is the outcome of a false, superstitious training, and that in the absence of such mental training the heart is never anxious to find a deity. It is not true to say that science is "speechless" in the presence of the deep and universal longings of mankind." On the contrary, science, in one or other of its departments, claims to be able to satisfy all longings that can be justified at the bar of reason. Indeed, science is a substitute for every form of supernatural religion.

Said an Arab to a Christian minister; "Your missionaries come to us and tell us that our religion is false, while theirs, which they offer to us, is absolutely true. They can talk well, but they cannot argue. The moment they are contradicted they lose their temper, and threaten us with hell-fire, and our men simply laugh in their sleeves." How literally true of all Christian defenders of the faith.

A writer in the *British Congregationalist* asks, "Is a world-religion possible?" and answers, "We know it is, because we have it." This brief answer contains two distinct untruths—namely, the claim to knowledge and the claim to possession. There never has been a world-religion yet. That Christianity is not, nor is likely to become, such a religion is self-evident both from its two thousand years' history and from its present dying condition. The present situation is highly diverting. It is as if its champions said: "Yes, Christianity is a hopeless failure at home, but we are determined to push it for all we are worth abroad."

It is all very well to hang Dhingra and fancy "there is an end to that matter." There isn't an end to it. What was it that turned Dhingra's head and drove him to the reckless folly of assassination? He himself said that he did it to avenge the floggings and other barbarous indignities inflicted on "politicals" in India; prisoners being treated in this way, often, merely because they had written articles and delivered speeches that hurt the feelings of the British officials who call themselves the Government of India. Lord Morley denied that "politicals" were treated harshly or were brought into contact with ordinary criminals, but he seems to have been misinformed; at any rate, his statement was untrue. Mr. C. J. O'Donnell, M.P., cites the testimony of three Indian medical men practising at Nagpur. They accidentally met with the editor of the *Desh Savak*, who was being transferred from one prison to another. He is a B.A. and LL.B., and is under sentence of fifteen months' hard labor for seditious writing. He looked an old man already, and he is only thirty. His eyes and cheeks were sunken, and he was in the last stage of emaciation. Yet he was "made to walk in heavy chains," although he could "only with great difficulty and effort walk" at all, and "had to bend down and pull up the leg-chains with his hands." Surely this is not what Lord Morley means by "not treating the 'politicals' harshly." It is in our opinion disgraceful, and we begin to understand why the Government showed such sympathy with the Czar. If our position in India can only be upheld by such means we devoutly hope it may fall. And this has nothing to do with politics. It is a question of common humanity. We know good Freethinkers amongst the Indians, and we are almost ashamed to look them in the face when they come and shake hands with us. How their faces brighten when we assure them that "all good Freethinkers belong to the same nationality."

An Englishman writing in the *New York Truthseeker*, and describing himself as the secretary of a rather mythical Freethought organisation over here, makes some curious statements with respect to the latest "blasphemy" prosecution. He admits that the National Secular Society spent more than £200 over the Boulter case, but he omits to say

that a certain part of this represented the maintenance of the "blasphemer's" home during his imprisonment, a duty which was not undertaken by the said rather mythical organisation, or its spokesman, but left to the N. S. S.—as usual. It is admitted, too, that "Mr. Boulter appealed for legal assistance" and that the N. S. S. "lavishly procured it," but the critic is "of opinion that they never got their money's worth." He is entitled to his opinion, but he is not entitled to say that "those who assisted" Mr. Boulter "must be mortified by the reflection that such a large sum of money has been expended with such a questionable advantage." Those who assisted Mr. Boulter—and the critic was not one of them—are not at all mortified. They did their duty, and would do it again. Moreover, a very considerable "advantage" has resulted from their doing it. This has been fully explained in the *Freethinker*, and we are not going over the ground again for the sake of one person, whose ignorance is probably more affected than real.

This critic, who is supposed to be a friend and colleague of Mr. Boulter's, says that most of the money would have been saved if Mr. Boulter had defended himself, "which every man should do on such a charge as 'blasphemy.'" Mr. Boulter decided that point for himself—absolutely. He had a right to do so, and he was in the position of danger and responsibility; unlike those who offer him advice so freely—eighteen months afterwards. Difficulties are apt to look small when they affect others, and large when they affect oneself. It is not so easy as some appear to think to defend oneself from the prisoner's dock on a charge of "blasphemy." It seems easy enough, no doubt, from an outdoor platform in the midst of a sympathetic crowd; but it is quite another thing when you stand in the dock, and have to face skilled and practised lawyers, and a hostile judge, and a bigoted jury; with nearly all your friends kept out of court by the Russianised methods now prevalent in London, and the press outside maintaining a conspiracy of silence against you. It isn't the bravest men who brag the most of what they would do in such circumstances. And there is just another thing to be said. The only people who *did* anything for Mr. Boulter belong to the N. S. S., and they are treated to all the cackle; some of it, we are sorry to say, being of a very disreputable character. Not a word of criticism is devoted to those who did nothing, and said they did it on principle—or to "advanced" journals that acted nearly as badly as the Christian bigots did. But it was ever thus—and we suppose it ever will be.

The British and Foreign Bible Society cultivates romance. That is what it lives by. But it shouldn't go in for wit. It's sure to fail at that game. Look at its story of the French colporteur who defended the story of Balaam's ass by saying: "Why cannot you believe that an ass has spoken like a man, when we so often see men who speak like asses?" What a defence of miracles! A man speaking like an ass is a metaphor; an ass speaking like a man is—Bible oratory.

