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PRICE TWOPENCE

What does it matter if one is violent? To be right, that is everything.—VICTOR HUGO.

## Materialism and Crime.

"MATERIALISM and Crime" is a promising title. It appeared over an article in last week's *New Age*, the writer being Mr. Francis Grierson. We turned to the article with considerable curiosity, but the very first sentence filled us with disappointment. Instead of finding a serious discussion, founded on sociology and statistics, we had simply come across a ventilation of personal prejudices. Mr. Grierson writes well, in the ordinary meaning of that expression, but his ideas in this article are just those of the common street-corner evangelist. If he had not displayed greater mental resources on other subjects, we should have considered this particular outburst as unworthy of notice.

There is something almost grandiose about the self-confidence of pious gentlemen like Mr. Francis Grierson. They have the true spirit of infallibility. It never occurs to them that they could possibly be mistaken. Neither are they able to imagine that anybody can differ from them on purely intellectual grounds. Their opinions are not mere opinions; they have a moral quality; and if you do not share them you display an ethical deficiency; in fact, your turpitude may run up to something beyond murder. So terrible a thing it is not to see eye to eye with the Grierson fraternity.

"Will materialism," Mr. Grierson asks, in his first sentence, "bring our civilisation to an end, or will crime and insanity compel our civilisation to get rid of materialism?" *Get rid* is a curious phrase. It suggests fines, imprisonments, and executions. And this seems to be really what Mr. Grierson contemplates as the only proper and effective policy with his intellectual opponents. Two paragraphs further on he repeats the previous question in a slightly altered form. "Will nations and individuals," he asks, "be compelled to suppress materialism as they are suppressing consumption and other diseases?" Materialism is to be stamped out as a disease. Well, if you are going to that length in dealing with it you ought to condescend to tell us what you mean by "materialism." Mr. Grierson does not tell us. He gives us no definitions; he obliges us only with synonyms; and one of these synonyms is "scepticism."

What is *scepticism*? We gather that it is doubting the accuracy of Mr. Grierson's opinions on any subject which he chooses to consider important. Now the important subject in this instance is a future life. The "intellectual decadence" of ages and civilisations, we are told, proceeds in the following stages:—"Scepticism, irony, pessimism, materialism, denial of the psychic part of man, disavowal of belief in immortality." Mr. Grierson's great concern, therefore, is about the soul and a future life. He says little or nothing about God.

Now it is noticeable that Mr. Grierson offers no evidence whatever on behalf of the proposition that man has a distinct psychic nature, apart from his body, which will go on living for ever and ever, and a day after that. He takes it for granted. Mr.

Grierson believes it, and isn't that enough for all decently constituted persons? This is the mental egotism of the street-corner preacher. And the same may be said of Mr. Grierson's view of the awful things that will happen to the world if it fails to toe the religious line he draws for it. What could be more like the street-corner preacher's utterance than the following?—

"A man who does not believe he has a soul is a man who does not believe I have a soul, and there is no secret trick too mean for him, there is nothing to stop him but fear of the law, and so long as he escapes the law he cares for no one....."

The materialist hates to die, although he may not fear death. His desire is to live as long as he can and enjoy all he can no matter at whose cost."

Fancy a man who regards himself as a serious thinker, and has induced certain other people to regard him in the same light, writing in that amazingly ridiculous fashion of men like Bradlaugh, Ingersoll, Clifford, Morris, Swinburne, and Meredith. Even the great "G. B. S.," for all his talk about religion, puts this very belief in personal immortality out of doors as a contemptible outcome of man's selfishness and vanity. He also is amenable to Mr. Grierson's censure. He wants to enjoy himself at anybody's cost—he the teetotaler, the non-smoker, the vegetarian—in a word, the ascetic.

The great moral question, according to Mr. Grierson, is this: Do you fear anybody or anything? If you don't you haven't "got a conscience." And you are liable to cut Mr. Grierson's throat at the first convenient and profitable opportunity. Now this is repellent to Mr. Grierson. He naturally protests against it. He demands security for his windpipe. Those shocking materialists must be suppressed. It is a matter of self-preservation with Mr. Grierson. But the proper answer is that he is mistaken. Human conduct is less founded on fear than he imagines. It is far more founded on sympathy, affection, and social instinct.

How curious it is, by the way, that the persons denounced as "materialists" usually believe in the inherent goodness of human nature, while the self-styled "spiritualists" or "idealists" usually believe that prisons and hell are the only guarantees of virtue, and that no man would live decently for ten minutes if it were not for the police on earth and the Great Policeman in the sky.

When for once Mr. Grierson offers a tangible illustration he gives himself away with the greatest simplicity. "There never was a time," he says, "when so many officers in Germany and France have tried to sell their country for 'a mess of pottage'; and it is not difficult to fix the blame on the spirit of materialism, which urges such people on to reap what pleasures they may before death arrives." But how different were the facts in the classic Dreyfus case! Dreyfus himself, who did not sell his country, was an Atheist. The leading men who fought his battle, not merely in his personal interest, but in the interest of truth, justice, and the honor of France, were nearly all what Mr. Grierson calls "materialists." And what were the real "sellers" of their country, the real liars and forgers? Catholics. Believers in the soul and a future life—gentlemen who, to use Mr. Grierson's facetious language, had "got a conscience."

G. W. FOOTE.

## God and Pain.

A LITTLE over a month ago, in the *Freethinker* for July 10, I criticised a sermon delivered by the Rev. Charles Voysey, of the Theistic Church, Piccadilly. Since then, I have received a couple of letters, accompanied by the same number of pamphlets, from Mr. Voysey, who appears to think that a further consideration of his arguments should have the effect of producing a more favorable state of mind in relation to the Theistic case. To be quite candid, I do not find anything in Mr. Voysey's pleadings that I am not already familiar with from other religious writers, even though they carry along with them a number of doctrines that Mr. Voysey repudiates. Nor do I think it probable that any religious writer will produce an argument in favor of the belief in God with which those who are engaged in fighting Theism are not already familiar—at least, in substance. The old arguments may be presented in a more ingenious manner, and may be supported by modern analogies and illustrations. But substantially they remain unaltered, and those who have reached the position of a reasoned Atheism are not likely to be nonplussed by the more ingenious manipulation of Theistic arguments.

Mr. Voysey claims to rest his religious beliefs on facts that are common to all. This, however, does not place religious belief upon so safe a ground as Mr. Voysey appears to think. For the important thing is not the facts, which are of necessity common property, but the inferences deduced therefrom. And in this respect I cannot see that Mr. Voysey's inferences are any more justifiable than those of other religionists. In many instances he quite fails to discriminate between what are the facts and what are the inferences, and so claims for the latter a certainty that belongs to the former. An illustration of this is found in his treatment of the existence of pain and evil. The existence of pain is a fact about which there is no dispute. But, adds Mr. Voysey, all pain serves a good purpose, therefore, pain points to the existence of a benevolent and designing Deity. In arguing thus he assumes that he is presenting his readers with two indisputable facts from a single inference. In truth, the only fact is the existence of pain. That it always serves a useful purpose is a highly debatable statement; while the conclusion that it therefore leads us to a belief in a God is still more questionable. Things may serve a useful purpose, from particular points of view, without there being any design whatever. An elephant that kills a tiger may, from a man's point of view, serve a useful purpose. But it does not follow that this is the purpose of the elephant's existence. From the tiger's point of view, it would be as clear a proof of design if the elephant killed the man.

Mr. Voysey claims that if we take the facts of nature, and of human nature, they establish beyond reasonable doubt a presumption in favor of the existence of a God. In his own case, however, this conclusion is reached by fixing attention on one aspect only of the facts selected. Thus he says:—

"Merely as an animal, I find myself provided with conditions suitable to my needs and capacities. Before my very birth, countless provisions were made to prepare for my coming into the world, and all through helpless infancy and childhood a wealth of human care and love was bestowed upon me without which I must have perished miserably or incurred irreparable injury."

Now suppose we reverse this and write:—

"Merely as an animal I find that the conditions are often not suitable to my needs and capacities. Before my very birth it would seem as though numerous means had been prepared to ensure my destruction. Diseases of various kinds are there to which I may fall a victim, or only escape destruction at the cost of disfigurement. My teeth are set on edge by the sour grapes my parents have eaten. All through helpless infancy I am dogged by pains, and threatened by ailments that are treated lightly only because all are more or less afflicted with them. For protection against these I am dependent upon a wealth of human love and care—often enough

powerless to ensure immunity—but which, because of its activity, only seems to throw into darker relief the truth that nature, or God, is continually on the watch to punish me for being what I am, and for which I cannot be charged with the smallest degree of responsibility."

Is not this picture quite as truthful as the one presented by Mr. Voysey?

Mr. Voysey's theory of the beneficial nature of pain is expressed as follows:—

"Pain is wanted to ensure the health and life of a babe. And as it grows, the pains of teething, the pains of disease, are all warnings that some danger is to be averted or a difficulty is to be overcome. The child will hurt itself in trying to walk, in tumbling down, in coming into collision with various objects, in touching hot substances, in burning its fingers and in getting pricked with needles and pins. Every pain is an instruction to the child in order to ensure its very life and safety.....Pain is perpetually wanted as a warning and as a protection."

The theory that pain is the accompaniment of processes injurious to the organism, and therefore plays the part of a warning, is one that unquestionably contains a truth, but it is one that needs very guarded application. For what Mr. Voysey's theory demands is, first, that all injurious processes should be preceded or accompanied by pain, which is not the case; second, that the pains which are to serve as a warning are proportionate to the gravity of the injury threatened, which again is not the case; and thirdly, that the warning pain should precede the injury, which is not true in any case. Mr. Voysey's special illustrations may be considered as they arise.

First, I may note that to call pain a warning is to strain language almost to breaking point. If I see a man making towards the edge of a cliff and call to him in time for him to halt this side of safety, my cry may properly be called a warning. But if he goes on walking until he falls over and breaks an arm, how can the pain of a broken arm be said to be a warning? The injury is done. Again, a man settles down in a marshy locality and contracts malaria, the effects of which remain with him throughout his life. In what sense are his pains a warning? They cannot serve the purpose of warning him against contracting malaria. He already has it, and the pain only serves as a reminder. To really warn, the pain and the disease should be two distinct things. But they are not; pain is only the psychological aspect of the physical ailment. When the pain is felt the injury is already done; it is a consequence, not a forerunner. At the utmost it can only warn us not to persist in certain courses.

The only genuine sense in which pain can be said to act as a warning is in its effect on others. From observing the pains and discomforts of other people, I profit by their experience, and so avoid the pain to which they may be subjected. But this consideration cannot be of much value to the Theist. It can reflect little to the credit of an assumed Creator to believe that he so arranged things that one person is tortured by a disease in order to show another how to avoid contracting it. As a matter of fact this is how most of our lessons are learned. We learn, not by experiencing pain, but by reflecting on the experience of other people. The dangers of certain poisons were not discovered by any pain that was caused by them, but by some people observing their effects on other people. And so with most of the things we learn to avoid. Pain is not the teacher of the individual, but the experience of those that have gone before him. They have suffered, and he reaps the benefit of their suffering.

