

THE Freethinker

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PRICE TWOPENCE

Far from believing a thing because you have heard it, you ought to believe nothing without having put yourself in the same position as if you had never heard it.

—PASCAL.

On Ridicule.

GOLDSMITH said there are two classes of people who dread ridicule—priests and fools. They cry out that it is no argument, but they know it is. It has been found the most potent form of argument. Euclid used it in his immortal Geometry; for what else is the *reductio ad absurdum* which he sometimes employs? Elijah used it against the priests of Baal. The Christian fathers found it effective against the Pagan superstitions, and in turn it was adopted as the best weapon of attack on them by Lucian and Celsus. Ridicule has been used by Bruno, Erasmus, Luther, Rabelais, Swift, and Voltaire, by nearly all the great emancipators of the human mind.

All these men used it for a serious purpose. They were not comedians who amused the public for pence. They wielded ridicule as a keen rapier, more swift and fatal than the heaviest battle-axe. Terrible as was the levin-brand of their denunciation, it was less dreaded than the Greek fire of their sarcasm. I repeat that they were men of serious aims, and indeed how could they have been otherwise? All true and lasting wit is founded on a basis of seriousness; or else, as Heine said, it is nothing but a sneeze of the reason. Hood felt the same thing when he proposed for his epitaph: "Here lies one who made more puns, and spat more blood, than any other man of his time."

Buckle well says, in his fine vindication of Voltaire, that he "used ridicule, not as the test of truth, but as the scourge of folly." And he adds—

"His irony, his wit, his pungent and telling sarcasms, produced more effect than the gravest arguments could have done; and there can be no doubt that he was fully justified in using those great resources with which nature had endowed him, since by their aid he advanced the interests of truth, and relieved men from some of their most inveterate prejudices."

Victor Hugo puts it much better in his grandiose way, when he says of Voltaire that "he was irony incarnate for the salvation of mankind."

Voltaire's opponents, as Buckle points out, had a foolish reverence for antiquity, and they were impervious to reason. To compare great things with small, our opponents are of the same character. Grave argument is lost upon them; it runs off them like water from a duck. When we approach the mysteries of their faith in a spirit of reverence, we yield them half the battle. We must concede them nothing. What they call reverence is only conventional prejudice. It must be stripped away from the subject, and if argument will not remove the veil, ridicule will. Away with the insane notion that absurdity is revered because it is ancient! If it is thousands of years old, treat it exactly as if it were told the first time to-day. Science recognises nothing in space and time to invalidate the laws of nature. They prevailed in the past as well as in the present, in Jerusalem as well as in London. That is how

Science regards everything; and at bottom Science and common-sense are one and the same.

Professor Huxley, in his admirable little book on Hume, after pointing out the improbability of centaurs, says that judged by the canons of science all "miracles" are centaurs. He also considers what would happen if he were told by the greatest anatomist of the age that he had seen a centaur. He admits that the weight of such authority would stagger him, but it would scarcely make him believe. "I could get no further," says Huxley, "than a suspension of judgment."

Now I venture to say that if Johannes Müller had told Huxley any such thing, he would have at once concluded that the great anatomist was joking or suffering from hallucination. As a matter of fact trained investigators do not see these incredible monstrosities, and Huxley's hypothetical case goes far beyond every attested miracle. But I do say that if Johannes Müller, or anyone else, alleged that he had seen a centaur, Huxley would never think of investigating the absurdity.

Yet the allegation of a great anatomist on such a matter is infinitely more plausible than any miraculous story of the Christian religion. The "centaurs" of faith were seen centuries ago by superstitious people; and what is more, the relation of them was never made by the witnesses, but always by other people, who generally lived a few generations at least after the time.

What on earth are we to do with people who believe in "centaurs" on such evidence, who make laws to protect their superstition, and appoint priests at the public cost to teach the "centaur" science? The way to answer this question is to ask another. How should we treat people who believed that centaurs could be seen now? Why, of course, we should laugh at them. And that is how we should treat people who believe that men-horses ever existed at all.

Does anybody ask that I shall seriously discuss whether an old woman with a divining-rod can detect hidden treasures; whether Mr. Home floated in the air or Mrs. Guppy sailed from house to house; whether cripples are cured at Lourdes or all manner of diseases at St. Winifred's Well? Must I patiently reason with a man who tells me that he saw water turned into wine, or a few loaves and fishes turned into a feast for multitudes, or dead men rise up from their graves? Surely not. I do what every sensible man does. I recognise no obligation to reason with such hallucinate mortals; I simply treat them with ridicule.

So with the past. Its delusions are no more entitled to respect than those of to-day. Jesus Christ as a miracle-worker is just as absurd as any modern pretender. Whether in the Bible, the Koran, the Arabian Nights, Monte Christo, or Baron Munchausen, a tremendous "walker" is the fit subject of a good laugh. And Freethinkers mean to enjoy their laugh, as some consolation for the wickedness of superstition. The Christian faith is such that it makes us laugh or cry. Are we wrong in preferring to laugh?

There is an old story of a man who was plagued by the Devil. The fiend was always dropping in at inconvenient times, and making the poor fellow's life a hell on earth. He sprinkled holy water on the

floor, but by-and-bye the "old 'un" hopped about successfully on the dry spots. He flung things at him, but all in vain. At last he resolved on desperate measures. He plucked up his courage, looked the Devil straight in the face, and laughed at him. That ended the battle. The Devil could not stand laughter. He fled that moment and never returned.

