

# THE Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

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*This head more than churches, bibles, and all the creeds.*  
—WALT WHITMAN.

## Maxim on Missionaries.

WE suppose we are indebted to Sir Hiram Maxim for a copy of the *R. P. A. Annual*. It would have been rather belated if coming from the publishers. Moreover, Sir Hiram Maxim's attack on the missionaries is by far the most important, as well as interesting, article in the whole list of contents. It deals with a vital topic in a vital way. Most of the other articles, while valuable in their fashion, might as well be read six months hence, or six years hence, for any urgency there is in their subjects or treatment. Literary men are so apt to fall into the "literary" style, which is a good deal like the gold-beater's art that makes a little go a very long way. After this style, the simple, straightforward speech of a man of affairs, who has something to say and just says it, is quite refreshing.

Perhaps we may also be permitted to say that we do not perceive any wisdom, learning, or eloquence in this Rationalist publication that need fill Free-thought advocates with despair. It really looks as though the air of superiority which heavier writers sometimes give themselves over their livelier contemporaries is only one of the more amusing illustrations of nature's law of compensation. We see nothing substantial in these articles that has not been said over and over again during the last thirty years in the pages of the *Freethinker*. And there is another thing to be observed. "Construction" is easily talked about, but not so easily achieved. The one common note in all these articles is opposition to Christianity. If the writers had to formulate to other agreements there would be a hopeless chaos.

Even the principal statements and arguments in Sir Hiram Maxim's refreshing article—which gives the *R. P. A. Annual* all its actuality for the general world—will be more or less familiar to those of our readers who remember Mr. Cohen's striking pamphlet on Foreign Missions and the admirable articles on Missions and Missionaries by Mr. W. Mann—to say nothing of all sorts of articles and paragraphs from our own and other pens. We say this while cheerfully allowing that Sir Hiram Maxim has put his case against the Missionaries in his own good-tempered but pungent manner; and that his pointed sarcasms against Christianity itself are likely to make decent people think, even if they make hypocrites squirm.

Sir Hiram Maxim strikes the right keynote at the start. The missionary business is a gigantic fraud, and all frauds are based upon misrepresentations. "The missionaries are," he says, "and always have been, the greatest liars on the face of the earth." We rubbed our hands together at that sentence. It was true, and it had been said before, but not by anyone in Sir Hiram Maxim's position. He has a name in the world of practical science, he cannot be shouted down, he cannot be starved out, and he will get a hearing; in fact, he has got it, for the newspapers are all printing tid-bits from his article, and newspaper correspondents are swarming around them like flies around a jam-pot.

The statement that the missionaries are the greatest liars on earth is backed up by some valuable references. Eugene Simon and other travellers are quoted with regard to the intellectual and moral character of the Chinese, and the real chance of converting them to Christianity.

"The late Sir William Des Voeux was for a long time Governor of Hong-Kong. On his return he told me that the missionary propaganda in China was a total failure from beginning to end. On one occasion the head of the largest Protestant mission, being ordered home, called upon the Governor. He said he had been in China twenty years, had worked hard, and done his very best; he had left no stone unturned, and still he did not believe he had made a single *honest* convert.

The Russian Church has long had a representative at Peking. Some years ago, in discussing the missionary question in China, he said: 'I have been in Peking twenty-five years. It is quite possible I have made one convert in that time, but I am not sure of him. If anyone tells you he has made more than one convert in twenty-five years, don't you believe him.'

Colonel Carr, who was at one time attached to the American legation in China, speaking of the missionary propaganda, pronounced the whole thing to be a fraud of the first water. He said: 'The Chinese have more than one excellent religion of their own. They have no use for any new variety that we have to offer them.' On his return to America he read the missionary reports, and was astonished beyond measure. He wound up by saying: 'The American missionaries in China are the greatest liars on the face of the earth.'"

"The missionaries," according to Sir Hiram Maxim, "do not stand a ghost of a chance of making any headway in China." Even if they stood any chance before they stand none now. China will never forget the moral lesson taught her by the "punitive expedition" sent out by Christian Europe. Sir Hiram Maxim speaks for many Chinese friends of his on this subject:—

"The Chinese were a party to the first Hague Peace Convention, and it was certainly understood at the time that all nations that agreed to the terms of that convention would abide by, and be subject to, the same treatment in the case of war. Let us see now what happened. Some German missionaries penetrated into a part of China where the people were both ignorant and religious. They attacked the national faith, and the Chinese retaliated, just exactly as people would have done in any other country, not excepting Germany itself. There was a fight, and two missionaries were killed. This led to rioting in Peking. The German Ambassador took an active part in the street fighting for several days, and was finally killed. This was a signal for the leading Christian nations to make war on China. Unfortunately, the Japanese joined in the crusade. This war was conducted against an innocent people in a most atrocious manner. Not one of the conditions of the Hague Convention was observed. There is not an instance in history where the worst barbarians have treated a people with such heartless cruelty. The so-called laws of war were disregarded in every particular—murder, rapine, and robbery everywhere. Thousands of Chinese ladies committed suicide to avoid the barbarous Christian soldiers—in fact, there is nothing in history that will at all compare in wickedness with this crusade against the innocent Chinese. Neither sex, age, nor private property was respected. At the sacking of Peking the palaces of the Emperor and of all the wealthy people were ransacked and looted, and nearly every missionary establishment in Peking became a store-house for stolen property. The missionaries themselves took an active part in robbing the rich, and

many beautiful, elegant things that they stole were afterwards offered for sale in London, Paris, and New York. China was forced to pay a large indemnity for being robbed, each nation having a share of the spoil; but when the Americans appreciated the true state of affairs they became disgusted and ashamed of themselves, and refused to be a party to the robbery."

Sir Hiram Maxim says that "the official name of Christianity in China is 'The Devil' Religion," and he says that it is a devil religion. "Our religion," he says, "so bristles with devils that they could not have logically called it by any other name." And he backs this up with the following delectable footnote: "If we take the Bible for our guide, we shall find that the principal occupation of Christ was going about the country and casting out devils. It was believed at that time that the whole earth was dominated by devils, and that Christ had come to combat them. It will be remembered that seven were cast out of Mary Magdalen, and no less than two thousand out of a sufferer at Gadarene. Christ entered into a treaty with these devils before he cast them out, by which he allowed them to enter the bodies of two thousand pigs, whereupon the whole lot of pigs committed suicide by drowning. Therefore we know that we have two thousand and seven devils at least, and only three Gods, who occasionally take the form of only one God."

"A militant Anti-Missionary Society is urgently wanted." This is Sir Hiram Maxim's conclusion. In the meanwhile, he suggests that the "not over-intelligent" and the "weakly" missionaries might be taken off their present jobs and put to "planting trees on the bald-headed hills of Spain, Portugal, and Italy." We have no objection to this. But we suspect, after all, that the only way to destroy Christian Missions is to destroy Christianity,—which we hope Sir Hiram Maxim will continue to assist in doing.

G. W. FOOTE.

## A Great Illusion.

*The Immortal Hope.* By S. H. Mellone, M.A. (Lond.), B.Sc. (Edin.).

ONE experiences both pleasure and regret at the sight of a man of ability arguing against one's own opinions and whose argument leaves one quite unaffected. There is pleasure because if one is really desirous of getting at truth, it is well to know all that can be said against one's opinions, and by those who are well able to say it. Opposition from a fool is useless and annoying. *His* arguments may be easily demolished, but the ease of victory may be due to the folly of the champion, and not to the weakness of the cause he supports. But to feel that what has been well said against us leaves us unscathed, gives a fresh sense of confidence in our own mental attitude. But, on the other hand, there is a regret at what we conceive—so long as we hold our own opinions to be soundly based on fact—to be energy and ability spent in a wrong direction. Now Mr. Mellone's book does not lack ability, it is at least as able as any book of its size and scope recently written on the question of a future life. Nor does it lack fairness; indeed, it does face certain aspects of the case that are usually avoided by religious writers. But neither ability nor fairness can give a weak case real strength, nor supply evidence where evidence is altogether wanting.

Unfortunately, one cannot discuss the question of a future life without being almost drowned by successive waves of sentimentality. Believers cite their feelings on the question as so much evidence, and as though they were any more than the reflection of a challenged belief. Or the desire for a future life is urged as good ground for assuming its existence, as though all desires receive gratification, and as though it were not, in this particular case, the validity of the desire that is called in question. Personally, I am not conscious of any *desire* for a life

beyond the grave, nor do I think I am unique in this particular. If there is a future life, I am content. I shall, one day, know all about it. And if there is not, I am also content. For then I shall know nothing about it—not even that I know nothing about it. I can no more regret non-existence after I am dead than I can regret non-existence before I was born. Or, if it is said that people desire to meet those they respect and love on the other side of the grave, I can only reply—still keeping to the testimony of my own consciousness, which, as evidence, is as good as that of the consciousness of anyone else—that I am not aware of any desire to meet those I respect and love in some other world. I do desire, most strongly, to meet and be with them here; I regret, most keenly, the separation caused by death; but I am not aware of any desire—probably because I have not the belief—to meet them on the other side of the grave.

To this the reply may be made that I am, in this respect, unique, a sort of human monstrosity, something in the mental world analogous to a two headed man in the physical world, and that, therefore, my feelings on the question afford no criterion by which to judge others. Well, my whole case is that, far from being unique, I am perfectly normal; and that if other people will only analyse the real nature of their desires, and study the true and legitimate direction and application of their feelings, they will discover they are much the same as myself. Education and the cultivation of a more or less morbid way of looking at life may do much to develop a misunderstanding of the real nature of human desires and capacities; and their corrective is to be found in a careful study of human life and human history. This done, I fancy that what I have said as regards myself, will apply to all normally constituted human beings.

Dr. Mellone heads the first chapter of his book "Sources of the Belief in Survival," and by its title, this section should have gone to the root of the matter. He does not question the account of the origin of the belief in a future life, as given by Spencer, Tylor, and others. On the contrary, he says, "There is no doubt that this explanation is true and important." How important, he scarcely realises, since he adds that the fact of a belief resting in its beginnings on illusion will not affect its truth now. This might be granted, provided the belief could be enforced by independent evidence. But this is not the case; all that Dr. Mellone regards as such being really derived from the primitive belief itself.

This much I hope to make plain later. At present, assuming the origin of the belief to be as stated by Tylor and Spencer, namely, that man began to believe in a double existence from his experience in dreams, enforced by other experience during his waking hours, discussion as to the truth of the belief is at an end. If the belief began in an illusion, and, therefore, rests on an illusion, no amount of apologising can get to anything but an illusion. For what is the essence of the belief in a future life? It is that man is a duality; he is a body plus something else—soul, spirit, the name matters little—and that this added something is independent of the body, is, in fact, the real man, and survives the body's disintegration. Now, whatever plausibility philosophers and modern theologians may give to this belief, it is certain that neither philosophers nor theologians reached this conclusion as the result of their own independent investigations. Their work has been to apologise for it, and invent more or less plausible reasons why it should not be given up. It is not a civilised product at all. Civilised man tends to doubt it; savages alone universally believe it. Step by step the belief in this duality of man is traced from civilised man back to the primitive savage. And how does he come to believe it? Well, the answer of the writers named is that when the savage sees himself and others visiting distant places during sleep, his want of knowledge condemns him to the conclusion that this wandering self has an independ-

dent reality. And as this double can get out for a time during sleep, so it escapes permanently during death. In this, the savage conception and the modern conception is essentially one. There is no difference in substance; there is a difference only in the way the belief is expressed.

