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The real history of mankind is that of the slow advance of resolved deed following laboriously just thought: and all the greatest men live in their purpose and effort more than it is possible for them to live in reality.—JOHN RUSKIN.

Dying Like a Dog.

"DOETH God care for oxen?" asks Paul, and the question does him great discredit. Why should not God care for oxen? Why should he not care for all his creatures? It may not be true that the beetle crushed beneath our feet feels a corporal pang as great as when a giant dies; nevertheless, it feels in its degree, according to its position in the scale of existence. Consideration to what we call the lower animals should not depend upon their intellectual powers. It was well remarked by Bentham that the question is, not do they think, but do they feel? If they are susceptible to pain, they are morally within the scope of our regard. And if we are under an obligation to consider them, how much more so is God, who called them into being, and who should not only be wiser than the wisest man, but better than the best.

This exclamation of Paul's puts Christianity, in this respect, on a lower level than the higher Judaism. Even the Mosaic Law forbids the muzzling of the ox that treads out the corn. It is also said in the Old Testament that the good man is merciful unto his beast. Christianity has ever been remarkable in its disregard of the rights of animals. In fact, it allows them none. God gave Adam dominion over them, and that lordship has descended to his posterity. No ill-treatment of them is a sin, although it may be regrettable. Now and then a Catholic saint, like St. Francis, overflowing with an invincible sweetness of nature, recognises the brotherhood of the winged and four-footed creation; but the Catholic Church has never recognised it officially; on the contrary, it still teaches the opposite doctrine. They have no souls. Only man has a soul. And it must be admitted that sometimes he has only enough, as Ben Jonson said, to save his body the expense of salt.

It is strange how the Bible insults dogs. Certainly they have objectionable features. Their habits are liable to be offensive when they have not been properly trained—though the same may be said of human beings, and especially of savages. They are devoid of sexual modesty. But then again there are many millions of men and women, and some whole tribes and even nations, that are not overburdened with this virtue. When all is said against him that can be said, however, the great fact remains that the dog has been an invaluable friend to mankind. It is difficult to see how men could have passed from the nomadic into the pastoral state without the dog's assistance. The shepherd still knows his worth. Moreover, it must be allowed that the dog is generally brave, and nearly always faithful. He sticks to his master in all weathers and in all fortunes. He will not forsake a tramp for a millionaire. He usually resents the lifting of a man's hand against a woman, and he puts up with endless worries and indignities from children, because he knows their

helplessness, and feels they do not mean him any harm.

Several years ago, in the city of Hertford, if we recollect aright, half a streetful of people kept snugly indoors while a brutal ruffian was slowly murdering a poor woman outside. They heard his blows and oaths, they heard her pleas and groans, but they did nothing. They left the matter to the police, who were naturally engaged elsewhere. Had there been a dog in the street, it is ten to one that he would have interested himself in the affair. Very likely he would have flown at the ruffian. Anyhow, he would have uttered a vehement protest, which might have brought some backing.

The human being is higher than the canine, but sometimes the dog is the nobler of the two. Yet the Christians have always used the dog's name to express their deepest sense of contempt. How common it is to hear them say to an Atheist that he "dies like a dog," when a dog has often died sublimely, fighting against desperate odds, and pouring out his heart's blood for his master, or his master's children, or even his master's property. What could be more touching than the story of the dog whose master succumbed in the snow? When they were found, the man had still some living warmth about his heart. But the dog was frozen dead. He had shielded his master with his own body. He had died inch by inch to save the one he loved.

Byron had a favorite Newfoundland dog, whose memory he has enshrined in famous verse. "Boatswain," the poet wrote to his friend Hodgson, "is dead!—he expired in a state of madness, after suffering much, yet retaining all the gentleness of his nature to the last; never attempting to do the least injury to anyone near him." Boatswain was buried in the garden of Newstead, and his virtues were celebrated in an inscription on his monument. Then came the verses, from which we extract the following:—

"But the poor dog, in life the firmest friend,
The first to welcome, foremost to defend,
Whose honest heart is still his master's own,
Who labors, fights, lives, breathes for him alone,
Unhonor'd falls, unnoticed all his worth,
Denied in heaven the soul he held on earth:
While man, vain insect! hopes to be forgiven,
And claims himself a sole exclusive heaven."

This is the finest part of Byron's poem on Boatswain. The rest is marred by the poet's extravagant and affected misanthropy.

A hundred years before Byron, another great satirist—not the greatest, but the most finished—had put in a good word for the dog. Pope's splendid *Essay on Man*, whatever the admirers of "true poetry" may say against it, is full of good sense and philosophy, and marked by astonishingly fine versification. And although this has nothing to do with our immediate subject, we cannot resist the temptation of saying, by the way, that Ruskin has done justice to Pope in his beautiful *Lectures on Art*. Ruskin brackets Pope and Virgil as "two great masters of the absolute art of language." "They are," he says, "the two most accomplished Artists, merely as such, whom I know in literature." He notices Pope's "serene and just benevolence," which placed him, in theology, two centuries in advance of his time, and "enabled him to sum the law of noble life in two lines which, so far as I know, are the

most complete, the most concise, and the most lofty expression of moral temper existing in English words." This is grand praise, but, if we may corroborate Ruskin without impertinence, it is richly deserved. Here are the two lines in question:—

"Never elated, while one man's oppress'd;
Never dejected, while another's bless'd."

Think over these lines, dear reader, and the more you reflect upon them the more they will fill you with admiration. If they do not, there is something wrong with you, and you had better consult a doctor.

But let us get back to the dog, and quote the lines of Pope already referred to:—

"Lo, the poor Indian! whose untutor'd mind
Sees God in clouds, or hears him in the wind;
His soul, proud Science never taught to stray
Far as the solar walk, or milky way;
Yet simple Nature to his hope has giv'n,
Behind the cloud-topt hill, an humbler heav'n;
Some safer world in depth of woods embrac'd
Some happier island in the watery waste,
Where slaves once more their native land behold,
No fiends torment, no Christians thirst for gold.
To Be, contents his natural desire,
He asks no Angel's wings, no Seraph's fire,
But thinks, admitted to that equal sky,
His faithful dog shall bear him company."

Call this poetry or not, according to the catholicity or limitations of your taste—it is certainly magnificent writing; and nothing could be more masterly than the way in which the most terrible satire is flung, without producing the least chaos, into the midst of that pastoral scene.

The poor Indian—not the Hindu, mark, good reader—the "savage" of North America, not the "barbarian" of India—believed his faithful dog would bear him company in the happy hunting-grounds of Paradise. With his dog he might be happy, particularly as he escaped the Christians who enslaved him on earth, tormented him like devils, and drove him to the death-in-life of their gold-mines. Talking to him about dying like a dog would have invited the retort that he would sooner die like a dog than live like a Christian.

Pope is said to have been a Catholic, but he was really a Freethinker. In the *Essay on Man* he versified the philosophy of the sceptical Bolingbroke. Everyone knows that Byron was a Freethinker. Let us now take another Freethinker—the late Matthew Arnold. He also wrote beautiful verses on a dead dog. *Geist's Grave* is one of the later poems which showed that he had not altogether lost his singing voice while drudging as Inspector of Schools, and writing volumes of controversial prose. "Dear little friend" he calls the dead Geist, and praises his "loving heart" and "patient soul." After remarking that Nature, with all her infinite resources, never quite repeats the past, nor reproduces a personality, Arnold continues:—

"Stern law of every mortal lot!
Which man, proud man, finds hard to bear,
And builds himself I know not what
Of second life I know not where.
But thou, when struck thine hour to go,
On us who stood despondent by,
A meek last glance of love didst throw,
And humbly lay thee down to die."

Well for all of us will it be, when the end comes, if we only die like that dog; with a last glance of love on dear ones around us, and a serene submission to the fiat of Nature. We like that word "humbly." It is foolish to resist the inevitable, like a kicking, spluttering child in the grasp of a giant. Death should always bring resignation. This, indeed, is all that religionists mean when they talk of bowing to the will of God. There is a world of wisdom in the old proverb that "What can't be cured must be endured"; or, in the great language of Shakespeare,—

"But let determin'd things to destiny
Hold unbewail'd their way."

We may even go beyond that. For death comes to all, and will come, in spite of our unwelcome. Often at last it comes as a deliverer; and then we may cry

with brave Walt Whitman, "Come, lovely and soothing Death!"

Men die and dogs die, and a living dog is better than a dead man. Let the Christian cease his foolish talk about the Atheist dying like a dog. When his time comes he will have to die in just the same fashion. Meanwhile he might ponder the words of one of his own "sacred" writers:—

"For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them; as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath.....All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again. Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth?"

Ah, if the clergy only wrote like that! We should read them oftener. But let us not omit this "sacred" writer's conclusion:—

"Wherefore I perceive that there is nothing better than that a man should rejoice in his own works: for that is his portion: for who shall bring him to see what shall be after him?"

There, good Christian—you who whimper about dying like a dog—you are answered out of your own Book. And don't reply that the Atheist, like the Devil, can cite Scripture for his purpose. Why should he not? He accepts a good thing wherever he finds it.

G. W. FOOTE.

Mind and Purpose in Nature.

The World of Life. A Manifestation of Creative Power, Directive Mind, and Ultimate Purpose, by Alfred Russel Wallace.

It is extremely probable that the truest admirers of Dr. Wallace—amongst whom the present writer ventures to rank himself—will be those who most regret the appearance of this work. This will not be merely because they do not agree with the conclusions reached, but because between those conclusions and the facts cited there is really no logical connection. A mass of scientific fact is placed before the reader, followed by an inconsequential "therefore," which is clearly the result of the author's prepossessions in a particular direction. Plainly, the book has been written, not because of Dr. Wallace's knowledge of the World of Life, nor because of his knowledge of the evolutionary process, nor has he been led to certain conclusions in consequence of his study of the facts of animal life, but because of his belief in what is known as Spiritualism. I do not mean by this that Dr. Wallace has consciously stooped to a piece of special pleading. Personally, I hold him in too great respect to believe him capable of so unworthy a proceeding. All his life he has said what he believed to be true, careless of whether it offended the throned respectabilities or not, and his character is not likely to have undergone a change in this respect. But the fact, to my mind, remains; and after a careful study of his four hundred closely printed pages, I have failed to find any other ground for his conclusions, save his prepossessions in favor of Spiritualism.