Superstition is the Devil. Treat him to a hearty, wholesome laugh. It is the surest exorcism, and you will find laughter medicinal for mind and body too. Ridicule, and again ridicule, and ever ridicule!

G. W. FOOTE.

Mind and Purpose in Nature.—III.

(Continued from p. 83.)

SOMETHING needs be said in passing on Dr. Wallace's belief that man's color sense, with "our higher æsthetic and moral attributes," cannot be fully accounted for by Natural Selection, but have been developed for the purpose of qualifying him for a "higher and more enduring life." However conclusively it may be shown that purely utilitarian considerations account for the beginnings of color and of a color sense, Dr. Wallace still maintains that we cannot on ordinary scientific lines account for the present development of either. But in this argument it is tacitly assumed that color is practically coextensive with the plant and insect world. The color of sea and sky, of sunset and sunrise, and of other natural phenomena must have existed so long as the earth has been anything more than a molten mass. Color did not commence, as a natural fact, with the existence of an animal capable of perceiving and appreciating it, nor does it even now exist with any obvious relation to human existence. Moreover, some sort of a color sense exists in animals other than man—how far removed from man no one is able to clearly say. But Lubbock's experiments plainly proved that bees recognise various colours; and unless animals and insects do recognise colors, it is hard to see what meaning is to be attached to warning, mimetic, or protective coloration in the animal and plant worlds. The whole point in such coloration is that some animal shall be attracted, or warned off, or deceived. And how is this to be done unless a certain experience is associated with a certain coloration?

Of course, no one believes that animals take the same keen æsthetic pleasure in colors that man does. But the fact of their recognising colors proves the existence of a nascent color sense, and that gives the foundation for more developed forms. And it is quite in line with what we know of the course of evolution in other directions that secondary developments should occur which in time come to have an independent value of their own. Thus all sex relations are based upon the crude and animal fact of sexual differentiation. And it can be observed how in many directions a liking for qualities of color or form has been evolved with no other end than that of species perpetuation. But even with animals possessing no marked degree of self-consciousness the means to an end must become an end in themselves, otherwise the purpose of the process is frustrated. To take a single illustration: while we can easily trace the connection between the nest-building instinct of birds and the rearing of young, it would be absurd to assume that the bird builds a nest with an intention to deposit its eggs and rear its young. The facts become still clearer when we turn to self-conscious man. Æsthetic considerations still continue to serve their primary purpose of maintaining a selection in mating; but here the secondary aspect has not only secured an independent value of its own, but is often a preponderating factor. Beauty of form and grace of character are consciously pursued as ends in themselves, while man's consciousness of pleasurable emotions and of the means of

realising them gives his æsthetic nature a marked degree of strength and independence.

The delight that man takes in color is, then, nothing more than a special application of the principle briefly outlined. Just as the mere existence of an organ brings with it organic promptings to exercise and develop it, so the ability to appreciate color leads to a desire for the gratification of this capacity, and consequently to its strengthening. Dr. Wallace's argument that the color sense is greater than is demanded by the principle of survival value is thus beside the point. The mere fact that man, or any other animal, delights in exercising a certain capacity or organ really gives it a certain survival value, since it strengthens the joy of living and the desire to live. What Dr. Wallace ought to do to prove his case is to instance some quality or structure that is without survival value from its inception.

Finally, why is the æsthetic sense of man restricted to color? Form—to mention one other factor—is as important as color in æsthetics. And it cannot be pretended that pleasing forms began to exist with the appearance of man, or that they then became more plentiful. From the most remote ages the mineral world, and later the plant world—to say nothing of other aspects of nature—presented forms as pleasing as anything we have to-day. Ferns that are found in the coal measures are as beautiful and as dainty as any that line the wayside to-day. And if all the beauty of form in nature exists without reference to man, why not the beauty of color? Is it not sadder, and more scientific, and more intelligible to assume that man's æsthetic sense being the product of natural conditions necessarily finds its modes and standards of beauty among the conditions that have developed it?

Perhaps a still more fatal objection to Dr. Wallace's thesis that nature shows directive mind and purpose is found in the fact that nature does not show in any of the examples selected qualities created solely for the benefit of the animal possessing them, but characteristics, the end of which, is to outwit some other animal bent upon its destruction. Thus, in the matter of nuts, which Dr. Wallace believes were "intended" to be eaten, their coloring is always of a protective kind. Before ripening they are the color of the foliage, and after ripening they are the color of the ground or of decaying leaves. The nut develops qualities that tend to prevent its being eaten, and the animal has a keenness that will penetrate its disguise. A beast of prey develops strength or coloration enabling it to stalk or kill. Its natural prey develops characteristics that will enable it to escape. And so through the whole world of life. Every new development in the animal world is the attempt of an animal to evade or overcome organic or inorganic enemies that threaten its destruction. The unity of nature is not something produced by a beneficent co-operation of mutually helpful parts, it is a unity that results from the balance of warring components. It is at best an armed peace which only lasts so long as every offensive development meets with a prompt reply. Where this does not occur, war, with no mercy to the vanquished, is at once declared.