Let us take, as illustrations, some of Mr. Voysey's examples. What benefit does a child derive from the pains of teething? No one remembers them in after life. Or, if there is any mysterious educative value about them, does anyone believe that the child who cuts his teeth in a practically painless manner is worse off, from an educational point of view, than one whose dentition is accompanied by extreme pain? What useful purpose is served by the painful plan of cutting a set of teeth that are developed only to be

lost and make room for another set, more or less useful. Anything more clumsy and, if designed, deliberately cruel than this plan of cutting milk teeth it would be impossible to conceive.

Quite as wide of the truth is Mr. Voysey's assumption that a child learns to walk through the fear of falling down. The education of nerves and muscles by which walking is effected has no more to do with falling than it has with flying. Children do not learn to walk the quickest who fall the oftenest. Nor would any parent try to teach a child to walk by pushing it over. The case of a child and fire is still more instructive. Some benevolence in the arrangement of things might be argued if children were born with an instinct that warned them from touching fire. But as a matter of fact the brightness of a light is the very thing that attracts them to their injury. Thousands of children are injured or killed by this, and Mr. Voysey should set himself to explain not only why "the burnt child dreads the fire," but why God has given fire such an attraction to infantile minds. Not that children are, on the whole, taught to leave a fire alone by being burned. Here, as elsewhere, they depend upon the repeated warnings of their parents—who do not imitate God's method of burning a child's finger in order to teach it not to play with a light.

Quite as fatal to the theory that God's benevolent character is shown in the infliction of pain is the fact that the intensity of pain is in no sense proportionate to the actual injury to the organism. The terrible scourge of consumption commences in quite a painless manner, and does not, I believe, at any stage, equal in intensity the pain of a first-class toothache. Cancer also has usually a firm hold on a patient before the pains resulting forces a sufferer to seek medical advice. A corn is in no sense a dangerous infliction, and yet many people are far more likely to seek a "cure" for this than for many a complaint which, inflicting injury upon the entire organism, will be borne with for years because the pain of it is tolerable.

Or one may take the cases, so often reported, of death by asphyxiation from coal gas. Here is an agent fatal to life, and yet the effect is not to rouse a person to the deadly danger, but to induce a more profound sleep that will end only in death. So, too, with the effects of severe cold. Travellers in Arctic regions, and even belated travellers in snowstorms in other quarters of the globe, relate that their great difficulty is to fight the tendency to lie down and sleep—the one thing that must not be done on any account. Here, instead of pain playing the part of a kindly monitor, the organism seems to be crying out for that which will ensure its destruction. In this case the organic shrinking from pain, instead of being a beneficent fact, becomes one of the most malevolent significance.

C. COHEN.

(To be concluded.)

### Freethought and Conscience.

THE moral sense is at once the product and the most valuable asset of social life. It is an acquired sense, and not in any degree an inheritance. What we receive from our ancestors at birth is a nature charged with strange potentialities, predispositions, or tendencies, the character of which, in every case, is determined by the ancestral history. Science has established nothing more firmly than the fact that the moral sense is not an endowment conferred upon humanity at the commencement of its career, but an acquirement made by very slow degress during hundreds of thousands of years, it may be, and made unequally by different tribes and nations, and by different individuals in the same tribe and nation. This is a truth which the Christian pulpit almost entirely ignores. The preacher invariably speaks of conscience as a gift of God, as a faculty Divinely

planted in every human being, and as a voice that infallibly expresses the Divine will on every question. He forgets, however, or does not perceive, that such a view of the origin and nature of the moral sense represents God as guilty of shocking partiality and injustice. Would a fair-minded and good-hearted Deity endow one man with an exceptionally keen and powerful conscience, and another with a wretchedly dull and silent one? On the assumption that there is such a God, is it possible to suggest any reasonable explanation of the existence of savage races? The truth is, that the Christian doctrine of the moral sense hopelessly impugnes the moral character of the Creator, and renders the belief in him an insufferable insult to the reason.

According to the Christian view, God is not only the author of the moral sense, which he so unevenly distributed among mankind, but also a sort of an Almighty Policeman to keep it in order. That is to say, he endowed us with a moral sense that cannot be trusted to do its duty unless its Maker's eye is constantly upon it. Surely this is not a compliment to the maker. But this is not all. To insure the straight going of a moral agent there must be, in addition to the mere fact that the moral sense within him is a Divine gift, incessantly kept under Divine inspection, a distinct consciousness, on his own part, that God is watching him. The only infallible safeguard of morality, the preacher assures us, is a vivid belief in the existence of the Invisible Policeman. "Surrender that belief," he says, "and your moral life will collapse." He tells us further that when a professing Christian becomes guilty of some heinous crime, his first action is to abolish the Almighty Policeman, to hug a make-believe conviction that he was never really present, or that he is wholly a myth. This is a specimen of his language:

"People passing through churchyards, so the old saying goes, whistle to keep their spirits up. And so people who have consciences burdened with the memory of sin, or who harbor lusts and evil passions in their hearts, try to keep their spirits up by saying, 'There is no God.' But just as those who whistle loudest are often the most afraid of ghosts, so multitudes of those who loudly proclaim their unbelief are tortured by dreads and fears. It is a forced unbelief. It is a cultivated doubt. The wish is father of the thought with them. They say they do not believe because they do not want to believe."

Again we say that this is anything but complimentary to the heavenly police force. A policeman's primary duty is not to catch criminals, but to prevent crime; and surely, if an omnipotent and omnipresent policeman does not succeed in preventing crime, he must be pronounced a disgraceful failure. On the other hand, a wrong-doer who imagines that he gets rid of the Righteous Judge and punisher of sin by merely saying to himself and others, "He does not exist," is infinitely more stupid than the ostrich who believes that he is safe from the enemy the moment he buries his tiny head in the desert sand. *It is safe to assert that there are no such Atheists.* If such people exist at all, their only accurate designation is, not Atheists, but unmitigated fools, despicable cowards, execrable liars.

The Christian view of conscience is uncomplimentary not only to God, but to Christians themselves. If a man refrains from burglariously entering a house simply because he finds it surrounded by a dozen constables, we are not justified in pronouncing him an honest individual in consequence. He who abstains from stealing merely from fear of being caught and punished is not a paragon of virtue. At bottom, he is a thief, and would commit theft if he dared. The application is irresistible. Christians are good (save the mark!) because they believe in the Righteous Judge and in the punishment of sin. They would give the rein to passion and lust were it not for the Big Policeman's unsleeping eye. Such is the inevitable inference from the preacher's own reasoning. Followers of Christ observe morality, not because they are moral, but because they are afraid of the consequences of immorality. They do not sin because they believe in the punishment of sin. Is

it possible to conceive of a more pernicious and detestable teaching? What is regarded as a most cogent argument against Atheism undermines the very foundations of Christian Theism. What is thought to be most damaging to the cause of Freethought rebounds and gives Christianity a violent slap in the face.

Fortunately, however, such teaching is absolutely false. Christianity does not engender goodness, nor does Freethought encourage badness. Belief in God does not produce a moral life, nor does the lack of that belief involve its collapse. As a matter of fact, what keeps a good many people in order is not the fear of God, but the dread of the adverse judgment of society. King David committed adultery, and to cover up the adultery he committed murder, and the widow became his wife. David was an exceedingly pious man, being "after God's own heart"; and yet although he committed the two great crimes with God's eye upon him, he apparently suffered no qualms of conscience until months later the prophet Nathan told him a pertinent parable and then cleverly applied it. Neither the love nor the fear of God deterred him from doing grievous wrong, nor brought him to repentance afterwards. A well-known treasurer of the Presbyterian Church of the Northern States of America was famous for his devoutness. He was admittedly one of the most godly men in the denomination. And yet, while thus held in highest esteem because of his undoubted nearness to the Lord, he was systematically defrauding, on a large scale, the very Church which he professed to love with such ardor. But it was not until he was found out that his conscience awoke, and hastened the end. The history of the Church furnishes innumerable instances of that kind; and the conclusion to which we are driven is that faith in God, issuing in the most fervent piety, does not safeguard morality. What people fear most is not God, or hell, but public opinion. The reason why belief in God does not serve morality more efficiently is that bound up with it is the hateful doctrine of the forgiveness of sins. Men are taught that all sins, even the worst, have been atoned for by the blood of Christ, and that God is bound to cancel them, when penitently implored to do so, for Christ's sake. Thus, so far as his relation to God and his eternal prospects are concerned, the sinner gains nothing, but loses all, by pretending to become an Atheist. As a matter of simple truth, Atheism provides no refuge for criminals, and administers no sleeping draughts to guilty consciences. It does lead to a total neglect of public worship, and to a complete disregard of Sunday as a more sacred day than Saturday or Monday; but it lends no manner of encouragement to anti-social attitude and conduct, or to a single act that militates against the highest welfare of the community.

Until it can be definitely shown that Freethought embodies anti-social elements, or teaches doctrines that are in their very nature inimical to the highest morality, it is utter nonsense to speak of it as issuing in immorality. What it does issue in is mental sanity, harmony between head and heart, concentration upon the real problems of a real life. And this is a genuine gain, and, without doubt, a gain to morality. The man who asks, "Why should I do good to my fellow-beings, if there is no God to reward me if I do, or to punish me if I do not," has not yet learned the alphabet of the moral life. He is a cringing slave, a nauseous coward, not a strong, courageous man. Freethought throws a man upon himself; upon his dignity, self-respect, and manliness; upon his sense of essential oneness with all life and of his corresponding responsibilities. Atheism involves riddance of the nightmare of supernaturalism, and the grasping with strenuous earnestness of the grim realities of the natural, the flinging behind in disgust of the "Fables of the Above," and the seizing with singing delight of the verities of the Round-About. An old adage says, "Beware of the man of one book." We say, Beware of the man who is taken up with one world, the only world he knows, because, if he gets fair-play, he is sure to make some

substantial use of it. His chief advantage lies in the fact that he is not entangled and confused by a great multitude of conflicting interests. He is free to devote himself wholly to the business of living. Unlike Browning's Grammarian, the loyal Freethinker says, "Live now or never."

"But," the preacher retorts, "Freethought offers no incentive and provides no motive-power to a noble and fruitful social life." Now this is a fallacy of the most dangerous kind. It is Freethought alone that does provide a natural incentive to live an unselfish and beneficent life, and it is Freethought alone that introduces an effective motive-power. As John Stuart Mill says:—

"A morality grounded on large and wise views of the good of the whole, neither sacrificing the individual to the aggregate nor the aggregate to the individual, but giving to duty on the one hand, and to freedom and spontaneity on the other their proper province, would derive its power in the superior natures from sympathy and benevolence and the passion for ideal excellence; in the inferior, from the same feelings cultivated to the measure of their capacity, with the super-added force of shame. This exalted morality would not depend for its ascendancy on any hope of reward; but the reward which might be looked for, and the thought of which would be a consolation in suffering, and a support in moments of weakness, would not be a problematical future existence, but the approbation in this, of those whom we respect, and ideally of all those, dead or living, whom we admire or venerate."

J. T. LLOYD.

### A Catholic Show.

FOR the first time in my life I have been to a Catholic church. Being away from home, and staying in Leeds, I resolved one morning, lately, to pay a visit to the cathedral, a fine, recent pile of buildings. So I went in on a Sunday and heard High Mass being sung. I must confess that I got a full return for my sixpence. Even the gorgeous staging of Beerbohm Tree's plays is not in it with this mysterious, incense-laden, green-robed show. It seemed as if I had been transported back to ancient Rome, and was at a shrine of one of the numerous deities once popular in that seat of Paganism.