On the other hand, those who will give this book a warm welcome—as has already happened with the bulk of the reviews that have appeared—will be chiefly those who are least able, or least inclined, to appreciate the scientific part of it. They will welcome it because it supports their religious beliefs, and will congratulate themselves on being possessed of profound scientific insight, without ever having taken the trouble to acquire it. They will delight in being able to claim the support of one who deservedly ranks high in the world of evolutionary thought, quite careless of whether the facts justify their jubilation or not. In the name of Alfred Russel Wallace, science will be invoked as an ally of superstition, even to the extent of bolstering beliefs that he would repudiate.

Quite two-thirds of Dr. Wallace's book is taken up with a description of the evolutionary process and a

discussion of questions at issue between Darwinians and Neo-Darwinians. All this, while of great interest in itself, is avowedly intended as the groundwork on which is based the claim that the "World of Life" manifests "Creative Power, Directive Mind, and Ultimate Purpose," and it is this conclusion with which I am now specially concerned. It may clear the ground somewhat to point out that what Dr. Wallace discerns in Nature is not the workings of a "God" in the ordinary Christian sense of the word. It is, he says, "hopeless to realise what is the nature of the controlling power and mind" which has built up our universe. A rather curious statement, since, if there be a mind, we have already determined the nature of the assumed directing power. And as "mind" can only mean what we ordinarily mean when we speak of mind, the only question that can arise is a quantitative one. We can only be in doubt as to the extent of its capacity and resources. And a couple of pages further on (p. 392) we have the definite statement that "the organising mind which actually carries out the development of the life world.....need not be what is usually meant by the terms God or Deity."

What Dr. Wallace argues for is the existence of an indefinite and incomprehensible "spiritual" power, and that between ourselves and it there is "an almost infinite series of grades of beings, each successive grade having higher and higher powers in regard to the origination, the development, and the control of the Universe." The highest grade of angels would create "by their will power" the ether, a lower grade would develop from it matter with all its laws and forces, and then watch over the various stellar systems until one or more of them provided suitable conditions for the development of a life system. Life is initiated by "a body of spirit workers," while "organising spirits" influence the myriads of "cell souls" to carry out their work with accuracy and efficiency. Finally, at successive stages of development, "higher intelligence might be required to direct the main lines of variation in definite directions in accordance with the general design to be worked out," and to guard against any mischance to the line of development which is to culminate in the production of man.*

This is what Dr. Wallace believes a careful examination of the world of life proves. On what grounds, we shall see later. At present, and with all due respect to the author, one may safely say that a more amazing theory was never suggested since Newton, discoverer of the law of universal gravitation, wrote in defence of the Biblical prophecies—albeit with rather less cause for wonder than is provided by Alfred Russel Wallace, co-enunciator with Darwin of the principle of Natural Selection. Dr. Wallace appears to have worked backward from his Spiritualism. It is held by Spiritualists that disembodied human intelligences are able to, and do, influence for good or evil those who are still living this earthly life. But this leaves the question of creation where it was, and I am not aware that Spiritualists have ever claimed for these disembodied spirits any other directive power over natural forces other than that which is, in kind, possessed by man. Dr. Wallace seems to have gone beyond this, and to believe that long before there were any human intelligences, embodied or disembodied, long before, even, there existed a material universe, there existed this vast hierarchy of angels with, apparently, nothing whatever to do. Perhaps it was to provide this unemployed spiritual host with some occupation that the Deity—to use a convenient term—foresaw and determined the universe as it now exists. This, I admit, is a little improvement on the orthodox Christian scheme. In that scheme the Deity suddenly awoke himself from a state of hitherto infinite somnolence and created the world—either for his own glory or out of sheer perversity. With

"an infinite series of grades" of spiritual beings ready to hand, but with nothing to do, the act of creation looks a trifle more reasonable.

But a trifle only. If Dr. Wallace's theory of creation be accepted, we have a *reason* for the world process. But have we any *justification* for it? The ultimate purpose of the world, he says, is "the development of mankind for an enduring spiritual existence" (p. 228). But with this infinite number of spiritual existences already on hand, what need to create more? No one is injured by not being born or by not being created. Would there have been any injustice if these angels had not created, by will-power the ether, and then matter, and so through the whole process? Or, if there is an injury in not being born, consider the vast injustice being done to the unborn myriads of the future. Or, if the purpose of creation was as stated, why not have created perfect spiritual beings at once? There could have been no lack of power. Remember we are not dealing with higher powers operating on materials already provided, and so far conditioned, in their operations. Those who had the purpose in mind created, as Dr. Wallace believes, all the materials, forces, laws, conditions that result in this long process of development. Why not, then, have created the fully developed being at once? When, in his *Contributions to the Theory of Natural Selection*, Dr. Wallace drew the line at the mind of man, one critic aptly retorted that he believed "our brains came from God and our lungs by Natural Selection." But even that view was sweetly reasonable at the side of this multitude of angels creating and guiding the world, and only securing at the end of a long and faulty process what might as easily have been secured at the beginning—even if there were any reason for securing it at all. Whatever difficulties there are in the naturalistic interpretation of Nature, they have at least the merit of being inherent in the subject. They are not difficulties springing from a wholly gratuitous and useless hypothesis.

Two-thirds of Dr. Wallace's book are, as I have already said, made up of a series of interesting and instructive chapters of the evolution of living organisms. By themselves, these would form a valuable contribution to the literature of evolution, particularly the chapter on "Recognition Marks." There is no need, however, to discuss or describe these in detail, their importance being, for the purpose of the book, their bearing on the thesis that Nature manifests mind and purpose. And so far as this is concerned, Dr. Wallace wholly fails to make out his case. This is not due to any deficiency on his part—except so far as trying to prove that which is incapable of proof can be counted as such. For the truth is, that not only do the facts cited not prove the conclusions set down, but it lies in their very nature that they cannot yield any such conclusions. One need not be an authority on biology, on chemistry, or on physics, to say this with the utmost confidence. All that is needed is properly to understand the nature of the facts cited and the nature of the conclusions deduced therefrom. For this reason it is quite unnecessary to take Dr. Wallace's proofs in detail. A general consideration, with an example here and there, is all that is required.

In the first place, it may be pointed out that the case for a directive mind in Nature gains nothing in substance from a multiplicity of instances. A multiplicity of cases dazzles rather than convinces, and, in a surreptitious manner, throws upon one who dissents from the Theistic conclusion, the need for adequately accounting for every case offered. This is a responsibility that does not lie with the Atheist. The doctrine of Natural Selection, for instance, offers an explanation of adaptation in the animal world. But the case for Non-Theism is independent of its truth. Its service in this direction is that the evidential value of a class of facts upon which Theists laid great stress is destroyed thereby, and that it provides an explanation for those who, unless

* See pp. 390-395.

one is forthcoming on a naturalistic basis, feel compelled to accept any other that is offered. Nor need the believer in Deity range all over the universe in search of proofs. One is as good as a million—if it can be found. For if mind and purpose exist in Nature it must be everywhere, since, on this hypothesis, the whole of Nature was called into existence by a creative intelligence, and its purpose must be expressed in all its parts. To the modern mind, God's work must be everywhere or nowhere, he must be all or nothing. One clear instance of mind and purpose in Nature is enough; and in piling up the number of assumed cases the believer is not only trying to dazzle the unbeliever, but one cannot avoid the suspicion that a nascent consciousness of the weakness of his case drives him to seek confidence in mere repetition.

C. COHEN.

(To be continued.)

"The Ebbing Tide."

AT last Christian ministers and their flocks are beginning to realise that their cause is in serious danger, and that, unless something extraordinary is done, and quickly, it is doomed to extinction. The religious press has opened its columns for an earnest discussion of the present decline, its causes and cure. The *British Congregationalist* has started a Symposium, in which the question, "Is Anything Wrong with the Churches?" is being considered by a number of representative men, who express different and in some instances conflicting opinions. The communications are both interesting and amusing. One reverend gentleman names eight reasons for the arrested progress of the Church, all of which are, in reality, not causes, but symptoms. It is easy to blame the week-end habit, the increasing army of "oncens," the consequent deterioration of the religious life, the theological unrest and its controversies; but these things are but weathercocks indicating the direction in which modern thought is travelling. Some correspondents go the length of glorying in the reduction of membership, convinced that what the Church loses in quantity it gains in quality: but the majority lament the falling off, and attribute it to the fact that "the Churches have forgotten that their only chance of success is loyalty to Jesus Christ, our adorable Redeemer, and that the only way of augmenting the Church is through conversion, which is a continuous miracle, much more convincing than those miracles to the authentication of which learned theologians, or acute theologians, devote their futile logic." Principal Forsyth delivers himself of the following profoundly luminous statement:—

"We shall never increase or recover our membership by meeting to invent devices for the purpose. We may be netting more birds than we can cage or feed. Preachers make hearers, but the Word alone makes doers, responsible in a Church and strong in its truth. Whether we have access to preachers of genius or not, whether the numbers are reduced or not, the Word has still its ancient power from the very stones to raise up children to Abraham."

Note that reference to the Word and its ancient power. The Word can do what preachers cannot. "If anything is deeply wrong with the Church," says Dr. Forsyth, "the Word which created it alone can set it right." Here is another of the Principal's sayings: "Let us confer less with flesh and blood and more with Father, Son, and Holy Ghost." Now, the Word is the Word of God's love, and if God exists he can give it effectual utterance whenever he sees fit. This God, this Father, in the person of his incarnate Son, is the "adorable Redeemer," who is said to have definitely promised to draw all men unto himself and abide with them unto the end of the world. According to the teaching of the pulpit, the "adorable Redeemer" loves and needs men much

more than men can love and need him. He is described as yearning for them with an infinite longing, and as having already sacrificed himself in order to win their confidence and affection. Such is the doctrine of salvation as formulated by the orthodox Church. The only fault one can find with it is that not one word of it is true. From the very beginning the Church has been sailing under false colors; and as this fact becomes known people lose confidence in and desert her. This is the real explanation of the decrease in the number of her passengers to the fabled Glory Land. The Church is to-day what she has always been, the only difference being that people are ceasing to take her at her own valuation. The scales of superstition are falling from their eyes, and they are beginning to see her as she truly is. The Word is being deprived of its charm and alleged power, and the "adorable Redeemer" reduced to an empty myth. The preacher is being dragged down from the throne on which he sat and wielded tyrannical powers so long. He no longer delivers a message, but gives expression to personal prejudices and speculative dogmas, and the dwindling numbers who still go to hear him take him for what he is, and criticise him accordingly. Paul tells us that the preaching of Christ crucified was "unto the Jews a stumblingblock and unto Gentiles foolishness"; and it is only at this late hour that the inhabitants of Christendom are discovering that the Jewish and Greek attitude to the Christian Gospel is the only reasonable attitude.

