

THE Freethinker

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Despite the philosopher who, as a genuine Englishman, tried to bring laughter into bad repute in all thinking minds, I would even allow myself to rank philosophers according to the quality of their laughing—up to those who are capable of GOLDEN laughter.—NIETZSCHE.

Views and Opinions.

God and Jeffries—And Other Matters.

IAGO expressed the conviction that whether Roderigo killed Cassio, or Cassio killed Roderigo, either way suited him. Our own idea of the great, unprecedented, unparalleled, etc., encounter at Reno, in Nevada, U.S.A., was something similar. Whether the undefeatable Jeffries knocked out the unsubduable Johnson, or the unsubduable Johnson knocked out the undefeatable Jeffries, was all the same to us. We could not see that the fate of the white and black races hang trembling in the balance; and if we had seen it, we should have said that the victory must go to the winner. Nature doesn't share man's prejudices. She is perfectly indifferent about the color of the upper or the lower dog's skin. Until the Greeks set up business none of the ancient civilisations were white. And after the lapse of more than two thousand years nature quietly permitted an Asiatic yellow nation to give a European white nation a remarkably sound licking. Moreover it seems likely that Europeans will have many more lessons taught them in the not far distant future by the despised Asiatics; and the tuition may easily extend from Asia to Africa.

We are not going to discuss prize-fighting, except to say that while it may be carried on fairly and honorably it is a display of prowess on the brute side of human nature. What mankind specially wants for its progressive civilisation is not thews or muscles but brains. A great painter was asked what he mixed his colors with. "With brains, sir," was his reply. Men will have to mix everything with brains if they are to rise in the scale of culture. The fight which took place at Reno has no relation whatever to the world's advancement. It was primitive savagery under "civilised" laws of expression.

One sinister feature of the Jeffries-Johnson fight was the presence of hundreds of "ladies" (heaven save the mark!). Some three hundred of the fair sex were seated in what may be called a reservation; the rest were scattered amongst the "elegant" crowd. The phenomenon was one of the outcomes of modern "liberty." Those who think that women owe their modesty and gentleness to something entirely innate, and not to countless ages of evolutionary discipline, are, to put it mildly, mistaken. Give women their sling and they will be as bad as men; perhaps worse, if we may trust the satire of Juvenal. There is truth in the old proverb that the corruption of the best is the worst. It may also be that woman hurts herself more than man does if she falls. Women most frequently turned down their thumbs, for the death of the defeated gladiator, in the Roman arenas; nor, apparently, are the "ladies"

behind the "gentlemen" in their enjoyment of bloodshed at a Spanish bull-fight.

Jeffries and Johnson both bragged before the contest, but the white "bruiser" beat the black "bruiser" at that game. The whites, indeed, are the greatest braggarts on earth—and their religion helps to make them so, as we shall see presently. Johnson said he was going to beat Jeffries, and Jeffries said he was going to make Johnson sick of the sight of a boxing glove. In the rivalry of oral egotism Jeffries was easily first. His sneers at the "nigger" sound humiliating now. Let us hope that Jeffries' white friends will not revenge themselves with fresh lynchings. Racial hatred is already most dangerously strong in the United States. And it is likely to grow stronger; for, if the truth must be told, the white leaders have shown, and still show, an utter lack of statesmanship in dealing with the "colored" problem. They have never gone beyond the policy of the six-shooter. Even in religious circles this is, in essence, the only policy pursued. Blacks are not allowed to sit in the same church with whites. Young Men's Christian Associations will not admit "colored" members. They worship the same God, are to be saved by the same blood of Christ, and will have to mix with each other in heaven, but the white believers will see the black believers damned before they mix with them on earth. And what does all this prove? It proves that religion is not really a harmonising influence; that, instead of allaying, it exasperates political, social, and personal quarrels. It was a cynical but sound observation of Swift's that most men have religion enough to make them hate each other.

We say that blacks and whites worship the same God, but a stranger would hardly think so. Johnson's black friends prayed for his victory in the contest. They held a long prayer-meeting at Brooklyn on the critical day. No doubt they believe that their prayers for the triumph of their protagonist were answered. Nor do we see how the whitest theologian could contradict them. On the other hand, it appears that one white clergyman, at least, was satisfied that God was going to give the victory to Jeffries. Jeffries' father, the Rev. Alexis Jeffries, consulted the Lord on the matter. "Jim will win," he told an interviewer, "because the Lord is on his side, and the Lord will help him as He helped David slay Goliath." Which is exquisitely funny when it is recollected that Jim was the bigger man of the two. The Rev. Alexis Jeffries may get good tips from heaven (to borrow a phrase from Mr. Stead), but he got a rotten one that time.

That the Lord God Almighty (if such a being exist) settled who should win the honor, and what is of more importance, the big stake, at Reno, is unquestionable. He would not be the Lord God Almighty if he did not. "I, the Lord, do all these things." The party who knocked Jeffries out was not Johnson but Jehovah. Johnson was only the human agent that Jehovah employed for the purpose. This is first-rate theology—though we don't expect the "white trash" to recognise it. Their opinion is that if God doesn't back their man he will remain

neutral. They argue on that basis throughout. Men do this everywhere. When they win, God is with them; when they lose, God is not with the enemy; their defeat is either an accident or the work of the Devil. Anything else would mean that they were not everybody—and what religionists could ever believe that?

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Mr. W. T. Stead, whose tips from heaven used to be famous, seems to have a new one. While admitting that the undeniably attractive power of a fight was a difficulty in the way of peace propaganda, he said on Monday evening at Browning Hall that—"There were many evidences to show that America in the hands of Divine Providence was destined to become the banner-bearer in the march of the world's civilisation, and to be the power for bringing about the federation of the nations of the earth." Who can dispute on such a subject with one so familiar with the intentions of Divine Providence? We venture to suggest, however, that, speaking humanly, Mr. Stead's "evidences" might be more convincing. We confess to being fairly sickened with the hypocritical attitude of American Christians. They raised heaven and earth, and the other place, to prevent a boxing-match being held at San Francisco. Nobody was likely to be very much hurt, for boxers don't try to kill each other, but a lot of white "heathen" would enjoy themselves after their own fashion in watching the encounter. Now it is the settled conviction of the average American citizen, even more than the average British citizen, that all enjoyment but religious enjoyment is a deadly sin. For that reason they clamored against the boxing match in California, and succeeded in getting it transferred to another State,—as if *that* were an advantage to anyone but the Reno caterers. It was not brutality and cruelty that they were opposing. They did not protest with any vehemence that we heard of against the horrible lynching of a negro just about the same time. He had merely sent a love letter to a white girl, and for that offence he was tortured with red-hot wooden stakes, and finally burnt alive. Brutality and cruelty of that kind are tolerated—and a boxing match is howled down! Is *this* the action of banner bearers in the march of the world's civilisation?

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Religion is a tragical affair in this world. It is also a comical affair. Tragedy and comedy have a way of getting mixed up, as Shakespeare saw, and illustrated in his later tragedies. Christianity itself is a curse. It is likewise a joke. The doctrine of prayer is full of food for mirth. Those who really believe it are called Peculiar People (which indeed they are!), and cast into prison. Those who profess to believe it, and don't, put them there. Honesty in prison and hypocrisy holding the keys! One must laugh or cry at such a spectacle,—and we prefer to laugh. Prayer! They say God answers it. Well now, we clip the following from a recent Shipping Intelligence:—

"*Faith* (schooner), of Beaumaris, bound to Swansea with scrap iron, put in here this afternoon with damage to bulwarks, stanchions, and rail on port quarter, having been run into by barge, *Maggie*, off Dungeness. (Telegraphed from Newhaven.)"

Just think of it. The very name of that ship is an appeal to Providence. *Faith!* She might as well have been called *Infidelity*.

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A great man begged his son to observe with how little wisdom the world is governed. He might also have begged him to observe how easily it is bamboozled by priests and plundered by their friends. When one looks at the mental and moral calibre of the clerical gentlemen of all nations one wonders how they manage to impose their craft upon wiser and better people than themselves. The explanation is that they control education and abuse the helpless minds of little children.

G. W. FOOTE.

Reason and Religion.

IT is the fate of many who are revolutionists in their youth to find themselves conservatives in their old age. Thought is never still; it either recedes or advances, and often those who play a part in promoting an advance find themselves ere long in the rear. I am reminded of the truth of this on reading a couple of sermons by the Rev. Charles Voysey that someone has been good enough to send me. Older Freethinkers will remember Mr. Voysey as one who made a stand against the orthodox Christian position at a time when orthodoxy was much more in evidence than it is at present. Mr. Voysey left the Church of England, and set up a church in which he has preached ever since. He has been advocating what he regards as a purer form of religion, although I have never been able to understand on what ground one religion is called "purer" than another. One religion may possess fewer objectionable features than another, or it may be more general and indefinite in its teaching, and so present fewer points for criticism; but I cannot see in what way one religion is "purer" than another so long as all are fundamentally irrational.

From my point of view—it is a statement I make without the remotest desire to be offensive—Mr. Voysey represents a fairly common case of arrested development. There are thousands of people who discover at some time of their lives that their religious beliefs are in conflict with truth. Some—the minority—make a clean sweep of their beliefs, and build up a theory of life without any assistance whatever from supernaturalism. Others—the majority—simply ease themselves of the obtrusively objectionable features of their early creed, retaining its fundamental irrationality, and are so elated over what is rejected that they never notice the character of what is retained. Fortunately, they may inspire others who are more ready to push the revolt to its logical conclusion. And thus it happens that men like Mr. Voysey find themselves overtaken by many who may have become less orthodox through their example, and left behind by many more who have not fallen into the common error of mistaking a stage in a pilgrimage for the conclusion of the journey.

Mr. Voysey, one cannot help feeling, belongs to those who have fallen into this error. When he was deprived of his church in 1871, it was because of his heresy. And having reasoned himself out of certain forms of religious belief, he assumed that those he retained were such as could be justified by the most impartial and scientific reasoning. The truth is, however, that his Theism is no more capable of justification than the orthodox dogmas he gave up so many years ago. More; his Theism owes its existence, in him, to the dogmas he so scornfully rejected. It did not originate in any unprejudiced study of facts; it did not commence in any unbiassed train of reasoning. It was a belief impressed upon his mind in its avowedly uncritical stage, and it simply survived the wreck—not because it was of greater value than much that went under, but simply because it was provided with a lifebelt of sentiment. And against a thousand that retain a belief of this kind, the fact of one who rejects it is weighty. For the thousand who retain the belief do so because they have not, or will not, see the evidence against it. At any rate, its acceptance by them does not rest upon evidence. But the one who rejects does so because of the evidence that has forced itself upon his attention. His mental attitude is the accompaniment of his maturity; and it exists in spite of all that prejudice has to say against it. Not any number of believers in Deity, destined to be such from their cradle upward, can prove the unbeliever to be wrong. But a single unbeliever is enough to demonstrate the uncertainty of religious beliefs.