The tolling of bells, the sweet, rich tones of the organ, the cloudy and heavy atmosphere, the hypnotised worshipers, the flitting white-and-green-robed figures, the piping of the choristers—what a medley of sensations. Yet in the midst of it all I was reminded of that farcical sketch, *Jud' Brown on Rubenstein*, and how *Jud'* got up in the delirium of emotion produced by the great pianist, and shouted: "Go it, m' Rube." But one can readily see how it is that Rome has such an influence over a certain type of mind. The antiquity of the system, the mysteries of her dogmas, the vast, complex machinery at her command, the symbols and ciphers with which she conjures, all form the shimmering web which she weaves for the capture of the only too-credulous human prey. And a sentence of the late Father Tyrell—quoted by Baron von Hügel in a recent number of the *Hibbert Journal*—serves to illuminate my point. "It is a poetical, mystical, decidedly intelligent mind, and of course hankers after Rome of the saints and mystics, and is repelled by Rome of the theologians and curialists." He was referring to a young man who had come under the influence of "The Scarlet Woman."

In a great revival meeting there is a gush of wild singing, the stirring of tremendous emotions. This was evident at the Torrey-Alexander Mission and at the Welsh Revival meetings. At the correct moment, carefully gauged by the speaker, there is the delivering of the discourse, in which he hurls his blunt, terrific thunder-blasts, sweeping the swaying, unhappy mind completely off the balance. Then the sugar-coated pill of Calvinistic theology is presented to the sick soul, who is advised to try a private consultation in the inquiry-room.

But with the Catholics all this is too vulgar, too like a cheap-jack shouting his wares, or like a travelling quack haranguing his audience of open-mouthed country bumpkins on the efficacy of his cures. And the difference between the Protestant Revivalist and the Catholic system is the difference between a cheap and nasty music-hall performance and a better-class melodrama. Every device is used to influence the mind. Figures, pictures, stage-lighting and stage-posing—all that is theatrical is in evidence. And yet is it not because of these very things that mediævalism has left us its treasures of art and architecture?

How many forces are at work playing on the susceptible mind, like varying currents of air which make the grass and the trees sway hither and thither. Now the mind is swayed this way, and now that; now dashed against a blank wall of despair; now swept into a surging whirlpool of tremulous emotion. Everyone who has passed through a religious experience knows, only too well, all these phases. And yet it cannot be otherwise. But the gale which sways the giant cedar only tends to root its multitude of tendrils further into the earth. What a history there is of subtle influences, psychological changes, great crises, in the development of a "soul" out of the dim, elemental, and crude beliefs of youth, through the battling with elusive problems, into a clear grasp of the cosmos. But from amid the multitude of things, like the hurrying notes of a symphony, there emerges the steady, though varying, chanting of the Progress of Humanity.

But here the repulsive faces of the priests, the glitter of the show, the bowing of the celebrant, the devout crossing of the breast, the little side altars with brazier and candles, and the kneeling devotees in pious meditation, all leave on the outsider a peculiar uncertain feeling. Should he laugh, or cry? And yet here one is in touch with the great historic religion in all its sensuous and subtle power. And, after all, Protestantism is only a split off Catholicism, and the Bible but a tag on the ancient mantle. Here was the atmosphere; and of what use was the study of the dogmas, as articles of belief, apart from grasping what this atmosphere means?

Once out in the open-air again, I breathed deeply to try and rid myself of the obnoxious effluvia of the incense. And I was glad after dinner to get away on to the uplands, and feel the fresh breeze off the moors, and the aroma of the new-mown hay, to listen to the plaintive call of the plover, and feel something of that delicious contact with Nature. Thus I shook off the evil influence of a superstitious jumble of antiquated myths. Was not Father Chiniquy right when he said in his book, *Fifty Years in the Church of Rome*, that the religion of the old Sun-worshippers, waiting to greet the orb of day as he rose above the eastern horizon, with chanting and incense, was a far more sane idea than the adoration of the consecrated wafer?

FELIX PONDERING.

### Our Poets and the Sea.

"O fair, green-girdled mother."—SWINBURNE.

FEW town-bred people really love the sea. Her unadorned beauty is not enough for them. The sight of a lonely white beach, or a long stretch of ribbed sand, or the measured surf beating on the shore, has no attraction for their eyes. They must take some of their city amusements with them in the shape of bands, pierrots, punch and judy shows, hawkers, and evangelists. The sea does not give her best to them. She waits for the true lover whose breast broadens and whose eyes brighten at the sight of his beloved, and who wants no other company, who loves her in all her various moods, and does not flee when she ceases to smile. To him she not only gives health, but in calm enriches his

fancy with witching melody, and in storm stirs his being to choral harmony. Unlike mortal mistress, she causes her lover no anxiety, but thrills him with a constant joy in her presence. He on whom her spell once falls has indeed suffered—

"A sea change  
Into something rich and strange."

When the glorious summer comes, when we feel that, after a year's work, we have won the prize of a holiday, how we turn instinctively to the sea. We pine for the smell of the sea, the murmur of the waves, the sound of the pebbles on the shore, the cries of the sea-birds, and long to linger, with Shelley—

"Where the pebble-paven shore  
Under the quick, faint kisses of the sea,  
Trembles and sparkles as with ecstasy."

Shelley is always a wonderful writer, but he is never happier than in his sea pieces:—

"I see the deep's untrampled floor  
With green and purple sea-weeds strown."

Listen to this magnificent passage from "The Ode to the West Wind":—

"Far below,  
The sea blooms, and the oozy woods, which wear  
The sapless foliage of the ocean, know  
Thy voice, and suddenly grow grey with fear,  
And tremble and despoil themselves."

Swinburne has sung the glories of the sea in many a song. We can all soar with him into the seventh heaven of poesy. Try the description of that immortal swim of Tristram of Lyonesse:—

"He watched the dim sea with a deepening smile,  
And felt the sound and savor and swift flight  
Of waves that fled beneath the fading light  
And died before the darkness, like a song  
With harps between and trumpets blown along."

Byron was a famous swimmer, and his apostrophe to the ocean in "Childe Harold's Pilgrimage," has the right ring about it. Coleridge, despite the "sunless sea" of "Kubla Khan," was too prone to moralising in the presence of the ocean. Wordsworth bids us—

"Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea,  
And hear old Triton blow his wreathed horn."

Arnold has the Virgilian spirit of awe in his "Dover Beach," and he never displayed his art to happier advantage than in "The Forsaken Mermaid."

Keats thought of the great waters rather as a treasure store of magic, a world which he could people with the creations of his gorgeous fancy. He makes splendid use of this, as in his ever memorable lines:—

"Like stout Cortez, when with eagle eyes  
He stared at the Pacific—and all his men  
Looked at each other with a wild surmise—  
Silent, upon a peak in Darien."

In other moods he speaks of the ocean's "pure ablation round earth's human shores" and of "perilous seas in faery lands forlorn."

Tennyson's sea pictures would make a study in themselves:—

"The plunging seas draw backward from the land  
Their moon-led waters white."

"Listening now to the tide in its broad-flung shipwrecking  
roar,  
Now to the scream of a madden'd beach dragged down  
by the waves."

"Crisp foam-flakes scud along the level sand,  
Torn from the fringe of spray."

To Robert Bridges, ships and the sea are one and indivisible. He has expressed the wonder and the witchery of the business in great waters:—

"Whither O splendid ship, thy white sails crowding,  
Leaning across the bosom of the urgent west,  
That fearest not sea rising nor sky clouding,  
Whither away, fair rover, and what thy quest?  
Ah! soon when winter has all our vales opprest,  
When skies are cold and misty, and hail is hurling,  
Wilt thou glide on the blue Pacific, or rest  
In a summer haven asleep, thy white sails furling?"

Shakespeare is, as ever, the Master. His phrase "multitudinous seas" seizes, in one triumphant

moment, the eternal movement of the world's waterways. The human note is introduced with the same consummate mastery in another passage:—

"On such a night  
Stood Dido with a willow in her hand  
Upon the wild sea banks, and waved her love  
To come again to Carthage."

MIMNERMUS.

### Acid Drops.

General Booth is at his old tricks again. Speaking on Sunday at South Shields, with the Mayor presiding (what mayors we do get in England!) the old showman said that if the Government would lend him the price of a single *Dreadnought* at 2½ per cent., he would fix up on small holdings on the land 2,000 families, representing 10,000 souls, and repay the loan in forty-four years. The men he would settle would be chosen from among the unemployed, with their wives and children. But families will get on the land, with proper legal facilities, without any aid from General Booth. His long nose is not wanted at all in the business. Moreover, the security offered by General Booth, even for the interest, to say nothing of the principal, would not be good enough for anybody outside a lunatic asylum. Hadleigh Colony shows what a failure he is at making things "pay," and his London shelters show what a curious success he is in dealing with the "unemployed."

The case of a man named Wicksey was before the Walsall Board of Guardians recently. He had been sent out to Canada by the Distress Committee, which paid General Booth £2 per head more than the passage out. Wicksey, however, told the Guardians that he had refunded the money advanced by the Salvation Army for his passage out, and had the receipts in Canada. But the Town Clerk had not received any report from the Salvation Army to that effect, so Wicksey's application to take his wife and family out of the Union to accompany him to Canada, whence he had come to fetch them, was adjourned for a week for further inquiries. Query—Will the Salvation Army "brass up"?

Florence Nightingale is dead. What a beautiful name! And what are all the angels of superstition to such a woman?

One of Florence Nightingale's closest and best friends was Harriet Martineau—another great woman, and an Atheist.

The *Daily News* quoted largely from Harriet Martineau's article on Florence Nightingale in an old number of that newspaper. And what powerful and elegant writing it was! It made everything else in Monday's *Daily News* look poor.

The *Westminster Gazette*, with common orthodox insolence, in its article on the death of Florence Nightingale, says: "That the noble lady whose release from all bodily ills we now record was an earnest Christian goes without saying." In a certain sense—a sense, of course, not intended—this is perfectly true; for no lady Freethinker would ever have been granted an opportunity of doing Florence Nightingale's work. Christian bigotry would have seen to that. Nurses in hospitals even now have to belong to some Christian denomination; if they show any Freethought tendencies they are soon hustled out. And the contemptible bigots who hustle them out have the cheek to ask "where are your Freethinking nurses?"

The Rev. A. J. Waldron says that when he was first appointed to Brixton he found in a safe belonging to the church a list of persons converted at the Torrey-Alexander Mission. Sixty per cent. of the names on the list were those of children under twelve years of age. Of the remainder, a visit to each showed that there was not one who was not already a member of some church or other before the visit of the two Americans. This is precisely what we were pointing out all the time this "Mission" was, with the assistance of a number of clergymen, humbugging a section of the British public. We congratulate Mr. Waldron on having, once in a while, let out the truth.