Is this endless game of check and counter-check what one ought to expect if nature really disclosed a creative mind and purpose? Of course, in human affairs we adopt some such plan, as when we place a man in an office of supreme importance, and then devise plans to prevent him exercising his power in the wrong direction. But this is because we have to deal with human nature as it is. If we could make our officials as we want them, these checks would be unnecessary. So when Dr. Wallace says that the present plan is the best because it is the only plan that could have succeeded, one may reply, certainly it is the only plan that could have resulted—given the material universe as we have it. But as Dr. Wallace assumes that the "highest angels" created the ether, and others created matter, and so forth, the responsibility for the necessity of the devices indicated rests with those who endowed

the material universe with all its forces and properties. On that basis we are certainly warranted in looking for a more intelligible and more intelligent scheme of things than actually exists.

Dr. Wallace has a very interesting aside, on p. 279 of his book, which aptly expresses his warm sympathy with social reform. He writes very strongly of the widespread ravage of nature by the destruction of animal and vegetable life, of the number of people toiling for a bare existence, or stricken with preventable disease, as a consequence of the greed and avarice of man. This is what one would have expected of Wallace the social reformer. But it should have occurred to Wallace the believer in "Directive Mind" in nature, and who believes that "ours is the best of all possible worlds," that all this is part of the directive control for which he is pleading. If it is part of the "plan," regret is foolish; if it is not part of the "plan," one would like to know how it happens to occur. So far as man's defacement of nature is concerned, he is only doing what every living species does—gain his own ends irrespective of the consequence to others. So far as man's ill-treatment of his fellow man is concerned, he is acting worse than most groups of animals, who usually restrict their ill-treatment to outsiders. And, in this case, the "Directive Mind" seems to have lost its influence precisely at the point where it would have been most useful.

A further disproof of "Plan" or "Purpose" or "Intention" in the development of a higher species of animal through the operation of Natural Selection may now be indicated. From one point of view the history of Natural Selection has been unfortunate. Darwin avowedly borrowed the phrase from the selection practised by breeders, and Theists were not slow to argue that the "divine mind" played the same part in the production of species that man did in the production of a new variety. Then, because a higher type resulted from the struggle for existence, it was assumed that the production of a higher type was the "purpose" of the process, and so, careless of those who went under, God was praised for producing a better species of animal, even though it displaced a less satisfactory piece of his handiwork.

Now, so far as we can speak of any "intention" involved in the process of Natural Selection, the intention is not preservation but elimination. For Natural Selection only operates where there is elimination. Why, for instance, is there an evolution against a disease like consumption, and none against chicken-pox? The answer is that because the first kills, and because the immunity of people in relation to it ranges from zero upward—the least immune are killed, and the rest remain. Chicken-pox, on the other hand, does not kill—it merely afflicts; and so the "Directive Mind" allows generation after generation of children to be afflicted by it. There is evolution against any disease that kills; there is none against a disease that merely torments and weakens.

Take the animal world, and there is the same lesson. How is it that the level of any species of animal is raised? Simply by the killing off of such of its members as are not able to overcome certain difficulties of the environment. Generation after generation those members of a species that fail to reach a certain standard are killed. In each generation those that are above the standard survive. Owing to increase of numbers, or to increase of competitors, the standard of survival is raised, and the kind that survives at one time perishes at another. Result: a stronger, sturdier type of animal. But where in this process can we detect any "intention" of producing this stronger type? Where there is no great killing there is no great advance. No elimination by death, no evolution, is the law of Natural Selection. It is a selection, not of the fittest, but of the unfittest. Dr. Wallace places the emphasis on the wrong half of the process. Nature—and the "Directive Mind" in Nature, if there be one—is not seeking to preserve; it is seeking to destroy. Those who survive do so because natural processes are not able to kill them. If we are to personify Nature at

all, we shall do it accurately by figuring it as a brutal and vengeful being, first creating animal life, then destroying all it possibly can, and only failing to destroy all because their natural endowments place them beyond its power. The Survival of the Fittest is no proof Nature's kindly intentions towards animal life; it is rather the registration of malevolence towards its own creations.

C. COHEN.

(To be concluded.)

Man's Freedom.

PRINCIPAL A. E. GARVIE, D.D., is contributing to the *British Congregationalist* a series of articles under the general heading of "What are we to Believe?" The first article was criticised in these columns; and now the XVth cries aloud for attention. The title of this is, "Concerning Man: His Freedom," and it opens with a statement which discredits the whole of it. Dr. Garvie says:—

"The revelation of God's Fatherhood is unto the redemption of man by the forgiveness of sin. The necessity of forgiveness implies the reality of sin, and the reality of sin involves the possibility of choice or freedom. To the Christian view of man liberty is essential."

That is a candid avowal that the subject of man's freedom is about to be discussed under the influence of a strong theological bias. In Dr. Garvie's system of divinity the freedom of the will is an absolute necessity, just as in that of the great Augustine the enslavement of the will is a foregone conclusion. Now, when a man argues under the dominion of prejudices and prepossessions he is bound to go seriously astray, and of the truth of this statement the article under consideration is an apt illustration. Principal Garvie rightly observes that "the range and depth of a man's personality depend on the measure in which he exercises self-judgment"; but he is not justified in asserting that "this self-judgment is an illusion if whatever a man has done he must have done and could not have done otherwise." It is not true that "in every choice, in every reproach of conscience for having chosen wrongly, a man affirms his freedom." The sense of blameworthiness has nothing whatever to do with freedom of choice. When a man blames himself for an evil action he does not thereby proclaim that, being what he was when he performed it, he could have acted differently. Self-reproach merely indicates that we instinctively hold ourselves responsible for the moral condition in which we may be at any given moment. It is a fallacy to declare that "when we blame a man for a wrong he has committed we take for granted that he might have done right," or that "when we praise a deed of heroism or sacrifice, we assume that the doer might have chosen the safer and the easier path." What we really do assume, in either case, is that the actor himself might have been in a lower or a higher moral state, but not at all that, being what he was, his action could have been different. Praise and blame are part and parcel of the environment, and may, if discreetly administered, strengthen noble tendencies and weaken base ones, and considerably help to mould character. Here is another of the Principal's fallacies:—