This theory, it may be noted, is not a mere guess at the mental habits of our long gone primitive ancestors. It is based upon the actual beliefs of existing savages all the world over. And its accuracy is attested not only in this way, but by an analysis of the belief itself. For the soul of man is always thought as a complete copy of the bodily man. In all the stories of spirits seen that have interested or amused the world, the seers have always been faithful to the savage in seeing the spirit as an actual double. It is always such as we all see in the course of our dreamings. Moreover, the savage not only dreams of men, he dreams also of things. And if his seeing people in dreams leads to his giving them a double—a pale copy of themselves—seeing objects in dreams should also lead to his giving them a double. This he actually does. He gives a double or soul to all things animate and inanimate alike. And the world wide primitive custom of burying food and weapons with the dead is a practical expression of the belief that the double of the man will need the double of the food and of the weapon in the next world, as the more solid man needed the more solid objects in this.

Now, I repeat, if this theory be true, we may still find it in an interesting topic to discuss the development of this belief, but there is no need to argue whether it is true or not. That question is settled by an acceptance of the anthropological theory. If the savage had known what we know concerning the brain and the nervous system, he would never have reached the conclusion he did reach concerning the existence of a soul. The blunder was inevitable to his ignorance; we have preserved his blunder in spite of our more reliable knowledge.

Moreover, it is fairly easy to show that the most refined form of the belief in a future life is a descendant of this primitive illusion. Man does not part with his beliefs easily or suddenly—particularly when they are religious beliefs. There is a process of refinement; enough of the old belief is modified to suit changed conditions, while there will always be found plenty who, undesirous of breaking with the old, and yet feeling the claims of the new, will, in both literature and philosophy, labor for their reconciliation. Thus we can see how the savage double—a literal copy of the man, although of a finer form of matter—becomes under the influence of philosophy a metaphysical entity of a non-material nature. The double, or ghost, becomes the "soul." In the same way a mere continuance of existence becomes "immortality," while the conditions and nature of the future life are being continually remodelled under the pressure of social development. And all the time new arguments are being fashioned why the belief should be retained. At one time the belief is based upon metaphysical distinctions that are now discarded. At another period the moral nature of man is dwelt upon; at another the principle of the conservation of energy is illegitimately forced to do service, and at yet another man's unexhausted capacity is dwelt upon as reasons why there must be a future life. But the truth is that none of these things suggested the belief. Nor would anyone ever have used them in its support had not the belief been already in existence. It is the theory that suggests the relevancy of the arguments used, not the facts or arguments that suggest the theory. Disguise it how we may, the savage is the true parent of the belief in a future life; and, while we have rejected all his theories concerning this world, we are ready to accept his leadership concerning another on the other side of the grave.

Let it be noted, too, that all our knowledge of the nature and structure of the human organism has gone to the discredit of the belief in survival. I do not mean that theories may not be based, and are based,

upon our *ignorance* of much that relates to the human body. But ignorance—the truism is necessary—is not knowledge, and it should lead to silence rather than to the reckless exploitation of ingenious hypotheses. Our *knowledge* runs all in the one direction, and hitherto no one has succeeded in extracting from that knowledge a single indisputable piece of evidence in favor of the belief in a future life. Dr. Mellone admits that "Modern psychology has nothing to contribute to the solution of our problem"—that is, to the belief in a future life; and adds that "Psychology has effectually disposed of the conception of the soul and body as two separate things absolutely opposed in their nature." Quite so; and he might have added that common sense in common experience had disposed of this conception even before psychology had done so. The connection between the quantity and quality of a nervous system and the display of life and mind is constant and obvious. Professor James admits that in treating mind and life as functions of the organism science has only carried out a little farther the common belief of mankind, and asks: "How can we believe in life hereafter when science has once for all attained to proving, beyond possibility of escape, that our inner life is a function of that famous material, the so-called 'grey matter' of our cerebral convolutions? How can the organ possibly persist after its organ has undergone decay?" How, indeed! It is equal to suggesting the continuance of a nation after all the individuals composing it are dead. Professor James, however, has a theory which he thinks may give the belief in immortality a new lease of life, and as this theory is adopted by Dr. Mellone, I will deal with it in my next article.

C. COHEN.

(To be continued.)

### "The Existence of God."

MR. ALFRED GERMANY, in an exceedingly able and interesting article, which appeared in these columns under the above heading for September 18, criticises the following sentence: "No sensible man goes about the country asseverating that there is no God, for no sensible man pretends to be in possession of any knowledge whatever on the subject." With practically the whole of that article the present writer is in hearty agreement. Evidently, Mr. Germany's objection to the statement quoted is on account of its denial of any possible knowledge on the subject of a Divine existence; but, curiously enough, his own eloquent presentation of the argument for Atheism only serves to establish the accuracy of that denial. It is quite correct to say that "there is not an atom of real evidence in proof of a Deity that has always declined to demonstrate its existence," but the wisdom of affirming that "there are many unanswerable arguments against the possibility" of its existence is, to say the least, extremely doubtful. Atheism is merely a relative term, and would never have been heard of had it not been for the prior existence of its co-relative, Theism. Atheists owe their very being, as Atheists, to Theists, and all they require to do, in self-justification, is to demonstrate the unconvincing character of the so-called arguments for Theism. This was the exact position held by Bradlaugh. His words are significant:—

"I do not deny God, because I cannot deny that of which I have no conception, and the conception of which, by its affirmer, is so imperfect that he is unable to define it to me. If, however, 'God' is defined to mean an existence other than the existence of which I am a mode, then I deny 'God,' and affirm that it is impossible such 'God' can be."

In short, Atheism is simply the negation of Theism. That deaf-and-mute American lady, mentioned by Spencer, who received no instruction concerning God until she was of mature age, was not an Atheist except in the sense that she possessed no Theism.

It was only when the term "God" was defined to her that she either affirmed or denied his existence, according as the alleged evidences adduced impressed her. Ingersoll is reported to have said, "I do not deny the existence of God, but I am fully convinced that every God I have ever heard of is non-existent." Indeed, the God whose existence Mr. Germany denies in his article is a clearly defined God. It is in a Creator and Ruler of the Universe that he does not believe; and he does not believe in a Creator and Ruler of the Universe because, as a scientist, he denies creation and is quite sure that the Universe rules itself. In that sense all Atheists are *deniers* of God. But even so pronounced an Atheist as Haeckel is yet an advocate of a god. On page 112 of his *Last Words on Evolution*, he speaks thus:—

"Our Monistic god, the all-embracing essence of the world, the Nature-god of Spinoza and Goethe, is identical with the eternal, all-inspiring energy, and is one, in eternal and infinite substance, with space-filling matter. It 'lives and moves in all things,' as the Gospel says. And as we see that the law of substance is universal, that the conservation of matter and energy is inseparably connected, and that the ceaseless development of this substance follows the same 'eternal iron laws,' we find God in natural law itself. The will of God is at work in every falling drop of rain and every growing crystal, in the scent of the rose and the spirit of man."

Mr. Germany admits that "it is perhaps a gratuitous labor do demonstrate a negative"; but it is by no means "a gratuitous labor" to overthrow a false positive, and this is the labor upon which present-day Freethought is concentrating all its energy. It is because we consider Theism to be false and injurious that we oppose it with such vehemence, and while attempting to destroy it we are of necessity Atheists. But the moment Theism ceases to be Atheism shall draw its last breath, because it is Theism that gives to Atheism both its meaning and its work. When the world becomes Godless there will be no more Atheists. And we are fully persuaded that until Theism has been completely overthrown, no marked advance can be made in the practical application of the principles of social science. Mr. Harold Begbie, in the *Christian World* for November 8, simply talks nonsense when he says that "without the sense of the existence of God life must become for every thinking man either unintelligible or base." Does he not know that it was during the first two hundred years of its history, when it was wholly Atheistical, that Buddhism achieved the ethical redemption of India? Is he not aware that he is surrounded every day by thousands of Atheists to whom life is neither unintelligible nor base? Mr. Begbie professes to despise theologians and popular preachers, but he runs them hard in the art of pious fibbing. Because he believes that a Godless world *ought* to be a base and wicked one, he audaciously asserts that it *must* be so; but he does not condescend to provide us with the why and wherefore of such a necessity. As a matter of demonstrable fact no such necessity exists. On the contrary, we maintain that "the sense of the existence of God" has wrought incalculable moral havoc in the world. It has seriously repressed self-respect and self-reliance, and conduced to the development of a servile, cringing attitude. Man has been almost afraid to breathe for fear of offending the Deity. When Theism was at its zenith human life was at its nadir. Ever since the belief in God began to wane, interest in and devotion to earthly life have been waxing.

The God Mr. Harold Begbie idolises is the Christian, as distinguished from the God of Nature. There must be two Gods at least, or else the Christian God is a hideous monster. To attribute the creation of the world and all within it to the Christian God is to blast his character for ever. Mr. Begbie, who gives theologians and popular preachers the go-by, declares that, because of their incapacity to demonstrate what Christianity really is and can do, the people are becoming indifferent and callous, and church attendance is alarmingly falling off.

Then he adds, as if in ignorance of the real significance of what he says,—

"And the danger to Christianity is enormous. Unless Christianity is manifested to men as a vital principle of human life it sinks to the level of the philosophies. And as a philosophy it is inferior to Buddhism. There is nothing in Nature or history to prove that God is good, far less to demonstrate a Divine Fatherhood. Christianity out of action is a supposition unsupported by the facts of Nature or the records of infidel experience. Never was a poorer philosophy of life offered to the reason."

With Mr. Begbie's strange conception of Christianity we are not in the least concerned; but, unless he believes in two Gods, of opposite characters, his conception of the Christian God is outrageously immoral. A Monotheist is bound to acknowledge that the God who created Nature was identical with the God who is said to have revealed himself in Jesus Christ; but the amazing fact is that there is nothing in Nature to prove that he is even good, much less that his very being is love. Indeed, this writer goes the length of affirming that the affirmation of God's goodness "contradicts our terrestrial environment and denies the attestation of human experience. Yet Christianity postulates a good God; a good God, furthermore, who is the loving Father of humanity." Then comes the following sane sentence in an insane connection: "A philosophy which begins in this way ends in folly; it is beneath the contempt of rational men." So it is; and so is a religion which begins in the same way: it ends in madness, and is beneath the contempt of rational men. Nature mocks the very idea of a good God, and history, even human history, does the same. But Christianity gives both Nature and history the direct lie with its irrational cry, "God is good, God is love, God is the loving Father of humanity."