Mr. Waldron also says that of all subjects religion still interests the largest number of people. This is a statement often made, but the truth of it seems to us very questionable. To commence with, there is no other subject in which such a large number of people are directly and financially

interested, and consequently no other subject that is forced upon the public to an equal extent. An army of men, of equal size with the religious army, advertising law, literature, politics, or art, might make any one of these as common a subject of conversation. Next, more people talk about religion than anything else—or are more ready to talk about religion than they are about anything else—for the simple reason that it is one of those topics on which no one seems to feel himself, or herself, too great an ignoramus to speak. On nearly every other subject people feel that some sort of preparation, some amount of preliminary study, is necessary. But on religion everyone seems ready to deliver a judgment offhand. And the greater the ignorance of ordinary matters, the more emphatic is the opinion expressed on religion. One need only observe the diffidence with which opinions are expressed on literature, or science, or even politics, and the certainty with which they are put forward about religion, to prove the truth of this. The fact is that while religion is not a subject that is confined to fools, it is one with which fools feel quite at home. The history of the world would have been vastly different to what it has been had people felt it necessary to give the same study to religion as to other matters before expressing an opinion.

The man who does "The Churches" for the *Morning Leader* ought to have his old-age pension. He is quite an antediluvian. At this time of day, he actually quarrels with the Rev. A. J. Waldron for stating some plain facts about the Torrey-Alexander mission's converts at Brixton. He cannot dispute the facts, but he whiningly says that "Mr. Waldron is adopting a tone likely to disappoint and discourage Christian workers." "The Churches" man believes in Torrey. He would! And what more is to be said?

"Father" Adderley, as he was called in Monday's *Daily News*, has expressed himself in favor of the cinematograph as a vehicle for religious instruction. The interviewer to whom he confided this went off to the central offices of the Church Army and had a talk with Captain Locher, who is in charge of the lantern department. This gentleman said that "much good work might be done by the use of the cinematograph at our various mission services," but it wasn't easy as yet to obtain suitable Bible films. Then the interviewer went off to Messrs. Pathé and Co., the cinematograph film makers, who said that they had several series of films depicting the stories of the Prodigal Son, Joseph and his Brethren, the Woman of Samaria, etc., and they mean to develop the business. May we venture, then, to offer them a few suggestions? Some amusing films would be Jonah on board the submarine *Whale*, Balaam's ass conversing with its master, and Jesus walking on the sea. The last, of course, would be accompanied on the pianola with "A Life on the Rolling Deep." Some "spicy" films, that would crowd the house every time, would be Adam and Eve before the fig-leaf period, Ruth and Boaz in the barn, Mrs. Rahab's house of call at Jericho, David admiring Bathsheba bathing, the same monarch dancing before the ark, Solomon at home with his seven hundred dexter and three hundred sinister wives, and Mary of Nazareth's midnight interview with the Archangel Gabriel. Yes, the Bible would be a grand book for cinematograph pictures.

The *Church Times* for August 12 generously admits that Thomas Paine "wrote some of the best and simplest English ever penned, and was in the succession of Swift and Goldsmith." Now we shan't be long.

So many religious preachers are comforting themselves and deluding others with the statement that Haeckel—one of Germany's foremost men of science—that we may be excused quoting a remark of the *Christian Commonwealth* on the matter. In its column of "Table Talk" the writer remarks that, "It is astonishing what a vogue this scientist's works has among the thoughtful reading public. The demand at the free libraries attests this. It is a mechanical age and a mechanical theory of the universe has come to the front." We do not quite know in what sense the *C. W.* uses the term "mechanical," but we imagine the truth to be that the "thoughtful reading public" is getting dissatisfied with religious theories of the world, and are finding in writers like Haeckel the mental sustenance religion fails to give.

A gentleman called W. J. Vickery, writing to us from Plymouth, earnestly desires us to "have the following points cleared up." The first is this: "Is there any proof that the Gospels were written in the first century? If the answer is in the negative, can you oblige with the names of eminent scholars who prove it?" Now if our correspondent under-

stood the character of this problem, he would not expect an answer in a few sentences. Learned disputes, in big books, have raged over it. All we can say here is that our present four Gospels, as we have them, were certainly not written in the first century; and the difficulty is not to find a scholar who thinks that they were *not* but a scholar who thinks that they were. The second point is this: "Is there proof that the Gospels were written by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John?" Our reply is "No." We do not know of any authorities, even inside the Churches, who would now say "Yes." The third point is: "Did Mr. Foote decline to accept a challenge offered him by a Mr. Dickson, of America, regarding the character of Col. Ingersoll?" We never heard of such a challenge before. We presume the "Dickson" means "Dixon," a reverend gentleman who was smashed by Mr. W. T. Stead in the *Review of Reviews* and ground to powder by Mr. Foote in the *Freethinker*. The fourth point is this: "Did Mr. Foote decline to accept a challenge by Mr. Charles Bradlaugh's brother to prove that Mr. Bradlaugh did not die a Christian?" We never heard of this challenge either.

We advise our correspondent not to let Christians make a fool of him. Take that last question, for instance. Mr. Foote was not present at Charles Bradlaugh's death, neither was Charles Bradlaugh's brother—whom Bradlaugh had disowned for years, and with very good reason. Why on earth should these two persons start discussing such a question with each other? What is their word on the subject worth? Charles Bradlaugh's daughter, who was with him during his last illness—the nurse who attended him professionally—and the doctor who also attended him professionally; these signed a statement which bars out all the lies that could be invented as to Bradlaugh's dying otherwise than he had lived; and the statement may be found in the penny pamphlet, written by Mrs. Bradlaugh-Bonner, and entitled *Did Charles Bradlaugh die an Atheist?*

Cannot sensible people see that the presumption is that an Atheist dies an Atheist, and it is for those who assert otherwise to prove their assertion? It is sheer nonsense to ask somebody or other to prove that Charles Bradlaugh did not die a Christian. You might as well ask his friends to prove that he never stole a leg of mutton.

Dickman was duly hung for the murder of Mr. Nesbit. Some people think he was innocent, but that is a matter which we are not called upon to discuss. What we wish to note is the callous refusal of the authorities to let him kiss his children on the eve of his execution. Perhaps they could plead the "regulations." But that only removes the responsibility a step further back. No doubt these people who refuse a dying man so simple and natural a request are good Christians. They *must* be. Freethinkers would never act in that way.

"For the moment," says the Rev. R. J. Campbell, "Western civilisation, roughly speaking, has lost sight of the Eternal. It is making a great deal of advance in other ways; it is becoming kinder, juster, more humane; it is beginning to realise its duty to make life more livable for the unprivileged and afflicted; but it does not dwell with the eternal, and therefore it neglects religion." The civilised world, that is to say, is growing morally better and less religious. Mr. Campbell regrets it. We don't. We say it is inevitable.

Bishop Harris, of Korea, at present in London, informed a *Methodist Times* representative that Christianity has a real grip upon the people of Korea. We would direct the Bishop's attention to an article in the *Japan Times* for April 9, wherein it is pointed out that the Koreans joined missionary societies under the impression that conversion protected them against regulations imposed by the Japanese, and even freed them from the necessity of paying taxes. The writer of the article plainly says that "The greater part of Christian converts are malcontents, or else such Koreans as are aiming at some selfish emolument." When they find out their mistake they leave. The Bishop also said of Japan, "It has been a revelation to me how Christianity has permeated the life of the nation." "Permeated" is a very serviceable word, and does duty when no tangible results can be recorded.

Clergymen make much capital out of their church collections on Hospital Sunday, but they have evidently not sufficient interest in the cause of charity to overlook an attack on their own trade interests. Some of the numerous cinematograph shows have obtained permission to open their places on Sunday, devoting all their profits to the London Hospital. A Rev. Dr. Voelcker is taking a leading

part in a movement against what is described as a new form of Sunday desecration, and all the Churches are being urged to give their support. It is admitted that there is nothing objectionable in the displays, but it is explained that these theatres "are often within a few yards of places of worship, blazing with electric light, and offering many attractions to the passer-by. Such sights must tend to weaken the public feeling with regard to the sanctity of Sunday, already suffering under many encroachments." The frankness of the admission is the only pleasing feature about this deliverance. The cinematograph theatres are to be closed, not because they are objectionable in themselves, but because they are often close to a church, and people may prefer a moving film to a stagnant sermon.

Dr. Voelcker and others have approached the County Council, but have failed to get any "satisfactory response." The Committee of the London Hospital has been approached, but that body declined to refuse subscriptions offered to them as the proceeds of these Sunday entertainments. Now it is suggested that the Churches should band themselves together and decline to collect money for the London Hospital so long as it receives subscriptions from the source to which exception is taken. In other words, these clergymen advocate starving—so far as they can—the London Hospital until it helps them to force a form of Sabbatarianism upon people who have no taste for it. We hope that all concerned in the maintenance of the Hospital will decline to permit themselves to be made the catspaw of these parsons—who put their own professional interests before everything else—and take all that the proprietors of these theatres are willing to give them. It would be well if the Churches could truthfully say that their funds came from no less honorable a source.

Jesus said: "If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me." "Not for this child," said the Rev. James Satterthwaite, of the Vicarage, Disley, near Stockport, who died on June 21, and left estate valued at £52,492.

Here is another of them. Rev. John Edward Alexander Inge, of Gayton-le-Marsh, Lincolnshire, left £64,551. After that the Rev. R. B. Watson, of Edinburgh, ex-chaplain of the 93rd Highlanders, who left £7,764, is hardly worth mentioning.

Americans are just as foolish in religious matters as people are on this side of the herring pond. All the churches in New York offered up prayers for the recovery of Mayor Gaynor the day after he was shot. This appeal to "the One Above" is extremely amusing, made as it is by those who regard themselves as the 'cutest persons on earth. It might occur to them that if "Providence" really existed, and had any interest in Mayor Gaynor, it would have protected him against the assassin's bullet instead of pulling him through afterwards.

The dear old *Daily News*, which hasn't changed its character with its appearance, had the following headline the other day: "220,000,000 Bibles. Advance of Christianity in the Far East." The suggestion is that the circulation of the Bible means the advance of Christianity. Well, it doesn't. The Bible is circulated in England more vigorously than ever, and everybody knows that belief in Christianity is declining all the time.

Amongst the people who have had parts of the Bible translated (often very funnily) into their own lingo are "the 40,000 cannibals on the south coast of British New Guinea." These cannibals probably find Jehovah very much to their taste. They would also appreciate some texts in the New Testament, especially John vi. 53-57. "For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed" would suit them down to the ground. Yes, there does seem a future for Christianity in British New Guinea.

Formalin vapor is now used for the preservation of corpses. What a pity it wasn't invented before a certain crucifixion. The corpse of corpses might then have been kept on exhibition for ever. It would have been far more convincing than the ascension.

Superstition dies hard, even the most silly. Take, for example, the following ancient prayer: "Oh Lord Jesus, I implore thee, bless all mankind; keep me from all evil by thy precious blood; and take me to dwell with thee in eternity." When anyone sees that prayer his first duty is to copy it. If he omits to do so, he will meet with some

misfortune. But if a man is very pious, and will copy it nine days, beginning with the day he receives it, and sends a copy to a friend each day, on the ninth day he will hear of some great joy, and be delivered from great calamities. Even to-day there are thousands of people who seriously believe such childish rubbish, and so cumber their lives with worse than useless toil and worry.

The *Baptist Times* notes that in the Annual Report of the Commissioners in Lunacy, Nonconformist ministers form only a very small proportion. It concludes from this that "the surest preventive against mental disorders is simple and regular habits of life and hard and continuous intellectual exercise." We should not expect to find "hard and continuous intellectual exercise" a marked characteristic of the clergy. Oliver Wendell Holmes said that some people's stupidity saved them from going insane, and that people of intelligence ought to go mad once in a lifetime to prove they possessed brains. We suggest Dr. Holmes' theory to the *Baptist Times* as being at least worthy of consideration.