"The whole social order, with its law guarding the relations of men to one another, and its punishments for the breach of its requirements, assumes that they are not under any necessity, but can keep the laws, if they will, and that they deserve to suffer if they disobey. Government would have no moral justification at all if the punishment of crime were suffering inflicted on moral impotence."

To criminologists it is clear, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred crime is a disease, and should be treated as such by the authorities. The assumption that criminals are free agents is responsible for the cruel, degrading, and demoralising treatment to which, after convic-

tion, they are at present subjected. It is futile to say that men "can keep the laws, if they will, and that they deserve to suffer if they disobey," the real question being, *why* do some will to keep them and others do not? Why is there a criminal class?

So the Principal reasons at the bidding of his bias. He admits the "fact that even in Christian teaching the necessity of forgiveness and the reality of sin are not as confidently affirmed as at former times"; but he himself proclaims both with the confidence of the trained dogmatist. Here is a significant passage:—

"The relation of man to God is in all religions, conspicuously in the Christian, a moral relation—that is, it implies that man is free either to trust, love, and obey God, or not, and that whether he enjoys God's approval or rests under God's condemnation depends on the attitude towards God that he assumes voluntarily, and not of necessity."

On this point Dr. Garvie is most certainly mistaken. Most of the religions of the world have been wholly fatalistic; and, as interpreted in Augustinianism and Calvinism, Christianity is characteristically so. Man is always a slave, either of Satan or of God. While in bondage to the Devil he cannot trust, love, and obey God; and his emancipation from Satanic slavery is possible only as the result of supernatural intervention. But once God has him in his possession, not even the Devil shall ever again snatch him out of his hand. Now, how utterly absurd is the liberty of choice which God is said to have bestowed upon man. The choice between good and evil is a natural impossibility, on the assumption that God made man perfect. A perfect being cannot choose evil, because the choice of it would be an unmistakable sign of imperfection. The very possibility of choosing wrongly implies a fatal defect in the constitution.

At this point, Dr. Garvie appeals to "the witness that man has in himself of the possibility of choice between two courses of action." "This is an ultimate moral fact," he adds, "beyond which we cannot go." A man is not always able to choose that which conscience approves, because of the pull of something stronger than conscience, which necessitates an opposite choice. A drunkard's conscience tells him to go straight home and make his wife the custodian of his wages; but his craving for drink drags him into the public-house, where he wastes the major part of his week's earnings. As long as this craving dominates him his power of choice is an illusion. Strictly speaking, people never choose the way they go; they are simply driven by the strongest impulses within them. Even in the most trivial affairs it is the strongest motives that always prevail. We do not "recognise that there is a moral certainty of freedom, the denial of which lays morality low in ruins"; but we do recognise quite distinctly that there are intellectual and ethical considerations which render the assertion of human liberty, in the theological sense, wholly irrational and destructive of the very foundations of morality. Freedom of choice would introduce confusion worse confounded into human life, and under it disorganising uncertainty would reign universally. Free-will would set society by the ears in no time. It is Determinism alone that renders social life possible. Dr. Garvie is fundamentally wrong when he tells us that "this psychological determinism is due to the logical fallacy of a false analogy." It is due rather to the realisation of the truth that the law of causation admits of absolutely no exceptions, or that man invariably acts in harmony with what he is, and that at the moment of acting he is incapable of acting otherwise. That is to say, at any given time he cannot help being what he is and doing what he does. There is no objection to the saying that "the self is a unity and identity, and that it is one and the same in all thinking, feeling, willing"; the objection is to regarding this self as distinct and apart from the physical organism, or as capable of acting independently of it. Man is the product of heredity and environment. It is

probably true that the influence of the latter is much stronger than that of the former; but the most important fact to be borne in mind is that only a modification of environment can produce any modification of character, and that only an improvement in character can ever result in any improvement in the products of heredity.