"Mrs. Annie Besant, a former co-worker with the Freethinkers in England, is now in New York, exhibiting, before curious audiences of Theosophists and others, the sad wreck of a once rational mind. We have not heard her, but learn from apparently veracious newspaper reports of her lectures that she has reached the point of intellectual degeneration where she believes in the imminent second coming of Christ, who may this time 'choose to enter the body we call feminine.' A mournful sight is this. Women of a certain age identify themselves, as did Joanna Southcote, with the Virgin Mary, and predict a second miraculous birth of Jesus. Excluded from this class by years, they rely on re-incarnation by possession and not through birth, and preach other parallel vagaries. It is equally lamentable that these self-deluded individuals should find, in an age when science has made rational thinking the duty of intelligent beings, hundreds to follow after them and encourage them in their habits of delusion."—*Truthseeker* (New York).

Professor Sir J. J. Thomson, delivered a very interesting presidential address at the annual meeting of the British Association at Winnipeg. He had a great deal to say about the ether, which is now seen to be the vastly important thing which the old Greek philosophers said it was. Yet the orator felt obliged to wind up with the pious exclamation, "Great are the works of the Lord." It was his pinch of incense on the orthodox altar.

Dr. Campbell-Morgan says he "never gets into a panic over a phase," because the "tide is always busy ebbing and flowing, and every time it comes in a little higher up."

That is how this man of God consoles himself in the face of the present acknowledged failure of Christianity. But his reference to the tide is laughably unfortunate. He is thinking only of the flood-tide, which is very beautiful and suggestive, but he coolly ignores the existence of the ebb-tide. The flood-tide of Christianity is a thing of the past. It is now in the throes of its ebb-tide, ebbing and flowing, but every time going out a little lower down.

Rev. R. Roberts, of Bradford, whose *Hibbert Journal* article flattered the orthodox doves, wants to draw Christians away from Jesus to Humanity,—which is precisely what *we* want to do, and have long been trying to do. Replying to the Rev. Rhondda Williams, in last week's *Christian Commonwealth*, he utters the following warning against tying anything up to the historical personality of Christ:—

"And I must put, in the first place, a consideration which really dominates the whole issue, but which I did not feel called upon explicitly to state. I refer to the great question of the historicity of Jesus. I cannot accept that historicity as a demonstrated fact. The evidence available for it is so meagre, so contradictory, covers so small a portion of the alleged life-story, and is, moreover, so tainted with miracle, that it does not carry conviction to my mind. Yet, as I understand things, the Jesus of the Gospels is absolutely indispensable to Western Christianity as popularly understood. An influential and cultured school of British Socialism is following in the wake of orthodox Christendom. It is building Socialism on the Jesus story. It is in no spirit of irreverence and in no spirit of mere wilfulness that I venture to raise a note of warning. Christendom is in difficulties, not with its Christ, but with its Jesus. If British Socialism builds on the Jesus story, it, too, will be involved in the difficulties which now disturb the 'household of faith.'"

We are coming at last to what Dr. Conway affirmed that Carlyle said: "Exit Christ." Two hundred years of Free-thought criticism has not been in vain. It has permeated the minds of those who still call themselves Christians, but are little else than Freethinkers wearing a Christian label.

A grave and beautiful passage from Epictetus—the great Pagan moralist who was also a slave! How splendidly it stands out against the cheap sentimentalities of the weekly organ of the New Theology and Christian Socialism! Yes, there were giants in those days; the days of the "kings of old philosophy" who, as Shelley said, "reigned before religion made men mad."

What a strange lot of people the writers of anonymous letters and postcards must be! And what a lot of trouble they take to create a moral stench for which they never receive the credit! They quite waste their time as far as we are concerned. "Afflictions induce callosities," as old Sir Thomas Browne says, and we are thoroughly indurated. The worst anonymous letter on earth makes no more impression on us than a fly makes on the back of an elephant. Nor do anonymous postcards make any direct impression on us. If the senders happened to get in our way it might be some time before they sent postcards again, but as they keep carefully out of our way we pass on to the next business with a contemptuous smile.

Christina Trevorrow, a young Salvationist, committed suicide by throwing herself from a window of the Salvation Army Home of Rest in Gore-street, South Hackney. She thought she was dying of consumption. In a letter she left for her husband she said: "I am praying always to God that he will not let me do this." God answered—as usual.

The church tower of the village of Gello, near Lucca, Italy, was struck by lightning on August 24, and a portion of it fell on the roof, which collapsed. Several women were killed and fifteen other persons injured. A bad oversight on the part of "Providence"!

During the thunderstorm on August 25, the steeple of the parish church at Cressing, Essex, was struck by lightning and shattered. A hole was made in the roof, which caught fire, but the rain put it out. "Providence" woke up in the nick of time.

The terrible disaster in Mexico is another instance of "Providence." The flooding of the Santa Catarina River has destroyed thousands of houses; one whole town is practically wiped out; the dead are already known to number over 1,300, and may prove to be twice as many. "He doeth all things well."

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, September 5, St. James's Hall, Great Portland-street, London, W. : at 7.30, "Shakespeare's Philosophy of Life."—in *Hamlet*, etc.

September 12, 19, 26, St. James's Hall, London.

October 3, Glasgow; 10, Leicester; 17, 24, and 31, St. James's Hall, London.

November 7, Manchester; 14, Liverpool; 28, Birmingham.

To Correspondents.

THE PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND: Annual Subscriptions.—Previously acknowledged, £234 6s. 6d. Received since.—W. Dodd, £1; J. H., 5s.; W. R. Munton, £2.

LOVER OF FAIR PLAY.—We do not understand your question. Mr. Foote neither issues personal challenges nor accepts them. When the Christian Evidence Society wants a public debate, and is ready to put forward a representative, the National Secular Society will no doubt put forward a representative on its own side.

W. DAY.—We have no accurate information on the subject, and we should imagine it would be difficult to obtain.

H. B. DODDS.—The writers you mention earn a little cheap applause by sneering at a "materialism" which was never affirmed. Bradlaugh never, to our knowledge, called himself a "materialist." He called himself a Monist. Neither did Büchner—a more important man than Pearson or Saleeby—favor the term "materialist." He also was a Monist, as Haeckel is. He admits, in his main work, that *matter* and *mind* are aspects of one fundamental existence. Dr. Jenkinson's position, in the passage we quoted, is substantially the same as that of Bradlaugh, Büchner, and Haeckel.