The Rev. W. Bitton says that it should be easy to show the Chinese that what Christianity has done for the nations of the West it can also do for China. We agree it is easy to show this, and we have been trying to do so for a large part of our life. And when the Chinese fully realise all that Christianity has done for the Western world it will be even less ready to adopt it than is now the case.

Dr. Harry Roberts solicits books for the Mile End Workhouse Library. He wants 2,000 volumes for a start. But no old sermons! Nor new ones either, we imagine.

Enough slander has been cast at David Hume, simply because he was a Freethinker, and a master of that subtle irony which Christians have always dreaded. It is good to see the tables turned occasionally. Lord Rosebery, in his latest oration on Robert Burns, referred to Dr. Blacklock who dissuaded the great poet from emigrating to the West Indies and urged him to pay that visit to Edinburgh which was the turning point in his career. Writing on this topic in *T. P.'s Weekly*, Mr. Hector Macpherson observes that Dr. Blacklock owed a good deal to David Hume. He was a poet, if he is now reckoned a minor one, and it was felt that something should be done for him, especially as he was blind. They made him God's minister at Kirkcudbright, but the parishioners resented the idea of a blind preacher. He was therefore removed to Edinburgh on a small part of the stipend. "He owed much," Mr. Macpherson says, "to the kindness of David Hume, who not only took a literary interest in his poetic effusions, but went about persuading his friends and acquaintances to purchase his poems. When Hume resigned his librarianship of the Advocates' Library, he gave Blacklock his year's salary, amounting to £40." The bad man!

Canon Newbold is spoken of as one of the few great preachers of the Church of England; and he belongs to the very orthodox school. But, preaching in St. Paul's the other Sunday, the best he could say for Christianity was that it "puts a key into our hands which at least has the merit of fitting the lock" of the dark problems of life, "and seems to promise to open it." This last clause, "and seems to promise to open it," is incapable of improvement, coming, as it does, from a dignitary of the Church. Though it has been on trial for nigh two thousand years, Christianity, according to one of its most valiant champions, only "seems to promise to open" the lock of life's troubles and sorrows. And yet, if the truth must be told, the only fault of the clause is that it is too optimistic.

The absurdity of the situation appears when it is borne in mind that the above humiliating statement is made by a man who holds that "Christianity is a supernatural religion, based on the supernatural, advancing supernatural claims, and offering supernatural blessings," and who is convinced that the lives of its exponents and teachers is, or may be, "saturated with the power of the supernatural." No sensible person, listening to Canon Newbold's sermon, would ever dream that he wields any supernatural power; and, surely, no sensible person who admits that Christianity only "seems to promise to open" life's lock would imagine that there is anything supernatural about it. Its claims are indescribably ludicrous when compared with its performances.

The Christian preacher has always been an unblushing egotist. He is a perfect expert in the art of self-magnification. If he were to disappear, society would tumble headlong into the pit of perdition. Of all this and more we are

assured by "Laicus" in the *Methodist Times* for August 11. At present religion is in a parlous condition, and its only hope of salvation lies in the preacher. The preacher is the only one who can save religion, and religion alone, as handled by the preacher, can save society. "Laicus" makes game of the people who say that "preaching is played out," characterising them as "pert," "half-educated," "advanced people, who have picked up a smattering of science and literature," and have the "assurance of conceited ignorance." This is the kind of sniffing and sneering at opponents to be expected from a man who is half-conscious of being nothing but "a belated survival of the ages of ignorance."

Freethinkers were being sent to prison as "blasphemers" when "Hymns for the Use of Teachers and Scholars, compiled by Direction of the Committee of the Leeds Sunday School Union" was issued in 1833. The following are two cheerful verses from one of the hymns in that collection:—

"There is a pit beneath the grave,  
Where Satan and his angels dwell;  
God made it in his holy wrath,  
And call'd the horrid dungeon—hell.

There burn the everlasting flames,  
Kindled by His almighty breath;  
And sinners in that pit endure  
The vengeance of eternal death."

Even a paper like the *Daily Chronicle* laughs at this sort of thing now. It was very different in 1833. Papers like the *Daily Chronicle* helped to send Freethinkers to prison then for laughing at such stuff.

A recent "Thought for the Day" in the *Mirror* was the following:—

"The soul is a flame that God has intrusted to us; we are bound to feed it with all that we find most precious.—  
Voltaire."

Voltaire was an extraordinarily voluminous writer, and his pen was active for more than sixty years, covering all the developments of a restless mind. We are not going to say, therefore, that he did not write that sentence, but we should like to have the precise reference to it.

More "Providence." The floods in Japan are appalling. Great part of Tokyo is under water. Hundreds of people are drowned, thousands are destitute.

The calamitous fire at the Brussels Exhibition, in which so many beautiful and priceless things were destroyed, shows how human interests are dear to "the One Above." It can hardly be said that divine interference in such cases would paralyse the springs of self-help. And it makes one shudder to think of the poor animals burnt to death in the menagerie.

No doubt the curate of the parish of a village near Vicenza thought the better the place the better the deed. There was a quarrel between him and the parish priest, who had given him notice to go; but instead of doing that he borrowed a gun, loaded it, hid it in his vestments, and went and shot his superior dead as he was saying Mass. Another instance of the elevating and restraining influence of religion.

A hostile crowd at Thorpe, Surrey, roughly handled Mr. J. C. Gurr, a Wycliffe preacher—or Kensitite. They destroyed his "No Popery" banner, and treated him to several blows on the face and body. It took a local magistrate and a number of constables to restore order. How they love one another still!

Mr. Keir Hardie, addressing the Durham Miners' Association mass meeting on the Durham racecourse, prattled once more about "the great Working Man, Jesus of Nazareth"—who, by the way, left off Working (with a capital W) just like Mr. Keir Hardie, and took to the road. It appears that Jesus and Keir (or Keir and Jesus) are going to save the world between them, although they have both been on the job for some time without making much progress. We presume we must wait and see.

Keir promises, for the early future, to get the working-men of all civilised countries to declare most solemnly that the principles of Jesus shall no longer be outraged by war between nations. If war is declared the working-men, after that sublime declaration, will drop their tools and refuse to let a wheel turn. But if it were known that they would do that war would not be declared. Keir seems to have learnt one thing of Jesus. Gas!



### Mr. Foote's Engagements.

September 4, 11, 18, 25, Queen's Hall, London.  
 October 2, Glasgow; 9, Manchester; 16, Queen's Hall;  
 23, Leicester; 30, Birmingham.  
 November 6, Shoreditch Town Hall; 13, Liverpool; 27, Shore-  
 ditch Town Hall.

### To Correspondents.

**PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND: 1910.**—Previously acknowledged, £243 17s. 1d. Received since:—Frederick Rich, 1s.; H. M. Ridgway, £1.

**BRUSSELS DELEGATION FUND.**—Previously acknowledged, £10 9s. Received since:—A. J. Fincken, £1; C. Bridger, 1s.; H. Wyllie, £1; George Payne, £1 1s.; Frederick Rich, 2s.; B. Hall, 5s.; W. Bastet, 19s. 6d.; J. H. Ridgway, 1s. 6d.; P. R., 1s.; R. Taylor, 2s. 6d.; J. P., 1s. 6d.; W. Banner, 3s.; W. W., 5s.; C. McKelvie, 2s. 6d. *Per Miss Vance*:—A. Clarke, 5s.; G. F. H. McClusky, 5s.

C. P.—Sorry we cannot inform you.

JAMES CLARK.—You have been "told" nonsense. Mr. Thomas Hardy never was a contributor to the *Freethinker*. We printed a letter from him some weeks ago, in response to references we made to him in an article. That is all. We believe you will find that Mr. Thomas Hardy has not been "a contributor" to any paper.

C. BRIDGER.—Sending as requested. There ought to be many small subscribers. The rank and file of the party do much less than they should. We hope they don't feel "ashamed" to subscribe a small sum. One man's shilling may be relatively more than another man's pound.

THOMAS MARSHALL.—You surely didn't expect your letter to be inserted, did you? We have plenty of respect for individual doctors; some of them are of the elect of humanity; but their Trade Union is like other Trade Unions—and more so; and medical journals are like other journals—commercial ventures.

G. BRADFIELD.—See paragraph.

W. T. N.—See paragraph. Thanks.

FREDERICK RICH.—Thanks for your earnest wishes that we may live long to fight superstition and priestcraft.

A. B. MOSS.—It is only too true, as you say, in relation to the Melbourne matter that—"The pioneers are so often forgotten by the rising generation, when they are making progress by walking steadily upon the path made smooth by the toil of their predecessors."

M. GREEN.—Glad that you and your brother took the *Freethinker* on the recommendation of your newagent, and you think it worth a lot more than its price. Thanks for your warm good wishes. We note that you have seen enough of the "beauties" of religion.

G. HAIGH.—Luke xix. 27.

A. E. WILLIAMS.—See paragraph. Thanks.

T. H. S.—The cutting from the rag you enclose is beneath contempt. We think, however, that it is high time that we reprinted from the *Freethinker* in permanent form our detailed reply to Evangelist Torrey's "charges" against Thomas Paine—one of which the Glasgow yahoo repeats, though Torrey himself was obliged to abandon it.

W. P. BALL.—Much obliged for cuttings.

J. PARTRIDGE.—We have noticed it.

W. CHALLIS.—It is all that you say. Thanks.

F. COLLINS.—Orders for literature sent to our shop do not come under Mr. Foote's eyes, unless a complaint is made. Did you really suppose that they did? Cobbett's *Grammar* is easily obtainable, though we do not at the moment recollect the publisher.

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.

### Sugar Plums.

St. James's Hall being closed, for the present at any rate, the course of Sunday evening Freethought lectures during September and October, organised by the Secular Society, Ltd., will take place at the Queen's (Minor) Hall. Mr. Foote occupies the platform during the whole of September, and on the middle Sunday of the five in October. The four other Sundays will be shared by Mr. C. Cohen and Mr. J. T. Lloyd.

London "saints" are earnestly invited to assist in advertising these Queen's Hall lectures. It is quite impossible to advertise all over London (and the audience is drawn from the whole area) in the ordinary commercial way. Freethinkers are appealed to, therefore, to make the lectures known amongst their friends and acquaintances. Neat announcements are printed for circulation in that way, and can be obtained of Miss Vance, at 2 Newcastle-street, E.C.

Mr. W. Bastet, an Australian Freethinker, on his way home again after a visit to the old country, writes us from Germany, and encloses 20 marks (19s. 6d.) for the Brussels Delegation Fund. Mr. Bastet says he has taken the *Freethinker* for two years, and is sorry he did not take it from the first number. He did take Joseph Symes's *Liberator* from start to finish, and he agrees with all we said about "the big Joseph" in a recent Acid Drop. "He was indeed a giant fighter," our correspondent says, and "was only beaten when rascality and the rotten laws of the land combined," as in the case of the Hall of Science, which Symes raised the money to build, and which the "trustees" diverted to other purposes and finally sold. Mr. Bastet says "there never was such an able man in Australia," and there may never be again. We, for our own part, are delighted to have the good wishes of a stalwart supporter of the stalwart old fighter who never knew fear.