Like most divines, Principal Garvie grossly misrepresents the views of so-called Materialists on this subject. There is no truth whatever in the assertion that "Materialism assumes that the mind is passive, and the body alone active." What Materialists maintain is that the existence of mind as distinct from body is a baseless hypothesis. The assumption of a passive mind and an active body is clearly contradicted by consciousness; but the assumption that "the dependence of mind on brain is not absolute, and that in willing to act we are constantly assuming that the body depends on the mind," if not directly contradicted, is at least entirely unverified, by consciousness. Consciousness knows nothing of a mind or self on which the brain depends. But Dr. Garvie declares that "there is an individuality which cannot be explained by a varying compound of ancestral qualities, and that this individuality does assert itself and gets the better of its heredity, and rises above its environment." He even goes the length of teaching that "a man knows himself not to be merely the product of his heredity and environment, but feels himself bound to be the master of them both." That may be orthodox Christian teaching, but it is not scientific. If we are not merely the products of heredity and environment, what other factor had a share in producing us? Dr. Garvie does not tell us either its nature or its name. And what man has ever demonstrated his superiority to both heredity and environment, or his mastery over them? Here is a child, the product of a thoroughly bad heredity, just born into an equally bad environment: does the reverend gentleman imagine that such a child can ever get the better of its heredity and rise above its environment? Is there any force inherent in its constitution that can perform such a mighty miracle? Why, the Principal's own profession is a flat contradiction of his exceptionally wild assumption. The only hope for that child is in a total change of environment. Provide it with a completely wholesome and elevating environment from the very first, let all outside influences brought to bear upon it be of the purest and noblest quality, and the probability is that the organism thus played upon will lose its downward tendencies by the generation within it of their very opposites. This would be an instance, however, not of an individuality getting the better of its heredity and rising above its environment, but of a diseased human organism getting the better of its heredity as the result of the action of a totally changed environment. No one has ever risen above his environment; but the ill effects of a corrupt heredity have often been neutralised, if not eradicated, by means of an improved environment. There is no escape from the law of Cause and Effect: our only salvation consists in adapting ourselves to it by the cultivation and exercise of our intelligence.

J. T. LLOYD.

Christianity at the Zoological Gardens.

M. ANATOLE FRANCE, the foremost of European authors, has a delicious joke at the expense of orthodoxy in his *Isle of the Penguins*. He describes the old and half-blind St. Mael as mistaking birds for human beings and blessing and baptising them. This causes trouble in heaven, and God is embarrassed. A celestial congress is called, and the outcome is that the baptism, having been carried out, entitles the birds to the privileges of orthodoxy. Accordingly, the birds are endowed with souls—"very little ones"—and become human beings.

This is a very ancient theological difficulty. A distinguished countryman of M. France's, the late Gustave Planche, attacked the Dictionary of the French Academy because of its definition of man as "a reasonable being, composed of a soul and a body." He said this denied that brutes have souls. Descartes thought he solved this puzzle by regarding animals as pure machines. Father Bougeant, a Jesuit, believed them to serve as prison-cells for "fallen spirits." That ingenious father contended that each animal was inhabited by a devil, evidently impressed by the gospel legend of the bedevilled pigs. According to this sympathetic priest, a devil swam with every turbot, grazed with every ox, soared with every lark, was roasted with every chicken, and, presumably, romped with every flea. Hartley Coleridge caustically alludes to this line of reasoning in his *De Animabus Brutorum*, and calls it "blaspheming God for Christ's sake and lying for love of truth."

Paradoxical or not, preposterous or otherwise, the hypothesis of an after-life for animals has been sometimes mooted by accredited apologists for the Christian religion. In fact, it is difficult to open any seventeenth-century philosophical work without finding a separate chapter on the souls of animals. Leland, in his strictures on Lord Bolingbroke, admits the supposition of brutes having souls. Bishop Butler pronounces an objection to one of his arguments as implying, by inference, the "natural immortality of brutes" to be "no difficulty, since we know not what latent powers and capacities they may be endued with." This was, undoubtedly, one of those cases when a serene reserve was the essence of wisdom. John Foster, the evangelical essayist, writing of some birds, said: "I cannot believe that all these little spirits of melody are but the snuff of the grand taper of life." Theists like Theodore Parker, who believe in a future life on the ground that it is necessary in order to make intelligible the purposes of the deity, consistently extend the belief to the immortality of animals. The ultimate welfare must come to the ill-used beast, else, say they, the universe is not perfect. Theistic, like Christian, logic seldom resists inquiry or stands cross-examination. Dr. Johnson had a characteristic way of evading the difficulty, worthy of a Christian Evidence lecturer. Someone, *apropos* of Drane's *Essay on the Future Life of Animals*, said: "But really, sir, when we see a very sensible dog we don't know what to think of him." Johnson quickly replied: "True, sir; and when we see a very foolish fellow we don't know what to think of him."

In spite of bullies like Dr. Johnson, there always will be Charles Bonnets who will indulge in kindly and sentimental speculation with regard to animals in the hereafter. Charles Bonnet, the renowned Swiss naturalist, made himself as benevolently busy about the future state of his humble clients as Swedenborg did concerning "the paragon of animals." Leigh Hunt, again, from quite a different view and on quite other grounds, satirises the pride that smiles in so sovereign a manner at the notion of "other animals going to heaven." He is sorry he cannot settle the question, and can conceive much less pleasant addition to the society than such a dog as Pope's "poor Indian" expects to see admitted to that equal sky. Matthew Arnold, too, has, with his customary haughty irony, made his verses on the death of a favorite dog the vehicle of pure secularism:

"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 did throw,
And humbly lay thee down to die.
Thy memory lasts both here and there,
And thou shalt love as long as we;
And after that thou dost not care!
In us was all the world to thee."

"That unsubduable old Roman," Walter Savage Landor, allowed his imagination to conjecture the

future of even a dragon-fly. This is his apostrophe to the "insect king" who interrupted his reverie by the river:—

"Believe me, most who read the line
Will read with hornier eyes than thine;
And yet their souls shall live for ever,
And thine drop dead into the river.
God pardon them, O insect king,
Who fancy so unjust a thing."