The wonder is that the foolishness of preaching has been endured for so long a time. The preacher often speaks as if he had no sense of responsibility whatever. One who is referred to as "this prince of preachers" has just published a discourse on the words, "Let the dead bury their dead, but go thou and preach the kingdom of God" (Luke ix. 59); and in order to make that strange saying appear reasonable he gives vent to the following extravagances:—

"We must begin all our interpretations of the words of Jesus with the guidance of certain fundamental assumptions, and from these we must never depart. First, we must assume that the Lord Jesus Christ is the very fountain of all true, deep, tender, human love. Second, we must assume that the Lord Jesus Christ is the essential bond in all human ties and kinships. In him we discover the mystic cement which constitutes the solidarity of the race. 'In him all things consist.' Third, we must assume that the Lord Jesus Christ, when he moved along the ways of men, was the perfect ideal of courtesy and grace. And so, with these assumptions in our minds, let us meditate on the incident of our text."

Then he paints a purely imaginary picture of the man to whom the saying was addressed. He was an impulsive man, who was easily moved by forcible appeals. He had been a frequent hearer of John the Baptist, and more than once he had felt impelled to follow that wild man of the desert; but at the moment of decision something irresistibly held him back. When Jesus began his public ministry this man appeared on the scene, and was powerfully stirred by the new evangel. He was always turning up, and always on the eve of becoming a disciple. But procrastination was his supreme weakness. He was the victim of deadly delay. Well, with those three assumptions and that delightfully convenient imaginary portraiture of the man in his mind, "this prince of preachers" finds no difficulty whatever in proving that "Let the dead bury their dead" is the tenderest and most beautifully evangelical saying ever uttered. But what about the three assumptions concerning "the Lord Jesus Christ"? Can any sensible person, with the merest smattering of history, conscientiously entertain the idea that Jesus is "the very fountain of all true, deep, human love"? Is it even thinkable that there was no "true, deep, human love" in the world before he is supposed to have appeared? Such an assumption is an intolerable insult to the human race. Human love is a product of social evolution, and the original fountain of it was sex. The second assumption is disproved by the whole history of the Christian Church.

Christianity has never been a bond of union, and has never made for the solidarity of the race. As a matter of fact, it has been, and continues to be, the greatest and cruelest divisive force the world has ever known. Christian feuds and controversies have always been notorious for their heat and bitterness. Knowing all this, "this prince of preachers" has the hardihood to claim that in Christ "we discover the mystic cement which constitutes the solidarity of the race." The third assumption is equally groundless. The statement that Jesus was "the perfect ideal of courtesy and grace" is flatly contradicted by the Gospel records. On several occasions he treated his mother with extreme rudeness. The relations between him and his brothers were so bad that they did not hesitate to call him a madman. When his mother and they once desired to speak with him, he made himself specially offensive to them by declining to acknowledge them. When preachers base their interpretations and exhortations upon such unverifiable and absurd assumptions, is it any wonder that thoughtful people treat their pronouncements with cold indifference, if not with open contempt? Is it in the least surprising that the Churches are experiencing an ebbing tide which is not at all likely to be succeeded by a flowing one? The marvel is that a superstition so flimsily founded as the Christian religion has survived so long.

The truth is, that the divines themselves are getting to fear that the future of Christianity is seriously imperiled. The bugbear is the comparative study of religions. It is being gradually found out that Christianity is only one of several essentially similar cults. This discovery threatens the success of Foreign Missions. Addressing missionaries at the Memorial Hall the other day, Dr. Horton is reported to have alluded to this subject in the following terms:—

"He did not think that this study was an immediate gain. New difficulties emerged from a closer sympathy on the part of the missionaries in the field with the religions they had gone to change. The danger was that they might get such a sympathy with the other religion that the impact of the Gospel they had gone to preach would be weakened."

Missionaries are thus warned against studying the religions they have been sent out to displace with too much sympathy, for fear that an intimate knowledge of them may weaken their faith in the absolute superiority of Christianity. Their only hope of success lies in presenting Christianity as the only true and perfect religion, and in treating the native religions as more or less false and injurious. But why this nervous dread of knowledge? Why this apprehension that if missionaries acquire full knowledge of some Heathen religions it may lessen their loyalty to their own and damp their zeal in proclaiming it? It arises from the consciousness that, after all, the superiority of Christianity is insusceptible of proof, when other religions come to be thoroughly understood; and this consciousness is an evidence that the belief in the specially Divine origin and nature of Christianity is becoming a thing of the past even among leaders of the type of Dr. Horton. Indeed, the ebbing tide is in full force. The faith once delivered to the saints is in its death throes, while science is marching on to certain victory.

J. T. LLOYD.

A Costly House of God.

YESTERDAY (Sunday) we climbed the mountain which rises from the orchard behind the cottage to a height of nearly 1,000 feet. We wanted to see the world under the auspices of a north wind, a warm, bright sun, and a true blue sky.

"We" means myself and the "Democratic Vista," so called by a friend because of his disposition to make shavings rather than profits, to eschew starch

and respectability, and to practise, however "unpractical," rather than preach.

At the top, lying upon the deliciously soft turf starred with tiny flowers, we looked round at the vast stretch of vale and sea and mountain, and thanked the Fates for what we saw. The sea was best—a vast, rippled, deeply blue sheet, flecked here and there with the shadow of a tiny cloud. Later, we watched the progress of a steamer, with its long smoke-line and break in the water.

Below, across the valley (which, I think, is the valley of Dr. Johnson's *Rasselas*) our eyes fell on the tall, fine spire of a white marble church. Almost the first thing the local guide-books tell you of it is that it cost £60,000. It was built by a titled lady in memory of her husband. I thought of this as I saw its chalky gleam against the dark tree groves of the opposite mountains. Near it was visible the substantial vicarage. Builders of vicarages and churches evidently want to avoid the need for early workmen's trains and 'buses. They always build the clerical toilers' homes as near *their* works as possible.

One lovely Sunday morning we started to cover the five or six miles between the cottage and this particular Welsh show. Partly, we wanted to wipe out the accusation of its admirers that our indifference to it meant lack of æsthetic sense and love of architecture. We had seen and explored the eleventh century church of Wrexham, with its dark, reposefully massive tower, carved without stint, and impressing any ignoramus with its grand proportions. We therefore ventured to doubt the local guide dictum that this costly new white toy "is the most beautiful" (though it may be) "the most highly finished ecclesiastical edifice in North Wales." To call it simply "a church" would not fill the guide-book so well; besides, perhaps the writer's sense of fitness told him that "church" did not describe the building so well as the title he gave it.

As an object of beauty and veneration, one might as well compare a grocer's sugar-cone to the snow-clothed peak of Snowdon there, which the sun is now attacking with his warmth.

Down across the valley we struck along lovely roads, with fresh-springing pale green crops on either side. Hedge-banks, starred with late primroses, trailed over by pink-brown budding honeysuckle and wild-rose wreaths soon to flower. Thick masses of pale hawthorn scattered their sweet showers before us at every wind-breath.

Past the grand walls and towers of the eleventh-century castle of Rhuddlan, now dominated by ivy, over the old bridge spanning the river flowing past the castle, keeping in view, to the left, the very ancient Cathedral of St. Asaph rising in the midst of the valley, a few miles of good open road brought us to the church.

A line of comfortable, well-built stone cottages, with gardens, to the right—homes of the handful of "warranted to vote as they're told," who form the village—to the left, a line of fine old trees. Then the vicarage and church and, beyond, the entrance gates of a great park and mansion. Everything (but the trees) was trim, cut-and-dried. The church would look as well, and more fit, under a glass shade in a miscellaneous show than in an historic vale against great dark masses of mountain. Clean, cold, and severely proper, with its fine-tapered spire 202 feet high; its trim surroundings of path, lawn-like grass and white wall. Very little exterior carving for the £60,000—figures which seem to stare out of every window. Over these, I am bound to note, the carving is plentiful. Above every window the arms of the Deadbrokes appear.

In the account of its dedication, the first name mentioned is that of the Dowager Lady W. de B., the donor, and the last—the name of God. That may not seem improper to people who use the latter name as if they were on bowing terms with its owner. To anyone with some feeling for what the name was invented to convey, its being dragged in under the silk skirts, even of a Deadbroke, seems irreverent indeed.

We wanted to see the interior, which the sage of the guide-book says is chiefly delightful, with its marbles of almost every hue, its stained glass, its carving in wood and stone, and the chaste beauty of the whole. But service had begun, and the doors were inhospitably shut. We would not have interrupted the worshipers, even had they been open. But, compared with the Continental and Catholic Church practice of allowing folk to kneel when they need, the English method does seem a bit off. Which is a quotation from the Democratic Vista. He, being a "new" man, useth strange language.

A more rough-and-ready form of service would be better than one so correctly got up as to exclude any weary tramp from its restfulness. We soon saw the force of this statement. While we leaned, out of sight, against the broad trunk of a shady old tree, a little procession came slowly along under the high wall skirting the park. Only three people. First, a woman and her husband, the woman carrying a blue bundle, and the man what seemed to be a tool-bag. Both dragged frightful boots on their feet, flopping as they trudged along; patched rustiness of clothes, but clean, and clearly no ragamuffins. Behind, unable to keep up with them, came a bonnie girl of sixteen or thereabouts, pale, almost fainting from weariness and perhaps hunger. She walked in her stocking feet, carrying her "boots" in one hand and a bundle in the other. Her feet touched the ground reluctantly, as if she found that as cruel as humanity. They crept past the church without giving it a glance. As a man once said to me, "These people will never learn to care for beautiful things!"

Just now the father turned, and I noticed his kindly brown face wore such an expression as the super-religious rich pay to get embodied in the Christs' faces of their stained memorial windows. He stopped, while his wife instantly leaned against the park wall for rest, and waited for his girl to come up with them. In silence he took her hand, and drew it within his arm. Thus they passed on. The doors of the costly House of God were shut against their weariness, "the consolations of religion" not being readily accessible to tramps—until they are within reach of the workhouse chaplain.

From within, service being almost over, the organ and boys' clear voices pealed with sweetness that hardly disturbed the stillness of Nature around us. To the first words, clearly audible, we listened:—

"O God, our help in ages past,
Our hope in years to come!"