"A good God," yet a God who is the author of evil and cruelty and suffering and sorrow! "A good God, furthermore, who is the loving Father of humanity," yet a God who can sit calmly on his throne while Nature, the work of his hand, is treating the children of his heart as if they were absolutely of no account! To call such a God good, Mr. Begbie allows, would be philosophical folly; and yet he contends that what is philosophically irrational and false becomes in religion highest wisdom and truth. Has it never dawned upon him that his theology is an insult to his manhood and an outrage upon his intelligence? Does he imagine that a good God could have supplied him with two powers—the power of reason and the power of faith, which flatly contradict each other? Does he think it possible that Nature, which shows not one trace of a good and loving God, and Christianity, in which "there is nothing but compassion," could have issued from the same Divine source? In Nature, according to this teaching, God is morally indifferent, if not positively immoral; in Providence, he is partial, a bare-faced respecter of persons; and in Grace, he is all compassion and love. The most striking fact is, however, that in none of those three provinces does he furnish one atom of proof that he exists and works. The imperfections and cruelties and tortures which characterise Nature, the incidents usually described as providences, with a bright and a dark side to them, and what Christian workers speak of as miracles of Divine mercy, can all be satisfactorily accounted for without any reference whatever to a supernatural Being. Mr. Germany is fully justified in holding that the whole Universe, including man in the totality of his nature, testifies, in the most unequivocal fashion, to the non-existence of such a Deity. Indeed, Mr. Begbie's God annihilates himself because of his self-contradictoriness. Christianity depicts God as doing for man what man could never have done for himself, while Freethought calls upon man to do for himself what God in Christ has never even attempted to do for him.

Freethinkers have still a lot of work before them, in the doing of which, however, men like Mr. Harold Begbie are rendering valuable assistance.

J. T. LLOYD.

## The Buttress of the Bible.

THE popular illustrated report of the British and Foreign Bible Society, 1909-10, is a vastly entertaining publication which lets the cat out of the bag. It is addressed to the Christian reader, or, rather, the well-dressed Christian reader, for the whole book is intended to extract cash from its readers as surely as a patent medicine advertisement. Obviously, the notice respecting remittances, which delicately hints that cheques and bankers' drafts may be paid to the Society's bankers, and the pathetic form of bequest, are not intended for poor followers of the Carpenter of Nazareth. The publication itself costs a shilling; but we do not complain, for it is the best shillings-worth of real Christian evidence that we have handled for many a day.

The editor is as voluble as pious. In order to introduce his sacrosanct wares he imitates the methods of the profane quack doctor rather than the sacred medicine man. He tells his readers that "we shall learn a profitable lesson if we try to measure the Bible by a few commonplace criteria of popularity and influence by which other books are judged. We may apply to it the tests of circulation, of translation, of ubiquity, of cheapness, of vitality, and of catholicity."

As to the first test, he compares the circulation of the Bible with other books. He refers with gusto to the fact that "God's Holy Word" enjoys an annual circulation of 15,000,000 copies, whilst of Dickens's works only 24,000,000 have been sold altogether. "God" is even more popular as an author than Mrs. Henry Wood, Mr. Hall Caine, or the late lamented Queen Victoria. His romances sell better than those of Marie Corelli. It is the old story—"Eclipse first and the rest nowhere," as Macaulay would say. The test of translation is just as comforting to the Christian enthusiast. The Bible, or parts of it, have been translated into 580 versions, including "cannibal dialects." No one translates *East Lynne*, *The Pickwick Papers*, or *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* into "cannibal dialects." That is another indisputable proof that the Bible is a divine book.

Almost as touching is the test of ubiquity. The Bible finds its way everywhere, like *Old Moore's Almanac* or *Lloyd's Newspaper*.

"Under the shadow of Danto's tomb at Ravenna; among rubber-gatherers in the valley of the Amazon; in restaurants at Paris, and in cafés at Cairo, and in gambling dens at Johore; among lonely settlers in Queensland, along the new Hejas railway line which is creeping from Damascus down towards the holy cities of Islam."

The book is distributed by colporteurs, and it is a pity the editor refers to these lowly followers of the Most High God somewhat contemptuously. "One colporteur in Colombo," he says, "belongs to a respectable Singalese family." Are we to suppose the others are like the hard-working agents of the Christian Evidence Society at home?

The editor has a keen eye for finance, and accordingly he devotes a chapter to the "test of cheapness." "The cheapest edition of Shakespeare's works," he tells us, "ever issued in England was priced at a shilling, in paper covers. Our Society sells an English Bible, bound, for sixpence." The difference in these two prices, it may be explained, is made up by "the gifts of Christian people." That these "gifts" are not inconsiderable is shown by the balance-sheet, which shows that the general receipts of the Society last year were £288,722. The legacies during the same period reached the respectable sum of £58,998. This vast sum of money is spent by a single Society in one year in popularising the Bible. There are many other similar organisations, such as the Scottish and Hibernian Bible Societies and the American Bible Society, all of which are well supported by pious people. Few Freethinkers realise the enormous sums of money spent in the defence of superstition.

In fighting the Christian religion Freethinkers not only have to displace error by truth, but they have to fight vested interests and endowments. This makes the struggle between Reason and Unreason longer and more bitter than it would have been without the intrusion of capital.

If the Bible had not been associated with a heavily endowed system of superstition, it would centuries ago have been consumed to nothingness in the echoless Temple of Universal Silence.

MIMNERMUS.

## Acid Drops.

We see much praise in Christian circles of a little book entitled *Other-World*, by Mr. Harold Shephard. The chapter on "Death" is greatly lauded by the Rev. Dr. Horton—the Hampstead preacher who thinks that Atheists ought to be hustled off the globe. The author argues that death is emigration for this reason:—

"Man's own self is immaterial, invisible, other-worldly; the moral law also, since it is contrary to this world, has its source in the other. Ourselves, then, and the moral law have the same origin."

Now the first half of the first sentence is pure assumption. If man's real self is immaterial, invisible, etc., all the rest may be taken for granted. Mr. Shephard starts business with a telescope, the slides being nicely packed in; he pulls them out, and calls it development! And the second half of the first sentence is also a pure assumption; moreover, it is an absurdity, opposed to all the facts. The moral law is not contrary to this world; it is the condition of prosperity in this world—in the long run. One man may think he profits by lies and theft, although he may really be mistaken; but society as a whole cannot possibly profit by lies and theft; and that is the very reason why they are tabooed. Mr. Shephard merely repeats the "lightning and thunder" fallacy. But the Jew did not believe that murder was wrong because it was forbidden by a divine voice from the midst of a pyrotechnical performance on Mount Sinai; he believed that murder was wrong because he had a rooted objection to being assassinated.

Christians like Dr. Horton and Mr. Shephard always make the most of the late Professor Huxley's mistakes. Huxley's laudation of the Bible as a book fit for the patronage of the London School Board—which he appears to have lived to regret—has been a regular godsend to the anti-secular educationists. Christian apologists have also worked for all it was worth Huxley's blunder about morality being in "conflict with the cosmic process." Obviously it is an integral part of the cosmic process. Struggle with others was always accompanied by care for others. If the tiger buried his jaws in the throat of a palpitating victim, he took the carcass home to the tigress and her cubs, and refrained from eating, in spite of the most ravenous hunger, until they were satisfied. There lies the germ of all the moral culture that ever was or ever will be. Unless the tiger acted in that way the tiger species must have perished. And unless human beings acted in that way, on higher and higher planes of life, the human species must have perished. Man has fought with one hand and sustained those dear to him with the other. And what is gradually happening is this: his fighting powers are (very slowly, but very surely) being turned away from his fellow man and turned against the hostilities of nature, while the range of his interest in others is (very slowly, but very surely) being widened out to the whole scope of humanity.

At an inquest at Barking on a fish porter it was stated that his last words were "Two ales." The worship of Bacchus is older and stronger than the worship of Christ.

An attempt to bring about a union of Protestant Churches in South Africa has fallen through, chiefly, we understand, on account of the color question. Here in England, where we have no colored population worth mentioning, Christians talk largely about their need breaking the barriers between races. Where a colored population does exist, there are no greater barriers to admitting it to an equality with whites than Christian organisations.

Mr. R. J. Campbell has been compelled, as we pointed out not long ago, in order to make his Christian Liberal League properly respectable, to clear out Socialists and sentimental Freethinkers. This was inevitable. But in doing so he formulated a creed and manifesto, and so paved the way for trouble. Some of the most prominent advocates

of the New Theology have written dissenting from the manifesto and creed, so that there bids fair to be a split in the New Theology camp in the near future. This is just what might have been expected, and follows the normal course of affairs in Christianity. First, a movement more or less nebulous; then a definition as to what is of faith to prevent heresy; and finally, a split. Each party in turn following the same course. Christians can only agree upon what it is they believe, so long as they avoid formulating their beliefs in intelligible propositions. The moment they do this the fat is in the fire.

The *Christian World* doesn't like the thoroughgoing scepticism of the ex-Abbé Loisy, who is now an unfettered and unmuzzled Professor of the Collège de France. Loisy's book, *The Religion of Israel*, has been translated by Arthur Galton and published by Fisher Unwin; and in reviewing it our pious contemporary complains that the author is worse than Voltaire—who was at least a believer in God, and worse than Renan—who was at least a lover of Jesus; whereas in Loisy "there is no trace of a belief in any Divine revelation, or in any God at all." Loisy treats old Yahweh (Jehovah) as a constantly developing reflex of the Jewish imagination. No more. This deity was originally "a mountain god." He "kills outright those who peeped into his ark; the least infraction of his will drives him into a frenzy." He is "implicated in the pettiest tricks in the story of Jacob; he became an accomplice in theft for the benefit of his people." As for the Mosaic revelation, it was "nothing more than a theological romance." And the patriarchs "never existed." Which is what we ourselves argued in our *Bible Romances* and *Bible Heroes* a quarter of a century ago. No wonder the *Christian World* is a bit indignant.

The *Methodist Recorder* says that the most pressing need of the Church is to enlist the interests of male adults in foreign missionary work. It says that at present the work is left to "good women and young children." If for good women we read "weak women" we believe the statement accurately represents the facts. And there are several reasons for this. One is that people cannot help discovering—even though the discovery be a gradual one—what a farce, when it is not a fraud, the missionary movement is. The next is that even with religious people the missionary motive is worn out. The original idea was that the non-Christian races were in imminent danger of hell-fire, and could only be saved by believing in Christianity. But now that the belief in hell is discarded, and the Devil dismissed as a myth, the crudely religious type see no special urgency for the outlay of vast sums of money. And the more thoughtful are recognising the folly of forcing upon the uncivilised people of the earth European customs and ideals for which they are quite unfitted, and which can only result in the manufacture of hypocrites. We say nothing, at present, about the more sinister side of missionary work, the ill-feeling created, and the political complications to which it gives rise, although this is an aspect of the matter upon which the public mind sadly needs enlightenment.