Sydney Smith, who disliked bugs less than he did Methodists, is impatient of the affirmative hypothesis. The comfortable canon, "with good capon lined," humorously consigns the animal creation to dust. Carlyle is transcendental in his best Teutonic manner, and characteristically obscure in his remarks concerning a "little Blenheim cocker." "Have animals not a kind of soul," he asks, "equally the rude draught and imperfect imitation of ours?" The saints have no clearer message than the "Sage of Chelsea." St. Paul scoffingly asks, "Does God care for oxen?" and the more kindly St. Francis regarded the swallows as his sisters. Theophile Gautier contends that St. Francis was right, and that animals are "our brethren, who placidly pursue the line marked out for them from the beginning of the world." Swift's admirers said he could have written beautifully of a broomstick. Gautier was evidently equal to penning panegyrics of the placidity of the flea or the devotion to duty of the tapeworm.

Although Christians halt between two opinions with regard to the immortality of animals, the votaries of older and more humane superstitions did not treat them so contemptuously. As Montaigne quaintly says: "Some of the most ancient and noble nations of antiquity not only received brutes into their society, but gave them a rank infinitely above them, esteeming them familiars and favorites of the gods." In one place the crocodile was revered, in another the ibis, and cats were worshiped in Egypt. The monkey and the calf were honored with statues of gold. Here a serpent, there a fish, were objects of veneration. In those far-off days dogs were worshiped and not vivisected. Even in the Christian scheme a pigeon receives a portion of the adoration wasted on the Trinity.

The prevalence of all this superstition is not to be wondered at. Comparative physiology is no older than Goethe, and comparative psychology is only now glimmering in the minds of men as a possibility. But these are weighty matters for the serious scientists. Like Artemus Ward's statement concerning the glass eye of the aunt of the opposition editor, it is somewhat irrelevant to the issue. It is, however, a serious matter for religious belief if animals possess souls. Christ died to save all men; but if animals are to be included in the scheme of salvation, how will it fare with the Christian in the next world? The subject is sufficiently humorous to cause the wide mouth of the general public to broaden to a grin.

"How will he face the ox he wronged on earth,
The murdered sheep upon whose chops he fed,
The little lamb whose leg increased his girth,
The pig without a head?

By hares he jugged his spirit will be wrung,
The injured steed to glare at him will haste—
He whom he relished once as potted tongue,
Tinned meat and bloater paste.

The tabby that as sausage he consumed
Will rise against him with his tail erect;
The turkeys for his Christmas dinner doomed
His face will recollect.

The partridge, grouse, the quail he had on toast,
The creatures he has eaten, great and small,
Tough, tender, lean and fat; the boiled and roast—
He'll have to face them all."

MIMNERMUS.

A superstition overthrown
May raise again its head;
But superstition outgrown
Remains for ever dead.

—Victor Robinsoll.

Methods of Progress.

WE hear every now and then from recent converts to Freethought, who apparently still feel that there is a good deal to be said for the old religion. They do not put it exactly in this way, but this is what it comes to; and we gather that their disquietude springs entirely from the ethical side of the argument.

Now in answer to such correspondents' appeal to us for a little intellectual assistance we would say, first of all, that the primary and important question about Christianity or any other religion is this—*Is it true?* If it be not true, if it be positively false, if it be scientifically, historically, and philosophically unsound, nothing in the long run can save it, and nothing ought to save it. Beautiful falsehoods fail to charm when they are seen to be falsehoods. So that if Christianity were absolutely beautiful, which it is very far from being, it would still have to be dismissed as a body of doctrines and beliefs when we once recognise that they rest upon an impossible foundation. To state the case in purely mental terms, it is simply impossible to believe and to disbelieve a thing at one and the same time.

Let us take an instance. The story of the last hours, the death, the resurrection, and the ascension of Jesus Christ may be as beautiful and moving in its pathos and sublimity as his eulogists have represented it. We are not concerned for the moment to discuss the point. We will assume it. Yet this is not sufficient to give it a hold upon our allegiance. Something else is necessary before it can control our minds and shape our lives. We must believe it to be true. If we come to see that it is not really historical, but imaginative, legendary, and mythological, we may continue to admire it ever so much as a religious romance, but it will necessarily cease to command our devotion and excite our hopes and fears.

Here is another consideration. Any religion which has lasted a long time, and had millions of adherents in many countries, must have had many good deeds associated with it—that is to say, good deeds done by its professors, and possibly in its name. But if such a religion claims the credit for these good deeds, it must be prepared to accept the discredit of all the bad deeds. And how would the account look then? Dr. Barnado was a good man—but how about Torquemada? General Booth is a good man—but how about the Pope who struck a medal in honor of the St. Bartholomew massacre?

Revivals have been dealt with again and again in our columns. We are not going to accept all the loose statements we hear about their beneficence. They need a good deal of sifting. But even if they were all true, what would it prove? Simply this: that a powerful excitement may temporarily act as a substitute for positive virtue, just as hysteria may take the form, and produce the symptoms, of various diseases. But the hysteria is not really the disease, and the excitement is not really the virtue. The phenomenon is but momentary. The verdict of time shows that the ethical condition of a people is determined by slow and permanent causes. And this will continue to be so until earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, whirlwinds, and tidal-waves decide the general geography of our planet.

Secularism does not seek to imitate the Christian methods which our correspondents refer to. It could not do so if it wished, for "people of the lowest type" are precisely those who would most resent having any association with "infidels." There was a burglar once (and this is a fact, not a story) who bitterly denounced the admission of the late Charles Bradlaugh to the House of Commons, on the ground that if men like that went to parliament nobody's property would be safe. Criminals of this class must be left to Christian reform agencies—which, after all, if we may judge by statistics, do not seem to make much impression upon them.