J. BARRY.—Thanks for cuttings. The advertisement was "previous."

W. DODD.—Mr. Foote is keeping well.

SIMPLE SANDY.—Too late for this week; in our next.

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

F. WOOD.—Thanks. Our readers do us a service, and make their "weekly treat" more palatable by sending us cuttings containing material for paragraphs.

J. WILKIE.—We cannot undertake to answer such questions by post. The story of a female Pope (Pope Joan) seems to be quite legendary. Don't waste your time over it.

OTTO HOFFMANN.—Sent as requested. Pleased to hear you have obtained us "at least two regular readers" lately.

W. GREGORY.—Please don't say "kindly insert," etc. Let your lecture notice on postcard be framed on the model of the notices as printed in the *Freethinker*. Anything else simply gives our printers trouble, which means loss of time, and consequently expense.

HARRY BOULTER desires us to intimate that he wishes to start business on quarter day, and would be glad if all who mean to subscribe would do so in the interim. He sends us also a tract distributed by Rev. A. J. Waldron and his lambs on Clapham Common. It advises Christians, on the authority of Mr. Joseph McCabe, that the Blasphemy Laws are very good things and no danger whatever to free speech.

W. R. MUNTON, subscribing to the President's Fund, says: "I hope you will live long to keep the flag flying."

JAMES CAMPBELL.—We have answered questions about Musgrave Reads often enough, and must decline to do so any more—at least, for the present. Give Mr. Blatchford a turn now.

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

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

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

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

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

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Sugar Plums.

London Freethinkers, with the help of the friends and acquaintances they can bring along, ought to be able pretty nearly to fill the beautiful St. James's Hall this evening (Sept. 5), when Mr. Foote opens the new course of lectures there under the auspices of the Secular Society, Ltd. It

will be remembered that St. James's Hall has been engaged for Sunday evening lectures during September and October. Mr. Foote occupies the platform throughout September, and will be followed for two Sundays by Messrs. Cohen and Lloyd, after which he will deliver the three remaining lectures. Mr. Foote's general subject for the four September lectures is "The Master's Mind"—the Master being William Shakespeare. Each lecture will deal with a special aspect of the Master's mind. The first lecture is on "Shakespeare's Philosophy of Life"—especially as found in a study of *Hamlet*. The special themes of the other three lectures will be found in the advertisement on the back page of the *Freethinker*. We suggest that Freethinkers should try to hear all the four lectures. They are consecutive and complementary. We have already stated, but we repeat, that Mr. Foote will have to read liberal selections from the plays in the course of these addresses.

Those who excuse themselves from attendance at Free-thought lectures because (as they say) they cannot listen for ever to "Bible-banging" will have an opportunity during September of showing that this is their real reason for non-attendance by going to lectures of a very different description.

In the September number of the *Positivist Review* one of the ablest of Positivists, Professor E. S. Beesly, writes a very interesting notice of his brother, Augustus Henry Beesly, who died early in August, and was buried in a secular way. The funeral "was non-theological," Professor Beesly reading some verses written by the deceased, "expressing his non-belief in God and personal immortality." The poem called "A Sussex Churchyard" appeared in the *Nation* of July 24. "It showed," Professor Beesly says, "that he believed in no ultimate duality of mind and matter, and that the only Resurrection he expected was the mingling of the bodily elements in the grave with the eternally renewed upspring and growth of life in its simplest forms, and so in the course of time a new incorporation in a higher organism." Augustus Henry Beesly was, for the best years of his life, assistant master at Marlborough. He was the author of a book of poems and of a *Life of Danton*, which, as Professor Beesly well says, is "a masterly and eloquent vindication of the great man's career."

Dr. E. B. Foote, 120 Lexington-avenue, New York City, is the honorary treasurer of the Thomas Paine Historical Association, which has in view the establishment of a Paine Museum in the house at New Rochelle, where Paine lived during the last years of his life, and which is now kept as a memorial to him. A good number of relics, books, portraits, etc., are already accumulated, and the Committee are anxious to increase them. Dr. Foote asks us to beg the possessors of relics of Paine in England to send them on to him at New York. They will be carefully kept "for ever," as the saying is, in the Paine Museum. And as one Paine Museum is enough, and necessarily better than two, we hope Dr. Foote's appeal will be responded to. It is hoped to start the Museum on October 1.

Writing to us on this matter, Dr. Foote adds a few words on another subject. "Your 'blasphemy' article," he says, "is simply great; in accord with your happy faculty of hitting the bull's-eye, and presenting the subject so that there is no more to be said. 'That settles it.' With all your work, it's wonderful how you do it." We sometimes wonder, too,—if we may be allowed to say so. But it is astonishing what men can do with their hearts in what they are doing. That's the great secret. We are as much in love with our work now as we were thirty years ago.

Ingersoll was held in high esteem by the friends of animals' rights. His daughter Maud is active in the anti vivisection movement. Mrs. Sue M. Farrell (Mrs. Ingersoll's sister) has been having a lively discussion on the subject with the editor of the *New York Evening Sun*. We gather from the *Truthseeker* that the lady has much the best of the encounter.

Professor Metchnikoff has been interviewed in Paris by a correspondent of the *New York Times*. "May I know your views on religion?" the interviewer asked. Metchnikoff's reply was as follows:—"I am an Atheist, as you will see from my *Studies in Optimism*. The fact that the majority of the people believe in God and in a future existence is based not upon religious instinct, but may be explained by the influence of education. That is why we often see that people who in their childhood believed in what they had been trained to believe, in time lose their faith in those things as their minds develop."

A Modern Messiah.