The *Methodist Recorder* also suggests that advantage might be taken of the presence of Asiatics who come to England for purposes of study to let them see the "meaning of a Christian civilisation," and gain some idea "of the influence and value of a Christian Church." This is a very pretty sentiment, and will no doubt appeal to many British Christians. The character of the superior civilised and highly moral person graciously condescending to exhibit his excellent qualities for the admiration of the poor Japanese, Hindoo, or Chinaman is one that will accord well with his inclinations. But it is just this character of the inferior person that the cultivated Asiatic most strongly resents. Policy or politeness may prevent his showing this resentment while he is here, but it is there all the same, with the result that he is apt to develop a fairly well-founded contempt for his would-be patrons. What these superior Christian persons have yet to learn is that neither the educated Chinese, nor the Japanese, nor the Hindoo are ready to admit the lofty moral superiority of Great Britain. Differences in culture they do admit. Superiority in scientific knowledge and in the development of the more material side of life they also admit. But they are not quite stupid enough to attribute our commercial supremacy to the Sermon on the Mount, nor our scientific acquirements to the belief in the resurrection of Jesus. That manifestation of infantile intellectuality is left for English Christians.

Nor are these educated Asiatics who visit England in need of any enlightenment as to the meaning of a Christian civilisation. They probably know far more of us than we do of them. And, after all, if the beneficial influence of

Christianity was very obvious there would hardly be needed a guide to point it out. In such a case, indication is suspiciously like misdirection. It is said that Japanese students in London have had cinematograph films prepared of life in the East-end of London, as well as pictures of life in the West-end—night scenes in Piccadilly, etc. Of course, this does not alone present a true picture of our civilisation; but it should be included in any picture of the whole, and those who claim for Christianity a directive power in our life must be content to accept all due responsibility. Christian advocates are fond of presenting the ugly side of Eastern life as an expression of Eastern religion—positive or negative—and we ought not to be disturbed if the Eastern people return the compliment. One view is quite as reliable as the other.

Mr. Harold Begbie, the gentleman who published a volume of fatuous praise of the Salvation Army's rescue work, writes the first of a series of articles on "Christianity in Action" in the *Christian World* for November 3. After reading his article we are of opinion that nature intended him for a Salvationist, or for some other religious body of an equally crude type. He has the cheap journalistic instinct which recognises the importance of a superficial dogmatism with the unthinking public, and the lack of either an adequate knowledge of human nature or scientific method of thinking that permits him to see the miraculous in man after it has been expelled from nature at large. For Mr. Begbie's theory of Christianity is that its essence consists in miracles worked in the lives of people. Of course, Mr. Begbie does not stop to argue why Christianity does not work the same supposed miracle with all, nor does the obvious reflection strike him that a God who permits a thousand to be degraded and brutalised in order to manifest his greatness by working a miracle through one or two, is acting like a man who burned a houseful of people in order to demonstrate his heroism in pulling a single person out of the flames.

Doubtless at a time when educated Christians are getting ashamed of the crude evangelism of fifty years ago, such expressions as the following will have a certain market value, if only because the number of public men who will father them is steadily shrinking.

"Christianity saves sinners. Christianity alters totally and instantaneously the texture of character. It not only arrests a spirit on the downward slope of habituated action, but lifts it up and sets it moving in a direction quite new and contrary.....Instantaneously it makes brutality tender, depravity pure, criminality virtuous, and selfishness unselfish."

Now it is safe to say that the man who can say these things, and believe them, shows a complete want of knowledge of the springs and nature of human action. That character may be improved is true enough; but that it can be altered "totally and instantaneously" is simply not true. It never occurs. All changes in character are gradual, and only the ignorant observer confuses the culmination of a process with the whole of its preceding stages. That people speaking and working in the name of religion may help in this process is a proposition that no Freethinker is concerned in denying. Only as the same process takes place in the absence of religion, and the same influence is exerted by one person upon another, irrespective of religious opinions, there is no need to treat reciprocal human influence as a peculiarly Christian phenomenon. And when Mr. Begbie says it is Christianity that alone gives people the enthusiasm to save and serve their fellows, one might reasonably ask, What is it that causes men in revolutions to give their lives to redress injustice and establish what they conceive to be right? What is it that inspires men and women in thousands of movements, that have no connection with religion, to spend themselves in the service of their kind? Or is the only service, in Mr. Begbie's estimation, that of the soup kitchen, and the only saving that of the soul-degrading penitential form?

We should not like to judge even Christianity by Mr. Begbie's standard, so we say that in his opinion the essence of Christianity is to seek out the fallen, and "it dies directly it ceases to seek." People nowadays who do anything worth doing will incline to the opinion that a philosophy of life that lays more emphasis on prevention, and is less concerned with a partial cure, is far more helpful. But Mr. Begbie's Christianity is essentially a philosophy of the soup kitchen and the doss-house. Christianity, he says, is "neither a philosophy like Buddhism or Confucianism, nor a moral law, like Mohammedanism." As a matter of fact it is both, of their kind, although inferior to Buddhism in both directions. You cannot, he says, justify Christianity except by such miracles as those involved in instantaneous change of character. "Never was a poorer philosophy of life offered to the reason."....."There is nothing in nature or history to prove

that God is good, far less to demonstrate a divine fatherhood." This happens to be true enough; but we fail to see how this proves the point. Christianity does not cease to be a philosophy because it is a poor philosophy, and teaches things that are not in accord with facts. It only proves that Christian teachings are not reliable. Well, the world is rapidly realising this; and presently we hope it will advance to the stage of declining to be bribed into supporting an intellectual falsehood because in its name soup kitchens are opened and "reclaimed" blackguards taught to riot in their evil past on a public platform.

Dr. Alfred Russel Wallace's new book in support of the Theistic interpretation of the universe will be published shortly, and we shall await its appearance before criticising his views and arguments. We would much rather have his own written and printed words than the account of them in Mr. Harold Begbie's interviews with Dr. Wallace in the *Daily Chronicle*. It seems to us that there must be a considerable mixture of "Begbie" with the "Wallace" in these interviews. We never knew Dr. Wallace to be guilty of bad manners before—and these interviews reek with bad manners. Dr. Wallace is represented as taking the position that anybody who differs from him on the question of Deity must be very much of a fool. Now this is so unlike the Dr. Wallace whom the world has known so long; and it is so like the Mr. Harold Begbie whom the world has known so recently.

Such words as "madness" applied to an intellectual opponent's opinion are simply controversial hooliganism. Dr. Wallace is made to say that "those who have eyes to see and minds accustomed to reflect" know that there is "intelligent and conscious direction" in the universe; that is to say, they must agree with Dr. Wallace. The impudence of this assertion becomes conspicuous when it is mentioned that Darwin himself was one of those who did not recognise "intelligent and conscious direction" in the universe. "There seems to me," he wrote, "to be no more design in the variability of organic beings, and in the action of natural selection, than in the course which the wind blows." That was Darwin's view of the matter—and had he no "eyes to see" and no "mind accustomed to reflect"? The very question, in his case, is a glaring absurdity.

"Materialism is a most gigantic foolishness." "Materialism is dead for all intelligent minds." This language is ascribed by Mr. Begbie to the modest Dr. Wallace. Yet at the very same time an interview with Edison appears in the newspapers, showing that he adopts that "gigantic foolishness," and that on the Wallace-Begbie theory he does not possess an "intelligent mind." Yes, we were right. We had better wait for Dr. Wallace's book and judge him by his own deliberate words.

Mr. Harold Begbie should not write about what he doesn't understand. It might seriously restrict his journalistic enterprise, but that is not our business. Mr. Begbie describes Dr. Wallace as "with Darwin the simultaneous formulator of the evolution hypothesis." Everybody acquainted with the subject knows that this description is the vilest absurdity. It was the theory of Natural Selection that Wallace hit upon about the same time as Darwin did.

Here is another Begbieism. "I have never been able to understand," he says, "how the germ of life managed to exist in our molten earth. How did it endure that unthinkable heat?" Only a perfect ignoramus could have written that sentence and that question. Mr. Begbie has not even an elementary acquaintance with the literature of the "spontaneous generation" controversy.

There are points of similarity between Crippen and Moses. Both committed a murder. Both buried the dead body. Both fled from justice. But there was no "wireless" in ancient Egypt. Lucky Moses!

Rev. H. W. Webb-Peploe asked his congregation on Sunday evening "to make it their daily duty to pray that Dr. Crippen might be fully prepared to meet his Maker." Hadn't he better be prepared to meet "Belle Elmora"?

Christian humility is a rare and precious thing. The *Christian World* gravely records the fact that the Rev. John McNeill has no "squeamishness" in referring to his having once been employed as a railway clerk. The other day he said "quite casually" to a *C. W.* writer, "When I was a clerk on the N. B. Railway." Wonderful! Yet we daresay the wages earned as railway clerk were much more honorable than any the Rev. John McNeill has earned since.

The Congregational Insurance Company issues a notice that under the Workman's Compensation Act the managers of Sunday-schools are liable for any accident that happens to children while in school. It also issues a table of premiums. But why not ask the minister of the church to pray—and trust to it?

Lord Gorell is a most vigilant chairman of the Divorce Commission. He insists on challenging witnesses' statements that are not supported by evidence. Sir James Crichton Browne, the distinguished physician, for instance, expressed the view that the religious sanction of marriage was of the utmost importance in avoiding divorce, and added that divorces were more frequent proportionately where marriage took place in a registrar's office. "I am not quite sure you are right," Lord Gorell said with great politeness, but great firmness behind it. His lordship intimated that he had a return which showed that decrees nisi were granted in the following cases:—Church of England, 485; Roman Catholic, 9; denominational Protestants, 54; Jewish, 17; Registrar's Office, 156; Foreign, 2. Sir Lewis Dibden observed that about 70 per cent. of marriages were solemnised in church; whereupon Lord Gorell remarked, "That is very nearly the same proportion as the relation between the registrar and Church of England divorce cases." Thus the people whose marriages are blessed by the religious sanction show the same percentage of divorce as the people whose marriages are purely civic and secular. So much for the special value of religion in this instance.

"The *Freethinker*, the organ of the secularists of England, in noticing that 14,000 starving cats had been taken off the streets of London during the year 1909, abandoned by their thoughtless and callous owners, comments—'Christian England'! Yes, Christian England indeed, when we think of worrying an otter, and a female otter too, in the way described above, and then calling it 'sport.' We wonder the people engaged in this cowardly and cruel pursuit are not heartily ashamed of themselves."—*The Animals' Guardian*.

Mr. Hilaire Belloc has been delivering a rice-pudding sort of lecture at Dublin on the French Revolution. He is about as accurate and worth listening to on this subject as he was on the subject of Ferrer. Perhaps the strongest opinion expressed that evening was the Very Rev. Dr. O'Keane's. This gentleman, in supporting a vote of thanks to the lecturer, declared that "the French Revolution was the black, tragic fact that horrified earth and heaven." This declaration was loudly applauded. Of course it was. Catholics were the under-dogs in that great movement. Had they been the upper-dogs there would have been far more bloodshed than there was, but it wouldn't have been black and tragic, and it wouldn't have horrified earth and heaven.

Any excuse for a collection. The Rector of Merton, Norfolk, is desirous of raising a fund of £1,600 to repair a certain church. The church stands in the district associated with the nursery story of "The Babes in the Wood," and a tablet is to be placed in the restored church to their memory. Therefore, the rector solemnly announces his belief in the historical veracity of the story, and appeals to all lovers of the old story to send a donation. Of course, the tablet will not cost £1,600; we presume six pounds would pay for this, the balance is to pay for the church to preserve the tablet. Wherefore, we repeat, any excuse for a collection.