Mr. Voysey's sermons are entitled "True and Sham Rationalism," and with much that he has to say about Rationalism I can agree—only, unfortunately,

much of it is beside the mark. I agree with him that it is idle to make the word "Rationalist" a party badge, as though none but those accepting certain teachings use their reason. All men reason, whether their conclusions be true or false. The human brain functions the same and illustrates the same general principles in an Atheist and a Christian, a savage and a civilised person. Religious beliefs are not formed apart from reason—they are the product of rationality; but it is reasoning based on faulty premises, or on sound premises from which wrong conclusions are drawn. "Freethinker," another word against which Mr. Voysey protests, comes under a different category. If we define this, with Mr. Voysey, as "a method of inquiring into the truth of any proposition," the non-Christian's case would be that by its nature Christianity perverts the value of the only method by which truth may be reached. The effect of Christian teachings is such that the inquirer does not come to the study of the facts with an unprejudiced mind, but with a strong bias in favor of a particular conclusion, or with a fully formed opinion which selects all that may be used in its favor and ignores everything against. It is true he does not cease to think and reason, but his thinking is robbed of its utility by a prejudice that determines on a foregone conclusion.

Both "Freethinker" and "Rationalist," however, should be taken with due regard to their historic development, otherwise we are merely playing with words. When people first called themselves "Rationalists" (a term, by the way, that originated *inside* the Christian camp) they did so to separate themselves from others who accepted religious teachings based upon the authority of a Church. And, similarly, "Freethinker" was first used to distinguish those who revolted from ecclesiastical authority and claimed to base their opinions upon considerations that were independent of supernaturalism. There is, therefore, some historic justification for using such words as the badges of parties who are opposed to supernaturalism in all its forms. And if, as Mr. Voysey says, these words "increasingly become a title of honor," it is because experience has justified the method by demonstrating its value as an instrument of intellectual advancement.

Mr. Voysey's complaint is that Freethinkers introduce a new dogmatism of their own. He says:—

"In a friendly sort of way they despise Theism and degrade it to the level of the superstitious current among the Christian peoples. They will not even condescend to examine the claims of Theism to be a scientific religion, based not on supernatural revelation, but on some undisputed facts of human nature. It is enough for them to see that Theism recognises in the universe a mind and will superior to the mind and will of man to make them turn their backs upon it and not even to look at it. Such practical contempt, based entirely on prejudice and assumption, is, in my opinion, inconsistent with real Freethinking and real Rationalism."

Quite so, if the rejection of Theism really was based upon prejudice and assumption. But is this the case? On the contrary, I do not think there is a single form of the argument for the belief in Deity that has not been examined by Freethought advocates, and often dealt with in a spirit of gravity quite unwarranted by their intrinsic worth. Mr. Voysey is, of course, greatly impressed with the soundness and importance of his own views. This is only natural, and is as it should be. But he cannot reasonably expect other people to attach the same importance to them. For my own part, knowing what I do know of the history of Theism, the belief in God seems to me one of the least important of beliefs about which anyone may bother. Christians say it is of tremendous importance, and many Freethinkers, from unconscious imitation or from a desire to be amiable, say likewise. But is it true? Numbers of people manage to get on very well without a belief in God, and there is no single art or science that can be shown to be dependent upon it for existence. A belief that we can get on so well

without cannot be of any very great importance, and the sooner believers in Deity realise that the value of life this side of the grave is quite independent of it, the better for all concerned.

Naturally, Mr. Voysey regards his own form of belief as aristocratic, and resents the Freethinker placing it upon the plebeian level of "superstitions current among the Christian peoples." So might the cultivated rose, could it but speak, resent relationship with the hedge-side variety. Yet a rose is a rose whether it blooms in a garden or flowers by the wayside, whether its petals be few or many. And, but for the wild rose, the finest of cultivated specimens would not exist. It may outshine its relations, but it cannot transcend them. So neither can Theism, in any of its forms, transcend its origin in the discarded superstitions of the primitive savage. With the Freethinker, his treatment of the belief in gods is not a question of degradation or of elevation, but of classification. As the botanist demonstrates the fundamental kinship of all roses by ignoring superficial differences and reducing them to their essential similarities, so the scientific Freethinker treats the various forms of the belief in God. He sees that all of them have certain features in common, whether they exist in a Piccadilly church or in the depths of an African forest. And the former has no higher warranty of its truth than the latter. Nay, but for the latter the former would not be in existence. It is the mistaken ignorance of the savage that gives birth to all the gods, and all that later ages has ever done is to modify a primitive superstition in the hopes of making it more acceptable to later thought, without ever being able to furnish a single piece of evidence in its support.

There are really no "undisputed facts of human nature" on which religion may be based. With all the facts to which the believer appeals the Freethinker is perfectly familiar. It is not the facts the Freethinker disputes, but the interpretation placed upon them. He sees what the religious person will not see—that the interpretation of the modern religionist is essentially that of the primitive savage. Its form has undergone a change, the language in which it is expressed has become more refined, but it remains essentially the same. It is the believer who refuses to face the facts. He closes his eyes to the mass of knowledge at our disposal concerning the origin and nature of religious beliefs. He maintains the mental attitude of his far-gone ancestors in his dealings with modern thought. To use an old simile, he stands with his back to the sun worshiping the dark. And, so standing, he mistakes his own shadow for evidence of the existence of his God.

C. COHEN.

Head and Heart.

THERE are Christian teachers not a few who frankly confess that *intellectually* they are Agnostics, and at the same time boast that *emotionally* they are fervent believers. Their heads say one thing and their hearts the opposite, and they heed the latter. There are others, however, whose contention is that they believe with their heads, but that their hearts refuse to kindle into enthusiastic endorsement of the action. The difference between these two classes of believers may be concretely illustrated. Not long ago there lived a clergyman who was obliged to admit that the external evidence for the resurrection of Jesus was not strong enough to convince his intellect, but who yet preached the doctrine with no uncertain sound, because he considered the internal evidence sufficiently overpowering to fully satisfy his heart. "Left to itself," he used to say, "my reason would land me in certain unbelief; but my heart has known the power of the resurrection, and speaks out for it with such ebullient ardor that the reason is completely silenced." In the same town as this emotional Christian there resided another, who was in the habit of engaging in

debates with unbelievers, and across whose mind not even the shadow of doubt ever passed; but practically his faith, sincerely enough held, was of absolutely no value to him. His heart never said "Ditto" to his head. But there is a third class of divines who maintain that the evidences of Christianity are so conclusive as to give ample satisfaction to both heart and head, when they are in a normal condition. In other words, there are, according to these teachers, "two quite distinct kinds of faith—the faith of the *head* and the faith of the *heart*, and it is because they confuse these in their thoughts that thousands of people get into serious difficulties."

It is to this third class that the Rev. Harry Bisseker, M. A., evidently belongs, and it is from his article on "The Problem of Belief," which appeared in the *Methodist Times* for June 30, that the last sentence in the preceding paragraph is a quotation. Before any criticism is offered, it is but fair that his views should be accurately stated. It must be admitted that Mr. Bisseker's definition of what he calls the faith of the head is unobjectionable. He says:—

"Christianity presents to our mind a certain view of life, and this view rests upon alleged facts of history and experience. In support of its view, therefore, Christianity offers definite evidence. Whether the view is to be regarded as true or erroneous is strictly not at all a question of the will. It is solely a question of *evidence*. The facts alleged must be examined, and their opponents' criticism has to be investigated. In the end, the student's mind gives its verdict. If the evidence in favor of the Christian view appears sufficient, the student declares that he 'believes' in Christianity. If it appears inadequate, he declares that he does not."

As it stands nothing can be said against that passage. Unfortunately, however, it is the policy of the Church to render an unbiassed examination of the evidence utterly impossible. To train a child to believe before it can think for itself is to completely disqualify it for the just weighing of evidence for and against. The child is a believer long before it becomes a thinker; and when it *does* begin to think, the duty of thinking in harmony with its faith is diligently impressed upon its mind. No child brought up in a Christian home can be an unprejudiced student of religion. In the article under discussion, Mr. Bisseker is dealing with a lady who has a sufficiently independent intellect to doubt the truth of the Bible and Christianity; but because of her Christian up-bringing she has a strong bias in favor of belief, and because of this bias, her doubt casts her into "inexpressible darkness and despair." And while she is in this frame of mind, what does Mr. Bisseker offer to her? *Biassed advice*. He counsels her to consult Dr. Frank Ballard, and to read well-known books in defence of Christianity. Dr. Frank Ballard and the works I have mentioned, he says in effect, will show you "how firm are the intellectual foundations on which the faith rests." Why does he not advise her to "go and have a candid talk" with some duly accredited Freethought lecturer, and to carefully peruse the works of some intelligent unbelievers? The fact is that Mr. Bisseker dares not give her such an advice, because of the fear that by following it she would become a thorough Freethinker. Theoretically, the reverend gentleman advocates the duty of fairly considering both sides, but in practice he considers only his own side, and he recommends doubters to study only the evidences for the faith.

And now we pass on to the faith of the heart. Mr. Bisseker holds that, "apart from our belief in our own existence, all the beliefs which he hold with the greatest certainty are beliefs of our heart." We are now face to face with a pernicious fallacy. The distinction between head and heart, on which Mr. Bisseker so confidently relies, is, in point of fact, almost wholly fictitious. A quotation will bring this into bold relief. Speaking of his lady correspondent, the reverend gentleman says:—

"Let her think now of some friends in whose truth she has absolute trust. And then let her ask herself

what kind of trust it is that she has in them. She will see at once that it is mainly not a faith of the head, but a faith of the heart. She could not possibly prove the trustworthiness of these friends by any process of intellectual reasoning. The utmost point to which that particular process could carry her would be to establish a very strong balance of probability in their favor. The point of *certainty* is reached only when the faith of her heart is brought in to aid the faith of her head."

Mr. Bisseker employs the words "belief," "faith," and "trust" as if they were synonymous; and yet in the very illustration he himself supplies nothing is clearer than that they are not interchangeable. We trust our friends because we *believe* in them, and we believe in them because we *know their character*. Trust is the outcome of belief, and belief rests on knowledge. Now, Christians claim that because they believe and trust in God and Christ, and experience ecstatic delight in consequence, God and Christ really exist as objective Beings; but the claim is totally false. Faith and trust in the absence of knowledge are of no value whatever. No one believes in God because he knows him, though many labor under the vain delusion that because they believe in him they also know him. It is the same with Christ. "We hear of him and read his words," says Mr. Bisseker, "and an instinct tells us that he is to be trusted." But the Christ we hear of, and the Jesus whose words we presumably read in the Gospels, are two fundamentally different beings—which are we told by an instinct to trust? If the Jesus whose words we read, then the instinct urges us entirely in vain, for in all Christendom there is not even one who translates his trust into obedience. The Sermon on the Mount is trampled under foot by all professing Christians. If the Christ we hear of, those of us who go up and down in the world, and hear of at least fifty radically different Christs, naturally wish to know which among them all an instinct impels us to trust. As a matter of fact, no instinct bids us trust any Christ whatever. If the Christ believed in by Mr. Bisseker really lived he would certainly make himself known to us by direct, personal intercourse, and there would be no need to go to church or chapel to hear about him and so learn to trust him. We would then trust him because we knew him, instead of irrationally claiming to know him as the result of our trust.