IF any enthusiastic reader of the *Freethinker* should ever be seized with a spasmodic desire to run to earth an alleged "converted infidel," my advice to the subject of such an impulse is, Don't. In all probability it will be a fruitless chase, and may lead to most inhospitable regions and to contact with strange mortals, or, as in the case of the present writer, to a Sahara of controversy as barren and unprofitable as the great desert itself. The search for the "converted infidel" somewhat resembles the search for the North Pole; it is a hazardous undertaking, requiring great patience and dogged perseverance, but possessing a certain fascination for adventurous spirits; and, while it may be the occasion of some novel experiences, you never, so to speak, "arrive."

It was in the voluntary search for one of these converts that I came across a *Modern Messiah*. The circumstances of our acquaintance were as follows. Some few years ago, a Methodist minister tickled the ears of a religious gathering in the North by the statement that a "zealous infidel propagandist" in the city of Leeds had been converted to Christianity. As this was reported in the local press, I thought I would like to test its accuracy, and, if true, learn the reasons which had induced this noted infidel to accept the Christian faith. Accordingly, I wrote to the Rev. Samuel Chadwick, the minister in question, asking for the name and address of the person who had caused such joy among the angels in heaven by his repentance. Mr. Chadwick's acquaintance with the convert and the circumstances, however, appeared to be but slight, but he gave me the address of a brother minister at whose place of business, he said, the conversion had taken place, and who would no doubt supply me with the needful information. Apparently there *was* a convert, and in reply to my inquiry the reverend gentleman to whom I wrote said he had handed my letter over to his protégé, from whom I might expect to receive an answer in due course. Appended to this gentleman's letter were some pious reflections on the evils of unbelief, which might have been appreciated by the infant-class of a Sunday-school. It likewise assured me that it was by no mere *mental* process that the convert had changed his views. But an explanation of the mysterious theological process by which Christians are manufactured was evidently beyond the convert's powers of description. He, in turn, handed my letter to a Mr. Ferris, of the Brotherhood Church, Leeds, from whom I received a long, irrelevant epistle, propounding some rather novel religious views. I was not anxious to enter into a private theological controversy, and told Mr. Ferris so, and also that I would be obliged if his friend, for whom he was acting as spokesman, would kindly give a reason for the new hope that was in him. Again followed another theological disquisition, with but little reference to the wonderful conversion. Repeatedly I urged that this "zealous infidel propagandist" would verify the truth of Mr. Chadwick's public statement, but in vain. This bold propagandist had suddenly become smitten with a bashful silence. His "zeal" had, for some reason or other, deserted him, and he preferred to hide his newly acquired light under a bushel. The brilliant flow of oratory with which he used to delight his Freethought audiences had become frozen at the source.

How far he justified such a description, and how much truth there was in Mr. Chadwick's boast, we shall presently see. As I have said, this occurred some years ago, and I have taken the above particulars from an old copy of the *Freethinker*, in which they were then published. The matter had almost escaped my recollection—the fact that my last letter had remained unanswered being forgotten—until I was surprised to receive by post in the early part of this year a package in which this letter was enclosed, with apologies for the long-delayed reply. Re-read-

ing this letter after the lapse of four years, I found I had asked two pertinent questions as to the intellectual status of the convert, and the particular brand of Christianity to which he had succumbed. Referring to these, Mr. Ferris says: "You ask whether the convert had accepted orthodox Christianity, and whether he was a person of any intellectual note. I should be inclined to answer both *in the negative*." And, as Mr. Ferris claimed to have had more to do with his friend's conversion than either of the two clerical gentlemen who made such a noise about it, his opinion must be given its due weight. As to the convert's "orthodoxy," Mr. Ferris says: "I do not think he had any clear ideas whatever upon the subject of Christianity." Nor did he think that he "took any stock in the 'Plan of Salvation' or the 'Atonement' as commonly stated." In another part of our correspondence Mr. Ferris says: "I cordially detest the Bible and all the nonsense it contains, and have never said a word in defence of it." Whatever, therefore, may be the proper term to designate the religion of Mr. Ferris and his convert—and probably it may be given a name when its disciples get travelled as far as Antioch—it bears no resemblance, either doctrinally or constitutionally, to the brand that passes current as Methodism. Not only, then, had Mr. Chadwick juggled with the term Christianity, but the "zealous infidel propagandist" had no existence outside of his fervid imagination,—considerations which lend some support to the expressed opinion of Mr. Ferris that the "Rev." Mr. Chadwick was not a shining light of veracity.

But to come to the subject of our title—a modern Messiah. I am not able to state whether he was born in a stable like the Christ, or in a royal palace like the Buddha, or whether his appearance was a case of God being manifest in the flesh, or merely a reincarnation of some previous earthly existence. But the signs of religious genius are unmistakable. One of the reasons given by Mr. Ferris for his silence was that he had "recognised the need for a clearer exposition of the groundwork of belief." The former Messiah had evidently left this groundwork in a very unsettled and very unsatisfactory condition, and although theologians had been at work for twenty long centuries trying to make this groundwork intelligible, they had only succeeded in making confusion worse confounded. But the spiritual intuition of Mr. Ferris succeeded where all others had failed, and he put all controversy at an end by the publication of a twopenny pamphlet. "In the course of time," he says, "I was able to issue a small pamphlet dealing with some of the questions raised by many others like yourself." This pamphlet is entitled *What is Truth?* and supplies a long-felt want in the Christian system. It has often been regretted by religious apologists that the original Messiah neglected the opportunity Pilate's question afforded him of throwing definite light on a subtle and perplexing problem. Possessing infinite wisdom, he allowed mankind to struggle on for two thousand years through labyrinths of mental perplexities—until, in fact, Mr. Ferris said, "Let there be light." And one can only regret that Pontius Pilate was not permitted, like Abraham of old, to behold afar off the day of this later Messiah, and read with prophetic vision the complete and final answer to his famous question in this world-illuminating pamphlet. For then, we may be sure, the stern, inflexible countenance of the Roman governor would have been depicted for us suffused with a patriarchal smile.