General Booth, judging in the same way, has made no impression on the poverty and vice of this country. The "submerged tenth" are as much in evidence as ever. The publicans do not fear his teetotalism. The tobaccoists do not fear his non-smoking. A good while ago he asked for a million pounds to export honest working-men to the Colonies. Charles Bradlaugh tried to get them settled upon the soil of England. It is the land laws that drive myriads, and perhaps millions, of Englishmen out of the most natural and healthy occupation in the world. And the remedy does not lie in cheap philanthropy, but in wise legislation. Give labor land and security and it can do without "charity." Saviors of society like General Booth only find opportunities in the midst of the squalor and misery of our boasted "Christian civilisation." There would be no room for them in a healthy community. And it is the healthy community that Secularists want to realise. They do not spend their time in palliating evil effects—that is an incessant business, as bad as the rolling of Sisyphus's stone. They deal with causes. And just as they believe that prayer is a poor substitute for effort, and faith a poor substitute for knowledge, they also believe that charity is a poor substitute for justice.

Suppose a foul river ran through a certain country, and reform agencies operated here and there, setting up works, drawing out small quantities of water, and purifying it—and then pouring it back into the river again. What would be the good of such labor? What would be the value of such investments? Would it not be better to purify the sources of the river, and to prevent pollution from draining into it? Christianity is always trying to *cure* evil. Secularism tries to *prevent* it. Which is the wiser method of progress?

G. W. FOOTE.

Acid Drops.

A deputation of German divines are in London. On Sunday they visited the King and presented him with a Bible. We should have thought he possessed one. But you never can tell.

King George has fixed Tuesday, March 21, for receiving the deputation in connection with the tercentenary of the Authorised Version of the Bible. The deputation primarily represents the Bible Society, but it is "intended to be representative of the religious and civic life of the country"—which is a very large order; far larger than is likely to be executed. We understand that the deputation will present "a specially prepared Bible" to the King. *How* prepared, we do not learn. Are all the loyal passages to be printed in capitals or italics? Such passages as "Fear God and honor the King." Or is the "sacred volume" to be got up, including the binding, in a style worthy of the King's acceptance? In any case, it will be a farcical performance. If that book is indeed the Word of God it should be presented to the King as plainly as possible. For what is a king more than any other man in comparison with the (real or supposed) creator and ruler of the universe? How that divine personage (if he exists) must smile at the antics of his poor little worshipers!

The King's Speech ended with the holy and soothing words, "I pray that Almighty God may bless your labors." Right on the heels of this, on a certain telegraph tape, came "Tweedledee, Faultless, Gal's Gossip," which is presumably racing news, though it "sounds like a great Amen."

"He wished them to remember," the Bishop of Southwell said, "the tremendous importance of continuing their influence over the children of the country." Quite so. Not their own children, but the children of the country—that is, other people's children. We quite understand. This is the everlasting trick of priestcraft. And it is the only interest that the clergy have in education.

Another thing the Bishop of Southwell said. "If the Church were to be disestablished and disendowed," he remarked, "they would find themselves in a position of extraordinary difficulty with regard to the support of the clergy." Of course they would. The Church couldn't pay

its way by itself. It sponges illimitably on the nation—and the dead.

Colonel Seely, M.P., is not exactly the kind of person one would expect to find orating on "Christian Unity." But truth is strange, as Byron said,—stranger than fiction. The right honorable gentleman assured his audience that "religion and philosophy were now hand-in-hand." "Now" is distinctly good. It means that religion and philosophy didn't use to be on such good terms with each other. What has brought them together? Has philosophy capitulated to religion, or religion to philosophy? Colonel Seely might tell us—if he knows.

The clericals are fighting hard against Sunday rivalry in the form of cinematograph shows. The most infamous profession on earth wants to put down the innocent amusements of the public on the day that soul-savers and gospel-grinders do the greater part of their own business. In full course the reactionary London County Council is of sympathy with them. "Birds of a feather"—but the proverb is somewhat musty.

The Carmarthenshire County Council had a warm discussion lately on the cinematograph shows at Llanelly. The Nonconformist churches (note this!) petitioned for the stoppage of Sunday performances. The police, however, reported that Llanelly was more orderly since the Sunday evening performances were given. But the Council decided to support the Nonconformist churches rather than the police, and the cinematograph shows were only granted six days' licences. This won't fill the churches. It will only fill the streets. Such is the beautiful, peaceable, and elevating influence of religion—even in the land of Lloyd George.

Reactionaries are trying to represent the Portuguese government as a set of brigands. Well, here is their latest act of brigandage. A commission appointed by them to make an inventory of the goods on board the royal yacht *Amelia* has reported its opinion that everything found there is the property of the dethroned King and his mother. These goods are therefore being forwarded to the runaway King in London. What a vile and mercenary set of wretches these men are, to be sure! What else could be expected of them, being mostly Freethinkers?

Dr. Salter, the well-known Socialist of Bermondsey, addressed a men's meeting at Bloomsbury Central Baptist Church on Sunday afternoon. Having described some of the sufferings of the poor, he asked "What is the remedy for all this?" Whereupon a gentleman in the audience (or was it congregation?) cried out, "Have faith in God and don't go to a doctor, sir; that is the remedy." Dr. Salter chaffed the gentleman, and hoped if he had the toothache he would never go to a dentist. And such chaff would have been all very well—in another building; for that was a consecrated place of worship, and to ridicule faith in God *there*, with the approval and applause of the assembly, shows what a hollow mockery Christianity has become.