After all said and done, all beliefs, if real and worth anything, are intellectual and rest upon knowledge. The belief in God and immortality, in Christ and his salvation, may truly be said to be intellectual; but as it rests on speculation, and not at all upon knowledge, it is practically useless, and worse than useless. It robs life of its natural beauty by setting it in a false perspective. It kindles illusive hopes and seeks to extinguish legitimate ambitions. Mr. Bisseker says of his lady correspondent that "she already has the instinct of Christ's trustworthiness"; but, with due deference to this gentleman, it may be pointed out that what the lady seems to experience just now is the instinct of rebellion against her superstitious upbringing and surroundings. Her nature yearns for emancipation from the cruel bondage of tradition and credulity. As a natural consequence of her pious education and environment, "all her life she has wished to be Christ's follower, and some time ago she definitely dedicated herself to his service"; but her partially awakened intellect keeps pulling her in the opposite direction. How many there are in a like position. Intellectually, their faces are towards the light of day, while emotionally they are still more or less in love with the darkness of the night that is passing. Their reason tells them that religion is not true, but they turn in a religious circle and find it difficult to tear themselves away. "They know that the thing they have to do is to *believe*, but it seems the one thing they cannot do, and the more they try the more hopeless they become." They dread unbelief as if it were the deadliest of sins. They sincerely wish to believe, and do their utmost to beat back what they regard as their worst enemy. And in the horror which they feel at the very thought of utterly losing their faith,

it is to eminent divines that they appeal for guidance. If they only dared to read anti-Christian literature—of the existence of which many of them are, alas, in ignorance—if by chance they could turn for counsel to some wise and sympathetic unbeliever, how different the result would be in multitudes of cases. Unfortunately, it has been drilled into them from infancy that the reason is not to be trusted, that the intellect is a false guide, and that their one duty is to listen to their feelings, with the result that some of them crush their doubts by main force and remain in bonds for longer or shorter periods. Such was the fate of the young minister who, in his twenty-seventh year, completely lost the orthodox faith in which he had been trained. Fearing Atheism more than death, he painfully groped his way back into some sort of a creed, assisted in the task by that strangest of books, Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus*. Had he then got into touch with a Bradlaugh or an Ingersoll, he would have got out of the house of bondage upwards of twenty years earlier than he eventually did.

What young people need to learn is, that Reason is the rightful monarch of human life, and that it is never safe to heed the feelings unless they are illumined and inspired by the Reason. In common parlance, the Heart should always be the instrument of a duly enlightened and instructed Head.

J. T. LLOYD.

Christ's Champions.

"Strange cozenage."—DRYDEN.

CHRISTIANITY has been described as an organised hypocrisy, and nowhere does the conviction of the truth of the statement force itself upon one's attention so much as when reading Christian apologetics. A Mr. A. H. Tabrum, evidently impelled with the juvenile desire to assist Omnipotence, has published a brochure, entitled *Religious Beliefs of Scientists*, with the avowed object of proving that there is no antagonism between Religion and Science; or, in plain English, that the fairy-tales of the Bible are in accordance with ascertained scientific knowledge. Brother Tabrum has not relied solely on his own efforts, but has invited the co-operation of a number of persons interested in science. He sent out a large number of inquiries, and he publishes the replies in his booklet. He has not taken this matter in hand hastily, for some of the letters were written fourteen years since, and the volume represents the slow accretion of years, and therefore should be the more valuable on that account.

The letters printed in the volume are, unfortunately, more amusing than instructive. Nearly all the great and good men, who have responded to the appeal of Mr. Tabrum, either confuse the issue or else admit the soft impeachment, which the pious editor wishes to be refuted to the greater glory of the Creator. Before we consider the replies of these scientists, let the reader remember that the Bible contains the stories of Noah's Ark, Jonah and the Whale, the Feeding of the Five Thousand, the Virgin Birth, the Ascension and Resurrection of Christ, and the numberless other fairy-tales associated with the Popular Superstition. Now listen to the dulcet voices of the scholarly advocates.

Principal Macalister, of the Glasgow University, answers the question thus:—

"In my opinion, there is no conflict between science and the moral and spiritual teachings of the Bible."

The attentive reader will notice that Principal Macalister has got out of a tight place by avoiding the issue. The ethics of the Bible are not the subject directly in question.

Professor W. Boyd Dawkins, of Owen's College, Manchester, is frank, but only to a certain point. He says:—

"It is, of course, true that scientific research has shown the imperfection of the cosmogony of the Old Testament, but it has done nothing more."

There you have the fatal admission. And should Professor Dawkins ever find himself in the clutches of the Merciful Great God of the Christians, he will have the same short shrift as Voltaire and Paine, Huxley and Darwin.

Dr. Carruthers, F.L.S., late of the British Museum, writes:—

"I know of no fact of science which is antagonistic to the Bible, rightly understood."

There is much virtue in the qualification.

Sir Dyce Duckworth is simply delightful. He positively purrs like a domestic tabby:—

"You may rest assured that the greatest number of the best and most open-minded men of science find no difficulty in reconciling the Christian religion with the constant additions being made to science."

Indeed, they do not, as he might easily ascertain if he read beyond his own contribution to Tabrum's masterly collection.

Not only the living but the dead are dragged into this exhibition. The late lamented Sir J. W. Dawson, LL.D., is quoted as saying that, as far as his experience went, scientists were as devout as any other class of men; and he adds pathetically: "It is remarkable how many of the most eminent have been Christians."

Letters are also published from a number of other "illustrious obscure" persons; but all to the same effect.

All the correspondents seem obsessed with the topsy-turvy idea that religion is scientific and science religious. Like Ulysses' seamen, their ears are filled with wax and they are deafened by the voice of the sirens.

In spite of Mr. Tabrum and his strange associates, there is a real antagonism between Science and Religion. The system of Copernicus, the discoveries of Galileo, the law of gravitation of Newton, and the Darwinian theory were all in turn received by the clergy with equal disfavor. As the arguments for each of these scientific theories were not equally weak, we are inclined to attribute that resistance to a general dislike of knowledge. Priests always feared that a closer scrutiny might reveal the absurdity of a Christian superstition.

We would remind Mr. Tabrum that there is a Christian Science of which he might have heard, seeing that Mrs. Eddy is an industrious American advertiser. It is sufficiently irrational to satisfy his most ardent wishes, and it is based upon the ideas which are to be found in the Gospels. Throughout Europe, too, credulous Christians still believe that sacrosanct relics have the power of curing diseases.

These nonsensical ideas emanate from the Bible, for, of all the strange, frantic, and incomprehensible books which have emanated from the imaginations of religious enthusiasts, this book is one of the worst. And the work which Freethinkers have set themselves is that of freeing mankind from the absurdities of pre-scientific times which are perpetuated by that volume.

MIMNERMUS.

CASE OF WASTED CHARITY.

Robert Loveman, the Georgia poet, said, in the course of an address on charity in Dalton:—

"All cases, naturally, are not worthy cases. It was but the other month a Dalton philanthropist, visiting a destitute family, had his heartstrings torn with pity. And, drawing out his wallet, he said:—

'Here, Calhoun, take this dollar and go and buy a chicken for the Christmas dinner.'

Calhoun, the young son of the house, accepted the bank-note gratefully, and the poor widow, with tears in her eyes, bowed the philanthropist out.

But the garden walk wound by an open window; and, as the departing philanthropist passed the window, he heard the mother say shrilly to her son:—

'You Cal, you jes' gimme dat dollah an' go git dat Christmas chicken in de natcheral way.'

Contrasts.

BY SINGLETON W. DAVIS.

THOUGH Neptune heaves in mountain swells
The bosom of the ocean,
Fair Luna's gentle charm compels
A wider, deeper motion.
'Tis not the fretful wind alone
Disturbs the river's flowing—
Beneath the ripple lies the stone
That trips its onward going.

The sullen roar, the smoke and fire—
The yell, and clash, and rattle,
May lend the conflict aspect dire,
But valor wins the battle.
'Tis not alone the mad mob's jeers
Aspiring spirits jostle:
Indifference may drown in tears
Humanity's apostle.

Leviathan may lash the sea
To spray and dread commotion;
But zoophytes, in unity,
Build islands in the ocean.
The haughty priest assumes to be
A "God's-will" revelator:
The honest man is, modestly,
A Truth investigator.

The Pharisee delights to stand
And pray in public places—
Proclaim aloud throughout the land
His own superior graces.
But he who meekly pays no heed
To babbling self-laudation,
In charity gives word and deed
To Human elevation.

—"*Humanitarian Review*" (Los Angeles.)

How They Love Another.

(From the London *Daily Telegraph* of June 20, being a telegraph message from its "Own Correspondent" at New York.)

As the result of a duel with knives, fought in the pulpit of the Rock Creek Baptist Church at Williamsbury, Kentucky, last night, the Rev. Robert Vanover is dead, his throat being badly slashed, and the Rev. Isaac Perry and his cousin, Mr. Blaine Perry, are in gaol under indictment. More than a hundred prominent residents of the county who witnessed the fatal fight have been subpoenaed as witnesses.

This duel was fought at the opening of the evening prayer meeting. Recently charges had been preferred against Dr. Vanover, and pending the trial, Dr. Perry filled the pulpit last night. Dr. Vanover had been excluded from the meeting by the trustees, but when the prayer meeting was convened he walked the aisle and stepped into the pulpit.

According to the witnesses, Dr. Perry immediately hastened towards Dr. Vanover, followed by Mr. Blaine Perry, and forthwith both ministers clinched and swayed about on the raised platform, on which stands the pulpit. The men had been struggling but a moment when several knives flashed out, and in another moment Dr. Vanover was dying from a gash in the neck.

Those nearest the combatants assert that Mr. Blaine Perry took a hand in the fight as soon as knives were brought into play, and held Dr. Vanover while the Rev. Isaac Perry deliberately drew the blade across his adversary's throat. A panic ensued when the flock realised what had happened. Dr. Vanover died within a few minutes after sinking down near the pulpit, and both the Perrys were arrested and hurried to gaol.