The first Messiah not only held his peace on such momentous occasions, but he wrote nothing for the benefit of posterity. The present Messiah, however, has settled the riddle of the universe and silenced Haeckel for ever in the compass of a few pages. Unlike the first Messiah, too, who came to fulfil the law and the prophets, the later one regards these as a "Judaistic incubus" on the true religion. These are slight points of difference between the old Messiah and the new, but it is the points

of agreement that justify the title of the present article.

When Mr. Ferris returned to the controversial arena after his four years' sojourn in the wilderness, with the kindly assistance of the Postmaster-General, we "fell to" as on the former occasion. And in the course of a few months I received no less than one hundred and thirty-two pages of foolscap, expounding the tenets of the new religion, which seems to be a compound of "mediumship," Christian Science, communistic Socialism, the more impracticable parts of Christian ethics, and a primitive belief in miraculous possibilities.

Like the first Messiah, Mr. Ferris is on very intimate terms with his Heavenly Father. He possesses a child-like faith in the words of the hymn, "The Lord will provide." You have but to shut your eyes and open your mouth, and "all things are yours." When Judas is not at hand with the bag to provide the material necessities of life, there is no need to worry; Jesus didn't, and "the Father justified his faith." Nor is the age of miraculous providence past. Says my correspondent:—

"The same things happen to-day. I have had to pray for my next meal, not knowing in the least where it would come from. But it arrived. And I know of other striking cases among my friends. My own experience when living without money (which I did for three years) were very remarkable. And when I went, with a companion, to discuss with Tolstoi, we started in mid-winter without a halfpenny in our pockets, and with no overcoats. And we lacked for nothing."

The irreligious globe-walkers have generally started equipped with a concertina or a trombone, a performing monkey or a little dog, but these men of faith set out in obedience to the Master's injunction without even a nightshirt or a comb. And when, after having been in peril by sea and land, suffering imprisonment and shipwreck, and fighting with wild beasts at Ephesus, these sturdy travellers arrived at last at the Muscovite's dwelling, it was to find that the ungrateful Tolstoi positively refused to enter into any discussion on the subject of the Virgin Birth. Which is enough to make the angels weep.

Whether at the end of the three years our friend's faith failed him, or whether it was that the "Father" became tired of such a drain on his resources, the correspondence does not say; but he apparently returned after his wanderings to—the carpenter's bench.

In the matter of raising the dead, the Messianic experiment of faith was not quite so successful. Indeed, placed alongside of the raising of Lazarus or the widow's son at Nain, it must be written down as a dismal failure. However, the experiment is worth quoting, if only for its candor.

"Do not suppose the dead are not raised in modern life. I have read of at least one authentic instance, fairly recently. Indeed, I once tried to raise the dead myself, in a special case where I thought I had reason to do so. I did not succeed in doing that, but I did succeed in getting into touch with the just-departed spirit of the man, and in learning why it was not expedient for him to return."

If at first you don't succeed, says the song, try again. Probably Mr. Ferris may be more successful in some future attempt. However, to get into contact with a "just-departed" spirit is no mean accomplishment, though not quite so difficult perhaps as getting into touch with a converted infidel.

Besides this wholesale raising of the dead; catching spirits as they fly; meeting the widespread demand for "a straightforward philosophical presentation of the case for Christianity, in the terms (as nearly as may be) of modern science"; subsisting for three years on faith—besides these, our Messiah possesses other accomplishments. He is a writer of poetry. And in moments of sublime inspiration he sometimes flashes forth truths the discovery of which have at all times baffled theologians. One of these truths which Divine Providence has hidden from the wise

and prudent and revealed to Mr. Ferris is thus expressed:—

"Not in the ancient Scriptures
May the Word of God be found,
Not from tongue of prophet or preacher
Shall its utterance resound.

It glows in the mother's bosom."

So, while modern theologians have been discussing whether the Bible *itself* is the Word of God, or whether it only *contained* the Word of God, as a vessel does water, they have been on a false tack. While popular preachers have been hoisting the Bible on a pole, even as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, it had no more spiritual efficacy than the *Daily Mail*. The Word of God was playing the game of hide-and-seek, and while they were looking for it in the "ancient Scriptures," there it was all the time snugly reposing in the bosoms of the female portion of their congregations.

We venture to think that this discovery—that the Word of God glows in the mother's bosom—will shed light on some very important problems. The universality of the religious instinct, instead of having reference to some estate from which man fell, will be explainable by the universal absorption of mother's milk by the sucking infant. And there can be little doubt that the present decay of religious influence is largely due to the modern practice of bringing children up "on the bottle," as the Word of God can scarcely be expected to "glow" in a genderless tin of condensed milk. In the light of this truth many passages of Scripture, especially those relating to "bosoms," will lend themselves to a new interpretation. That saying which has so baffled the commentators, about little children being of the kingdom of heaven, no longer presents any difficulty. The kingdom of heaven lies, not in the future, but in the past, in those blissful days when we imbibed the divine nectar at our mother's breasts. Hood recognises this in "Past and Present," when he laments in the days of his manhood that now—

"'Tis little joy
To know I'm further off from heaven,
Than when I was a boy."

To follow this modern Messiah through all his mental vagaries would be a futile task. But the foregoing references show the sad havoc that religion makes of even a brilliant intellect. Because the saner parts of the correspondence exhibit not only analytical ability, but reasoning power of a very high order. It is only minds religiously diseased that would boast of a convert who had "no clear ideas, whatever, on the subject of Christianity"; we make our friends a present of all such. Freethought is essentially an intellectual movement, and while its progress may be comparatively slow, its adherents are made of sterner stuff than to be blown about by every wind of doctrine.

JOSEPH BRYCE.

James Lick: The Humanitarian and Philanthropist.—II.

By DR. I. H. BETZ.

(Concluded from p. 550.)

AFTER some time his attention was directed towards California, now coming into prominence, and after due consideration he determined to proceed towards the new Eldorado.