It was enough. Leaning against the old tree, we had learned another bitter lesson in æsthetics, politics, and "religion." Our hearts were stung into more active revolt against the system which allows one woman to spend £60,000 worth of human life on the vain erection of a whited sepulchre of modern "religion," while her victimised sisters and brothers die of weariness and hunger.

I turned away, trembling all over, and cried some of my bitterness away. The "new" man merely swore. We walked home at a fearful pace, speaking no word, and with hunger and dinner forgotten. A friendly hand had prepared for us "the snow-white mountain lamb" and the more civilised green peas. We saw our friend, while we were yet afar off, looking down for us, shading her eyes from the sun. Then the wonder was that we brought so little appetite, and less account of the famous marble church.

We had the picture before our eyes of three of the most oppressed and wronged of our fellow-creatures—our brothers and sisters—for whose shameful plight, we believe, no system offers a remedy unless based on Justice and Brotherhood.

ANNIE EDWARDS.

Mrs. Copely: "Don't you think our minister is becoming heterodox in his views?"

Copely: "Yes; but just see how the church is filling up! We may be able to do something with that mortgage, after all."

Acid Drops.

The British Museum authorities are arranging for a special exhibition to illustrate the history and development of the British Bible. The exhibition will be in conjunction with the tercentenary of the Authorised Version. The organisation of the exhibition will be personally superintended by Dr. Kenyon, the Museum librarian. We hope to hear that one of the exhibits will be the two tables of stone that Moses brought down from Mount Sinai, containing the ten commandments "written with the finger of God." Won't there be a crush to see it!

Every now and then we hear of some wonderful discovery which is going to upset the Higher Criticism altogether, but the Higher Criticism goes on just the same as before. The latest "find" is reported to be a hundred clay tablets which are "believed to form a portion of the archives of King Ahab." Well, suppose they are so, instead of being believed to be so,—what then? The Higher Criticism does not say there is no history in the Old Testament; it simply says that it is mixed up with all sorts of other matter,—mythology, legend, tradition, and priestly fiction to support priestly teaching. Bibliolators need not fancy that this position is going to be overturned by any discoveries, not even when they are skilful forgeries.

The following notification, printed on a visiting-card, was found inside a Maidstone resident's letter-box the other day:—

"The Vicar of S. Philip's (Rev. H. Stansfield Prior) has called to-day, and is sorry not to have seen you."

The fact that the reverend gentleman sees fit to have such cards printed seems to indicate that a large number of his parishioners do not relish the idea of having spiritual fairy-tales brought home to them.

A good deal is being said about the Countess Tolstoy's inability to follow her husband in his renunciations of property. But why on earth should she act on opinions she does not share, and reduce herself and her family to beggary? Women may be trusted to hold on to something tangible in such cases. No doubt it was Sapphira who was at the bottom of Ananias's keeping back a part of the money he got by selling his possessions. We can imagine her saying to him, "Consider the little Ananias and Sapphiras, my dear; let us keep back a bit in a stocking for a rainy day."

The *Catholic Times* thinks the silence of the English press on the anti-Christian nature of the Portuguese revolution is "very ominous." So far as we know, the fact that the leaders of the revolution are Freethinkers has been pretty plainly stated. Nor are we aware that the Portuguese Government is "anti-Christian." It is certainly non-Christian; but every civilised Government ought to be that. What the Government has done is to guarantee liberty of worship, and all Freethinkers, we hope, will help to make this a real thing. We wonder what the *Catholic Times* would like the British press to do? Conduct a campaign calling on Mr. Asquith to send a few warships to re-establish the Catholic Church in Portugal? What a lovely thing Catholic Christianity is, to be sure!

The Mayor of Luton was recently struck with what the *Christian World* describes as a "happy thought." Desiring to bring the clergy and the dissenting ministers together, he invited them to dine in the Town Hall. After the toasts were given speeches were made, and the meeting concluded with the hope that the example might be copied by other towns. The Mayor deserves every credit for his intentions—provided the rates did not bear the cost of the dinner. But what a commentary upon Christianity! Religion could not bring them together, but a dinner succeeded. The bond of union was found neither in the brain nor the soul, but in the stomach! And it was a secular official who made the discovery.

A French school-teacher, who follows his occupation at Bristol Grammar School, has raised a timely and sensible protest against the Boy Scouts and similar movements. At school, he said, we teach our boys to fight fairly, and not hit below the belt. Meanwhile, we encourage them to join in movements that familiarise youngsters with all the tricks and subterfuges of a mimic warfare. We quite agree with the protest raised by this French school-teacher against a movement that has for its real object the exciting in the minds of youths of the desire for militarism. Physical training everybody believes in, but there is no need what-

ever for this to be accompanied by a military parade that ends in providing material for an Army rather than developing useful citizens. It is idle to talk of our desire for peace while we persist in such methods. Peace, permanent peace, will only be secured when the glamor and false greatness of militarism is killed in the minds of the people.

Rev. F. B. Meyer warns the Government, through the *Daily News*, that it will have to buck up and satisfy the Nonconformists by carrying their education policy into law. The Free Churches see that it is now or never with them. Very well, then; we believe it will be never. The Government has tried to carry a Bill for them three times, and failed each time. Mr. Birrell brought in number one, Mr. McKenna number two, and Mr. Runciman number three. Where are those Bills now? Another Bill on the same general lines will in all probability meet the same fate. We shall be astonished if the Nonconformists succeed in establishing their religion in the national schools, in defiance of Free Church principles. The combination against them is too great. Churchmen and Catholics are both opposed to what Gladstone called "the imposture of undenominational religious teaching." And there is also the opposition of an ever-growing new party—the party of Secular Education.

"There is a growing interest in our Free Church work," Mr. Meyer says, "and the signs of the times are full of encouragement." What about the figures, Mr. Meyer, what about the figures? Don't they show a slump in Free Church membership? The "growing interest" is not in the Free Church work, but in the matters that are connected with it at Free Church Congresses. At the Portsmouth Congress, in March, Mrs. Sydney Webb is to speak on "Poor Law Reform" and Mr. J. Ramsay Macdonald on "Causes of Unrest in the Labor World." But these things are side shows. They are not a real part of the Free Church exhibition.

The Rev. F. Dudley, vicar of St. Thomas Church, Overmorrow, Monmouth, has suddenly shot into fame by means of the following letter, in which he deals with "parish parties plus scandal and minus financial profit":—

"Will you allow me to make known through your columns that we are discontinuing for the future the annual parish party at the Rolls Hall, which has been customary for nearly 20 years. These gatherings are not what they were—either in regard to numbers or character. They have become simply dancing parties for the young men and women of the town; and people of 'light and leading' in the place have put it to me whether it is right to promote the cause of Religion by such means. Unhappily, it is only too well-known that some terrible scandals, which have shocked the community during the past few years, have been closely connected with these gatherings. Moreover, the financial profit has become so small that the 'game is not worth the candle.'"

Mr. Dudley forgets that anything does in religion if it pays. If it doesn't pay it will drop soon enough.

The Rev. C. Ensor Walters, of Sheffield, still imagines that he is an authority on the subject of "Modern Unbelief." The truth is, that he either knows nothing about it or is guilty of wilful misrepresentation. Into a lecture recently delivered in the Stapenhill Wesleyan Chapel, he packed as many falsehoods as it was possible for him to do. He repeated the hoary-headed old lie that the Atheist "denies the existence of God." The Atheist does nothing of the sort; but he does emphatically deny Mr. Walters's, or anybody else's, ability to prove the existence of God. The Atheist is simply a person without Theism. He does not believe there is a god, the existence of whom can be denied.

Mr. Walters repeated another Christian lie, namely, that "the revolution in France was the outcome of Atheism." Every scholar knows that that is a ridiculous falsehood. At the time of the Revolution Atheists were rare. The Constituent Assembly was composed almost entirely of Catholics, even Deists being a very small minority, while Atheists did not count. Abbé Grégoire approved of the Revolution, being a zealous democrat and anti-royalist. "Scandalous Hébert," as Carlyle calls him, though usually described as an Atheist, himself vehemently repudiated the charge, and gloried in the fact that he had "exhorted the people to read the Gospels and obey Christ." Even Chaumette and Robespierre were Deists. Robespierre, in particular, characterised Atheism as "aristocratic," and established the worship of the Supreme Being. Let Mr. Walters read the works of M. Anlard on the Revolution, now translated into English, and he will find his charge disproved by exact documentary evidence.

Mr. Walters accused Atheists of still another crime—namely, that of "tacking Atheism on to Socialism." Surely Mr. Walters must know that Socialism is not of Christian origin, and that even now an overwhelming majority of the Churches are in deadly opposition to it. It is true that a few clergymen here and there pose as Christian Socialists, and make a desperate attempt to tack Socialism on to the Church, which they had never dreamt of doing until it dawned upon them that Socialism menaced the future of the Church. Mr. Walters has many things to learn, among them being the elementary lesson of telling the truth about his opponents. On what ground does he describe the Atheistic attacks on Christianity as "insidious"? He cannot but know that such attacks are purely argumentative, open, and above board. Atheists never hit in the dark, from behind, or below the belt. They leave those methods to the Christians.

Captain Brodie, the Salvation Army officer who preached with a death's head over his own, announces that "The gates of hell will be on view at 6.30 p.m., free." He should have added "Old Nick willing," instead of the usual "D. V." But perhaps the "gates of hell" are part of a trick advertisement. If they were real, the advertiser might be inside them with no disadvantage to the world at large.

"The rector will be pleased to hear of any illness in the parish." We have the authority of the *Evening Standard* (Jan. 19) for saying that this announcement is on a church notice-board in a parish near Brentwood.

Money-begging circulars are posted about, apparently, at least at this time of the year, in the most indiscriminate manner. We have received one—addressed to G. W. Foote, Esq., 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, London, E.C.—from Prince Alexander George of Teck, at Windsor Castle, inviting us to subscribe to the St. John's Foundation School for the free education of the sons of the poorer clergy; and also inviting us to the Yearly Festival Dinner of that "admirable institution" at the Hotel Metropole on February 22. We are afraid we cannot accept either of these invitations. Not that we object to the sons of the poorer clergy being educated. They ought to be, if it can be managed, but not at our expense.

Liverpool clergymen, perhaps finding a new excitement necessary, are getting up a crusade against Mormonism. At a meeting in Hope Hall, one of the speakers, Mr. H. P. Freece, quoted from a Mormon writer to the effect that "If plural marriage is unlawful the entire fabric of Christianity is without foundation." And the audience cried "Shame!" Which shows their ignorance of their own Bible. Polygamy is a Bible institution, never abrogated or censured, and practised by all the Bible God's favorites.