Several of the relatives of Dr. Vanover say that the fight between the two families has just begun, and two of them stated openly that they will kill Dr. Perry unless the jury finds him guilty of murder in the first degree and the judge sentences him to be hanged. They say that the charges brought against Dr. Vanover do not warrant the murder of their relative. The Perrys, however, claim that Dr. Vanover first drew a knife.

Dr. Vanover was one of the most widely known mountain preachers in Kentucky. He "rode circuit" for many years, and had acquired a considerable reputation as a preacher of the Gospel in remote country districts.

Plagiarists are always suspicious of being stolen from—as pickpockets are observed commonly to walk with their hands in their breeches' pockets.—*S. T. Coleridge.*

Acid Drops.

By the overwhelming majority of 383 to 42 the House of Commons passed the first reading of the Bill to modify the King's Accession Declaration out of consideration for the feelings of the Roman Catholics. We are glad that the first reading of the Bill was so carried. Not that the Roman Catholics deserve it. Considering their own principles, and their practice of intolerance wherever they have an opportunity, they ought not to be surprised if they were denied all consideration themselves. Some of us do not forget, and are not likely to forget, how the Roman Catholics in England justified the assassination of Francisco Ferrer, and libelled his character when they found the general opinion of the civilised world was against them. No, it is not on their principles that they obtain toleration in England; it is on the principles of their enemies.

The old Declaration made by the King of Great Britain and Ireland was as follows:—

"I do solemnly and sincerely in the presence of God professe testifie and declare that I doe believe that in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper there is not any transubstantiation of the elements of bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ at or after the consecration thereof by any person whatsoever; and that the invocation or adoration of the Virgin Mary or any other saint and the sacrifice of the masse as they are now used in the Church of Rome are superstitious and idolatrous, and I do solemnly in the presence of God professe testifie and declare that I doe make this declaration and every part thereof in the plaine and ordinary sence of the words read unto me as they are commonly understood by English Protestants without any evasion, equivocation, or mental reservation whatsoever and without any dispensation already granted me for this purpose by the Pope or any other authority or persons whatsoever or without any hope of any such dispensation from any person of authority whatsoever or without thinking that I am or can be acquitted before God or man or absolved of this declaration or any part thereof although the Pope or any other person or persons or power whatsoever should dispence with or annull the same, or declare that it was null and void from the beginning."

This anti-Catholic oath was really dynastic. Its utility, if it ever had any utility, is a thing of the past. It is a perfectly absurd and ill-mannered thing for the King of Great Britain and Ireland to denounce the religion of a large section of his own subjects in his Coronation Oath, and to insult its professors. The most sensible proceeding would be to clear the Coronation Oath of all references to religion. But the country is not—or is supposed not to be—ripe for such a thorough-going change. Mr. Asquith has therefore brought forward a new Declaration pledging the King to uphold the Protestant Established Church, of which His Majesty must declare himself "a faithful member." The following is the new formula:—

"I — do solemnly and sincerely, in the presence of God, profess, testify, and declare that I am a faithful member of the Protestant Reformed Church as by law established in England, and I will according to the true intent of the enactments which are intended to secure the Protestant succession to the throne of my realm uphold and maintain the said enactments to the best of my power according to law."

With this the Catholics are satisfied, though a minority of Protestants are much dissatisfied. What the Catholics would really like to see is a royal Declaration damning Protestantism and promising to maintain Catholicism. But they can't get that until they are in a majority again—which we trust they never will be. Meanwhile, they take all the favors they can get and profess to be thankful.

The new Coronation Oath does not really get rid of the trouble between Protestants and Catholics. The King still swears that he will maintain the Protestant faith of the Established Church. Well, the Established Church has a Prayer Book, which was set up in England by the Government, with dire pains and penalties against every clergyman who declined to use it, and against every person who said anything against it. Now the Prayer Book contains the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Established Church, and the King logically promises to uphold them. And those Articles denounce Catholic doctrines and practices far more vigorously than the old Coronation Oath did. Several of the Articles are plainly directed against the Romish Church. All the seven, from the eighteenth to the twenty-fourth inclusive, are of that character. King George, therefore, if he takes the new Coronation Oath framed by Mr. Asquith, will publicly swear to oppose "transubstantiation, or the change of the substance of Bread and Wine in the Supper of the Lord"—to oppose the denial of the Sacrament to laymen in both kinds—and to promote the doctrine expressed in the

second half of Article XXXI.—“Wherefore the sacrifice of Masses, in which it was commonly said, that the Priest did offer Christ for the quick and the dead, to have remission of pain or guilt, were blasphemous fables, and dangerous deceits.” *Blasphemous fables, and dangerous deceits!* That is a lot worse than the words the Catholics complained so loudly about in King Edward's Coronation Oath.

Freethinkers owe it to themselves, and their own principles, to extend toleration to all men, including Catholics. At the same time, Catholics ought to be ashamed to plead for toleration for themselves, when they mean to deny it to all other religionists or non-religionists whenever and wherever they have the opportunity. Not a single English Catholic that we know of protests against the attitude of the Catholic Church in Spain. The Vatican note of June 21, on the religious associations question, contains an addition protesting against the Spanish Government's “permitting the display of external signs of their faith by dissenting Churches.” That is the Catholic attitude in Spain. Other Churches must lie low and give as little sign as possible of their existence—and be thankful that they are suffered to exist at all. Here in England the Catholic attitude is that of a beggar on horseback. They actually want to carry the Mass in the public streets!—a thing which never ought to be allowed by any self-respecting Government. The Mass is a religious ceremony; it is the central ceremony of the Catholic Church; to allow it in the public streets is to affront Protestants, who, by the way, are still in the majority; it is also to invite the open scorn of Freethinkers. Nothing could be more calculated to provoke a breach of the peace.

The Vatican, of course, is capable of anything. There is no wickedness it is not capable of to suit its own ends. In Spain, as we pointed out, the Vatican is stoutly protesting against toleration. In England it is displaying the other side of its Janus face. Just look at the following Ruter telegram from Rome dated June 29:—

“The Vatican is most satisfied with the change introduced into the King's Declaration, and it is reported that the Pope is personally very pleased by it. His Holiness is understood to have said that he was sure that a country marching at the head of progress and civilisation could not maintain a formula so conflicting with the spirit of toleration of its people.”

England is flattered for its toleration; Spain is denounced for its toleration; and the flattery and the denunciation both come from the Vatican—which is pursuing its own ends in defiance of truth, honesty, and even decency.

The choek of these Catholics when they think they can afford to show it! The Lord Mayor of London, who is a Catholic, at the close of the consecrating process in Westminster Cathedral, entertained the Archbishop of Westminster and the Roman Catholic Bishops of England to dinner at the Mansion House. What right had the Lord Mayor to do this in a public building—with the Spanish and Austrian ambassadors present? What would he say—and what would they say—if a free thinking Lord Mayor invited the principal men of a Freethought Conference in London to dine with him at the Mansion House? They would be howling their indignation all over the metropolis.

The Nonconformists in the House of Commons are supporting an amendment to Mr. Asquith's Bill for Amending the King's Accession Oath. They want the King to be a Protestant, but they don't want him to belong necessarily to the “Protestant Church by law established.” They want him to be free to join a Nonconformist Church if he chooses to. In other words, they want a look in as well as the Anglicans. Catholics are the only people to be shut out of the sharing.

When will Mr. Asquith, or some other Premier, introduce a Bill to repeal the Blasphemy Laws in consideration for the rights and feelings of Freethinkers? When they are as powerful as the Catholics. Not sooner—and not later.

We are informed by the *Church Times* for July 1 that the *Daily Telegraph* “was guilty of an amazing absurdity” when it recently stated that the Prince of Wales was about to be “confirmed in the principles of the Church of England by the Archbishop of Canterbury at Windsor.” It seems that “in the Sacrament of Confirmation there is no confirming in the principles of any Communion, but in the Grace given at Baptism.” Then our religious contemporary delivers itself of the following astounding statement:—

“The Archbishop did not go to Windsor to confirm the Prince of Wales in the principles of the Church of England, but to convey to him through the imposition of his hand the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

The *Daily Telegraph* stands corrected, the Prince of Wales has the Holy Ghost, the Archbishop of Canterbury is a prosperous wizard, and, of course, the *Church Times* is incapable of perpetrating “an amazing absurdity”!

“This, sir, is a notable day, not only for you, but for the nation.” So said the head flunkey priest of the Church of England at the Confirmation of the Prince of Wales. It is a wonder he didn't say it was also a notable day for God.

The brand-new “poetry” sung at the Prince's confirmation was simply wonderful. The clerical “poet” actually thought that “supplication” and “consecration” were rhymes. What noble ears he must have!

The Rev. Dr. Garvie, of New College, Hampstead, has deliberately let the cat out of the bag. He is reported to have told a Patney congregation that our first duty is to repent of sin. He didn't care a rap whether the first chapters of Genesis were literal history or not, his supreme concern being, “Is sin in the world? Is sin in us?” His answer was, of course, in the affirmative. Then he dealt Mr. Campbell a strong blow, repudiating his definition of sin as selfishness, because it was “entirely inadequate.” Sin, according to Professor Garvie, “does not consist entirely in moral disobedience, but also in religious distrust.” In its essence, sin is “indifference to God, distrust of God, separation from God, lack of fellowship with God.” Mr. Campbell retains the theological term after having stripped it of its theological meaning; but Dr. Garvie sticks to both. If he is right, the biggest sinners in the world are Atheists, Freethinkers, Agnostics. Morally, they may be as noble and pure as are the angels round the Great White Throne; but, unless they repent and turn, they shall be damned to all eternity, all the same. This is the nauseating nonsense upon which the thoughtful people of to-day are turning their backs in ever increasing numbers.

Our only comfort, however, is derived from the declaration that the moment the most hardened Freethinker repents and turns to God, saying from his heart, “O God, I am so sorry that I ever disbelieved in you, but now I know you are there,” God will offer to his faith the forgiveness of his sin of unbelief; “that is the gift which he first of all holds out to his children when they turn to him.” So Dr. Garvie tells us; and Dr. Garvie speaks as one who knows. At any rate, he will be guiltless of our blood when the day of reckoning comes.

Marcel Prevost's *Cousin Laura* has just been declared to be indecent by a Johannesburg magistrate, and its sale prohibited. The solicitor for the defence made reference to the Bible and Shakespeare, but the magistrate, with great indignation, stopped him, saying he was not entitled to make such comparisons. We presume it was the Bible, and not Shakespeare, that excited the magistrate's ire. Certainly the Bible is the more “indecent” of the two, and if it was only taken—as it ought to be in a Christian country—as the standard of decency, most other books would be quite secure against conviction.