Influential friends tried to dissuade him from going. He was assured the United States could not hold the country, and that the inhabitants were a set of cut-throats who would murder him for his money. In short, they alleged he should let well enough alone and remain contented. To this James Lick gave answer that he knew the character of the American people, and that it was not in their nature to give up a country that they had once laid hold of, and that as for the other reason he had implicit confidence in his ability to take care of himself. A new difficulty, however, presented itself, the surmounting of which showed the character of the man. He had on hand a contract for a number of pianos, when his workmen suddenly left him for Cali-

fornia. To violate his word was not for a moment to be considered. He determined his contract must be fulfilled, and he personally did the work, although it required two years of hard labor.

His pianos finished, he turned everything into money at a great sacrifice. He was possessed of \$30,000 in gold doubloons. With this he sailed for California in the ship *Lady Adams*, arriving in San Francisco in the latter part of 1847.

In the spring of 1848 the city contained nearly 1,000 inhabitants. It had just emerged from the pristine condition and primitive name of Yerba Buena, and was becoming under American rule a valuable seaport. Rumors of the discovery of gold filled the air, and tens of thousands flocked into, and filled out, the new metropolis of the Pacific. The vast majority, irrespective of class, rushed to the mines. The sagacious minority remained in the city. Among the latter was James Lick. His shrewd insight told him that a great city would arise on the peninsula, and that it would be the inlet and the outlet, not only of commercial California, but virtually of the whole North Pacific Coast. The sand-hills which stretched out from the coast and the chaparral-covered eminences his prophetic vision converted into broad streets and avenues lined with handsome, enduring structures. He foresaw the population streaming from every quarter of the globe to this focus of attraction, the ships laden with the necessaries and luxuries of life, and took his measures accordingly.

Quietly and carefully he invested his money, sowing his gold broadcast over many a piece of ground, the sellers jubilant and exultant over the price he paid them.

During 1848 he pursued this course. Keeping his own counsel, as was his wont, none knew of the extent of his purchases or of the amount he paid for any of them. The usual contests over titles were encountered, and frequently he was compelled to enforce his rights through the persuasive eloquence of loaded revolvers. Squatters would respect these arguments, and instances were reported of their houses disappearing almost as rapidly as the tenants. The risk was great, but he accepted it, and having planted his money in the ground he serenely awaited the harvest. It came rapidly.

As the city increased, in the heart of it were observed large vacant improvement lots, apparently forsaken, but which the inquirer found belonged to James Lick. Meanwhile he branched off into other pursuits.

In 1852 he purchased a property near San Jose, at Alviso, and had erected a mill which was probably never equalled in the world. The wood was of mahogany and the machinery was of the finest description. It cost him \$200,000, and by some humorous ones was called "Lick's Folly," but it turned out the finest brand of flour and commanded the market of the world. With his own hands he planted an orchard of splendid fruit-trees, which in itself, in those early days, was a fortune.

During all this time he did not forget his handiwork, and in 1872 addressed a characteristic letter to his old friend Meyer, discussing some of the peculiarities of piano building, giving his own views as to their relative merits.

The "Lick Hotel" in San Francisco was another of his enterprises. It covered nearly an entire block, and in the floor he displayed the knowledge which he had gathered while working at the bench. He composed it of many thousand pieces of inlaid wood, highly polished. When the fraternity of Free Masons wished to erect a temple in San Francisco, they found the only site which would suit them belonged to James Lick and was part of the square upon which he designed to erect the "Lick House." Of course it was not for sale. However, one of the brethren frankly approached him and in a straightforward manner told him it was the only spot which suited them. The result was, that the ground covered by the handsome temple of the Masonic brethren, who so cordially greet their brothers from abroad, was secured, and the "Lick House" to that extent was curtailed in its proportions. Those only who know the man could fully appreciate the sacrifice he made in the transaction. Although reluctant to sell, he was lavish in his gifts. His great wealth did not dry up the fountain of his noble, generous heart. The mill he built and adorned according to his vow came too late in life to win his youthful love and so he was never married and was said to be "unlovable, eccentric, solitary, selfish and avaricious," which was hardly correct.

Mr. Lick had for many years been a reader of the Boston *Investigator*, a radical journal which was established by Abner Kneeland in 1831, the year after Garrison founded the *Liberator* in the same city. This was an independent, fearless journal, which was continued by Seaver & Mendum and their successors until 1904, a period of seventy-three years.

Just how Mr. Lick became a liberal remains unknown. Men of his character, who have self-reliance and determina-

tion, are very likely to take a common-sense view of all questions which are brought before them. It must also be remembered that he was brought into contact with adventurous spirits from all quarters of the world, who were imbued with the love of freedom and independence, and being brought in contact with a journal which echoed and voiced their sentiments they naturally gave it their reading and support. The *Investigator* advocated Materialism and was a staunch defender of the services, writings, and memory of Thomas Paine, although he represented the school of Deism. The *Investigator* also published the works of Voltaire, D'Holbach, Volney, Paine, and others. It had been contemplated to erect in Boston a memorial building to Thomas Paine, which should also be a home for the *Investigator*, and for some years previously donations had been made for this project. In 1872 James Lick donated his Alviso mill property to the Paine Hall and Lecturers Fund, and deeded it to five trustees which had been previously appointed or elected. It would seem that this mill property by many years of disuse and decay had depreciated very much, so that when sold in 1873 it only realised about \$20,000.

Mr. Mendum visited Mr. Lick during this time, but found him grave and reserved. In fact, during his last years it is said that those who approached him rarely ventured to endeavor to enlist him in any projects they had in hand. Rev. J. L. Hatch, Unitarian, visited him at his home in the Lick House during the last year of his life, but did not converse with him on religious subjects. No evangelists ventured to obtrude their presence upon him. He was elected a vice-president (with twenty-five others) of the National Liberal League which was organized in Philadelphia, July 4, 1876.