The Wood-Green Branch holds its annual picnic on Sunday next (Aug. 28). There will be a trip to Chingford by the 1.30 p.m. train from Haringay-park (Midland Railway), with tea at Butler's Retreat at 5 p.m. "Saints" from other London Branches will be welcome. Tickets, including tea and rail, 2s.; tea tickets 1s.; children half price. Address, W. Stewart, 78 Carlingford-road, West-green.

The Liverpool Branch holds another picnic to-day (Aug. 21). The party leaves for Eastham by the 11 a.m. boat from the Landing Stage. Cricket and other games are in the program. Tickets 2/9 each from the secretary, W. McKelvie, 49 Penrose-street, Everton.

The *Leamington Chronicle* prints an excellent letter from Mr. Frederick W. Walsh, pointing out that the elimination of an insult to Catholics from the King's Coronation Oath does not complete religious toleration in England, as the Blasphemy Laws still remain on the Statute Book. The editor, in a leaderette, suggests that the penal laws against Blasphemy are not like penal laws against Protestantism or Catholicism, being only aimed at "attempts to deliberately cause pain to those who profess a particular faith by grossly irreverent or indecent attacks upon or parodies of it." Let the editor read the Statute against Blasphemy, and he will see that it is aimed at opinions, and does not contain an allusion to irreverence or indecency.

Not being able to make out from the New York *Truth-seeker* how Mr. George Macdonald was getting on, whether he was better or worse, or living or dead, we dropped him a line and asked him to let somebody drop us one on his behalf in return. We have just received a reply in his own handwriting. He appears to have had a very bad time with rheumatic fever, was away from the editorial office for two months (one in bed, and one convalescing), and although now back at the office is still rather feeble and working half time. We earnestly hope he will soon be himself again. His loss would make a big gap in the *personnel* of American Freethought. "I am relieved," he concludes his letter, "to know you are through with your trouble. As for myself, I can stand anything but ill-health, and think I should prefer the cemetery to the hospital. May you long escape both."

James Thomson's ("B. V.") admirers will be glad to have his articles on Walt Whitman which Mr. B. Dobell has made accessible in booklet form—in paper covers 1s. and in cloth 1s. 6d. There are two sets of articles—one contributed to the *National Reformer* in 1874, the other to *Cope's Tobacco Plant* in 1881-2. Mr. Dobell contributes a longish Introduction to the reprint. We hope to give this little volume an extended notice very shortly.

## The Antiquity of the Cross.

"The Cross has been used everywhere and throughout all times as a means of marking and adorning.

Among Pagan tribes, both in the Old and in the New world, it occurs under every possible form as representative of natural forces—or accessory to idols; and after the crucifixion of Christ it became the true symbol of Christianity."—*Harzog's Religious Encyclopadia*, article "The Cross," by Heinrich Merz, D.D.

"It is curious, on the other hand, that a cruciform device having diverse significations should have occupied a prominent position among the many sacred and mystic figures and symbols connected with the anthologies of heathen antiquity. Such certainly was the case in Egypt, Assyria, Persia, and India, and also among the Scandinavian races of the North." *Encyclopadia Britannica* (ninth edition), article "The Cross."

"Not only was the cross-symbol, as all scholars now admit, absolutely universal in pre-Christian times, and as a rule a recognised symbol of life or immortality, but the actual idea of a mystic or exemplary crucifixion was perfectly familiar in Pagan theology."—J. M. ROBERTSON, *Christianity and Mythology*; 1900; p. 402.

THE vast majority of Christians think that the use of the Cross as a religious emblem originated with Christianity, but every scholar knows that it was one of the most ancient of all religious symbols. It is one of the most easily made of all signs, as befits a figure of such extreme antiquity, reaching back to the very commencement of civilisation.

The Rev. Baring Gould has a chapter upon this subject in his *Curious Myths of the Middle Ages*, in which he shows that "the Cross was a sacred sign long before our Savior died on it." He tells us:—

"Long before the Romans, long before the Etruscans, there lived in the plains of Northern Italy a people to whom the cross was a religious symbol, the sign beneath which they laid their dead to rest; a people of whom history tells nothing, knowing not their name; but of whom antiquarian research has learned this, that they lived in ignorance of the arts of civilisation, that they dwelt in villages built on platforms over lakes, and that they trusted in the cross to guard, and may be to revive, their loved ones whom they committed to the dust." (P. 364.)

He also tells us that, according to the calculation of M. Des Verges, the great development of Etruscan civilisation took place "more than 1,040 years before our era," and these Cross-worshippers lived "long antecedent to the time of Etruscan civilisation." He also cites the verdict of De Mortillot, who, in his book on *Le Signe de la Croix avant les Christianisme*, declares "that above a thousand years before Christ the cross was already a religious emblem of frequent employment."

When the Spaniards conquered Mexico they found the Cross already an object of veneration. Prescott, the historian, says:—

"They could not repress their wonder as they beheld the Cross, the sacred emblem of their own faith, raised as an object of worship in the temples of Anahuac. They met with it in various places; and the image of a cross may be seen to this day, sculptured in bas-relief, on the walls of one of the buildings of Palanque, while a figure bearing some resemblance to a child is held up to it, as if in adoration."\*

Earlier in the same work we learn that its appearance gave rise to the wildest conjectures as to the races who had introduced the sacred symbol of Christianity. "But," says Prescott,

"no such inference, as we shall hereafter see, could be warranted. Yet it must be regarded as a curious fact that the Cross should have been venerated as the object of religious worship both in the New World and in the Old, where the light of Christianity had never risen." (P. 88.)

The Rev. Baring Gould says:—

"The same cross is represented on old pre-Mexican MSS., as in the Dresden Codex, and that in the possession of Herr Fejérváry, at the end of which is a colossal cross, in the midst of which is represented a bleeding deity, and figures stand round a Tau cross, upon which is perched a sacred bird."†

The same writer tells us "It was revered in Paraguay. In Peru the Incas honored a cross made out of a single piece of jasper; it was an emblem belonging to a former civilisation" (p. 372). This earlier civilisation was that of the Maya race. "They were overthrown by Votan, 800 B.C. The cross was adopted by the Azteks from the conquered Mayas. It was the emblem of Quiateot, the god of rain." (P. 373.)

The Greek Cross—like the Maltese Cross—has arms of equal length. It is only lately that we have discovered the reason for this. The startling discoveries—by Mr. Arthur Evans—in the Island of Crete, of the palace of King Minos, and of the Minoan civilisation which flourished before the rise of the Greeks, and from whom they derived their culture, is no doubt fresh in the minds of our readers. It was from this ancient culture that the Greeks derived their Cross. As Professor Burrows points out, in his most interesting book on these discoveries:—

"The square, equal-limbed marble cross that we find in the snake-goddess chamber at Knossos suggests the reason why the Greek world has always preferred that shape for the Christian symbol, as opposed to the Western 'Latin' cross, with its longer upright."\*

And this is not all; for Mr. Burrows tells us that "Mr. Evans believes that the Snake Goddess was not the central object of worship in the Middle Minoan III. shrine, but the marble cross." Mr. Evans is the highest authority on the subject, and he dates the end of early Minoan III. culture at 8000 B.C.!

That the Cross was venerated by the ancient Egyptians we have the express testimony of the early Christian historians, Sozomon, and Socrates. The latter says:—

"When the temple of Serapis was torn down and laid bare, there were found in it, engraven on stone, certain characters which they called hieroglyphics, having the form of crosses. Both the Christians and Pagans, on seeing them, thought they had reference to their respective religions: for the Christians, who affirm that the cross is the sign of Christ's saving passion, claimed this character as peculiarly theirs; but the Pagans alleged that it might appertain to Christ and Serapis in common; 'for,' said they, 'it symbolises one thing to Christians and another to Heathens.' Whilst this point was controverted amongst them, some of the heathen converts to Christianity who were conversant with those hieroglyphic characters interpreted that in the form of a cross to signify the *life to come*. This the Christians exultingly laid hold of as decidedly favorable to their religion."†

In this connection we should bear in mind that the Emperor Hadrian, when he visited Alexandria about the year A.D. 130, wrote: "There are there Christians who worship Serapis, and devoted to Serapis are those who call themselves bishops of Christ."‡

Apparently the two religions were indistinguishable; but the worship of Serapis was many centuries older than the worship of Christ.

Bonwick, in his *Egyptian Belief and Modern Thought*, says: "Horus appears sometimes with the long Latin cross. The Greek pectoral cross is Egyptian. It was called by the Fathers 'the devil's invention before Christ'" (p. 218). Bonwick says that the Cross was extended toward an Egyptian worshiper just as he had seen it done after service by the priests in Russia. He also tells us: "Strange Asiatic tribes, bringing tribute in Egypt, are noticed with garments studded with crosses; Sir Gardner Wilkinson dates the picture 1500 B.C. (P. 219.)

Mr. J. D. Parsons, in his able and scholarly work, *The Non-Christian Cross*, observes:—

"As we shall see in the chapters to come, there was a pre-Christian cross, which was, like ours, a symbol of Life. And it must be obvious to all that if the cross was a symbol of Life before our era it is possible that

\* Prescott, *History of the Conquest of Mexico*, p. 465.

† *Curious Myths of the Middle Ages*, pp. 371-2.

\* R. M. Burrows, *The Discoveries in Crete*; 1907; p. 115.  
† Socrates, *Ecclesiastical History* (Bohn's edition); 1884; p. 279. See also Sozomon, *Ecclesiastical History* (Bohn's edition); p. 333.

‡ Giles, *Christian Records*; 1877; p. 86.

it was originally fixed upon as a symbol of the Christ because it was a symbol of Life; the assumption that it became a symbol of Life because it was a symbol of Christ being in that case neither more nor less than a very natural instinct of putting the cart before the horse." (P. 15.)

Mr. Parsons writes as a Christian, and in the course of his work remarks: "Several questions naturally arise at this point of our inquiry, and it is not easy—nay, it is impossible—for us Christians to honestly dispose of all of them and yet retain our cherished opinions upon this matter" (p. 72). The same writer cites from the work of Dr. Max Ohnefalsch-Richter, *Kypros, the Bible, and Homer*, an illustration of an inscribed cylinder, in which the priest or king is represented as raising his arm "In adoration in the direction of the Cross suspended in the air before him, a holy object we often meet on Assyrian and Babylonian monuments" (p. 202). In another illustration of a vase, "The representation is one of the Sun-God Dionysus upon a cross" (p. 199). And this testimony as to "the pre-Christian cross, says Mr. Parsons, is 'borne by a work of research so free from bias against the views of the Christian Church that it has prefixed to it a letter of warm commendation from that veteran statesman and theologian, the author of the ultra-orthodox *Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture*,' Mr. Gladstone.

Having demonstrated the indisputable fact of the cult of the Cross before Christianity, two questions remain to be settled. First, the origin of the pre-Christian Cross. Second, from whom did the Christians borrow their Cross?

Mr. Parsons has a chapter on "The Origin of the Pre-Christian Cross," and shows good reasons to believe that it had its origin in Phallic worship. In other words, it represented the generative principle, and therefore became the symbol of Life. This view of the Cross is held—although Mr. Parsons omits to mention it—by English scholars like King, Inman, Payne-Knight, and Forlong, besides a host of Continental scholars.

The chaste and severe ladies of the Mrs. Grundy type little know the origin of the pious emblem they sometimes wear on their immaculate bosoms.