The Right Rev. Arthur F. Winnington Ingram, D.D., Bishop of London, receives £10,000 a year and reports that he loses heavily on his job. He appears to be recouping himself by authorship. His latest book is *The Mysteries of God*. We did not know that his lordship was so much in the Almighty's confidence. But we remember the text about “babes and sucklings.”

A contemporary refers to the case of a man who was sentenced, four years ago, to imprisonment in Oxford Castle. He was asked the usual question as to his brand of religion. He replied, in Tennyson's words:—

“I sit as God, holding no form of creed,
But contemplating all.”

The ready warder, who acted as booking clerk, put him down as Church of England. All the nondescripts go into that category—and all the hypocrites who want the chaplain's help in finding a soft job in prison.

The Second London Division of the Territorial Force held a church parade two Sundays ago. It included the old London Scottish, the Queen's Westminsters, the London Irish, etc. About 4,000 were on parade. In the course of the show it was proved how religion is striving to get a wide and firm hold on the new fighting men. The rear of the procession was brought up by the Bishop of Kensington and his attendant clergy; the choir, headed by the massed bands,

sang "Onward Christian Soldiers," and then the whole of the troops sang "Soldiers of Christ, arise, and put your armor on." Soldiers of Christ! Not soldiers of England. But the most striking fact is yet to come. A platform, erected on one side of the square showed a canopy and (the *Chronicle* reports) "three drums for an altar." It ought to have been completed with a bloody head and cross bones.

It is a notable fact that on the very day that Mr. Asquith introduced the Bill to modify the King's Declaration to suit the Catholics an Archbishop and fourteen Bishops, besides a large number of other ecclesiastics, were engaged in consecrating the new Catholic Cathedral at Westminster. It was a tremendous variety performance lasting many hours. In proof of the statement that the Catholic Church knows how to rig the English press, we may mention that all this tomfoolery was reported with the greatest solemnity by several London newspapers which are supposed to be Protestant.

It was the Liverpool Stipendiary magistrate, Mr. Shepherd Little, who has just died suddenly from heart trouble, that had to sit and hear the squabbles between Catholic and Protestant in his court, and was compelled to remark that it was the people with no religion who behaved properly.

George R. Sims has been leaving Freethinkers alone lately in the *Referee*, and is puffing seaside resorts. More air restorers!

Lord Hugh Cecil, speaking in the House of Commons on the Census Bill, said: "The burglar is as entitled to have his Anglican collects as the murderer is to have his extempore prayers." Evidently Lord Hugh knows to what classes really pious people belong.

The Rev. John Tuckwell, speaking at a Bible League meeting at Southend, said that the League "aimed at bringing the Bible out of the Slough of Despond that had been created for it by the New Theology and the Higher Criticism." It is pleasant to find the Bible in the mud, and we hope that it will remain there.

Canon Jephson, in his book *My Work in London*, speaks of his labors at St. John's Church, Waterloo-road, South London. He found the people of that neighborhood undesirable of his ministry, and he distributed scrubbing-brushes and bars of soap as a bait to secure attendance at his church. We have no doubt that those secularistic articles did more real good than the retailing of religious fairy-tales.

A well-known man of God says that "in preaching the preacher must never become in any sense a rival of his Master." But there is no danger that any preacher will ever do that, for the preacher's Master is always himself, though spoken of in the third person, to escape responsibility. The preacher's only other master is the congregation, and that only when he lacks popularity.

Sabbatarianism is active again at Great Yarmouth, after a peaceful interval of ten years. Mr. Arthur Jones, of St. Peter's-road, is a dealer in fancy goods, and depends upon Sunday for a good part of his trade. On the Lord's Day he sold Detective Monger a sixpenny-halfpenny match-box, and for this heinous offence he was summoned to appear before the magistrates, who fined him five shillings and costs (or seven days). They told him that if he repeated his offence the costs would be more—though it is difficult to see why. With respect to the imprisonment, however, Mr. Jones told the Bench: "You cannot give me seven days. You must put me in the stocks under the Act." Evidently there is going to be some fun at Great Yarmouth.

The *Yarmouth Mercury*, in a leaderette on this case, makes the sapient observation that "the one object which Sunday traders have is the making of money." Good God! What a discovery! We thought the object of all trading was to make money. Has the proprietor of the *Yarmouth Mercury* any other object?

In the same number the *Yarmouth Mercury* falls foul of Mr. J. W. de Caux, who, in a letter against beating children, says that "those who cannot teach without caning are not fit and proper persons to undertake teaching." We quite agree with Mr. de Caux. But the Yarmouth editor, being a Christian, doesn't. He treats Mr. de Caux's position as an insult to all the teachers in the town. "It simply means," he says, "that there is not among the thousands of teachers

in this country one fit to teach"—which he says "is so exaggerated and sweeping as to carry with it its own refutation." But is it not the Yarmouth editor who is guilty of the exaggerated and sweeping statement, which is implied in his criticism, that not a single teacher of all the thousands in England is able to teach without the cane? That is an insult to the teaching profession. As to the assertion that "the cane cannot be abolished from the school," perhaps the Yarmouth editor will be good enough to explain why it is abolished in France, Germany, and other countries, including Heathen Japan. If a Japanese teacher were to strike a child he would lose his situation on the spot.

It has been said that nature has provided a place for juvenile chastisement. It is the same place where nature is said to have padded adults so that they may fall easy. This is the spot, it is argued, where dull and lazy school-boys should be castigated. We may call this the *à posteriori* method of teaching. If you can't drive knowledge and sense into a boy's head drive it into his—other end. Such is the wisdom which Mr. de Caux is gravely rebuked for doubting. And he is a Freethinker—and his rebuker is a Christian; which, after all, is just what might be expected.

The newspapers have, as usual, carefully concealed the fact that Dr. F. J. Furnivall, the Shakespearean scholar, who has just died at the great age of eighty-five, was an Agnostic. He was a devoted admirer of Shelley, and laughed at those who tried to minimise or explain away Shelley's Atheism. Some months ago the doctors told Dr. Furnivall that he had but a short time to live. He accepted the news quite cheerfully, and made all preparations for the end, including a notification to his friends.

The *Glasgow Citizen* reported a lecture by Professor James Swanson on "Faith and Medicine." It was the closing lecture of the Biology Class at St. Mungo's College. Professor Swanson seems to think that because doctors are relying less upon drugs, and more upon mental and moral agencies, the reign of "atheism and materialism" is over. We were not aware that "drugs" and "atheism" were brothers, or cousins, or even partners. Neither were we aware that "purity, love for others, and righteousness" belonged to the "supernatural." As for faith-healing, of course it is perfectly natural, as far as it is real. It is only the extension of a common old method of recovery. Doctors have always known that keeping up a patient's spirits is half the battle. And what is this but the power of "suggestion"? The influence of that part of the human organism which is called "mind" over that part which is called "body" has always been recognised. And what is valid in faith-healing is only a special cultivation of it.

Twenty-eight thousand pounds is to be spent on a Christian cathedral at Khartoum. The gentleman who does religion for the *Morning Leader* says that the Mohammedans will trust the Christians better on finding that their costliest building is devoted to prayer and worship. Apparently he thinks the Mohammedans don't know that Christians have plenty of big, costly churches in their own countries.

Frau von Weber, whose long trial for complicity in the murder of her first husband, Major von Schoenebeck, occupied four weeks, and was only terminated by her being declared totally insane after an attempt at suicide, appears to have lived the life of a Messalina. Students of history and of human nature will not be surprised to hear that she was also very pious. One of her many lovers confessed that she made him swear under the Christmas tree that he would murder her husband. He took the oath and did the deed. So much for the elevating and purifying influence of religion.

Our condolence to *John Bull*! Our contemporary has been libelling a parson, and has had to soothe his injured feelings, in the usual way. We have been criticising parsons for thirty years, and have never had a libel action yet. Shows how careful we are—doesn't it?

Some clergymen would persecute like blazes if they could. Rev. R. W. Patterson, for instance, a Presbyterian minister, said recently at Philadelphia: "If I had my way I would have an executioner called in to deal with all heretics and blasphemers. Burning at the stake would be too good for those who revile religion. The growth of heresy is such that nothing but such measures as this can stop it." Well, then, it won't be stopped; for Pastor Patterson will certainly not be able to "have his way." So, if he's satisfied, we are.

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

(Lecturing Suspended during the Summer.)

To Correspondents.

- PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND: 1910.**—Previously acknowledged, £227 11s. 7d. Received since:—Andrew Shiel, 5s.; Ernest, 5s.; Harry Organ, 2s.
- J. V. LECKIE.**—Your five questions cannot be answered in this column. Each of them would need a column to itself. You cannot do better than get Mr. Cohen's pamphlet on Foreign Missions, published at our office, price 4d., post-free.
- R. ROSETTI.**—Of course you never heard of Bradlaugh lecturing to "men only." Neither did anyone else. He despised such paltry tricks to catch audiences, and left them to the charlatans of the most unscrupulous religion on earth.
- E. B.**—Thanks. See paragraph.
- S. COHEN.**—Sending as requested. Pleased to know that the Manchester "saints" are "impatiently awaiting the opening of the lecture season, and the extreme pleasure" of our visit. We always enjoy our visit to Manchester.
- ANDREW SHIEL.**—We are naturally much pleased to hear from one who "has had and read every copy of the *Freethinker* since the first number," and "believes it to be better with every issue, if that is possible."
- W. A. DAVIES.**—Pleased to hear that you and a few more Free-thinkers have got this journal placed on the table of the Working Men's Library at Caerphilly, one of the oldest towns in Wales. We hope your attempt at Llanbradach will be equally successful. Miss Vance, the N. S. S. secretary, is writing you respecting the formation of a Branch.
- W. BRADFORD.**—We do not know whether the Rev. Z. B. Woffendale ever stated that Charles Bradlaugh recanted on his death-bed. Nor do we care. Mr. Woffendale was not present, and his word is worth no more than any other man's who was not present. Those who were present—Bradlaugh's daughter, the nurse, and the doctor—give the lie to the recantation story. You appear to know of Mrs. Bradlaugh-Bonner's pamphlet.
- HARRY ORGAN.**—Glad you liked the Conference speeches. They certainly read a good deal better than most speeches reported in the newspapers. We note your wish to "congratulate Mr. Cohen on the excellence of his last two series of articles."
- A. WILKINS.**—The *Freethinker* has always been sent out from our publishing office on "sale or return." Any newsagent who states to the contrary is either lying or is deceived by his wholesale agent, who in that case is doing the lying. Put pressure on your agent.
- INQUIRER.**—Your apprehensions are unfounded. Something is bound to get overlooked in an over-busy life like ours. We are always pleased to hear from you and value your good wishes. It is impossible to say anything at the moment about the Shakespeare book or the photograph. We are "going slow" at present.
- A. G. LYE.**—Much obliged.
- VICK.**—*La Foi*, by Brioux, has not yet been published in an English translation.
- S. TAYLOR.**—Thanks for congratulations. The other matter shall be seen to.
- H. GIBBINS.**—The Paine quotation is—"The world is my country, and to do good is my religion."
- F. HARDING.**—Thanks for list of addresses that we can send six consecutive copies to; also for congratulations and good wishes. We intend to live and work for Freethought as long as possible.
- T. W. HAUGHTON.**—Will deal with it next week.
- WALTER DAVIDSON.**—We inserted the only letter sent us in criticism of Mr. Cohen's articles. What more could we do? We are ready to find room for a well-written, courteous article in reply.
- JAMES THOMAS.**—Reads like a bit of fun; we think you take it too seriously.
- J. HANS.**—See paragraph. Thanks.
- R. IRVING.**—We note that Mr. Joe Young, secretary of the Brighton Branch of the S. D. P., whose funeral is reported in the *Evening Argus*, was for many years an appreciative reader of the *Freethinker*.
- A. HUNT.**—We have an eye on the gentleman.
- W. P. BALL.**—Many thanks for cuttings.
- 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.
- When the services of the National Secular Society in connection with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the secretary, Miss E. M. Vance.
- LETTERS** for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.
- LECTURE NOTICES** must reach 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.
- FRIENDS** who send us newspapers would enhance the favor by marking the passages to which they wish us to call attention.