Mr. Lick was disappointed that the sum realised in the sale of the mill property was so much smaller than it was hoped it would be. If Mr. Lick could not dispose of the property to good advantage it was hardly to be expected that strangers, thousands of miles away, could do better. To have contributed a certain sum direct would seem to have been the better plan. However, the liberal public were thankful to Mr. Lick for the sum he had contributed toward the project. Work was begun on Paine Hall on July 4, 1874, and it was dedicated on Paine's birthday, January 29, 1875. The building is finely located, close by the Parker Fraternity Hall. Its cost was over \$100,000. It is four stories in height and contains two halls.

In 1874 Mr. Lick placed the remainder of his property in the hands of seven trustees, to be devoted to public charitable purposes. In the spring of 1875 the bequests, aggregating some millions of dollars, were changed in some respects. To the Academy of Natural Sciences and the Society of California Pioneers, of which he was president up to the time of his death, he bequeathed the residue of his property after his other legacies had been paid. He was not unmindful of his relatives in the far East, and also raised the monument at Fredericksburg, Pa., before his death. He died at the Lick House, October 15, 1876. In 1887 his remains were interred under the base of the great Telescopic Observatory on Mount Hamilton, near San Jose. On a tablet is inscribed—"Here Lies the Body of James Lick."

His attitude and independent spirit may be seen by a circumstance which occurred in San Francisco several months before his death. On July 4, 1876, the Liberals of San Francisco had a portrait of Thomas Paine painted for them by Mrs. Addie L. Ballou, intending to hang it across the street, which the owner of their hall forbade. The matter was called to the attention of Mr. Lick. He examined the banner and ordered it hung across from the Lick House, where it could be seen from his rooms.

Among his numerous bequests were the Lick monument which stood opposite to the City Hall. It was completed and unveiled November 29, 1894. It required three and one-half years to construct it. It is built chiefly of granite supporting massive bronze figures, and also bronze panels of historic designs. The portraits are designs of Sir Francis Drake, Father Junipero Serra, John C. Fremont, and John A. Sutter. The latter is buried at Lititz, Pa., not more than twenty-five miles from the birth-place of James Lick. The statue is one hundred and fifty feet high. Beneath are four panels portraying "Crossing the Sierras," "Vaqueros Lassoing a Bull," "Trappers Trading Skins with Indians," and "California's Progress Under American Rule." From the main shaft looks down the face of James Lick in bronze amid drappings of the bear flag and the American flag.

When Lick lived in Baltimore, in 1819, he learned to know or admire Francis Scott Key, author of the "Star Spangled Banner," and in his memory he erected a monument in Golden Gate Park, at a cost of \$60,000. He left \$150,000 for the School of Mechanical Arts, and \$100,000 for the Old Ladies' Home, and \$100,000 for Public Baths. For the aforesaid Lick monument facing City Hall he left \$100,000. To his natural son, John H. Lick, he left

\$150,000. This was afterwards increased to \$540,000, to obviate a suit on his part against the trustees. This son was born after he left for Hanover, Pa., in 1818.

John H. Lick, the natural son of James Lick aforesaid, was born in Fredericksburg. At the age of fourteen he went to reside with an uncle in Centre County, Pa. In 1836 he returned to Fredericksburg and later became a clerk, remaining thus at different points up to 1846, when he went into business for himself. In 1854 he went to California at the request of his father. Returning in 1857, he again went to the Coast in 1859 to take charge of the large mill at Alviso, which he operated until 1863. In 1867 he made a tour of Europe, and again on his return went to California. In 1871 he returned to Lebanon County and died there in 1891, aged seventy-three. He was never married. He was a man of many estimable virtues and had large successful business interests. He stood highly in his community. In this connection it may be remarked that Benjamin Franklin had a natural son, William Franklin, who became Colonial Governor of New Jersey. This son had a natural son, William Temple Franklin, who became the secretary of his grandfather, and also the editor of his writings after his decease.

James Lick left a bequest of \$700,000 for the Mount Hamilton Observatory, to be connected with the University of California. This was located on the Peak Diabola, on the Coast Range, some thirteen miles from San Jose, which is itself about fifty miles from San Francisco, in the Santa Clara Valley. There is a good roadway to the Observatory, which is about double the distance from San Jose, owing to the steepness. The peak itself is about 4,300 feet above sea-level. The elevation of the building is 4,029 feet. The other peaks along the crest of the range are named "Copernicus," "Newton," "Tycho Brahe," "Huygens," "Herschel," and "Ptolemy." The diameter of the lens of the telescope is thirty-six inches, and the length of the tube is fifty-six feet, two inches, and the whole weighs several tons. This glass was made by Alvin Clark & Sons, of Cambridgeport, who had made the twenty-six inch glass for the Naval Observatory at Washington, and many others. This lens was to excel all others then in existence. It required an amount of labor and skill almost incalculable. Probably larger glasses will be constructed in the future, but this telescope with a possible power of 3,600 diameters, makes it possible to examine the moon as though it were but sixty miles away. A visit to this observatory is a rare treat.

Some of the Lick benefactions, with other material, were destroyed by the great earthquake several years ago. The noted Alviso mill was also destroyed by fire some years before.

Lick's work-bench was brought from South America to San Francisco in 1847. This may be found in the visitor's room, and bears the inscription, "The foundation of his large fortune and the source of his power to confer large benefits upon his fellow-citizens and upon mankind was honest and faithful labor."

Such is the story of a Pennsylvania German boy who, unaided, faced the world alone and pursued fortune during a long life of eighty years with results that are amazing. Pictures of Mr. Lick show him to have been a man of good physique and constitution. He possessed a sharp, penetrating eye. His jaws and mouth indicated resolution and determination. He possessed breadth between the ears, and his head was large and capacious. His forehead was high and prominent. He was a man of good perception, memory and reflection. With little education in the schools, he yet was a student in the world of common sense and experience. He had great powers of acquisitiveness, but his integrity remained unquestioned. He may have been looked upon as a cold, selfish man, yet his benefactions would seem to show that he was a humanitarian at heart. Men like Lick, Girard, Johns Hopkins, Williamson, and George Peabody may be looked upon as selfish, but in the end they become philanthropists to the world at large.