Dr. Aked's £100,000 New York church is not likely to materialise after all. It seems that a difficulty has occurred in connection with the site and the money is being returned to those who gave it. The trouble is that the character of Fifth Avenue is changing. Business firms are encroaching on this once select territory, and it is likely that, in ten years, Fifth Avenue will be a commercial centre with a poorer residential population. It would never do for the millionaire's church, with Rockefeller's pet parson, to be any other than a first-class fashionable centre. The poor are the Lord's poor, and all men are brethren; but, all the same, millionaires must be kept as select as possible if they are to reap the full benefit of the preaching of so thorough-going a democrat as Mr. C. F. Aked.

Noah Wolf, a German Jew, against whom the Coroner's jury have found a verdict of wilful murder, had been an inmate of the Home for Aged Hebrew Christians in North London. He had been converted by the London Society for the Promotion of Christianity Amongst the Jews—and is the first convert of the Society we have heard of lately. According to the evidence, including his own, he was told to leave the Home, and was allowed five shillings per week.

That was stopped after a time, and the convert's prospects looked anything but rosy. Moreover, he was angry because Andrew Simon, the manager of the Home, accused him of not believing the prophecies of the Bible properly; so he took a large sharp knife, and visited the said Andrew Simon at the Home, and stabbed him ever so many times about the neck and chest, several times through the heart, and left him dead on the floor. We don't suppose the Jew Conversion Society will boast very loudly of *this* convert. But can it show another who has been brought to Christ recently?

Cholera riots have been going on in Italy for some time. The superstitious Catholics resent the scientific efforts of the authorities to deal with the epidemic. A report of the shocking scenes which took place at Bisceglia will give a good idea of the general state of affairs. The following is from the Milan correspondent of the *Daily Chronicle* :—

"Bisceglia Cathedral, in the province of Bari, has been desecrated by shocking cholera riots.

The city was just beginning to recover from commercial depression when yesterday a fresh severe outbreak of Asiatic cholera occurred. The Red Cross Corps was hastily summoned and began a thorough disinfection of the cathedral, which apparently was the scene of contagion. Soon after a howling crowd of women broke down the closed doors of the church and rushed upon the Red Cross officials, trampling them under foot and destroying the disinfection material and pumps.

The fanatics then persuaded themselves that the images of the saints were scowling and sweating with rage, so tearing out their own tresses they began washing and polishing the faces of the statues.

About 300 fishermen, whose calling is sadly languishing because of the general prohibition against the sale and consumption of fish, came upon the scene and turned the Red Cross out of the building. Some ascended the belfry and set all the bells ringing violently. In a few minutes practically the whole of the population assembled eager for the opportunity of attacking the local authorities for their vexatious cholera measures.

Reinforcements arrived, and a pitiless hail of stones and missiles of divers kinds was hurled upon their heads from the upper windows and balconies of the adjacent streets. Once inside the cathedral they were confronted by a mob armed with daggers and revolvers. During a frightful display of barbarity that ensued one man was thrust through with a bayonet, and there was a pool of blood at the foot of the high altar.

The edifice resounded with the roar of firearms and the piercing shrieks of the fanatical throng. Besides casualties among the civilians, a number of soldiers fell wounded with bullets and knife thrusts in various parts of the church. The populace were left in undisputed possession."

This is what religion comes to when unchecked by Science and unleavened by Freethought.

Senor Canalejas, the Spanish Premier, admitted to an interviewer that Ferrer's school and his teaching were hated by the Clericals. "But that they brought about his condemnation and death," he said, "is an insult to the Spanish nation and to the honor of the Spanish officers of the Army who tried him." Senor Canalejas was bound to say something against Ferrer, but he might have said something cleverer than this. The civilised world is only too familiar with that "insult" to the nation and the army. The farce was played for all it was worth—and a bit more—in the Dreyfus case; and Dreyfus was innocent, after all. Senor Canalejas should remember that the only solid ground for argument is evidence.

Dr. Clifford has been orating in Trafalgar-square against "religious tests" for teachers. We beg to remind him once more that "religious tests" are the inevitable accompaniment of "religious teaching." They can no more be got rid of under his policy than under the policy of his opponents. We cannot believe that he does not see this. As the saying is, he is more "r" than "f" in this matter.

It appears that Roosevelt's warmest admirers are in Africa—and he may have to fall back upon them yet. They worshiped him as a deity because he was not affected by the stings of the diabolical tsetse flies. We fancy he is finding worse stings than those—in America.

More "Providence." Rev. C. Birch, rector of Fooks Cray, Kent, died in the pulpit on Sunday immediately after the sermon. It couldn't have been more sudden if he had been an Atheist. "As the one dieth so dieth the other," as the old book says.

With rare exceptions the "glorious free press" will never report anything of real importance in connection with the Freethought movement, but nonsense and mares-nests command their attention. We are not surprised, therefore, at

the paragraph which has gone the round recently about "a militant Atheist attack on London." For the information of inquirers, we may state that there is nothing new involved. A few old performers, not connected with the N. S. S., have concentrated on the big drum. That is all.

The inquest on Isabella Hill, an eight-year-old child, of 45 Mountjoy-street, Belfast, showed that she was killed by her own mother, who will probably be found to be insane, both her mother and her sister having died in the asylum. The part that religion played in the tragedy may be seen from the following terrible and pathetic statement made by the mother at the police-station :—

"About nine or ten o'clock I got a basket and two bottles. I put one of the bottles in the basket and the other in my pocket. I went to Mr. Suffern's and got 3d. worth of laudanum. I went to Mr. Roberts' and got 3d. worth more there, and then I came home. My little Bella was running about the door. I brought her in, washed her, combed her hair, and had a little farewell party. I then read to her from the Bible—'I am the root and the offspring of David and the bright and morning star.' I put her to bed then, and waited till she slept. I then went to her bed. I brought a hammer with me. It was loneliness made me do it. I wanted her to be put on my breast in the coffin. I whispered into her ear—'You are going to Jesus, and I am going too.' I struck her two blows. She didn't shout—she only trembled. I went to the kitchen then, and put the contents of two bottles into a cup, and drank it. I undressed then and went to bed to my little daughter. I couldn't stand her moaning. I got up and took her in my arms to the fire, and sat down with her, hoping she would die in my arms. As she was not dying I put her back to bed, dressed myself, and went for the police."

There is no need to add anything by way of comment. The moral is only too obvious.

"Without any idea of religion," Peary says of the Eskimos, "they will share their last meal with anyone who is hungry. They are healthy and pure-blooded, have no vices, use no intoxicants, and are without bad habits." Dear, dear! What sad news it must be to the professional soul-savers in this country!

The Shamrock Temperance League's tract No. 29 is an amusing eye-opener. It is mainly concerned with the good relations between the Church and the Liquor Trade. Underneath a rough picture of a place of worship, there are a number of bottles labelled Guinness, Rowe, Findlater, Lyle, and Kinahan; and below that a little dialogue, in which the Distillers say: "Our Church connection has paid us well," and the Brewers answer: "Yes, truly." This is followed by the statement that the Liquor Bill for the Holy Communion in the United Kingdom is estimated at £75 000. Another statement is that "Certain clergy of the United Kingdom hold close on a million sterling in liquor investments (£977,407), and as trustees they hold £894 856." According to this tract, the Church of England owns 322 public-houses. "Ho, everyone that thirsteth!"

Here is a true story with a neat joke. St. Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin, was restored in 1865 by the Guinneses; in the chancel there is a special Guinness window, with this inscription: "I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink."

Here is another interesting item. On the back door of the Diocesan Buildings, Clarence-place, Belfast, are the words, "Lyle and Kinahan, Ltd., Excise General Duty Free Warehouse." The Shamrock League tract asks the following question: "Are the spirituous and spiritual needs of the Y. W. C. A., etc., etc., supplied from the same premises?"

This plain-spoken tract asserts that "the liquor trade is increasing by leaps and bounds in Christian-governed India," and asks whether this fact "has ever been referred to in any Missionary Report?" Not likely.

#### THE TABLES TURNED.

My cook, when I engaged her—an Irishwoman, and an original—had given me a Roland for an Oliver. After asking her various questions about how long she had been in her last place, her capabilities, etc., I said: "And now, cook, in the light of recent painful events, I must ask you a very direct question: Do you drink?"

"No, madam," she answered; "and I may say as I am looking for a place where the lady don't, as I've been very unlucky in my last places."

We then exchanged characters for sobriety, and she came to me the next day.—*Mrs. T. P. O'Connor, "I Myself."*



### Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, November 13, Alexandra Hall, Islington-square, Liverpool; at 3, "Freethought's Victory in Portugal"; at 7, "Charles Bradlaugh: After Twenty Years."

November 27, Shoreditch Town Hall.

### To Correspondents.

- C. COHEN'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—November 6, Birmingham; 13, Canning Town; 17 and 18, Debate at St. Pancras Public Baths; 20, Shoreditch Town Hall. December 4, Manchester; 11, Liverpool; 18, Abertillery.
- J. T. LLOYD'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—November 6, Fulham; 13, Shoreditch Town Hall; 20, Manchester; 27, Leicester. December 4, Battersea; 11, Rhondda; 18, West Ham.
- PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1910.—Previously acknowledged: £263 4s. 1d. Received since:—R. Redwood, 10s.
- J. W. H.—Pleased to hear from a constant and appreciative reader in the Transvaal. We have gained a good many subscribers in South Africa during the past few years. Thanks for your good wishes for our health and the future of our "noble work," as you generously express it.
- A. E. MADDOCK (Ceylon), after referring to "the delicious humor and satire which are so often found in 'Acid Drops,'" says: "As a constant reader and admirer of the *Freethinker* I take this opportunity of congratulating you on the noble work you are doing for Freethought. You and your noble colleagues fighting strenuously at the battle's front make one wish, in this remote corner of the world, that one could also join in the thick of the fray. Much cannot be done in a place like this, but you may depend on my doing whatever can be done towards making the *Freethinker* more widely known."
- J. DE B. (S. Africa).—Always pleased to hear from you. There are, as you say, a number of publications devoted to Freethought in America. But there seems to be no cohesion in the Freethought forces over there. Perhaps it is owing to the size of the territory. Mr. Foote is in what most people would call good general health, but the insomnia is still troublesome, though not so much as it was some months ago.
- W. STEWART.—See paragraph. Glad to hear of a good sale of the *Freethinker* at Wood Green and Edmonton.
- F. O. RITZ.—Book received. Thanks, and best wishes.
- W. F. MARTIN.—Your wish has already been anticipated. Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner was offered one of the Queen's Hall dates in the new year, and has accepted the first Sunday in February.
- H. JESSOP writes: "I notice that a Birmingham friend would be a tenth towards making up the deficiency on the President's Honorarium Fund if nine others would do the same. I don't mind being £5, and if he and six others will do the same the thing is done." We desire to give this fund a brief rest after November.
- E. H. H.—Palestine was under Roman government at the time of the alleged execution of Jesus, and crucifixion would therefore be well-known. The Jewish Sanhedrim at Jerusalem had lost the power of life and death, which was reserved to the Roman governor. Stoning to death, the old Jewish method, was therefore no longer practised. The stoning to death of Stephen, in the Acts, was a lynching, not a judicial execution.
- G. BRADFIELD.—Glad you are so thorough. We saw Sir James Crichton Browne's evidence. Some of it seemed sensible enough. We fancy his statement that insanity is an "act of God" simply meant that it was in the same category as other misfortunes and calamities. We don't take it as an expression of personal conviction. Sir Oliver Lodge as a theologian is, as you say, getting a bit tiresome.
- INQUIRER.—Many front-rank critics deny the Shakespeare authorship of *Titus Andronicus*. If he did write it, it must have been a very early production, and therefore of no great importance from a philosophic point of view. We know the passage you quote. There is something much better about oaths and conscience in *Julius Caesar*, Act II., scene 1.
- F. DAVIES.—You misuse the word "flow" in your illustration. Blood could only flow from a wound while the heart was beating. The new edition of *Bible Handbook* will be duly announced. Glad you look forward every week to this journal.
- W. HERON.—Ingersoll visited Great Britain privately in the eighties. He did write those verses on Robert Burns. You see the danger of denying without due inquiry.
- M. TONGE.—We believe the affair was wound up, and you should have been advised if your name was on the register. We understand the shares were of little if any value.
- A. F. PATTER.—Glad the *Freethinker* has enlightened you on many points. What do you mean by "a supreme power"? And what do you mean by "giving life"? Life is not an entity; it is a condition of organised matter. And the question of a future life—which must be a matter of fact or nothing—depends entirely on evidence; not on what you may think about the possible intentions of some "supreme power." Take the similar question of miracles. It is a mere waste of time arguing whether "God" could, would, or should work miracles. The practical point is, do miracles happen? And that again is a matter of evidence.