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

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

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

Personal.

I HAVE been contributing to the *Freethinker* pretty freely for some weeks, but I am now occupying the editorial chair again. In doing so I beg to tender my warmest thanks to Mr. Cohen for occupying the editorial chair during my illness and my subsequent recuperation. He has turned out some excellent numbers of the *Freethinker*. What this means in the way of drudgery behind the scenes he knows, and I know, but the reader doesn't, and never will—unless he happens to be an editor or a sub-editor, and is aware of the fact that the editor of the *Freethinker* has to fulfil every function of the editorial office himself. I also tender my best thanks to Mr. Lloyd, "Mimnermus," and all others who have helped to sustain the interest of the paper in my absence. I feel that I am blessed with loyal colleagues and generous friends. Could I say more if I filled columns?

My health is practically restored, but I shall try to "go slow" as far as possible during July and August, so as to be in the best form for the opening of the new lecture season in September.

G. W. FOOTE.

Sugar Plums.

The National Secular Society's Executive has decided to send six direct delegates to the International Freethought Congress at Brussels in August. They are Messrs. Foote, Cohen, Lloyd, Heaford, and Roger, and Miss Vance. In addition to these direct delegates, it is intended to organise a party of what may be called indirect delegates, who will be fully credentialed members of the Congress. "Saints" who wish to join this party—paying their own expenses, of course—should communicate with Miss E. M. Vance, the N. S. S. general secretary, at 2 Newcastle-street, E.C. According to the size of the party will be the terms which she will be able to secure from a first-class agency. We repeat that the Congress sits from August 21 to August 24, inclusive.

The Secular Education League's new manifesto on the proposals of the self-appointed "Educational Settlement Committee," to which we referred a couple of weeks ago, is now published. It is terse, to the point, and its circulation should do good to the cause of Secular Education, even though the proposals of the Committee fall flat. On the other hand, should the present Government introduce a new Education Bill, it is quite on the cards that these proposals may be made the basis of the measure, and in that case the circulation of the manifesto may prepare the public mind against such a policy. All who can help in its judicious distribution should write for copies—which will be supplied gratis—to the Secretary of the League, Mr. H. Snell, 19 Buckingham-street, Strand, London, W.C.

Mr. Charles A. Watts, vice-president of the Rationalist Press Association, writes us:—

"The statement in your last issue, that Major Harris informed you that 'he had declined to become a member' of the R.P.A., does not accord with the facts as I knew them. He was an annual subscriber to the Association from its foundation, and he was one of the first life members. As I write I have before me a letter from him, addressed to myself, in which he says that he encloses ten guineas in order to be enrolled as a life member, and 'to complete a practical declaration of all-round interest in the R.P.A.'"

There is more in Mr. Watts's letter, but it does not relate to anything we wrote. With regard to this relevant extract, we have to say that Major Harris frequently told us that he gave donations to the R.P.A. (as he did to the Secular Society, Ltd.) but had not become a member, although he

had been pressed to do so, as he considered his membership of the N. S. S. sufficient. We gather from Mr. Watts's letter that this was the actual fact until a very short time before Major Harris's death. It will be noticed that Mr. Watts does not give the *date* of the letter he refers to. During the last year or two of Major Harris's life we saw less of him than before, partly owing to our residing so far from London, but more to his failing health.

The King of Spain has signed a decree authorising the Minister of Justice to bring into the Cortes a bill enabling Ministers to make a simple promise to respect the Constitution on assuming office, instead of taking the oath before the King. The bill extends to all citizens the power to affirm, instead of taking an oath on the Cross and Testament. Under this bill affirmation, instead of the oath, will be accepted in the courts of law. This is a great step in advance for Spain. No wonder the Papacy is enraged. The blood of Ferrer is crying from the ground to some purpose.

Mr. Hermann Veizin, the famous actor, left estate of the gross value of £137. Such was the wealth he accumulated during a long life of hard work. A codicil to his will, providing for the cremation of his remains, is very interesting and worth reproducing in our columns:—

"I direct the executrix of my said will or such other person as shall have the disposal of my remains after death, and my wish is that the same shall be reduced to ashes in the least expensive manner at the Golder's Green Crematorium, near London, and in the afternoon, if, as I am informed is now the case, a lower charge then obtains than in the morning, and that such process of cremation be attended by no formality or ceremony of any sort or any kind, and particularly by no religious service of any description, and that none of the ashes to which my remains are so reduced be preserved or kept by anyone in any urn, receptacle, or otherwise howsoever; but that the same be spread as manure on the ground by one of the gardeners at the cemetery at Golder's Green aforesaid.

And, further, that no tombstone, urn, or other monument of any kind be erected or dedicated to my memory; and I also earnestly desire that no relative or friend of mine should express his regret for my death by the wearing of mourning or by the sending of any wreath or floral emblem or token to place on or with my remains, or in any other conventional manner.

And I earnestly request and desire my said executrix or such other person as aforesaid and all my relatives, friends, and acquaintances to respect and observe my wishes as hereinbefore expressed or indicated."

"Particularly no religious service of any description" bears out our previous statement that Mr. Hermann Veizin was a Freethinker.

The Humanitarian League has done well to publish in pamphlet form, under the title of *The Spirit of Punishment*, a letter on that subject which Mr. John Galsworthy contributed to the *Daily Chronicle*. It is humanely conceived and forcibly expressed. The author says that public opinion "must shake itself free of our muddled conceptions of the object of punishment," and that "if we seriously desire to reduce crime to its irreducible minimum we must go to work like doctors." This view is gaining ground now. Its pioneers (of course) were Freethinkers. It was propagated from Freethought platforms during most of the nineteenth century. Finally, it was incorporated into the Immediate Practical Objects of the National Secular Society as follows: "The substitution of the idea of Reform for that of Punishment in the treatment of criminals, so that gaols may no longer be places of brutalisation, or even of mere detention, but places of physical, intellectual, and moral elevation for those who are afflicted with anti-social tendencies." It would not be easy to improve that. Mr. Galsworthy's pamphlet, however, will reach people that anything emanating from the "wicked" N. S. S. would frighten, so we wish it a wide circulation.

John Ruskin was one of the very few Christians (but he was rather an odd Christian, after all) who understood the fallacy of punishment—a term which the President of the N. S. S. has frequently declared should be banished from the vocabulary of jurisprudence. Ruskin was a seminal thinker, far more so than Carlyle, whom he called Master. At the close of the fifteenth letter of *Time and Tide* he wrote:—

"Crime cannot be hindered by punishment; it will always find some shape and outlet, unpunishable or unclosed. Crime can only be truly hindered by letting no man grow up a criminal—by taking away the *will* to commit sin; not by mere punishment of its commission. Crime, small and great, can only be truly stayed by education—not the education of the intellect only, which is, on some men, wasted, and for others mischievous; but education of the heart, which is alike good and necessary for all."

Ruskin, when he wrote like that, was unapproachable.

The Great Ice Age.

A REMARKABLE period in the geological history of Mother Earth, and incidentally in that of primitive man, is embraced by the great glacial epoch. If we form a mental picture of vast territories of the now temperate northern hemisphere lying under the iron dominion of ice and snow, we may in that manner restore in imagination a more or less truthful vision of the great ice age.

Surviving proofs of the prevalence in earlier times of arctic conditions are not, however, confined to northern Europe and America. Northern Africa, South America, New Zealand, and other areas have also experienced these frigid phenomena, and the memorials of pre-historic ice action are in each instance the silent witnesses to the former reign of kings ice and snow.

Succeeding, as it did, a lengthy period of warm climatal conditions, and being in its turn succeeded by the temperate climate the northern hemisphere now enjoys, men of science were naturally anxious to ascertain the causes that led to this arctic visitation. Some inclined to the belief that glacial phenomena were the outcome of former differences in the distribution of land and water. And if such terrestrial and aquatic modifications of the earth's exterior caused the deflection of the Gulf Stream, upon the influences of which our present temperate climate so materially depends, that difference alone would adequately explain the prevalence over extensive areas of the earth's surface of pitiless polar conditions. None of the various hypotheses put forward to explain past glacial domination has met with universal acceptance. But the theory which carries greatest weight with astronomers and geologists is the highly original and ingenious theory of the late Dr. James Croll. According to Croll's theory, the very marked alternations of climate which occurred in the Pleistocene period—which embraces that of the great glacial epoch—were caused by the increased eccentricity of the earth's orbital relations to the sun in combination with the modifications set up by the precession of the Equinoxes. The path pursued by our planet in its journey round its luminary is demonstrably subject to considerable eccentricity. When this eccentricity attains its maximum the earth is some fourteen million miles nearer the sun at perihelion (its closest approach to the sun) than in aphelion, when it attains its greatest distance from the sun—in which position the quantity of solar heat received by our planet is diminished by one-fifth. Consequently, when winter arrives at a time when our globe is in aphelion, the northern hemisphere will be at the mercy of a winter longer by thirty-three days than those we now experience, while the summer season will be shortened by an equal period of time. This coincidence of the northern winter with aphelion must obviously result in the refrigeration of the climate; the snows of winter will largely remain unmelted throughout the relatively brief summer, the temperature being much reduced by their presence. Succeeding seasons would become increasingly subject to glacial influences; the winds blowing from the northern glaciated regions would be more constant than those arriving from the south, and the equatorial oceanic currents would be deflected across the equator into that very hemisphere whose summer occurred in aphelion. This would tend to raise the temperature in that part of the world, while the northern hemisphere's temperature would be correspondingly lowered. Owing to the precession of the Equinoxes the position of the two hemispheres would be reversed every eleven thousand years or so, and in consequence, during a cycle of great eccentricity, each hemisphere would experience an alternation of extremely cold and exceptionally genial seasons. It is inferred from various calculations of mathematicians and astronomers that the last period of high eccentricity com-

menced about 240,000 years ago, and prevailed for about 160,000 years.