What a pity it is that Sir Oliver Lodge does not make himself acquainted with the available facts before delivering his lectures—or sermons—on religion. In an address before the Oldbury P.S.A., reported in the *Birmingham Daily Mail*, he said: "Christ's birth was so remarkable a circumstance that he [Sir Oliver Lodge] could not think it was invented. The extraordinary simplicity and poverty of surroundings of the birthplace was a kind of superhuman idea." Really one would have thought that no one who could reasonably claim a right to be heard could be found talking in this strain nowadays. Simplicity and poverty are in no sense superhuman, not even when associated with the beginnings of characters who have attained eminence. Still less is there anything unusual or superhuman about them when associated with religious saviors. Krishna was born in a cave, and brought up among herdsmen. In Egypt, the newborn sun-god was exhibited for worship in a crib or manger. Adonis was placed in a cave directly after birth. Mithras and Apollo were also born in caves, as was also Attis. The same similarity is to be traced between Jesus and other mythical saviors; and it is really surprising that a man in Sir Oliver Lodge's position should speak on this subject and betray such a profound want of acquaintance with its elementary data. The truth is, that the New Testament, in telling the story of Jesus Christ, invents nothing. The story lay all ready to hand in a variety of forms. At most all that was needed was a selection and a synthesis, and there is ample evidence that this actually took place. It is curious that, at a time when clergymen are getting ashamed of making the claim of originality for the Christian story, it should be put forward by one who owes whatever attention is paid to him when he speaks on religion to eminence gained in pure science.

Favier, the French murderer, who assassinated and robbed a bank manager at Lille, was executed early in the morning

on January 11. He was very cool, dressing himself with calm attention, confessing and hearing Mass. Before being strapped to the guillotine he kissed a crucifix, held to his lips by a priest. It was a most edifying exit, and we suppose he is now in paradise, with one of the two thieves who were crucified with Christ. What has become of the man he murdered is a question that excites no interest.

Prayers were asked at the Church of the Sacred Heart, Wimbledon, for "Cecil Grace, lately dead." What a pity they were not asked for the unfortunate aviator *before* he was dead! Hurrying him through Purgatory is all very well, in its way; but it would have been more useful to him to be hurried over the North Sea.

Holy Russia, whose orthodox Christianity is so scrupulously protected by the White Czar, is not the most moral country in the world. Twenty-seven suicides, or attempted suicides, were recorded in St. Petersburg during the Christmas holidays. Three thousand arrests were made for drunkenness, fifteen per cent. of the offenders being women. Over thirty deaths from alcoholic poisoning were registered at four municipal hospitals.

An honest soldier is upsetting the German Army. His name is Naumann, and he is an Adventist. He believes that the seventh day of the week is the Sabbath, and that it must be kept holy. He therefore refuses to perform any military service on Saturday. Warnings, threats, and minor punishments have been lost upon him, and he has been indicted before the chief court-martial of the Third Army Corps for insubordination. The ferocious sentence of five years and six months' imprisonment has been passed upon him, and if the Imperial court-martial, to which he has appealed, confirms his sentence, he will have the prospect of imprisonment for life before him, unless the Emperor pardons him, or he abandons his religious belief. At present he is very obstinate. One ought to obey God, he says, rather than man. But the court-martial would not discuss that. God's law or no God's law, the Army law was all they cared about. Yet they profess themselves Christians too.

"A lover of his country"—but why not give his name?—writes to the *Walsall Observer* suggesting that the vicars of the local parish churches should have the National Anthem played after every morning and evening service, in order to get up enthusiasm for the Royal Family and prevent the spread of Socialism. The gentleman doesn't say whether it is the tune or the words that will produce this effect. The tune is not a great one, and the words are contemptible.

A radical parson, the other day, said that no Tariff Reformer could be a Christian, and no Christian a Tariff Reformer. Mr. Lloyd George seems to be of the same opinion. "I am confident," he tells Mr. Harold Begbie, the interviewer, "that Tariff Reform means Socialism. I am absolutely sure of it. Not the Christian Socialism of a few enthusiastic Englishmen, but the godless Socialism of Continental materialism." It is amusing to a Freethinker to see these Christians running their religion with their politics—and often on opposite sides!

Mr. Harold Begbie, in that same interview, represents Mr. Lloyd George as having once been afflicted with the awful misery of Atheism. And when do our readers think it was? Why, when the right honorable gentleman was eleven years of age. "His suffering," we are informed, "was acute, poignant, agonising.....He felt himself to be a boat derelict on a wide sea of eternal night. There was no God for him.It was darkness, silence, and aching solitude." And all at the tender age of eleven! Which is very romantic; so romantic that we venture to doubt it. We don't suggest that Mr. Lloyd George is telling a falsehood; we only suggest that his memory has played him a trick. And the smile on one's face broadens as one reads that he was for five long years, from eleven to sixteen, in this desolate condition. At the latter age he read *Sartor Resartus* and "found God." Let us pray!

Rev. Prebendary Waters writes to the *Staffordshire Sentinel* protesting against a Sunday evening concert at the Grand Theatre in aid of the Hanley Infirmary. He calls it a desecration of the Lord's Day. We are glad to see an editorial note taking the reverend gentleman down a peg or two. The world moves, after all; in the press, if not in the pulpit.

The Bishop of Carlisle has been expressing his detestation of "Christians whose profession is a great hypocrisy, because

they don't carry it out in their lives." We have to remind him that his own practice doesn't quite square with his precepts. He enjoys a salary of £4,000 a year for preaching "Blessed be ye poor" and "Woe unto you rich." He lives in a castle, and we understand that he has a private fortune. These things give him a good chance of winning the "hypocrisy" handicap.

Members of the Birmingham University assembled at Carr's Lane Church on Sunday morning, January 15, to hear a sermon by the Rev. J. H. Jowett on "Purity," with reference to the text, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." The local *Daily Post* praises Mr. Jowett's address as "felicitous in its phrasing" and "rich in its suggested thought." In our judgment it abounds in thin-spun platitudes. We do not recognise a note of originality from beginning to end. And the advice that the man who aims at purity should "diligently read his Bible" is quite ridiculously professional. Mr. Jowett's sermon has also a reference to Byron, which shows how dangerous it is for Christian preachers to deal with profane literature. "He ventured to think," the report says, "that Byron could only describe one character, and that himself, and he could not but think that the severe limitations of the height of Byron's vision were largely due to the impurities of his life." What nonsense this is! Whether a poet's genius is dramatic or not is determined at his birth, and not by the purity or impurity of his life. Byron's genius was *not* dramatic; his attempted dramas are abortions; but this does not imply that he could only describe one character—himself. Byron wrote a great social epic—*Don Juan*; and his power of characterisation in it is a matter on which Swinburne was a far better judge than Mr. Jowett. "From the first canto to the sixteenth," Swinburne said, "from the defence of Julia, which is worthy of Congreve or Molière, to the study of Adeline, which is worthy of La Clos or Balzac; the elastic energy of humor never falters or flags." The names of Molière and Balzac in this eulogy (not that the other two names are to be despised) show what absurdity Mr. Jowett has been talking. We advise him to stick to his last. He may be an authority on Purity—for he looks as if milk rather than blood ran in his veins; but he is no authority on Byron—or Literature.

There was a Convention of the Western Federation of Free Churches held at Plymouth lately, presided over by the Rev. Dr. Jowett; and in the afternoon several hundreds of the delegates and others attending the Convention visited the historic spot at the Barbican whence the Pilgrim Fathers sailed in the *Mayflower* for New England. After listening to a brief discourse, all present, at Dr. Jowett's invitation, gathered round the commemoration stone and joined in the singing of the Doxology. No doubt they thought there was much to thank God for in the doings of the Pilgrim Fathers—who fled from tyranny in England, and, as a matter of fact, set up a worse tyranny of their own in New England. It was this fact which led an American humorist to say that, instead of the Pilgrim Fathers landing on Plymouth Rock, it would have been better for the world if Plymouth Rock had landed on the Pilgrim Fathers. But a joke like that is enough to make Mr. Jowett faint.

In a recent divorce case, a co-respondent named Watt, a married man living apart from his wife on a deed of separation, admitted free kissing but denied misconduct. According to the *Daily Telegraph* report, he took the female respondent for a trip to Rhyll, and stayed at the same hotel with her as Mr. and Mrs. Watt, occupying the same room. It is a bit of a puzzle, therefore, how the jury came to find that there had been "no misconduct." Perhaps the fact that Mr. Watt had been a Methodist local preacher gained him some sympathy.

Mr. William Stone, the Frome carpenter, who is reported to have regained his sight after twenty-five years' blindness, is full of "devout thankfulness for what he describes as a merciful dispensation of God." This is the human egoism that lies at the bottom of nearly all religion. Mr. William Stone clearly regards himself as a peculiar favorite of heaven. How, otherwise, does he account for the "merciful dispensation of God" not being extended to thousands of other sufferers from blindness in England?

Mrs. Elizabeth Brooks, of Fort Worth, Texas, being jealous of what she regarded as her husband's loving attentions to Mrs. Mary Banford, went to a department store and shot the "other woman" dead. She left a prayer-meeting to do the deed. If there is the "old Adam" in men, there is the "old Eve" in women. All the religion in the world doesn't alter that.

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, January 29, Queen's (Minor) Hall, Langham-place, London, W.: at 7.30, "The Bible."

February 5, Glasgow; 12, Manchester; 26, Birmingham.

March 5, Liverpool; 19 and 26, Queen's Hall, London.

April 2, Stratford Town Hall.

To Correspondents.

C. COHEN'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—January 29, Liverpool. February 5, Birmingham; 12 and 19, Queen's Hall, London; 26, Glasgow. March 5, Manchester; 12, Queen's Hall; 19, Stratford Town Hall.

J. T. LLOYD'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—February 19, Failsworth; 26, Queen's Hall. March 5, Queen's Hall; 12, West Ham; 19, Glasgow; 26, Stratford Town Hall. April 2, Manchester.

J. W. GIBB.—Pastor Russell appears to be a good man of business, and the English newspapers like to stand in with him for a share of the profits.

J. TOMKINS.—Next week.

M. BARNARD.—We cannot make out the name of the writer you ask our opinion of. Glad to know you get "pleasure and sane instruction" from our writings. Thanks for new year's good wishes.