J. K. MINETT.—Thanks for the cutting. The row over Sunday picture-shows is going on all over the country. There is nothing special in the Kingston case. The outcry about "Sunday labor" is the worst hypocrisy of all.

W. MEDLEY.—Much obliged for your letter, and the reference, which we had forgotten. See "Sugar Plums."

R. BENNETTA.—Tuesday is too late for paragraphs.

R. CHAPMAN.—Tuesday is too late. Next week. Mr. Foote is nearly himself again. In reply to your other question, he is more than willing to visit Newcastle, or South Shields if Newcastle is impossible.

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.

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

### Sugar Plums.

Mr. Foote lectures to-day (Nov. 12), afternoon and evening in the Alexandra Hall, Islington-square, Liverpool. Both subjects are fresh and attractive, and the hall should be crowded on both occasions. Intending auditors who have not provided themselves with tickets will be able to obtain admission, and what seats are available, by silver collection at the door.

We are asked to state that tickets for Mr. Foote's lectures at Liverpool can still be obtained at the addresses printed in our last issue. Also that tea will be provided at the Alexandra Hall between the afternoon and evening lectures, at about eightpence per head, for the convenience of visitors from a distance.

The new course of Freethought lectures at the Shoreditch Town Hall opened well on Sunday evening. There was a fine audience—especially considering the melancholy weather—to hear Mr. Foote's lecture on "Charles Bradlaugh: After Twenty Years," and no audience could have shown deeper attention and appreciation. Mr. Victor Roger occupied the chair. When he referred to the usual rule about questions and discussions, some one got up whom the audience evidently did not want to hear; and on the lecturer's suggestion it was promptly agreed to that discussion should be foregone for once, so that all might leave the place with the memory of Charles Bradlaugh (and not meaner matters) fresh in their minds.

Mr. J. T. Lloyd delivers the second of the Shoreditch Town Hall course of lectures this evening (Nov. 13), his subject being, "Religious Liberty and the Revolution in Portugal." As all seats in the big building are free, except a few reserved front seats at 1s. each, East and North London Freethinkers should try—and try hard—to induce their less heterodox friends and acquaintances to drop into the Hall and hear what is sure to be an eloquent Freethought address.

"Arley Lane" devoted "Pulpit and Pew" in the Birmingham *Weekly Mercury* of November 5 to Mr. Lloyd's afternoon lecture in the Town Hall on the previous Sunday, when he gallantly took Mr. Foote's place on the platform. "Arley Lane" paid Mr. Lloyd some handsome compliments both as writer and speaker. With regard to the audience, he wrote: "The floor presented a solid phalanx of men: the side galleries were full; I looked no further. Ladies were there, not so fashionably dressed as the lovely creatures who gazed over the details of the Crippen case, but in all probability of much higher individuality, and better morals."

Mr. Cohen had excellent meetings at the King's Hall, Corporation-street, Birmingham, on Sunday. We hope the meetings will be as good there to-day (Nov. 13), when Miss

Kough occupies the platform. Birmingham "saints" should give the lady a hearty welcome as well as two good audiences.

This is the last time we shall be able to call attention to Mr. Cohen's public debate with the Rev. J. E. Gun on "Theism or Atheism: Which is the More Reasonable?" It takes place next Thursday and Friday evenings (Nov. 17 and 18) at the Public Hall, Prince of Wales-road, Kentish Town. The tickets are 1s. and 6d. for each evening, and can be obtained of Miss Vance, at 2 Newcastle-street, E.C. This is the only way of making absolutely sure of a seat.

An effort is being made to form a new Branch of the N.S.S. at Grimsby. District "saints" willing to co-operate are invited to communicate with Mr. W. Medley, 230 Conamore-road.

London Freethinkers will please note that their Annual Dinner takes place at the Holborn Restaurant on Tuesday evening, January 10. The tickets will be 4s. each as before. Mr. Foote is to preside, and will be supported by almost everybody who is anybody in the Secular movement in London. In addition to a few speeches and toasts, a good musical program will be a feature of the evening's entertainment.

The Wood Green Branch has successfully launched a new N. S. S. Branch at Edmonton. Meetings are held every Sunday evening at 7 on the Green, Edmonton, and it is intended to carry them on (weather permitting) right through the winter. Local "saints" are invited to support this promising effort, of which full particulars can be obtained of Mr. Hecht, 34 Chiswick road, Edmonton.

Since September—that is, since the beginning of the new winter season—the circulation of the *Freethinker* has been steadily, if slowly, improving. We ask our friends to do all they can to make this forward movement continuous. They can do it at a very trifling cost, if they choose to exert themselves a little. They have simply to introduce the paper to their friends and acquaintances. This can be done in all sorts of ways, which everyone who means business will soon find out for himself. By keeping a copy of the current number about you, you will be in a position to offer it to any person to whom you have mentioned it in the course of conversation. Such a person will often say, "I've heard of the paper before, but I've never seen a copy, one doesn't find it lying on railway bookstalls and places of that sort." There is your opportunity. Bring out your copy of the *Freethinker*, and politely offer it; and you may secure us a new subscriber. We know "saints" who have laid themselves out for this kind of thing, and have gained us many new readers thereby. Missionary advertising like this, if we may call it so, is most effective in the case of a journal like ours. And it costs so little. Surely a considerable number of our present readers will make an effort to extend to others the pleasure they enjoy in reading it.

We are always open to receive the names and addresses of persons to whom we might advantageously post a free copy of this journal for six consecutive weeks. We don't want addresses out of a directory, of course; there should be some reason for believing that the persons indicated are likely to welcome the paper if it is only brought to their attention. We have gained a good many new subscribers in this way also.

We thank Mr. John Blundell, of Burton-upon-Trent, for offering to supply gratis a weekly copy of the *Freethinker* for the Reading Room in Union-street. We pity the Public Library Committee for being too bigoted to accept it.

Mr. Foote is reserving the December week ends for literary work, preparatory to the production of fresh publications in the new year. He will resume lecturing at the Queen's (Minor) Hall in January.

Mr. Lawrence Housman says Milton's picture of Eve is so contemptible it is no wonder that Adam fell with such a woman by his side. For that matter, we think Milton's Adam and Eve are both poor characters, and fairly well matched. The greatest character, and the one most worthy of admiration in *Paradise Lost* is Satan. If Christian theology be correct, God has succeeded in always damning the best men and women, and it is only fit that the most manly character in the heavenly crowd should have been ent to play the part of a leader.

## The God of the Mystic.

IN the *Freethinker* of September 18 the question of "The Existence of God" is raised by a contributor, and is also dealt with by Mr. Cohen. Both assume the Atheistic position, and prefer the affirmation of it to the more moderate Agnostic standpoint. The old-fashioned Deistic and Theistic positions of the Freethinkers of past generations seem to have merged into the Agnosticism of to-day. Some still—like the late J. A. Picton—retain the idea of God in a Pantheistic philosophy. The Science of recent decades has certainly been the illuminating power by which men have grasped more clearly the great idea of the Universe. And it has been the advance of such sciences as Biology, Geology, Astronomy, with the corresponding development of Physics and Chemistry, along with the study of psychological problems, which has broken down the barriers to progress raised by dead creeds. Thus men have been free to move on the upward path.

All Secularists must feel elated at the advances made in recent times in the religious world by Broad Churchmen among Anglicans, by Liberal Theologians among Nonconformists, by Modernists among Catholics. For, while shaking off the crudities of a dogmatic creed, a decided advance has been made towards a Broad Mysticism—that is, towards a freer and more sane religion. This wave of Rationalism—for it is nothing else—has affected almost every shade of religious belief and touched almost every sect in Christendom. From Catholicism to Quakerism the influence is seen. It has been said within recent years, that no sect adheres to the old-fashioned dogma of verbal inspiration except the Plymouth Brethren and a few similar extreme bodies.

The tendency always has been for the man who relinquishes dogmatism to drift into a Broad Mysticism. Many attempt to affect admiration for the Mystics, while they themselves still hold firmly to the Evangelical faith. We have instances of this inconsistency in Principal Dr. Alexander Whyte and Sir William Robertson Nicoll. But true Mysticism and Calvinistic Evangelicalism are incompatible. The tendency of Mysticism is to become Pantheistic. In the Mystics we find what Dr. Vaughan calls the "romance of religion." Their teaching has been the salt of religious thought. And though they often make vapid reading, yet they very often were the progressive thinkers of their ages—especially Eckhart, Boehme, Swedenborg, and others—and their breadth of thought was human.

Much ignominy has been heaped on the term "Pantheism." The Evangelical opponents of the New Theology movement have flung the title at the progressive party as a term of opprobrium akin to Atheism. But many broad thinkers have been dubbed Pantheists, in utter contempt, by the spiritually minded dogmatist, who is always so proud of his antiquated and cast-iron confessions and creeds—as proud as a child who has carefully heaped up the little sand-castle, little thinking that the incoming tide will level all again. Even Paul lost sight of his Rabbinism sometimes, especially in such passages as Romans vii. and 1 Corinthians xiii., and when he uttered words like those on Mar's Hill—quoting from the fountain-head of Mysticism, the Greek poets. Professor Max Müller, in one of his volumes of Gifford Lectures, has said in reference to Paul's speech that had anyone else uttered these words, they would have been branded as Pantheism. Most eastern religions, like Buddhism, are Pantheistic. And the great German Mystics, Eckhart and his school—who were the forerunners of Spinoza and Hegel—were pure Pantheists. And to-day, wherever orthodox Evangelicalism is left behind, the next step is towards Pantheism. Often such a philosophy is adopted quite unconsciously.