The unequal distribution of polar conditions is evidenced by the fact that the huge island of Greenland, which lies in practically the same latitude as Norway and Sweden—countries in which a comparatively mild climate prevails—still remains under the dominion of glacial phenomena. And a glance at the general characteristics of glaciated regions will best enable us to restore the appearance presented by the northern hemisphere during the great ice age.

The pioneer who furnished science with the first clear statement of the evidence for the former existence of a Glacial Epoch in Europe was the Swiss engineer, Venetz (1822). He noted that, wherever contemporary ice-rivers have receded, the rocks over which they had flowed are usually rounded, smoothed, or polished, or situated in the precise direction in which the glaciers had moved. And he further observed that at considerable, and occasionally great, distances from any surviving glaciers, rocks were to be seen bearing the same impressions as those over which rivers of ice have recently run. His attention was also arrested by the discovery of ancient moraine-heaps, similar in form to those deposited to-day in the channels of the frozen rivers of the Alpine districts. These memorials of past ice-work extend as far distant as the Jura mountain-chain, on the flanks of which he found huge masses of rock quite foreign to these mountains, but of the same material as the ancient rocks of the main Alpine chain. He therefore very justly concluded that glaciers originally extended along the valley of the Rhone, and had left these rocks stranded on the distant Jura. He thus solved a problem which had greatly perplexed all previous observers.

Charpentier and Agassiz followed in the footsteps of Venetz, and immediately made a detailed study of these records of past glacial action; and from that day to this the steadily increasing masses of evidence have clearly demonstrated the earlier extension of ice-rivers over immense territories of the present Temperate Zone.

Glaciers are literally rivers of snow compacted into ice slowly flowing from higher to lower levels. They continue to carry out their excavatory and memorial-erecting operations upon the loftier parts of all the highest mountains of the earth. At the poles, entire continents, with the adjacent islands, remain under their permanent domination. And in passing a vacation amid the Alpine glories of Switzerland, those that have eyes to see may view the labor which is being performed at the present moment by those eternal blind forces of nature that so materially moulded and shaped the land surfaces of Northern Europe and America in the great ice age, thus rendering possible much of the noble scenery of the British Isles.

In the regions of the equator an altitude of 16,000 feet is essential to the formation of glaciers, but the cooler the environment the less the height required; and when we reach the polar regions the glaciers extend from their birthbed to the sea and may be seen detaching themselves from their channels and being borne away as icebergs on the ocean's breast.

No matter in what geographical province they are formed, these sheets of ice are invariably most numerous and most massive when they are found on those upmost eminences of the earth's surface which are visited by the vapor-laden winds from the sea, while leaving little of their flanks exposed to the warm rays of the sun. A notable example of this phenomenon is afforded by the great mountain chain of Northern India. These mountains tower in the direct track of the south-west monsoon, with no intervening hills of any importance between them and the sea. As a consequence they first encounter the ocean's aqueous burden, and the succeeding snow-fall furnishes the material for the formation of the giant glaciers of the Himalayas. Similar phenomena occur in South America; the Andes, after embracing the breezes from the Pacific Ocean, bear

magnificent glaciers upon all their more prominent peaks. And we are informed on the highest authority that the ice rivers of the Mount Cook chain of New Zealand never descend below 2,000 feet above sea level on their sun-exposed surface; they encroach down to a height of 700 feet only on their western flanks, these being screened from the genial influences of the sun's heat-rays.

The snow reposes in all its white-starred beauty on the peaks of mountains which develop rivers of ice. It lies lightly in granular arrangement for a time; but as gravitation impels it downwards, the motions of the masses from the rear, which are accentuated by the lateral pressure, steadily solidify it, until the bubbles of air, to the presence of which the virgin purity of newly-fallen snow is to be traced, are expelled; and now the incident forces, acting with irresistible power from impact and increase of weight, transform the snow through compression until it assumes the customary appearance of an ice river—"that of a homogeneous mass of blue, crystalline ice."

Some conception of the magnitude of the former ice rivers can be gained from a comparison with those that exist in Greenland at this moment. For the largest known ice sheet in the Northern Hemisphere is that which shrouds the larger portion of the surface of Greenland. Its length is 15,000 miles, and its average breadth about 400 miles; so that this magnificent ice sheet covers an area of much more than half a million square miles. The cold of inland Greenland is almost incredibly intense at the warmest season of the year. According to the testimony of the great Arctic explorer, Nansen, the nights of the middle of September were visited with a temperature of about—45° C., or, to express it in terms of Fahrenheit's scale, 113 degrees of frost. It is a fair conjecture that during the severest periods of the Glacial Epoch the climate of Northern Europe and America was equally harsh, and we have many reasons for thinking that even the mammoth ice sheet of Greenland was far exceeded in magnitude by the glaciers then existing.

So far we have confined our attention to the phenomena presented by the valley glaciers and widely spread ice sheets which are developed on land surfaces through the gradual solidification of mantles of snow. But floating ice has its interesting and suggestive features also. During a severe and prolonged frost the rivers, lakes, and canals of Canada and Siberia are frequently frozen to a depth of from two to three feet, and lands usually exempt from such extremely frigid conditions are occasionally invaded by them. As W. A. Brend, in his charming booklet on *Ice in the Present and the Past*, remarks:—

"In the year 401, and again in 642, so intense was the cold in Southern Europe that the Black Sea was completely covered with ice. The Thames was frozen over in 1063, 1434, and 1515. In 1594 the Rhine, the Scheldt, and even the sea at Venice were frozen. The Baltic has on several occasions been sufficiently encrusted to allow men and horses to traverse it, and in 1568, Charles X. of Sweden marched a whole army across the ice from Holstein to Denmark. The winter of 1684 was bitterly cold; in England, forest trees, even oaks, were split by the frost, and many killed. Nearly all the birds perished. The Thames was covered with ice eleven inches thick."

The Arctic and Antarctic oceans are covered with ice all the year through, while the bays and fiords display a continuous belt of ice which rapidly increases in thickness in consequence of the ebb and flow of the tide and the accumulation of snow which constantly falls upon it. The enormous mass attained by icebergs segregated from the glaciers of Greenland is amazing. Dr. Hayes, as cited by Mr. Brend,

"saw one stranded to the north of Melville Bay which he estimated to weigh two thousand million tons; it was aground in water half a mile deep. Another described by Ross, stranded in 250 fathoms of water, measured over two and a quarter miles in length, and two miles in breadth. Even far south in the Atlantic, icebergs are often met with more than a hundred feet

in height, and it must be remembered that there is about eight times as much ice below water as there is above."*

Notwithstanding the severity of the climate in the glacial period, fossil remains demonstrate that organisms, both animal and vegetal, were abundant. But there is nothing startling in this; the fauna now inhabiting the polar regions is both numerous and varied, and there is by no means that total dearth of flora which was at one time thought to be the case. That savages lived both in Europe and America during the great Ice Age, we have every reason to believe. The relics of primitive man were at this period left in the old river gravels and cave deposits which have yielded so many memorials of his past history. Rock shelters and caves provided him with a habitation before he had evolved the art of building huts or raising pile dwellings.

For the better part of a century facts bearing upon glaciation, past and present, have been slowly gathered together. The investigations carried out by men of science have revealed to the reading world a period in the history of our planet previously undreamed of. There is nothing in Genesis or our other sacred writings to indicate that an Ice Age had ever existed on this earth. But if that hypothesis of Croll's be sound, the Great Ice Age is only one of many visitations of cold under which not only the Northern but the Southern Hemisphere has suffered. And thousands of years hence, when the temperate zones are revisited with arctic conditions, we may rest assured that if primitive man could exist in company with the now extinct animals of the Pleistocene period, the human stocks surviving into the next glacial era will readily adapt themselves to their frigid environment.

T. F. P.

Sir Robert Anderson—a Champion of Orthodoxy.

THE man in the street knows Sir Robert Anderson as one of the greatest authorities on criminal matters, but he does not know him as an Evangelical theologian and a Christian apologist. In fact, we might call him a twentieth-century Daniel who has been in the employment of modern Babylon, and who belongs to a select and divinely elected circle to whom the Deity has vouchsafed his revelation in these dark days of unbelief. On the platforms of the Evangelical Alliance, the Bible League, and kindred societies, Sir Robert has proved an effective and arousing speaker, challenging Modern Criticism and the Newer Thought, against which he has written a series of clever, if sometimes violent, books. Sir Robert has lately gained a sudden notoriety through his confession to the authorship of the famous "Parnellism and Crime" articles in the *Times* of 1887. This caused a spirited protest in the House of Commons, and a severe censure was passed on the "garrulous old man," who has shown that he lacked that square, consistent character which we expect to see in prominent civil servants.

At the time he wrote these articles Sir Robert was associated—as far as I am aware—with the Plymouth Brethren, that fissiparous sect of modern Paritans. And we might apply to him the words the late C. H. Spurgeon used of another Plymouth teacher: "A man born for the universe, who narrowed his mind to Darbyism." But latterly Sir Robert has been associated with the Presbyterians, and his son, the Rev. Alan Anderson, is a missionary in China.

Sir Robert's first book was a short exposition of evangelical dogmas—*The Gospel and Its Ministry*. Then followed *Human Destiny*, dealing with the "heresies" of wider-hope preachers—Dean Farrar, Samuel Cox, Andrew Jukes, and others. This book delighted Mr. Spurgeon. The author callously

argues for eternal torment, and he thinks that, just as His Majesty's prisons are orderly institutions, so in hell God may work out some scheme to his own glory—a queer God! "Daniel in the Critics' Den" was a reprint of articles in *Blackwood's*, and again an attack on Farrar; later there appeared *The Coming Prince*, a larger book on the same theme—perhaps the ablest work from Sir Robert's pen. In both of these volumes the author argues for the historicity and authenticity of the Book of Daniel, and works out the so-called prophecies according to a pre-conceived plan of the ages on lines dear to the prophecy monger, who would rather hypnotise his own mind with stupid interpretations of an old-world book than seek the rectifying of a crying social evil.