J. A. E. BATES.—Cuttings useful. Thanks.

J. LIDSTER, who worked hard for superstition in the days of his ignorance, now wants to work for Freethought, having gained enlightenment through the *Freethinker*. He suggests that every reader of this journal should "buy an extra copy for four weeks and put it into the hands of those he is desirous of winning."

SEBASTIAN SMITH.—There is an article on "Ridicule" in the first volume of our *Flowers of Freethought*. We would reprint it if other readers, as well as yourself, are interested in the subject. Whoever says that ridicule is no argument has felt the sting. Why, the grave Euclid uses it. He disproves a thing by logically arriving at "which is absurd." That ends it. The *reductio ad absurdum* is recognised in formal logic.

H. PAVLEY.—Mr. Cohen is dealing with Professor Russel Wallace's new book. No doubt he will do it to your satisfaction.

G. R. HARKER.—See paragraph. Thanks.

J. PARTRIDGE.—Pleased to hear that Mr. Lloyd's lecture at Birmingham on Sunday evening was so well attended and so warmly applauded. We note that Mr. Cohen lectures at Birmingham again next Sunday (Feb. 5).

C. A. EWING.—See "Acid Drops." Glad you and your friend, after reading the *Freethinker* for six months, look forward anxiously for your weekly copy, from which you "gain so much enlightenment."

J. V. RARLOW.—Glad you thought Miss Kough's lecture at Manchester on Sunday evening "very fine." No doubt her return visit will be very welcome.

E. B.—Thanks.

HARRY SHAW.—Will try to find room for it. Glad you still "like the *Freethinker* immensely."

H. SMALLWOOD.—See paragraph. Thanks.

A. E. WILLIAMS writes: "It may interest you to know that although Thursday morning is one of the busiest mornings of my week, I do no work until I have looked through my *Freethinker*, which improves week by week." This correspondent is thanked for cuttings.

R. JOHNSON (Manchester).—Thanks. Already reported. Sorry to hear that the secretary, Mrs. Pegg, is indisposed.

A NUMBER of answers to correspondents are unavoidably left over until next week.

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

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

When the services of the National Secular Society in connection with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the secretary, Miss E. M. Vance.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sugar Plums.

In spite of the black fog with which London was afflicted on Sunday, there was an excellent audience at Queen's Hall in the evening,—with the now usual proportion of ladies and general enthusiasm. Prior to the lecture Mr. Foote read, amidst the most impressive silence, Hamlet's soliloquy "To be or not to be." The lecture on "The Soul," a fairly long one, kept the unbroken attention of the audience to the finish, and was very warmly applauded. Mr. A. B. Moss, who presided, after paying the lecturer some pretty compliments, invited questions or discussion, and a few of the former were duly answered.

The last of Mr. Foote's special course of lectures at Queen's (Minor) Hall will be delivered to-night (Jan. 29). The subject is "The Bible," and the lecture will deal to some extent with the controversy going on amongst the Christians themselves on the question of revelation, especially with the positions of Modernism and the New Theology. The lecture should be instructive as well as interesting.

Mr. Foote leaves the Queen's Hall platform to other lecturers for six weeks, and then winds up the three months' enterprise with two lectures on the last two Sundays in March. The first lecture in February will be delivered by Mrs. H. Bradlaugh-Bonner, and we hope the "saints" will give her a good audience and a most hearty welcome. Mr. Cohen follows with two lectures, and Mr. Lloyd with another two.

A two nights' public debate is being arranged between Mr. Foote and the Rev. Dr. Warschauer. It is to take place at the end of March, probably at the Caxton Hall. Full particulars will be announced in due course.

Mr. Foote has accepted the invitation of the Liverpool Branch to a dinner on Saturday evening, March 4—the day before his lectures at the Alexandra Hall. This will mean his arriving in Liverpool a few hours earlier than usual, but that is manageable, the run from London to Liverpool being so brief nowadays.

Mr. Cohen lectures, afternoon and evening, for the Liverpool Branch at the Alexandra Hall to-day (Jan. 29). His subjects should excite interest and attract good meetings. Reserved seat tickets (1s. and 6d.) can be obtained of Mr. W. McKelvie, secretary, 49 Penrose-street, Everton, or at the Hall in Islington-square. Admission to unreserved seats by silver collection at the door.

The West Ham Branch holds a "social" on Saturday evening, February 4, at the Public (Minor) Hall, Canning Town. There will be songs, dances, instrumental selections, and games. Admission free—and all Freethinkers heartily welcome. Start at 7.30. Trams from Canning Town station pass the door.

The new Rationalist Peace Society holds its first public meeting on Tuesday evening next, January 31, at 8 o'clock, at South Place Institute—within two or three minutes' walk of Moorgate-street and Liverpool-street Stations. Mr. J. M. Robertson, M.P., will take the chair, and the list of speakers includes Mrs. H. Bradlaugh Bonner, Mr. J. F. Green, Mr. John Russell, M.A., Mr. S. H. Swinny, and Mr. G. W. Foote. As this Peace Society is not meant for Christians, there will be no harm in Freethinkers filling the hall on this occasion. Quite the contrary, indeed; and we beg them to fill it, and give the Society a good send off on (we trust) its prosperous career. Admission is free, but those desiring tickets, to send to their friends as reminders, can obtain them from Miss Vance, at 2 Newcastle-street, E.C.

The Manifesto of the Rationalist Peace Society, very ably drafted by Mrs. H. Bradlaugh Bonner, has been passed after careful consideration and discussion by the Executive Committee, and is in the printers' hands for immediate publication.

President's Honorarium Fund, 1911.

Third List of Subscriptions.

Previously acknowledged, £79 7s. 2d. L. Gjemre, £2; A. Firth, 2s. 6d.; A. Harden, £1 1s.; F. A., £1; R. H. Rosetti, 2s. 6d.; H. Wyllie, £2 2s.; Blackheath, 2s. 6d.

Christian Science.—II.

BY M. M. MANGASARIAN.

(Concluded from p. 60.)

WE pass on now to another consideration: Mrs. Eddy says that she was led by the Deity—the same who led her to fix the price of her lessons at \$300 for seven lessons—to name her discovery *Christian Science*. If Eddyism is “Christian,” then Catholicism, Anglicanism, the Greek Church, the Presbyterian Church, and the Unitarian, are not “Christian.” We wonder which of these is really “Christian.” A revelation that can not only give rise to Dowieism, Shakerism, Quakerism, Mormonism, and a hundred other “isms,” in addition to those already named, but which can also persuade the followers of each of this multitude of “isms” to believe that they alone are entitled to the name “Christian,” is really something to be afraid of. Of one thing, however, we outsiders can easily assure ourselves, namely, that Eddyism cannot honestly call itself “Christian.” But if Mrs. Eddy’s teachings are not “Christian,” her use of that label leads us to remind her of the commandment which she herself quotes to warn people against robbing her of her copyright book—“Thou shalt not steal.”

The inventor of “isms” cling to the word “Christian” because of its commercial value. There is money in the word, whatever the worth of the thing itself may be. It is a great advertisement. It gives one the *entrée* into society. It is considered a certificate of good character. It permits one to reap where he has not sown. It gives one a prestige and a divine backing. In short, the name “Christian” disarms opposition, and induces the people to come in troops, like fishes, into the net. We believe we have given sufficient reasons why an “ism” should be so anxious to be called “Christian.”

But no man or woman, unless he or she is seeking wealth, popularity, or power, will stamp a thought with a false or a misleading label. Mrs. Eddy has exposed herself to this serious charge by calling her cult “Christian.” I suspect she herself was conscious of this, else she would not have shirked the responsibility for it upon the Deity.

Mrs. Eddy’s teachings may be superior to those of Christianity, but they are not the same. “God never created matter,” says the author of this “end of the century” religion. The Bible, on the other hand, clearly announces the creation of the physical universe—of earth and sky, of sun and sea, of trees, plants, and animals. The creation of man out of the dust of the earth, and of woman out of a rib, and the deluge, which destroyed all things that breathed except what found shelter in Noah’s ark, are also minutely described. Surely, Mrs. Eddy and the Bible do not agree, unless, of course, they are both using words in some unnatural and arbitrary sense—unless they are juggling with words, which, if they are, we had better leave them alone, for they would be unworthy of honest consideration.

If “God never created matter,” then the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation, the Resurrection, of blood Atonement, and of a written Revelation are impossible. To be able to use the word “Christian,” Mrs. Eddy has changed the meaning of Christianity.

Jesus speaks and acts in the New Testament as though he believed sickness to be real. He never intimates that the leper, the paralytic, the blind, and the lame are so only in imagination. On one occasion when he opened the eyes of a blind man, he told his disciples that this man was born blind for a purpose—that a miracle may be performed on him to the honor of God. Did Jesus mean that the man was not blind at all, when he said he was born blind from his mother’s womb? Was Jesus in the habit of using words to mislead his hearers—of saying things the meaning of which would remain hidden for nearly twenty centuries, until Mrs. Eddy could place in the market her *Key to the Scriptures* at from three to six dollars a *Key*?

But Jesus also firmly believed in the existence of evil and the Devil, unless again he was juggling with words. Mrs. Eddy pretends to deny evil—we say *pretends*, for that is all that one who copyrights a book to prevent its theft can do. Jesus invariably speaks of the Devil as a person; that was the prevailing belief in his day and country, and Jesus never once intimates that he did not hold the same view himself.

Moreover, Jesus’ method of healing was entirely different from that of “Christian Science.” He believed in the power of touch and contact; he spat on the ground and made a kind of salve which he spread on the eyes of the blind; he intimated that there was healing in the hem of his garment; his apostle and brother James recommends the use of oil—olive oil, in all likelihood—in the treatment of the sick. We believe it was a wearing apparel or a handkerchief of one of the apostles which performed miracles in the absence of the apostle himself. Add to these that Jesus, after the resurrection, invited his disciples to feel the prints of the nails in his side and on his hands. Were these bodily marks imaginary? Unless Christianity is a boneless, mushy thing, which people might thump into any shape imaginable, it is the very antithesis of Eddyism.

But the most irreconcilable difference between Jesus Christ and Eddy is in the spirit in which they performed their “miracles.” Jesus does not appear to have had any financial schemes in his head. He tells his followers to give freely the power which they have themselves freely received. The idea of charging money for one of his cures, or charging a big sum for the purpose of encouraging appreciation for his gifts, would have shocked Jesus. The idea that some day a woman would copyright and market this same power, would have made him indignant beyond expression. It is impossible to believe that Jesus, who said “Get you no gold, nor silver, nor brass—neither two coats, nor shoes,” and “freely ye received, freely give,” could have the remotest sympathy with a woman who not only *sells* what she calls the power of God, but has also secured by legal procedure a corner on it that she may herself enjoy the full profits of the monopoly.