As to the derivation of the Christian Cross, we do not wish to dogmatise upon this point; but the present writer has—in the *University Review*, January, 1898—given his reason for believing that Christianity is indebted to the cult of Tammuz-Adonis for its central dogmas. That this cult was well known to the Jews and firmly established in Palestine we have the express testimony of the Bible itself; for Ezekiel (viii. 14) testifies that he saw the women weeping for Tammuz in the courts of the Temple of Solomon itself!

Now Ishtar was the Bride of Tammuz, and Mr. Parsons tells us "that the recognised symbol of the Phœnician Goddess of Love—Astarte, Asntoreth, or Ishtar, the Bride of the Sun-God—was a cross," and this cross was, "as can easily be seen upon reference to ancient coins, where it occurs in the hand of the goddess in question, [was] a long-handled cross such as is frequently to be seen in our pictorial representations of John the Baptist."\* There was no need for the Jews to borrow the Cross, it was already firmly planted in the soil.

We concluded the before-mentioned article by saying: "There is good reason to believe that a purified form of the myth of Tammuz became the kernel of the Mithraic, Eleusinian, and Dionysian mysteries, and that Christianity in its origin was merely a new mystery-play, compounded of the ancient myths and rituals." We have seen nothing to alter our belief since.

W. MANN.

## Eliminating the Devil.—II.

BY KARL M. TEIGEN.

(Concluded from p. 525.)

AMONG the twelve Consistorial members, seven upheld publicly the old saying, "*Nullus diabolus nullus redemptor*"—without a Devil there is no need of a Redeemer; whereas five of the members had less mediæval, or entirely modern, ideas anent this rhetorical personification of all human evils or supreme cussedness, "the Devil." That "he" in reality exists, usually as a male spirit in a multitude of male bodies or male boodles, especially in Theology and Law Journalism and Literature, in common or in higher so-called "Education," in peace or in war, is undeniable. But never in the form of a "serpent, a wolf, a dog, an adder, a dragon, a roaring lion," or a dusky gentleman with hoofs and horns, in the Biblical and superstitious sense, unless figuratively, akin to the bugbears of childhood. But, who are responsible even in Sweden for such superstitions, such "crass" concepts of the Devil as—a snake or anthropoid individual? The Bible and the clergy. They have been, they are still, the real "devils" of Scripture poetry, the Abaddons or Apollyons, the "liars, deceivers, accusers, tormenters, adversaries, princes of darkness, gods of this world, locusts or persecutors" of mankind, and multitudes are finally becoming aware of it. Public opinion is nearly through with the Bible Devil, but not with the smooth and numerous imps yet upholding him. And the Stockholm Consistory knew this. That's why it declined to try an "infidel" of their own guild, after Professor Knut Wicksell had been fined and imprisoned for Swedish "blasphemy"! They were afraid of another cosmopolitan scandal like that. So they refused to touch the Hannerz heresy case, and even certified to his correct diplomacy and good behavior generally—two sunlit indications of how progressive Sweden, "the France of the North," with its very bright people and its eminent leaders of yore; and yet, in the sciences and arts, in evolution, this sturdy young Sweden is now getting disgusted with its inherited deviltries, and means to have its religion, its high ideals, presently and permanently "undeveled," anyway.

After the Consistory's refusal to act, the celebrated Hannerz case was argued *pro* and *contra* in the press as never before. The greatest men in Sweden around the throne rushed forward to elucidate Lucifer positively or negatively, such as Professor B. Billing, Bishop G. Billing, Dr. Ivan Bratt, Dr. E. J. Ekman, Rev. S. A. Fries, Rev. H. E. Hallberg, Rev. Nils Hannerz, Rev. J. G. Hazen, Dr. Olof Kånberg, Dr. Theol. A. Landquist, Rev. C. W. Larsson, Professor H. Lundström, Professor Carl Martin, Court Chaplain G. Mazer, Professor O. Quensel, Hon. E. Räf, Professor C. C. Santesson, Rev. E. Schröderheim, Professor N. Söderblom, Court Preacher C. Ahfelt, and Professor H. Ohrvall. As samples of how the Swedish Devil was attacked and defended, a few short leads from each side are here appended. Bishop Gottfred Billing upheld deviltries thus:—

"That a Devil exists I do believe, because the Savior said so, and his words as to that cannot be misconstrued, as it seems to me.

The problem of evil remains unsolvable by human thought. At this the heaviest *crux* is not 'the existence of the Devil,' since the evil called sin is a fact, and this evil, as moral evil, can be nothing but evil will.

Even the doctrine about the Devil contains a piece of gospel for human beings, for it includes that the principle of evil lies not within humanity, but outside of it as a tempting power which may conquer, though not unconquerable. The expression, 'devilish mean,' is merely a metaphor.

All passages in holy writ about hell-fire, etc., are nothing but figurative expressions as to spiritual phenomena, expressions of, for instance, experiences and emotions on having ruined self or others, and being unable to undo what was done, to transform evil into good. Unless one wishes to deny human freedom, it

An honest man's the noblest work of God.—*Pope*.  
An honest God's the noblest work of man.—*Ingersoll*.

\* *The Non-Christian Cross*; 1896; p. 179.

seems to me impossible to oppose the necessity of self-reproach with its endless sufferings, when conscious emotionally of God's holy displeasure."

Rev. H. E. Hallberg exclaimed naively:—

"Undeviling the Church! How is that to be done? Do they mean to re-write our Bible and Hymn-book? If our Church is to exist, it must be on historic foundation, without severing our continuity with the traditional. No matter what the old forms now seem, they secrete concepts and ideas which for us do yet mean enormously much."

Rev. Nils Hannerz wrote in part thus:—

"As said before, in my religious views I have no place for any ideas of the Devil. I am also convinced of that the Swedish Church never had, much less has now, any 'Devil dogma,' as Dr. Nyström alleges. Individual clergymen may possibly entertain ideas in that direction. If our Church has such ideas it can easily be demonstrated by proceeding against me, who publicly denies belief in a personal Devil. Should Dr. Nyström succeed in getting me ousted as a heretic, then he is right; if he fails, then all his talk about the 'Devil-faith of the Church' is merely wind, and the 'surge which soon shall roll over Svealand,' as a result of his efforts, merely a tempest in a teapot.....

For two reasons has Christianity utilised pre-existing diabolism. Partly because individual sin and responsibility were more kindly construed as originating from outside influence; man was thus a victim wronged, deserving of pity from God and men. And partly, since the grave power of sin might be realised more cordially, if sinners are perchance victimised by a devilish spirit-world. To the best of my knowledge, not even the worst hell-fire pulpiteer has ever applied his diabolism otherwise.....I do not believe that 'the Devil' is a cause of insanity, and not 'religion' either.....in almost all cases they both seem to me to be rather symptoms thereof.....My belief in a 'Heavenly Father'—that is to say, my firm faith in mankind evolving more and more up towards sincere justice and brotherly love, thus excludes every inclination towards all deviltries, though I am not sufficiently 'modern' to slumber as to the reality of all evils. On the contrary, I am firmly convinced as to their reality, and, by my convictions, in duty bound to do what I can against the ravages of evils. For a systematic opposition even I must try to understand the origin of evil. My time and bent of mind do not permit me to indulge in superfluous speculations on what lies beyond the boundaries of my experience and my investigations. Hitherto I have had plenty of material right here. I therefore view individual evil, or 'sins,' partly as low or degenerate heritage, often down into bestiality; and partly, as proof positive of, that such evil individuals have not yet caught up with modern moral standards. Accordingly, thus should not only 'sins,' but also 'sinners,' be handled. For the welfare of humanity altogether, now and in the future; for the sake of its sound and safe evolution, such evil subnormals, high or low, ought to be 'interned,' in order to stop propagation of scrubs, or in order to really 'educate' some half-and-half plebeian 'possibilities' above conventionalism into civilisation, by Christian governments helping to uphold ideal homes. An intelligent social hygiene pulls up the roots of all evil."

Hon. E. Raf, a prominent politician, had this to say about deviltries:—

"I believe that in the spirit world there is something good, and, opposed to it, something bad.

The good and the bad, for instance, real love and real hate for the same object, such as truth, cannot originate from the same source.

The good and the bad are also plainly in conflict all the time for supremacy over the human mind, and thereby over the world.

The uniformity and deliberateness of this conflict the world over and history throughout presuppose a main, an absolute leadership of each.

I am certain that the good will win in this contest. Yet I do not believe that the good thereby will be transmuted into, but will be segregated from, the bad.

From this it follows:

- (1) That I believe in a personal God from whom all good came, and comes.
- (2) That there exists a personal opponent of goodness, the bad Satan who rules in the world of evil, where he is worshiped by his friends and patrons, and from whom all evils which we experience ever came, and comes.

(3) That God will finally guide goodness to a decisive victory, and thus establish insuperable barriers between good and evil, between heaven and hell.

In this, as I trust, unalterable conviction of mine do I hope that all editors, who perhaps more than any other class of men are in positions to promote either the good or the bad, may not incur unnecessary responsibilities for the great final settlement."

In Stockholm, "that beautiful Sinner on Lake Mälaren," Old Nick has evidently quite logical and smooth defenders, pleading his case with high rhetorical or syllogistic acumen. But his ancient body-guard has opponents there also, in science and dialectic ability well able to hold their own during the ongoing "Devil-fight." Such as Dr. I. van Bratt, who rebutted thus:—

"It is evident that average concepts about the Devil are being gradually humanised. For every decade a bit of his tail has been cut off, until nothing of it is left; and since even his horns came off, the Devil has assumed human shape more and more in the public mind. We have now reached a stage of progress where the most modern Devil-believers consider the Devil as the inside evil of man, no matter if a majority yet suppress their reform zeal and do not identify him with, but look upon him as, the natural cause and author of human deviltries. For this evil within us, manifesting itself so palpably and often, now more so than ever, is in reality the most reliable evidence, of the Devil's existence; since where else should all evil come from?"

It is remarkable how so many of those who have participated in this inquiry have stumbled over just this question: 'From where comes evil?'

I therefore beg public attention to observe that no reasonable answer can ever be given to a question so irrationally made up. It is a mistake to believe that all questions can be answered. If one asks crazy, answers to them will be crazy also.

It is just as incorrect to ask: Wherefrom comes evil? as to inquire: From where comes the beautiful, or the yellow? Not even where folly comes from can find an answer universally acceptable.

Yet with some hopes of answer we may perhaps ask: Wherefrom comes the beautiful, for instance, of a certain lady? Or, the yellow in some certain object? And, similarly: From where comes this or that evil quality in this or that human individual?

Evil, in the sense of all evil, is an abstraction, and lacks other reality than that of ideas in general. If we inquire whence evil comes, it means perhaps merely: From whence comes our idea of evil? That is: How has this idea originated in the course of time? But this is not what is wanted now.

It is our bringing up, moving on so abstract planes, which induce most people to regard this idiotic question: 'Whence comes all evil?' as both simple and natural, while they in certain concrete cases would look upon a question like this: Why did that person commit such a bad deed? as at least out of place, worthy of but astonishment, and, if the act was revolting, of condemnation.