The Silence of God, The Buddha of Christendom, The Bible and Modern Criticism, and other volumes have been issued at intervals during the last fifteen years. One little book deserves notice, and that is *A Plea for Reverence*. In this Sir Robert denounces the extravagant way in which the name of Jesus is abused in hymns, loaded with "syrupy" adjectives—"dear," "sweet," "blessed." It is undoubtedly true that the average believer is influenced more by the "theology" of hymns than by study of the Bible. There is one sentence which has clung to me for years, and which reveals Sir Robert's antipathy to the liberal theologian. It occurs, I think, in *The Silence of God*, and is to the effect that we should treat the heretic on the principle of "all mercy to the enemy, but no quarter to traitors." This shows how much Sir Robert reveres the teaching of the Nazarene, who said: "Judge not that ye be not judged.....for with what measure ye mete it shall be measured to you again." Again and again has this champion of orthodoxy likened the liberal Christian within the orthodox fold to a man guilty of treason, worthy only to be shot. Thus does dogmatic theology still breed that rankling hatred of men whose convictions differ from the orthodox creed.

This spirit is very strong in the two pamphlets which lie before me. One, entitled *Benefactors or Blasphemers?* (Pickering & Inglis, Glasgow; 1d.), is a reprint of an article from *Blackwood's*. In these few pages the Higher Critics are demolished. It is no wonder that a Scottish reviewer once called Sir Robert "a bonny fechter," his style reminds one of the writings of H. L. Hastings, that bitter opponent of Ingersoll. There is one pathetic footnote (p. 12): "Books like my own *Pseudo-Criticism*.....of course are ignored"; and he seems to wonder why! To this advocate of Conservative Protestantism, "The Samaritan Bible is conclusive proof that the 'critical hypothesis' of the origin of the Pentateuch is absolutely untenable" (p. 14). And the concluding sentence is: "If the 'Higher Critics' are right, let them be hailed as benefactors; if they are wrong, let them be branded as blasphemers." The second pamphlet, issued by the Evangelical Alliance, is entitled *The New Apostasy*, and is a condemnation, rather than a criticism, of R. J. Campbell's *New Theology*. ".....this evil book denies not only every distinctively Christian doctrine, but every truth of revelation. Its pages, moreover, are marked by a sort of profanity which not only outrages Christian sentiment but offends every natural refinement." These words seem to echo back a mocking taunt, when we remember the recent discussion in the House of Commons and the censure which was poured on Sir Robert's conduct.

And from this doughty champion the following words lose all their grip: "What possible claim to consideration or respect has a writer who can thus outrage and insult the feelings and convictions of the Christian?" To Sir Robert, the *New Theology* is not merely a mistake in reasoning, nor a losing of the way, but a delusion of the Evil One, and is backed up by demons. "It is THE LIE of the anti-Christian apostasy, the lie of which the Devil is the father." A half apology is offered for the strong language used: "And if I called it infidel and blasphemous the words have been used merely as descriptive epithets" (p. 18).

* Brend, pp. 111, 112.

The most humorous touch in this pamphlet is in a note with reference to Dr. Harnack's *What is Christianity?* This dogmatic amateur theologian says, "See my answer to it.....(6d)." So we leave this champion of the Faith, knowing that a few years hence these books will all be considered only as curiosities of literature to be consulted at the British Museum by the future writers on "The Humors of Apologetics."

FELIX PONDERING.

The Proposals of the "Educational Settlement Committee."

A CRITICISM AND A PROTEST BY THE SECULAR EDUCATION LEAGUE.

19 BUCKINGHAM STREET, STRAND, LONDON, W.C.

THE proposals of the "Educational Settlement Committee" which have recently appeared in the Press illustrate, once more, the folly of endeavoring to solve the religious difficulty in national education by avoiding the real issue. Time after time within the last few years educational peace has been sought along the lines of sectarian compromise. Mr. Birrell, Mr. McKenna, and Mr. Runciman have had to retire from a task that was hopeless from the beginning. Parliament has devoted much valuable time to their proposals; great concessions have been made in order to reconcile opposing interests; principles have been surrendered in the desire to obtain peace; but humiliating failure has attended every effort: and failure must inevitably recur in the future if the same lines are followed. The truth is that no solution of the problem can be found so long as the State is called upon to teach, at the public expense, any form of religion in the nation's schools.

The constitution of the "Settlement Committee" is not without importance. It was a self-appointed and non-representative body, drawn mainly from two sections of the English Protestant community. The chief recommendation of the Committee is the establishment and endowment of religious teaching under the Cowper-Temple Clause. Religion is to be paid for out of public funds, taught by public servants, and organised by public machinery. Cowper-Templeism, however, is opposed to the convictions of millions of our fellow countrymen, who will not submit either to pay for it, or to have it forced upon their children. The effect of the proposal, if adopted, would be to intensify the present bitterness and strife. The battle would be transferred from the school to the county and borough council chambers, and civic administration and reform would suffer in the strife and confusion that would inevitably arise. A new establishment of religion under county council and municipal control would be created, and the religious opinions of candidates, rather than their fitness as administrators of local affairs, would be the point upon which elections would be fought.

The Committee not only make Cowper-Templeism the official religion of the nation; in effect, they also make the teaching of it compulsory. At the present time the school authorities may confine themselves to secular teaching. The Committee would give them the choice of providing Cowper-Temple teaching, or of opening their doors to the expert teacher from officially approved denominations. Again, the Committee seek to impose upon the children an injustice against which Mr. Birrell expressly provided. His Bill provided that a child might absent himself from school during the time of religious teaching. This right the Committee would deny; they insist that the child shall either be present at some religious lesson given by an expert, or be placed in an invidious position before his school-fellows. *The practical effect of this proposal is to nullify the Conscience Clause.*

Every injustice under which the teacher at present suffers the Committee would continue, if not actually increase. Unless he can satisfy a sectarian committee that he has definite religious convictions of the exact color desired, the teacher is to be denied the right to earn his living in a large number of the nation's schools. On the other hand, while a head teacher is to be forbidden to give denominational teaching, in which he may possibly believe, he is even encouraged to give Cowper-Temple teaching, in which he may not believe. In both cases the Committee's conditions place a premium upon insincerity. The concession, that, on request, a teacher may be excused from giving religious teaching, is futile. No teacher could make such a request without jeopardising his professional career. He would be pointed at by the children, ostracised by his colleagues, and marked by the authorities. He would be, therefore, practically compelled to give religious

teaching, under penalty of sacrificing his career in the profession that he had chosen, and for which he had been specially trained.

The Committee treat the parents with no more consideration than they show to the teachers or to the children. To exercise the choice of school which is, under certain circumstances, given to them would, in hundreds of villages, be to endanger their very livelihood.

Such are the main points of the Settlement Committee's proposals. While they remove no difficulty, they impose new dangers. The question of the injustice inflicted upon minorities has either not been considered at all, or it has been treated with contempt.

It is high time that politicians learnt that the incubus of education all along has been the assumption put forward on behalf of the Churches, that it is their right, in the very nature of things, to have special consideration shown to them. All the controversy and strife have sprung from this cause. And the mischief will continue until statesmen learn, and are bold enough to act on their knowledge, that members of Churches, however powerful and distinguished, should only be treated as citizens in regard to all political and social questions. The interests of their special religious organisations should be nothing to the State. The Secular Education League is absolutely neutral in matters of religion; it is broad as the State itself; its supporters are found in growing numbers both within and without the Churches; and its sole object is to prevent the perpetuation and extension of the odious injustice which is inflicted by those who secure the propagation of their religion in the nation's schools at the expense of the entire community.

On these grounds, therefore, the Secular Education League offers its uncompromising hostility to the Settlement Committee's proposals, and it appeals to the nation to reject them.

Those who desire a speedy and satisfactory settlement of the Education question should support the principle of the "secular solution" by joining the *Secular Education League*. The amount of subscription is quite voluntary, beginning as low as one shilling. It is important that the League should have the immediate support of all who adhere to its principles; and sympathisers are urged to send their names to the Secretary of the League at the above address.

National Secular Society.

REPORT OF MONTHLY EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD ON JUNE 30.

The President, Mr. G. W. Foote, in the chair. There were also present: Messrs. J. Barry, W. Baker, E. Bowman, C. Cohen, H. Cowell, W. Davey, J. T. Lloyd, W. Leat, Dr. Nichols, J. Neate, C. Quinton, V. Roger, F. Schaller, S. Samuels, H. Silverstein, T. Shore, T. Thurlow, T. Dobson, N. Evans, J. Lazarnick, R. Rosetti, F. Schindel.

The minutes of previous meeting were confirmed and the monthly cash statement adopted.

The following officers were re-elected for the ensuing year:—General Secretary: Miss E. M. Vance. Monthly Auditors: Messrs. W. Leat and S. Samuels. Benevolent Fund Committee: Messrs. V. Roger, F. Wood, W. Leat, and S. Samuels.

New members were received for the Parent Society, and for Nottingham, Manchester, North London, Islington, Kingsland, and Wood Green Branches.

Application was received and permission granted for the formation of a new Branch at Mid-Rhondda.

The outdoor work was discussed, and Mr. Samuels gave notice of a motion in connection with this for next meeting.

The business in connection with the International Free-thought Congress to be held in Brussels was then discussed, and it was resolved that the Society should be represented by six delegates; and the following were elected: Messrs. G. W. Foote, C. Cohen, J. T. Lloyd, W. Heaford, V. Roger, and Miss Vance (health permitting). It was further arranged that members and friends visiting the Congress should be elected as honorary delegates.

The meeting then adjourned.

E. M. VANCE, *General Secretary.*

Love, friendship, ambition, science, literature, art, politics, commerce, professions, trades, and a thousand other matters will go on equally well, as far as I can see, whether there is or is not a God or a future state; and a man who cannot occupy every working moment of a long life with some or other of these things must be either very unfortunate in regard of his health or circumstances, or else must be a poor creature.—*Sir James Fitzjames Stephen.*

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Fountain): 3.15, Mr. Allison, a Lecture; 6.15, Miss Kough, a Lecture.

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): 3.15 and 6, Guy A. Aldred, Lectures.

ISLINGTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Highbury Corner): 12 noon, Walter Bradford and J. Darby Newington Green: 12 noon, S. J. Cook. Clerkenwell Green: 12 noon, H. King and T. Dobson. Finsbury Park: 3.30, E. C. Saphin. Highbury Corner: Saturday, at 8, H. King and T. Dobson.

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (Ridley-road, Kingsland): 11.30, W. J. Ramsey, "The Mythical Christ."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Parliament Hill Fields): 3.30, Mr. C. Cohen, a Lecture.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (outside Maryland Point Station, Stratford): 7, F. A. Davies, "Christianity and Common Sense."

WOOD GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Jolly Butchers' Hill, opposite Public Library): 11.30, H. Thurlow, jun., "Is There a God?"

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

COUNTRY.

OUTDOOR.

HUDDERSFIELD AND DISTRICT BRANCH N. S. S. (Kirkburton): 6.30, G. T. Whitehead, a Lecture. Market Cross: Saturday, at 8, G. T. Whitehead, a Lecture.

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