The Pantheist believes in a great universal living energy expressing itself in mind through matter, becoming conscious of itself in animal life, and rising to intelligence and soul in humanity. "In Him we

live and move and have our being." Yes, in the "Zeus" of the Greek poets. Aye, and all the poets have said "We are his offspring," from the Psalmist to Walt Whitman. The Monist—taking Ludwig Büchner's *Last Words on Materialism* as a fair expression of Monism—takes his stand on "force and matter," to which everything is traced, and he sees in the whirling fire-mist of the nebulae a great picture of the universe in the making. The living force which has built up the universe, moulded worlds, blushed forth in the color of the rose, thrilled in the rapturous song of the lark, rippled forth in the laughter of a child's mirth, and sobbed out again in the cry of a broken heart, is simply force. Life in all its mysterious power, its multitudinous manifestations, its infinitesimal sparks, and its never-abating tide, is only a condition resulting from force and matter. This life began we know not when—in a past eternity—and flows on to what we know not, into eternity to come. And is it not reasonable to say, in the presence of this eternal flux which awes us with its mystery: I do not know? But the Pantheist says: This universal energy is God, and I and all living things are part of God.

After all, is there such a tremendous difference between Agnostic, Monist, and Pantheist, when we have really understood each? I think not. The Pantheist is a mystic—a poet—who sees the world in all its gorgeous robing, who trembles with joy as he gazes at the rising sun chasing away the shadows of the night and flooding mountain and lake with scintillating colors, or stands in awe before the panorama of the mountain gorges of the Rockies and the Alps. The "eternal hills" impress him with an unspeakable grandeur and a mystic glory.

Now let us take several of Mr. Alfred Germany's statements. "With the aid of natural science we now know that the universe does not need a supreme controller." Here the very point which is under debate is coolly assumed—and there you are. Then follow the sentences: "The laws which govern it are not regulations ordained by a divine law-giver; they are inherent in the universe itself." The "supreme controller" idea was the old-fashioned "watch" argument of Paley. "Inherent in the universe," of course. And Pantheist, Agnostic, and Monist will say "aye" together—but how "inherent"? There's the rub. Let me reverse one of the sentences just to show how easy it is to play with words: "an uncaused 'universe' is, at least, quite as much a logical absurdity as an uncaused 'Maker.'" "God is rendered unnecessary" is an easily spoken sentence, but your contributor is simply charging that red rag the theological conception of God. He is decoyed by the thought of "God" which dominates the religious mind; and here we are at one with him. But it is easy to take passages to pieces and fantastically patch them up again. And, unfortunately, your contributor has laid himself open to this.

It is these very difficulties which lie at the root of the world-origin problem that has made the Agnostic say "I do not know," and frankly profess not "to be in possession of any knowledge whatever on the subject." But the Pantheist sees in the throbbing life, that eternal energy which smiles and sighs through the world, the heart of all things. Wordsworth, Browning, Tennyson, and Longfellow have all sung in the mystic strain. And even Walt Whitman has chanted:—

"I hear and behold God in every object, yet understand  
God not in the least.  
Nor do I understand who there can be more wonderful  
than myself.  
Why should I wish to see God better than this day?  
I see something of God each hour of the twenty-four  
and each moment then,  
In the faces of men and women I see God, and in my  
own face in the glass."  
—*Song of Myself.*

There are wide centuries between Meister Eckhart and Walt Whitman. Yet it seems to me that the great German mystic of the thirteenth century was nearer the truth than many thinkers since, and especially when he said "I am God." FELIX PONDERING.

## Pseudo-Criticism.—VI.

(Continued from p. 717.)

IN my last paper, it may be remembered, I quoted Sir Robert Anderson as saying that when he came to study the book of Daniel himself, his efforts "were rewarded by finding an array of solid facts, as set forth in the preceding chapter, sufficient to convince any competent tribunal that the 'critical hypothesis' is untenable." I now turn to his "preceding chapter" and prepare to face his formidable "array of solid facts" (given on pages 23, 24, and 25), and I take the liberty of transcribing them for the instruction of uninformed "infidels."

"The Critics maintain," says Mr. Anderson, "that the book of Daniel was written in the days of Antiochus [Epiphanes] not earlier than the fourth decade of the second century B.C. But if the case they have piled up in proof of this were as strong as it is feeble, a number of facts could be appealed to, any one of which would be sufficient to destroy it." Just so; and herewith I reproduce this "array of solid facts" as set forth by Mr. Anderson:—

"The first fact is the Jewish Canon. For the Canon included no book which was not believed to have been in existence in the time of Nehemiah. And it was closed *not later* than half a century after the death of Antiochus. And yet, according to the 'critical hypothesis,' Daniel was written within the memory of men who finally settled the Canon."

"The next fact is the Septuagint Version. For the critics themselves admit that that version was made before First Maccabees was written, and the corruptions which mark it give proof that at the time when it was made Daniel was an ancient book."

"Another fact is the book of Ecclesiasticus. For Daniel is cited by the Son of Sirach, who wrote at least a quarter of a century before Antiochus began to reign. And, I may add, the proof that the whole Jewish Canon was then already closed is almost adequate to satisfy even a hostile witness"—i.e., Dr. Ryle's *Canon of the Old Testament*.

"And if these and other external facts could be disposed of, the ninth chapter [of Daniel] would still bar the 'critical hypothesis.' For not even the subtle ingenuity of the sceptics, aided by a false punctuation of verse 25, can get rid of the Messianic prophecy of the Seventy Weeks."

Here they stand, these "solid facts"—a fourfold refutation of the "critical hypothesis" that the book of Daniel was written about 164 B.C.—and all four evolved out of Mr. Anderson's own head. I now proceed to briefly examine them seriatim.

1. "The first fact is the Jewish Canon." Upon this point I have already quoted Dr. Driver to the effect that "on the authorship of the Old Testament" as well as "on the completion of the Canon" the Jews possess "no tradition worthy of real credence," but only "vague and uncertain reminiscences" and "idle speculations." Under these circumstances it is simply ridiculous to found an argument on the date of the completion of this Canon. All critical scholars, however, are agreed as to the fact that the formation of the Canon was a gradual process, in which there were three different stages corresponding to the tripartite division of the books. This division is the following:—

(1) The Torah or Law, consisting of the Pentateuch or the "five books of Moses."

(2) The Nebiim or Prophets, which include the books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings; Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the Twelve (i.e., Hosea to Malachi). The first four are called the "Former Prophets," the remainder the "Latter Prophets."

(3) The Kethubim or Writings—called in Greek the *Hagiographa* or "holy writings"—which include Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Song of Songs, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther, Daniel, Ezra—Nehemiah, and Chronicles.

This division has been "current from antiquity among the Jews," and though some of the books are sometimes given in a slightly different order, in no case has a book of the Second division ever been

placed in the Third, or *vice versa*. Again, all Biblical critics are agreed that these three divisions have a historical basis. The Pentateuch was completed first, the Prophets a considerable time later, and the Writings at a still later period. As regards the approximate dates, the first division was completed and accepted as canonical in the time of Ezra (444 B.C.); the second division was accepted and accounted canonical about 200 B.C.; the third division was practically complete about 100 B.C., but not finally closed until about A.D. 100. We see now the reason why the Samaritans had only "the five books of Moses": those were the only books that were completed and accounted sacred and canonical at that time. We see, also, how the Jewish Canon affects the book of Daniel. Had that book been written in the age in which Daniel claims to have lived, it would undoubtedly have found a place in the Second division, the Prophets; but at the date when it was received as canonical, the canon of the Prophets had been definitely closed. It was therefore placed near the end of the Third division. The Jews had a habit of referring doubtful writings back to the time of Nehemiah; the book of Daniel professed to have been written before that time: it was therefore given a place in the Third division, but this was not, of course, in the generation in which it first appeared.

2. "The next fact is the Septuagint Version." According to the tradition of the Alexandrian Jews, the Law or Pentateuch was translated into Greek in the reign of Ptolemy Philadelphus (284-247 B.C.). This view is generally accepted, and the date 280 B.C. is assigned to the translation. The other books of the Jewish Canon were "turned into Greek by various hands at various times from the middle of the Third century B.C. down to the Christian Era, or even later." Many of these translations, however, were very faulty, notably that of the book of Daniel; so in the Second century A.D. three Hebrew scholars made independently new translations. The third, and most important, of these was a revision of the Septuagint from the existing Hebrew by Theodotion (A.D. 180-192), whose translation of Daniel gave such satisfaction that the Christian Church adopted it instead of the older Septuagint text. It is, then, a big assumption on the part of Sir Robert Anderson to say that the original text of Daniel in the Septuagint "gives proof that at the time when it was made Daniel was an ancient book."

Mr. Anderson says that the Critics admit that "the Septuagint Version was made before First Maccabees was written." The reason why many hold this view is the presence of the following passage in 1 Maccabees:—

1 Macc. ii. 59-61.—"Hananiah, Azariah, and Mishael believed, and were saved out of the flame. Daniel for his innocency was delivered from the mouth of lions. And thus consider ye, from generation to generation, that none that put their trust in him shall want for strength."

The words italicised indicate both the object of the book of Daniel and the reason why that late fictitious narrative found a place in the Canon. The book of Daniel was written in Hebrew in 164 B.C.; the book of Maccabees was written in Greek about 100. B.C. It is quite possible that such a patriotic and comforting book, as all pious Jews felt Daniel to be, may have been translated into Greek many years before it was added to the books in the Septuagint. In any case, there was plenty of time for Daniel to be accounted an ancient prophetic writing before 1 Maccabees was written. As an example, the great Irenæus quotes from a silly work of fiction written about forty years before his time (*i.e.*, the *Shepherd of Hermas*), and calls it "Scripture."

3. "Another fact is the book of Ecclesiasticus." Why, certainly. But Mr. Anderson says that the author of the book quotes from the book of Daniel, though he wrote "a quarter of a century before Antiochus began to reign." In other words, the book of Ecclesiasticus was written about 200 B.C., and the book of Daniel is said by critics to have been written 86 years later; yet, strange to say, "Daniel

is cited" by the author of Ecclesiasticus. Upon this subject Mr. Anderson says in a footnote:—

"Three quotations from the book of Daniel are cited by Dr. Schechter in his introduction to the *Wisdom of Ben-Sira*, but of course they are not accepted as quotations by the Critics. I beg to refer to my *Daniel in the Critics' Den*, pp. 101-103 (1902 ed.)."