The Yankee woman justifies her spiritual “trust” by saying, as we have already intimated, that people will not value a thing unless they pay for it. But Mrs. Eddy also says that the times have changed, which means that if Jesus were living now he would copyright the Gospels and charge about three hundred dollars for his Sermon on the Mount, if not more. As the excuse that the times have changed is frequently pressed into service, not only by Mrs. Eddy’s disciples but also by Christians in general, let us consider it for a moment.

The other day I was taking a walk near the Lake Shore drive, and one of the things which attracted my attention was the palatial residence of the Archbishop of Chicago. I do not in the least envy him his luxuriant and sumptuous quarters. He can evidently pay for them, and is, therefore, welcome to them. What perplexes me is the *morale* of it. What would the Archbishop say to Jesus, the mendicant,—he who had no place where to lay his head, he who went nearly barefooted in a hot Syrian climate to preach his gospel of poverty, he who denounced riches and unreservedly extolled poverty—what could the Archbishop say to Jesus were he to ask him how he, an unmarried man and a Christian priest, could enjoy living in a palace costing hundreds of thousands of dollars? To live in style and to preach poverty—is that the way to follow Jesus? We believe the laborer is worthy of his hire; we see no incongruity in a man living in a palace who believes in and seeks wealth; but to praise poverty in Jesus’ name and then to amass wealth! What is that? To live as a millionaire, as a capitalist—as a man of the world and in full possession of luxuries—and to pose as a poor, self-denying follower of Jesus! What is that? Did Jesus die on the cross that his professors may live on the cross?

The only excuse the Archbishop can give for his departure from the example of Jesus is that the times have changed. But in what respect have the times changed? Was there no wealth in Jesus' day? Did not people live in palaces two thousand years ago as they do now? Did Jesus live in a cave because there were no palaces to be had in his day? In what respect, we ask again, have the times changed? Is there no poverty now, as there was in the times of Jesus? Are there no huts, cottages, or humble dwellings left for an archbishop to dwell in if he chose to dwell in one of them? Is it impossible to be poor in modern times? Is it true that these Christians would much rather live in poverty as their divine Lord and Master did, if the "times" would only permit them to do so? What a pity "the times have changed."

Professing one thing and practising another! that is what is going to strangle the Christian religion. Resorting to subterfuge and sophistry to show that it is proper for the Son of God to have a stable, and for an archbishop to have a palace,—that a manger was good enough for a God, but his Vicar, the Pope, must have a throne; that when Jesus said "Blessed are ye poor" he only meant to say "Secure a corner on religion, copyright it—seize the keys of heaven and hell, and compel people to pay your price!" Dear, dear! Yes, I fear the times *have* changed!

But Eddyism is no more scientific than it is Christian. It would not be less questionable for me to pretend that Jesus believed just as I do than for Mrs. Eddy to pretend that her invention is scientific. The poles are not farther apart than are science and Mrs. Eddy. Science is investigation. Eddyism is a dogma. Science is knowledge,—ascertained and classified, and placed within the reach of all. Eddyism is a copyrighted cult. Science is free; no one need first secure permission before observing, studying, inventing, or teaching. But Mrs. Eddy threatens to excommunicate the independent thinker. Science is still open to new truths, but "Christian Science," says its founder, is a *final* revelation. For a man or a woman to profess to be the custodian of the last word on any human question, and then to copyright the same, is not only the negation of all science, which means unceasing investigation and fresh discovery, but it is also the most objectionable kind of charlatanism. Science, again, recognises no authority save what proof or evidence may command. "Christian Science," on the other hand, rests on the sole authority of Mrs. Eddy.

The Catholic Church is not a worse hierarchy than is "Christian Science." No preacher or priest who swears to a creed is more of a slave than the disciple of Mrs. Eddy. "A chain-gang," repeating her words from one end of the earth to the other; a fellowship of hypnotic slavery wherein no original word is permitted fifty-two Sundays in the year,—a machine which squeezes the minds with which it is fed into the shape of a uniform and fixed mould!—to call it scientific, is it not absurd?

Of course, Mrs. Eddy has a new meaning for "Science" as she has for the word "Christian." Why should anyone with an honest purpose and a clean thought torture or wrench words out of joint—out of their historic and common-sensical meaning? What protection would we have against anyone who resorted to such an artifice? "Christian Science" is neither "Christian" nor "scientific," unless the English language, history, and common usage are a lie, and unless the whole human race during the long past, and until the time of Mrs. Eddy's arrival, has been the victim of a monstrous imposture. But reflect what it means to try to wiper the whole world that a copyrighted idea may find a sale!

It is urged, however, that Mrs. Eddy's teachings have been demonstrated to be true by the cures they have performed. I need not question these cures; I even hope all the cures are genuine. I love humanity too well to wish it were not cured at all rather than that it should be cured by "Christian Science." If a man were to stand up this morning and say that he was dead for three months, and Mrs. Eddy raised

him from the dead, I will not ask him to bring his witnesses. I will assume that he is honest. But even when every claim of the healers is granted, all that is demonstrated is that "Christian Science" has cured people. Of course it has. I am sure the "Christian Scientists" will be as generous in admitting that during the past thousands of years cures have been effected also by other agencies. Mohammedanism has cured the sick; Catholic saints have cured the sick; holy places have performed cures, else why do multitudes of people go on a pilgrimage to shrines? patent medicines have helped the sick, otherwise the inventors and vendors of them could not have made such big fortunes; and the least tolerant "Christian Scientist" will admit that even physicians now and then perform a cure. Evidently, then, Mrs. Eddy is not the only healer, which, if admitted, proves that she has not performed any cures with her "divine" book which others have not performed through human means. If it be said that other cures are cures only in name, the same is said by unbelievers of the "Christian Science" cures. One objection balances the other. "Christian Science" would be unique, and different from a patent medicine, if it never failed to cure. But as it fails in some cases, and as it limits its operations only to certain complaints, and bars out surgery or dentistry, and as it has never accomplished what the other agencies have failed to accomplish—such as restoring a lost limb, raising the dead, or supporting life without food or drink—it follows without possibility of contradiction that it is no more, and perhaps no less, than any other patented or copyrighted drug—yes, a drug which, whatever it may or may not do to the body, surely puts the mind to sleep.

But what do you think of trying to prove the truth of a proposition by the good which the people who believe in it do? Here is a man who says Jesus was born of a virgin, and "proves" it by building hospitals for the sick. Those who do not believe in the incarnation do not build hospitals, those who believe in it do; therefore, Jesus was born of a virgin. Here's another who claims infallibility for the Bible or the Pope, and proves it by pointing to the good which the Sisters of Charity do. Let me tell you this: The virgin birth of Jesus, the infallibility of book and Pope, hide behind hospitals and Sisters of Charity because they dare not stand out in the open. Like leeches, like parasites, these theological absurdities stick to beautiful charity—to love and truth—realising that it is by sucking the blood out of these virtues that they can live. Wishing to advocate the forcible suppression of honest thought, the Church wove a beautiful cloak of good deeds—alms-giving, crippled children's home, soup and lodging for the poor—and threw this many-colored cloak about her shoulders when she went about with halter and thumbscrew to dominate the human mind. Why do you imprison Galileo? Why do you burn Bruno? And the Church answered, "Look at my good deeds. Are not my Beatitudes beautiful?"

But why do Mrs. Eddy's teachings appeal to women more than they do to men? Looking over the list of books on "Christian Science" in the Chicago Public Library, I found nearly twelve out of the fifteen works on the subject, under one heading, written by women. The educational advantages of women during the past centuries have not been many. It is only in recent years that our schools and colleges have opened their doors to them. The people who criticise woman for her intellectual backwardness must, in justice to her, place the blame where it belongs. How could we expect of her the same progressive tendencies without allowing her the same progressive educational opportunities which men enjoy? It is not her fault if she is mentally less active than man—it is the fault of the regime to which she has been subjected. Training and environment are the principal factors in life. There is no natural intellectual defect in woman. Under favorable conditions she will keep pace with man in the appreciation and pursuit of knowledge. "Christian

Science," like every other "ism" which derives its main support from women takes advantage of the fact that women are less trained to habits of original research and of logical thinking. As a result of their *un*education, women are less patient with minute and scrupulous investigation, and prone to jump to conclusions, or at least they prefer the "short cut" to the long, laborious, and difficult road to truth. They like ready-made conclusions, because the strain of sustained effort tires them quickly. The faculties of the mind, like the muscles of the arm, are not strong unless developed by exercise. Women have been denied intellectual exercise. They have been trained to be passive, receptive—not creative; that is another reason why she is the first to become a disciple and a follower.

Again, the neglect of the intellectual has developed the emotional nature of woman out of proportion. Living almost and exclusively in the emotions, she is a better hypnotic subject, as are children, for instance. The suppression of the life of the mind has also made woman conservative. She is more conventional than man, more fearful of change than man. What will her neighbor say or think of her, and her standing in society, have more weight with her than with man. A larger number of women than men join a church, because their friends belong to it, or because everybody is joining it, or because the "best" people are joining it, or because the fashion, the wealth, the culture, etc., of the city go there. It is more difficult for a woman to be original or independent than it is for a man. This, too, is the result of the narrow and false training she has received in the past. We have told her that it is scandalous for a woman to think her own thoughts, instead of those of her priest or husband.

Once more, women are not permitted to take an interest in large things—in the public work of the world; and being condemned in the main to a life of privacy, they have become more subjective, and therefore more mystical, as well as more emotional. The occult, the vague, the mysterious, appeal to them more than they do to men whose outdoor life and contact with great and public issues leave them no time for brooding. Goethe said that subjectivity was a disease. The healthy mind forgets itself in a thousand important questions. Religion drives people inward, isolates them, and encourages morbid self-introspection. Life takes us away and out of ourselves, and, by making us objective, broadens our views as well as develops our character. Those who stay at home all their lives do not know life as those who go out into the world. Women have been compelled to remain at home, figuratively speaking, while men have had the whole world for a field.