Most of the millionaires of the Pacific coast were men who came from the humbler walks of life. Many have regretted that so many of them were men of the world. Their works and benefactions conduced to the service and advancement of various enterprises, however. Men who work largely for self-interest only, are not likely to make much impression upon the material interests of the world. It was the fortune of James Lick to do his part in the advancement of the material world in which he was a great believer. Edwin Arnold, the son of Arnold of Rugby, after a visit to, and examination of, the observatory and telescope, wrote in 1892, as follows:—

"Truly James Lick sleeps gloriously under the base of his big glasses! Four thousand feet nearer heaven than any of his dead fellow-citizens, he is buried more grandly than any king or queen, and has a finer monument than their pyramids furnish to Cheops and Cephrenes!"

—"Humanitarian Review," Los Angeles, California.

Co-Education.

EIGHT YEARS' EXPERIENCE IN GERMANY.

THE South German newspapers publish the results of a referendum in which all teachers in the high schools of the Grand Duchy of Baden took part, as to the value of the co-education of boys and girls, which has been in force in the Grand Duchy since 1901.

The general result of the referendum is markedly unfavorable to the new system. Although no serious evils result from the system, the majority of opinions is that it has no positive educational superiority over the former system, and that there are certain marked disadvantages.

The opinion was general that co-education is to be recommended only in small centres of population where a separate high girls' school could not exist; in all other districts it is considered preferable to provide separate girls' schools with their own teaching program.

Most of the teachers deny emphatically that there is any useful sense of competition between the sexes, adding that on the contrary the general level of classes containing many girls rather tends to fall. Reference to the better records of girls has only the effect of making indolent boys more indolent. Many of the teachers complain that the girls showed markedly less talent for mathematics and natural science, and that in teaching biology and other subjects it was necessary to restrict the subject in order to make it suited for girls.

The reports generally agree that the male pupils disliked the presence of the girls. The girls had no effect upon the conduct of the boys, but the influence of the boys on the girls was shown in displays of morbid ambition and rough conduct.—*Westminster Gazette*.

THE BIBLE AND PERSECUTION.

Protestantism, with its open Bible, has everywhere maintained laws against blasphemy and heresy. The laws against heresy have fallen into desuetude in England, but while they lasted they were simply ferocious. We heard the late Lord Coleridge say from his seat as Lord Chief Justice of England, that the Protestant laws against Roman Catholics, particularly in Ireland, where they were executed with remorseless ferocity, are without a parallel in the history of the world. Catholicism, however, is no longer under a ban. Even the Jews have been admitted to equal rights with their fellow citizens. But laws still remain in existence, and are occasionally put into operation, against "blasphemers." It is true that many Christians are ready to profess a certain aversion to such laws, but they make no effort to repeal them. Many others contend that the feelings of Christians should be protected, and that while men should not be punished for being Freethinkers, they should be punished for wounding orthodox susceptibilities. It is not proposed, however, that any limitations of taste or temper should be imposed upon Christian controversialists; and this contention may therefore be regarded as a subterfuge of bigotry. On the whole, it may be said that Catholics without the Bible, and Protestants with the Bible, persecute unbelief to the full extent of their opportunities; and it is only as toleration grows from other roots, and is nourished by other causes, that the Bibliolators find out subtle interpretations of simple texts in favor of the prevailing tendency.—*G. W. Foots, "The Book of God."*

The Boulter Fund.

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ICONOCLASTS C. C. V. RED CROSS C. C.

This match was played at Hanwell on Sunday, August 29, and resulted in a victory for the Iconoclasts by 93 runs. This is our fifth consecutive win. We batted first and knocked up 86, of which Collard made a fine 44. Our opponents then went in, but collapsed before the bowling of S. Travis and Collard, being all out for 19. We then went in again and scored 125, of which Masters made a capital 28. Minett, Wareham, and the brothers Harvey also batted well. Our opponents then batted and did better this time, and made 99. Travis and Collard again bowled well. Scores:—Iconoclasts, 86 and 125; Red Cross C. C., 19 and 99. It was a most enjoyable and sporting game. There were a large number of spectators present, and the weather was glorious.—*H. E. VOIGT, Captain I. C. C.*

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.**INDOOR.**

ST. JAMES'S HALL (Great Portland-street, W.): 7.30, G. W. Foote, "Shakespeare's Philosophy of Life—in *Hamlet*, etc."

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Fountain): 3.15, A. B. Moss, a Lecture.

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): 3.15, C. Cohen, a Lecture.

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

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Parliament Hill, Hampstead): 3.30, F. A. Davies, a Lecture.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Outside Maryland Point Station, Stratford): 7, A. Hyatt, a Lecture.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Marble Arch, Hyde Park): 11.30, Debate between Mr. Hannen and Mr. Samuels, "Did Christ Rise from the Dead?"

WOOD GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Spouters' Corner): 11.30, a Lecture. Seven Sisters' Corner: 7, F. Schaller, "Atheism v. Christianity."

WOOLWICH BRANCH N. S. S. (Beresford-square): 11.30, A. Allison, "Christian Forgeries"; 7.30, E. C. Saphin, a Lecture.

COUNTRY.**INDOOR.**

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N. S. S. (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 7, H. Percy Ward, "Goodness Without God."

OUTDOOR.

EDINBURGH SECULAR SOCIETY: Musselburgh Links, 2.30, a Lecture; The Mound, 6.30, a Lecture; Portobello Sands, Mr. Bowie, a Lecture.

WIGAN BRANCH N. S. S. (Market-square): Monday, Sept. 6, at 8, H. Percy Ward, a Lecture.

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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 supernatural 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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