Modern investigations, however, have given us valuable assistance in elucidating the origin of human qualities, be they good or evil. Both these terms are relative. Only when we regard morals from the standpoint of evolution do we understand why certain qualities are considered as good, others as evil. It is a capital misapprehension to claim that hereby the differences between good and evil are removed! The difference becomes no less by maintaining human attributes to be good, or bad, merely in relation to something else.

Let the view of this point have originated in which way soever, there are certainly definite and natural causes of every good or bad human quality. These causes may come from two quarters: inherited traits, or from within; and, external impressions or from outside. From either or both quarters, but never from a third one, least of all from 'the Devil,' comes the cause of all evil and immorality.

In good or bad my ego is the result of my heritage and the milieu in which I have lived. Each are *per se* of sufficient import so that no further causes or explanations of human conduct are needed, although continued investigations will long be prosecuted on these expansive fields. And there are we on the right way to solve the problems of evil and goodness, both.

The Devil, however, is probably no longer indispensable. Of course, many good folks may part with him and miss him sadly. Old lineage and blue blood he has

always had, and if people can be scared into acting right he must have done a world of good! Anyone still in doubts as to his real existence must put questions about him right, and the answers will certainly come right also. For among all difficult questions in the world it seems restful to linger near one that is easy. And if there be anything easier to answer than this one, I never heard of it."

Professor Santesson argued that "I do not need to believe in an evil spirit world with a Devil, and therefore I do not believe in them either"; although the Professor knows of many abnormal people who were, or are, devilish evil and cruel in peace or war, ignoring all the virtues and raising and running most perfect hells. Such abnormalities suffer, of course, from what alienists call "moral insanity," coupled with "delusions of grandeur" in piety, State-craft, etc.

Rev. Schröderheim argued that Stockholm divines are done with the "crass" old imp, and have, for some time, preached either a more refined Devil or none at all. And the famous Professor Hjalmar Ohrvall declared:—

"In my opinion, the hell-doctrine is an extremely coarse and barbaric tenet, one of the murkiest spots in the entire Christian creed. It is not only irrational, but even exceedingly demoralising by the low concepts of God which it presupposes. How can ever this doctrine of hell be made to harmonise with belief in a loving and omnipotent God?"

The Professor said he agreed with John Stuart Mill about such a Devil and God, and he had no earthly use for either of them. In a similar strain wrote or spoke many other eminent Swedish scholars, the main defence of the Devil and his furnace devolving upon such court-divines as Mazer, Ahfeldt, and Bishop Billing.

Excepting perhaps in France during the Revolution, the old bugbear of orthodoxy has never been in tighter boots than just now over in Sweden. Of course, the Conservative "Christian press" has tried hard to suppress all straight information about it, and of course it has failed again. Truth cannot be forever kept down; it bobs up here, it breaks through barriers there, growing ever braver and stronger in each new conflict, be it with men or systems, with cachectic gods or with auge-spielt devils. Truth is yet the mightiest force on earth, and the world moves irresistibly onward. Finally, "The religious revolution is at hand, the doom's-day for devils is near."

—Truthseeker (New York).

## Thought and Faith.

BY L. K. WASHBURN.

THE whole tendency of civilisation is away from supernaturalism. All the progress which science has made has been at the expense of superstition. The trend of knowledge and the course of modern life are contrary to the predictions of theology. There never was more direct teaching against the foolish dogmas of the Church, and never greater or graver reasons given why mankind should distrust priestcraft. The world as a whole is becoming more liberal and independent in its thought, and more unwilling to be driven or led, and yet there is a giant mass of ignorance inherited from the theological past that seems almost impervious to the influence of the age, and a vast amount of stupid faith that is fed by the Church to be robbed by the priest.

The thought that is rising in the world is opposed to the faith that is dying in the Church. It is this thought that challenges the Christian doctrines and places the home above the convent, the parent above the priest, the nation above the Church, and the freeman's flag above the Christian's cross.

Thought leads the world to-day. Thinkers instead of theologians are finding light for mankind. Where faith stops on the march, thought leaps forth and cries, Onward! We must live for the future, not for

the past. The world has left Moses and Jesus out of sight. A higher life is ours than they ever dreamed of. We are living among better men and women than ever existed on earth. But humanity demands a nobler fate. We must go forward. Every "Thus far and no farther" which the Christian Church has set up must be torn down. The future is free. It must be redeemed from ignorance and superstition. We want more schools and fewer churches, more teachers and fewer priests.

Independence is every man's birthright. No man can be free who obeys a priest. Thought is the knight whose lance shall overthrow the power of religion. Faith is a slave. Knowledge shall sign the emancipation proclamation which shall give liberty to every mind. There is no priest in business. He has been banished from every realm but that of theology. The man who thinks gives the priest notice to keep out of his house.

The only part of a church that is sacred is its door—the way out. A church is a spider's web to catch the flies of faith. Heretofore reformers have tried to destroy the web; hereafter they must try to kill the spider. Religion lives upon those whom it can deceive.

Every man is in duty bound to do his own thinking. Let him stand upon his manhood. He who wants his rights should not shirk his duty. Throwing our responsibilities upon another has made social and moral inequalities. Obey the commands of your own nature, not the behests of a priest. The disobedience of Adam is the excuse for making a Christ. Nothing will deprive the Church of its power except independence. A man of self-respect is the despair of the clergy. Christianity cultivates cowardice. Thinking encourages courage. Rely upon yourself. Think out your salvation. Face the universe without fear. If you behave yourself you need not apologise to anyone. Everything surrenders to him who thinks and dares.

## Obituary.

It is with much regret that I announce to readers of the *Freethinker* the death of Madame Johannette Dlouhy. The deceased lady, who was of German birth, had been a sceptic from her girlhood, and was fond of relating how her incredulous questions horrified her instructors. She was a highly educated woman, spoke fluently several languages, and was thoroughly acquainted with their religious and scientific literature. A journalist by profession and holding strong Republican views, she resented the restrictions placed upon the German press, and, leaving Germany, became a naturalised Englishwoman. Although partially paralysed for several years and unable to attend meetings, she took great interest in the Freethought movement, was an ardent admirer of the late Charles Bradlaugh, and followed with keen interest the career of Mr. Foote since the time of his imprisonment. She read her *Freethinker* to the last number published, was a humorous and delightful conversationalist, and retained all her mental faculties until a final stroke of paralysis seized her on the morning of the 11th inst. The only regret I ever heard her express was that she was not possessed of a large amount of money by which she could benefit the Secular Society, Ltd., which she made the residuary legatee of her small estate, and which she esteemed as a masterpiece of ingenuity on the part of its founder, Mr. G. W. Foote, who is one of the executors of her will. The arrangements for the disposal of her remains by cremation were left to me as Secretary, and the Secular Service was most impressively read by Mr. J. T. Lloyd on Saturday at Golder's Green, before a small party of members of the N. S. S.—E. M. VANCE, *General Secretary*.

SOUTH LONDON Freethinkers will hear with regret of the death of Mr. Richard Lees, who some years ago was secretary of the Camberwell Branch of the N. S. S. Mr. Lees died of cancer on Wednesday, August 10, after an illness extending over many months. Deceased was a man who had travelled much in his earlier years, and his wide knowledge made his society coveted. He rendered very valuable service to the local Branch of the N. S. S. for some years, and on his retirement he was the recipient of a handsome testimonial from his Freethought colleagues.—C. E. S.

## SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

### LONDON.

#### INDOOR.

WOOD GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Enfield Adult School) : 9.30 a.m., Mr. Smith (ex-missionary), "Christianity and Secularism."

#### OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Fountain) : 3.15 and 6.15, F. A. Davies, Lectures.

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

ISLINGTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Highbury Corner) : 12 noon, Walter Bradford and S. J. Cook. Newington Green : 12 noon, J. J. Darby, a Lecture. Clerkenwell Green : 12 noon, H. King and T. Dobson. Finsbury Park : 3.30, J. W. Marshall, "Gods: Ancient and Modern." Highbury Corner: Saturday, at 8, H. King, T. Dobson, and James Rowney.

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (Ridley-road, Kingsland) : 11.30, Mr. Schaller, "Christianity a Stupid Creed."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Parliament Hill Fields) : 3.30, Debate between W. J. Ramsey, and J. Nicholls, "The Credibility of the Four Gospels."

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (outside Maryland Point Station, Stratford) : 7, W. J. Ramsey, "The God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob."

WOOD GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Jolly Butchers' Hill, opposite Public Library) : 11.30, Mr. Allison, a Lecture.

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

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Chairman of Board of Directors—MR. G. W. FOOTE.

Secretary—MISS E. M. VANCE.

This Society was formed in 1898 to afford legal security to the acquisition and application of funds for Secular purposes.

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

The liability of members is limited to £1, in case the Society should ever be wound up and the assets were insufficient to cover liabilities—a most unlikely contingency.

Members pay an entrance fee of ten shillings, and a subsequent yearly subscription of five shillings.

The Society has a considerable number of members, but a much larger number is desirable, and it is hoped that some will be gained amongst those who read this announcement. All who join it participate in the control of its business and the trusteeship of its resources. It is expressly provided in the Articles of Association that no member, as such, shall derive any sort of profit from the Society, either by way of dividend, bonus, or interest, or in any way whatever.

The Society's affairs are managed by an elected Board of Directors, consisting of not less than five and not more than twelve members, one-third of whom retire (by ballot) each year,

but are capable of re-election. An Annual General Meeting of members must be held in London, to receive the Report, elect new Directors, and transact any other business that may arise.

Being a duly registered body, the Secular Society, Limited, can receive donations and bequests with absolute security. Those who are in a position to do so are invited to make donations, or to insert a bequest in the Society's favor in their wills. On this point there need not be the slightest apprehension. It is quite impossible to set aside such bequests. The executors have no option but to pay them over in the ordinary course of administration. No objection of any kind has been raised in connection with any of the wills by which the Society has already been benefited.

The Society's solicitors are Messrs. Harper and Battcock, 23 Rood-lane, Fenchurch-street, London, E.C.

**A Form of Bequest.**—The following is a sufficient form of bequest for insertion in the wills of testators:—"I give and bequeath to the Secular Society, Limited, the sum of £— free from Legacy Duty, and I direct that a receipt signed by two members of the Board of the said Society and the Secretary thereof shall be a good discharge to my Executors for the said Legacy."

Friends of the Society who have remembered it in their wills, or who intend to do so, should formally notify the Secretary of the fact, or send a private intimation to the Chairman, who will (if desired) treat it as strictly confidential. This is not necessary, but it is advisable, as wills sometimes get lost or mislaid, and their contents have to be established by competent testimony.

# NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY.

President: G. W. FOOTE.

Secretary: MISS E M. VANCE, 2 Newcastle-st., London, E.C.

## Principles and Objects.

SECULARISM teaches that conduct should be based on reason and knowledge. It knows nothing of divine guidance or interference; it excludes supernatural hopes and fears; it regards happiness as man's proper aim, and utility as his moral guide.

Secularism affirms that Progress is only possible through Liberty, which is at once a right and a duty; and therefore seeks to remove every barrier to the fullest equal freedom of thought, action, and speech.

Secularism declares that theology is condemned by reason as superstitious, and by experience as mischievous, and assails it as the historic enemy of Progress.

Secularism accordingly seeks to dispel superstition; to spread education; to disestablish religion; to rationalise morality; to promote peace; to dignify labor; to extend material well-being; and to realise the self-government of the people.

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Any person is eligible as a member on signing the following declaration:—

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