"Christian Science" appeals to women because it promises them a little larger career than they have hitherto enjoyed. They become healers, bread-earners, readers, leaders, and teachers in "Christian Science" churches. To people who have been cloistered all their lives these opportunities to go out and teach and earn a livelihood are very attractive. For the same reasons women support also the orthodox churches. These take them away from the monotony of living forever in one sphere—the home. A change is good for us all, and the Church gives women this change. I believe that when women shall share with man the responsibilities and opportunities of public life they will be as little interested in the Church as the men are to-day. Let women have larger interests; give them a position in the world as promising and as dignified as that which man has appropriated to himself, and the theological formulæ of by-gone ages will interest women as little as they do men. Realising this fact, the churches endeavor to keep women and children in the same category.

Still another explanation of woman's readiness to follow is that she has been trained never to consult her own interests. She must conserve the interests of her children and her husband. She may be a liberal woman, but for the sake of her children or husband she must sacrifice her right to do or to

think as she pleases. When a man chooses a profession or contemplates a change in his life he generally consults his own tastes, fitness, and interests. But a woman must, it is thought, think of her own interest, qualifications, or possibilities last. She is born to sacrifice herself. Is it any wonder that her development has been slow? Is it any wonder that the priest and the inventor of new "isms" find in her a willing victim?

But, in conclusion, "Christian Science," like many a former "ism," has seen its best day. The wave, once so high, is already running out.

Superstition counts millions among its devotees. Science has but a handful. To see Mrs. Eddy, or General Booth, or Dr. Dowie, thousands will rush into the streets. How many will even open their windows to see Herbert Spencer pass?

Nevertheless only excellence is permanent. When "Mother" Eddy's cult has worn out, the thought of the scientist, the poet, and the philosopher—sweet and sane—shall continue without noise or rattle to give light and to save life.

The Ethical Plea for Superstition.

AN age of declining faith exhibits no more remarkable intellectual phenomenon than the advocacy of the retention of supernatural beliefs on the ground of their supposed moral efficacy, by persons who have themselves rejected such beliefs. This mental attitude is not peculiar to our own age, but has been recorded of past ages of religious decadence. At all these epochs it seems to have been held by the cultured classes that though they themselves may safely dispense with the religious sanctions of conduct, a realisation of the falsity of supernatural beliefs on the part of the masses of the population would result in a general moral deterioration, if not a complete overthrow, of the social order.

At the present time, this view is quite commonly held by that somewhat nebulous and hazy minded class of persons who call themselves "Reverent Agnostics," but whose reverence seems to be directed rather towards the old superstitions than towards the principles of truth and reason. And what makes this theory of the utility of superstition the more remarkable under its modern aspect is the circumstance that the Agnostics who hold it are, for the most part, firm believers in the doctrine of evolution—many of them accepting this doctrine in its entirety as applied to the organic as well as the inorganic world, and including the physical and intellectual evolution of man.

The underlying principle of organic evolution as understood to-day, is adaptation to the environment. All progress, physical, moral, and intellectual, consists in an increasing "correspondence" between the organism and the conditions in which it is placed—between the subject and the objective world; or, as Spencer puts it, between the "internal relations" and the "external relations." Regarded in its intellectual aspect this correspondence consists in an accordance between things as they really are and our ideas of them; that is, nothing more or less than a *perception of truth*. This applies to social as much as to individual evolution. All social progress, and, consequently, all true social welfare, depends ultimately on this correspondence between the society and its environment—on the establishment of true relations between them—and, therefore, on the accordance of beliefs with realities. And hence it is difficult to understand how persons holding evolutionary views can possibly entertain the opinion that the retention of false beliefs as to man's origin and destiny, and false theories as to the government of the universe that surrounds him, can ever bring about any real or permanent welfare for our race. How can such persons consistently maintain that the advancement and happiness of communities of rational beings can, under any circumstances, be

furthered by mistrusting the dictates of reason and taking refuge in delusions?

And besides this objection to the theory of the utility of superstition furnished by a consideration of evolution in general, we discover a further fallacy in the theory when we come to consider the origin of the superstitions themselves. Take, for instance, the belief in a moral creator and ruler of the universe, and in his commands as affording the sole sanction for morality. If the moral creator and ruler has no real existence, the belief must have had some totally different and independent origin. How, then, did it arise?

The beliefs of the lowest savages are chiefly concerned with personifications of the phenomena and forces of Nature; and, as it is mainly the harmful or terrifying phenomena of Nature that arrest the attention of savages, their supernatural beings are mostly of a malevolent type, requiring to be constantly propitiated or even hoodwinked. At this stage there is no supreme moral ruler.

As social evolution progresses, and a *moral sense* becomes increasingly developed, the idea of a *moral ruler* arises, originating, probably, in the deification of dead chiefs or kings, and passing upward through various degrees of abstraction and refinement till it finally reaches the conception of a supreme moral deity. And from first to last the morality of the deity and of his government of men are in exact proportion to the morality of his worshipers, and are, in fact, its direct product. If, then, the belief in the god arises directly, though mistakenly, from the moral sense of man, is it not somewhat illogical to distrust the moral sense of man (the fundamental cause) and to continue to appeal to the belief in the god (the incidental and fallacious consequence) as a sanction for moral conduct in modern civilised societies?

When we come to a closer consideration of the real nature of this much-valued "belief," which is supposed to be the only safeguard of the modern State against a universal overthrow of law, order, and morality, we find weighty reasons for doubting its efficacy. The chief of these reasons is the extreme vagueness and indefiniteness with which all supernatural beliefs must necessarily be held in an intellectual age. The great incentives to moral conduct among the "ignorant masses" are supposed to be the fear of punishment and the hope of reward in a future state; but (to say nothing of the complete lack of evidence as to a future state at all) some definite evidence as to the certitude of the punishment or the reward is necessarily demanded in a practical age before they can influence the conduct of even the most ignorant. In the absence of such evidence, the existence of the police-court and its presiding magistrate a few streets away will operate on the mind of the criminal as a far stronger moral incentive than all the supernatural rewards and punishments preached forth from a thousand pulpits.

Far different was it among primitive men. To them, the punishment meted out by an offended deity, or the rewards bestowed by an approving one, were matters of daily experience, for many of the ordinary phenomena of Nature were so interpreted, and could only be so interpreted. To them, the tempest and the earthquake, famines, floods, and pestilences, eclipses and comets, were very real and tangible evidences of the existence of an angered deity; while, on the other hand, fertilising showers, favorable winds, plentiful harvests, and abundant products of the chase were equally sure indications of the god's (or the deified chief's) good will. And if the god showed his anger or his favor so surely in this life, still more surely would he show them in the shadow-world whither he had gone, and whither each one of his people would also go—a shadow-world, the real existence of which was also indubitably manifested in every dream and vision, in every swoon and trance of common experience.

There is no possibility of comparison between this attitude of mind and that of even the most ignorant and credulous classes of a civilised community in

this practical and scientific age. When most of the ordinary phenomena of Nature have been satisfactorily explained, and when the idea of law and causation is becoming more and more firmly rooted in the minds of men, there remains no need for supernatural explanations and no ground for supernatural beliefs. For all such beliefs have had a physical basis, and when the physical facts are naturally interpreted the belief in their supernatural interpretation must necessarily disappear. The sense of mystery is the parent of superstition; and, as Nature yields up her secrets one after another to the persistent inquiries of human reason, the sense of mystery tends to fade away. Nor does this view of Nature depend on each person's own enlightenment and knowledge. The "man in the street" may have very little knowledge, and the man in the slum no knowledge at all, of the causes and nature of the phenomena around them, and of the methods by which these have been discovered; but this ignorance does not in the least affect their mental attitude towards such phenomena. They know full well that *the causes are physical, and that they have been discovered*, that "scientific men have found out all about it," and this is quite sufficient to put any idea of the supernatural out of court.

Thus we see that the superstition of primitive man is a very different thing to the superstition which some Agnostics would perpetuate to-day among the "ignorant masses." The one is a *natural superstition*, based on what seems to be daily and hourly evidence, arising from his absolute ignorance of natural law and order; while the other is an *artificial superstition*, inculcated in childhood, and precariously maintained in later life in the teeth of daily and hourly evidence derived from an ever-increasing knowledge of natural law and order. The superstitions of primitive man may have furnished a sufficiently effective moral motive for him, but if the superstitions of the ignorant masses of the twentieth century are the only means of furnishing a moral motive for them we are in a parlous state indeed.

Every advance in our knowledge of nature and of man's place in it serves only to discredit the ancient theories and to endanger the ancient beliefs; while on the other hand, every such advance serves as surely to strengthen the foundations of rational morality. For the more firmly the ideas of universal law and causation are grasped, the more deeply will be realised the far-reaching and inevitable consequences of human conduct, and the greater will become the sense of moral responsibility. And every addition to our knowledge of the natural origin and development of our own race will furnish a surer basis for the moral sanctions in those social instincts which form part of our organic inheritance.

It would surely, then, be wiser for unbelievers of all shades of opinion fully and frankly to abandon this attitude of tacit acquiescence in the perpetuation of superstition on moral grounds, and to base the moral appeal on the firm and solid foundation of rational ethics.

A. E. MADDOCK.

THE DOOM OF CHRIST.

Since thou hast quickened what thou canst not kill,
Awakened famine thou canst never still,
Spoken in madness, prophesied in vain,
And promised what no thing of clay shall gain,
Thou shalt abide while all things ebb and flow,
Wako while the weary sleep, wait while they go.
And treading paths no human feet have trod,
Search on still vainly for thy Father, God;
Thy blessing shall pursue thee as a curse
To hunt thee, homeless, thro' the universe;
No hand shall slay thee, for no hand shall dare
To strike the godhead, death itself must spare!
With all the woes of earth upon thy head,
Uplift thy cross and go. Thy doom is said.

—Robert Buchanan.

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.

QUEEN'S (MINOR) HALL (Langham-place, W.): 7.30, G. W. Foote, "The Bible."

ISLINGTON BRANCH N. S. S. (46 Dame-street): Monday, at 8, Discussion Class. Saturday, at 8, Elocution Class.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Public (Minor) Hall, Canning Town): 7.30, H. Thurlow, jun., "A Substitute for God."

OUTDOOR.

EDMONTON BRANCH N. S. S. (The Green): 7, J. Hecht, "Science and Christianity."

ISLINGTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Highbury Corner): 12 noon, Ivan Paperno, a Lecture.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, S. K. Ratcliffe, "The Passing of Puritanism."

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N. S. S. (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): C. Cohen, 3, "Militarism, Patriotism, and Freethought"; 7, "The Logic of Life."

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