As Sir Robert very justly says, "of course they are not accepted"—the reason "of course" being that no one save Dr. Schechter and Mr. Anderson can identify those quotations. I do not, "of course," say that three sentences in common use may not be found in both Daniel and Ecclesiasticus, and even expressed in identically the same words. The question, then, would be: Had the author of Daniel read Ecclesiasticus? If so, the coincidence would be accounted for. But, as it happens, the book of Ecclesiasticus *does* contain evidence relating to the book of Daniel. The author of that book was well acquainted with the sacred writings known in his day, and he admired and revered all the great and good men named in those writings. Towards the end of his book he devotes seven chapters (xliv.-l.) to praising and glorifying the character and achievements of the most notable of the Bible heroes. The following are the names of those he considered most deserving of praise. I can find space only for one line with each, though the writer gives a long paragraph. Readers should take particular notice of what he has to say of Daniel:—

"Let us now praise famous men.....such as did bear rule in their kingdoms, and were men renowned for their power, giving counsel by their understanding, such as have brought tidings in prophecies.....*Enoch* pleased the Lord, and was translated.....*Noah* was found perfect and righteous.....*Abraham* was a great father of a multitude.....In *Isaac* also did God establish..... blessing, and he made it rest upon the head of *Jacob*.....A man beloved of God and men, even *Moses*.....He exalted *Aaron*, a holy man.....And *Phinehas* the son of Eleazar is the third in glory.....*Joshua* the son of Nun was valiant in war.....*Samuel*, the prophet of the Lord, beloved of the Lord.....And after him rose up *Nathan*.....So was *David* separated from the children of Israel.....*Solomon* reigned in days of peace.....Also there arose *Elijah* the prophet of fire, and his word burned like a torch.....And *Elisha* was filled with his spirit.....*Hezekiah* did that which was pleasing unto the Lord.....*Isaiah* the prophet was great and faithful in his vision.....The memorial of *Josiah* is like the composition of incense.....*Jeremiah* was sanctified in the womb to be a prophet.....It was *Ezekiel* who saw the vision of glory.....How shall we magnify *Zerubbabel*.....So was *Jeshua* the son of Josedek.....Also of *Nehemiah* the memorial is great.....It was *Simon*, the son of Onias, the great priest, who in his life repaired the house, and in his days strengthened the temple," etc.

Here, it will be seen, the author of Ecclesiasticus has come down from the earliest times to a period subsequent to the death of Alexander the Great. But where is the great and zealous Daniel, the most pious, the most faithful, the most sagacious, and in every respect the most illustrious of all the prophets? That distinguished personage is conspicuous by his absence. The writer of Ecclesiasticus, who was familiar with all the Jewish sacred writings known in his days, had never heard of him—and for the simple reason that the book of Daniel had not then been written.

4. We are next told that if the three foregoing "solid facts" could be disposed of, Sir Robert Anderson has one of even greater solidity in store—*i.e.*, the ninth chapter of Daniel which "not even the subtle ingenuity of the sceptics, aided by a false punctuation of verse 25, can get rid of." This, the only real and positively insurmountable "solid fact," is "the Messianic prophecy of Seventy Weeks."

Upon the point of punctuation Mr. Anderson is undoubtedly correct; the colon in verse 25 (Revised Version) should be a comma; the writer was speaking not of seven weeks, but of sixty-nine weeks. The "Seventy Weeks" in Daniel represent 490 years, towards the end of which period there should live a certain "anointed one, a prince," whose life should be prematurely "cut off." This "anointed one" is

said by Christian advocates and Commentators to be Jesus Christ, and the "Seventy Weeks" paragraph (Dan. ix. 24-27) is alleged to be a prophecy indicating the time of his coming. This view is that maintained by Sir Robert Anderson, who has written a book upon the subject, entitled *The Coming Prince; or, the Seventy Weeks of Daniel*.

It is scarcely necessary to say that upon this question Sir Robert is hopelessly in error. The writer of the book of Daniel knew nothing of Jesus Christ. His "anointed one" was the good and revered high priest, Onias III., who was put to death in 171 B.C.—an event which all god-fearing Jews of that day felt to be a national calamity, among whom must be reckoned the pious author of the book of Daniel. Thus, the last of Mr. Anderson's "solid facts" is even weaker than the others.

ABRACADABRA.

(To be continued.)

### A New Peace Society.

The following circular explains itself.

38 Cursitor-street, London, E.C.,

DEAR SIR,—

August, 1910.

We have reason to believe that the Peace movement in this country is limited in its appeal by the fact that it is associated in the public mind with an exclusively Christian point of view and method of propaganda. While we wish in no way to criticise adversely those religionists who work through the medium of their particular faith, we cannot but regret that many who do not share their views are not attracted to share their work, but are possibly repelled by an assertion of theological belief and a reliance on supernatural agencies.

We know that certain existing Peace Societies do not fetter themselves with any religious tenets, and we have no desire to enter into rivalry with these bodies; but we propose to form a new Peace organisation which shall proceed on *explicitly* Rationalist lines, and shall recognise that War and Peace are questions to be dealt with by a consideration of social facts and psychology. By such means we hope to attract new adherents to, and workers in, the Peace cause without weakening any existing organisations, with which, indeed, some of us are associated. We feel sure that there are many Rationalists who are already in cordial sympathy with Peace principles, but have not attached themselves to any Peace organisation.

We do not propose to express any exclusive views on party politics or economics, our common object being merely to study and advocate Peace principles by Rationalist methods, and we hope to co-operate with Pacifists of all creeds and schools.

To this end, we venture to invite your opinion as to the advisability of forming such an organisation, the likelihood of its efficiency, and whether it would have the support of your Society and its members.

Yours faithfully,

|                     |                 |
|---------------------|-----------------|
| H. BRADLAUGH BONNER | J. M. ROBERTSON |
| PAUL DESCOURS       | HENRY S. SALT   |
| G. W. FOOTE         | ADOLPHE SMITH   |
| F. J. GOULD         | H. SNELL        |
| J. F. GREEN         | S. H. SWINNY    |
| W. HEAFORD          |                 |

E. G. SMITH, Hon. Sec. (*pro tem.*)

The replies received to this circular encouraged the promoters to proceed. A special meeting was held on October 21, a working committee was appointed, and a sub-committee to draft a Constitution and General Appeal, which will be published shortly.

### OBJECTIONABLE TERMS.

"In the game of life," observed the literary editor, "it is always —"

"I wish you wouldn't call life a 'game,'" interrupted the information editor.

"Why not?"

"Because it introduces the idea of chance. In the great scheme of creation —"

"I wish you wouldn't speak of creation as a 'scheme,'" irritably interposed the literary editor. "That introduces the idea that creation is a frame-up."

### The Invertebrate's Hymn.

"Nothing in my hand I bring," sings the Lord's invertebrate;

"Also, nothing in my head," he with confidence might state.

In the dust he loves to squirm,  
Boasting he is but a "worm."

"Simply to Thy Cross I cling"—clinging is the Christian's pride;

Works are futile, faith is all, impotence is sanctified.

"All the world can give is dross,"

Says the saint who hugs the Cross.

"Naked, come to Thee for dress; helpless, look to Thee for grace"—

Words some servile slave might chant, words which would a man debase;

But of them the worm's so proud

That he shouts them out aloud;

"Foul, I to the fountain fly,"—splash!.....his sins are now no more.

O 'tis passing strange to us, who have never "dipped" in gore!

We no blood-bath ever craved,

Water does for souls unsaved.

"Wash me, Savior, or I die"—true, to die were better far;

Still, our fearful Christians think they are better where they are.

"Heaven's our home," they blandly say,

"But—we'd rather keep away!"

Hymns of servile praise and fear daily make the welkin ring,

But the gods (a useless tribe) never *do* a blessed thing;

And, methinks, in this respect

They resemble Christ's "elect."

JOHN YOUNG.

### NATURE AND MAN.

Nature has no concern for the numerous species to which she has given birth, no more than the tree has for the leaves which turn yellow and sear every autumn, and fall to the ground. Nature, like evolution, which is but the result of its mutations, is not a personality. It has neither feeling nor reason; it has neither the notion of the good nor of the beautiful. Whether a species is good or bad, whether it is adapted or not to its environment, whether ten, twenty, or one hundred die before a good one is reached, is a matter of indifference to her. Nature is a state of things merely, a series of changes, a wheel which turns perpetually, a world inhabited or uninhabited which rolls through space. If man is more favored than other species he has to thank no one for it. He may erect altars to Nature and invoke her aid, but she neither will nor can abate one jot or tittle of her onward movement. If he would escape the common fate, if he would ameliorate his condition, be happy, let him make her his servant, reign over her as far as he can; but let him place his trust in no one but himself.—*Dr. Paul Topinard, "Science and Faith," p. 265.*

### N. S. S. Social Evening.

NOTWITHSTANDING the unpleasant weather, a large number of Freethinkers assembled at Anderton's Hotel on Thursday last, and an enjoyable evening was spent. This was the first opportunity many "saints" had of seeing Mr. Foote off the platform since his serious illness in the early part of the year, and he was kept busy handshaking, as, indeed, were Messrs. Heaford, Lloyd, and Cohen. There are always some provincial friends at these functions. This time we were all glad to welcome Mr. E. Pinder, of Leicester.

There was a good musical program, songs being contributed by Miss Hadley, Miss Redfern, and Mr. Alce Hardisty, but the gem of the evening was Mr. Foote's magnificent rendering of Othello's "Address to the Senate." The foregoing items were interspersed with a few dances, Mr. Quinton officiating as the hard-working and agreeable M. C. The enthusiastic way in which this part of the program was carried out, shows that it is not only the rising generation that appreciates a little dancing.

A pleasurable feature of these socials is that they bring together old Freethinkers, who, for various reasons, have not had an opportunity of recounting their old battles in the Freethought cause to brother Freethinkers for a number of years. All those who were present are eagerly looking forward to our next meeting.

E. M. VANCE, General Secretary

## SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

### LONDON.

#### INDOOR.

SHOREDITCH TOWN HALL: 7.30, J. T. Lloyd, "Religious Liberty and the Revolution in Portugal."

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Public (Minor) Hall, Canning Town): 7.30, C. Cohen, a Lecture.

#### OUTDOOR.

EDMONTON BRANCH N. S. S. (The Green, Edmonton): 7, J. Hecht, "Religion and Toleration."

ISLINGTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Highbury Corner): 12 noon, S. J. Cook, a Lecture.

### COUNTRY.

#### INDOOR.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N. S. S. (King's Hall, Corporation-street): Miss K. B. Kough, 3, "Women and Christianity"; 7, "What Has Become of Hell?"

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 12 (noon), Class; 6.30, Zosimus, "Phases of Religion and Religious Life in Ireland."

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, S. Perkins Pick, "Old Leicester." With lantern illustrations.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N. S. S. (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): G. W. Foote, 7, "Freethought's Victory in Portugal"; 7, "Charles Bradlaugh: After Twenty Years."

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, J. R. Ferrey, Miscellaneous and Dramatic Recital. Musical selections.

RHONDA BRANCH N. S. S. (Parry's, late Danix's, Durnaven-street, Tonypany): 6, Sam Holman, "Why I am an Atheist."

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## THE SECULAR SOCIETY

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Registered Office—2 NEWCASTLE STREET, LONDON. E.C.

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,

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

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