The *Thunderer*, the first "Dreadnought" battleship built on the Thames, was launched on February 1. The lady who performed the "christening" was Mrs. Davidson, wife of the Archbishop of Canterbury. The Archbishop himself was present, and superintended the religious ceremonies which are thought appropriate to such occasions. His Grace appears to have had some searchings of heart about the business he was transacting, or he had been disturbed by unfriendly criticism, for he took the opportunity of telling an interviewer that he was there, not in the interest of war, but in the interest of peace. His opinion was that the more powerful battleships Great Britain had the less likely she was to be involved in war. We presume, therefore, that he would like to officiate every week at the launching of a new "Dreadnought." Nor should we mind it either, as it is difficult to conceive anything more calculated to destroy the little respect that is left for Christianity in the minds of thinking people.

Dr. Davidson is a *reductio ad absurdum* of Christianity. After nearly two thousand years of it, its highest dignitary in England, which boasts of being the most Christian country in the world, is paid £15,000 a year for preaching the gospel of "Blessed be ye poor" and "Woe unto you rich" and "Take no thought for the morrow." The same dignitary officiates at the launching of battleships after preaching "Resist not evil" and "If one smite thee on the one cheek turn unto him the other also." Could there be a more deadly, contradiction between precept and practice? There never was a viler imposture in the world

than this same Christianity. Lies and fraud have been the very breath of its life. And we say, without the slightest hesitation, that the Archbishop of Canterbury is—at least in our view—a far more noxious person than any criminal in the prisons of this country. We also regard him as far more contemptible.

What a roaring farce it is that a society which tolerates, and even honors, the Archbishop of Canterbury, is mad to catch "Peter the Painter."

A few days after his performance on the Thames-side the Archbishop of Canterbury presided at a meeting of the British Peace Council, with a number of Catholic, Anglican, and Nonconformist speakers supporting him—including Dr. Clifford, Monsignor Howlett, the Bishop of Neath, and the Rev. C. Silvester Horne, M.P. The famous Prof. Adolf Harnack, a world-renowned theologian, came over from Berlin to attend this meeting. We daresay they all enjoyed the joke.

Dr. Harnack seems to have made a very eloquent speech at that Peace Council meeting on Monday afternoon. Among the speakers who followed him was the Rev. Dr. Clifford, whose love of peace has to be tested, when some "Christian" interest arises to be fought for. He used to be in favor of Secular Education, but when it came to the critical point he turned out to be in favor of "Secular Education *plus* the Bible"—which is like teetotalism *plus* whisky.

Dr. Harnack told a *Daily News* interviewer that his "liberal" views of Christianity were gaining acceptance in Germany; which is probably a reverse statement of the real process. "But," he said, "I find that the extremists are not pleased with me. I am not destructive enough for them." Exactly so. Harnack himself is not everybody. We might almost say that he has had his day. Criticism is passing forward to far more decisive conquests. The historicity of Jesus is now in the crucible, and the result may be easily foreseen.

What the *Nottingham Daily Express* calls "a remarkable series of meetings" has been held in that city, at which some remarkable admissions were made by the Rev. W. H. Findlay, a Presbyterian minister who was present at the World Missionary Conference held last year in Edinburgh. Here is one of the reverend gentleman's admissions:—

"The churches at home were needing a message, Mr. Findlay asserted. Were they not all feeling that there was something amiss with the religious life of the times? Wistfully they were looking for some help from somewhere. They found that they were declining in numbers, and the only comfort they could take—and it was sorry comfort—was that the numbers of the members of other churches were declining also."

How very sad! And, alas, how very true! "But," said Mr. Findlay, "they still had God in their catechism and theology." Yes, but what is the use of him there? It is in the strenuous world of life that the Churches are now fighting their battle for existence; and, God or no God, it is obvious they are losing in the struggle.

Some of the clergy have been suggesting that the Higher Criticism is responsible for the emptying of the Churches. This does not commend itself, however, to Bishop Hamilton Baynes, who has been pointing out to the Nottingham clergy that "The clergy did not invent the Higher Criticism; it was there. They saw it on every hand, in various publications, magazines, and newspapers." Quite so. The clergy did not invent the Higher Criticism, and they cannot abolish it. Bishop Baynes admitted that it was "a terrible upset" to many a man to find that the Bible was not true in the absolute, as distinguished from the relative, sense of the word; but anything was better, and less dangerous, than burking the question. All this is sensible enough. But is the Bishop right in saying that the Higher Criticism is "restoring confidence in the Bible" and "restoring their faith to a much stronger and firmer state than it was before"? What the Higher Criticism is really doing is changing the Bible, even to educated Christians themselves, from a supernatural to a natural book; and how that can place the orthodox faith on a stronger and firmer basis is like the peace of God in this, that it passes all understanding.

Sir G. W. Macalpine, President of the Baptist Union, is not in love with the pious talk about the reconciliation of religion with science. "Our religion," he said the other day at Burnley, "was always being contaminated by science.....The sort of compromise that they as religionists had had with science for the last twenty-five years must be broken down.....They had been bound down too much by

Evolution, but Christianity was not a product of Evolution, and above all they must find space for Jesus Christ." We expected to hear this sort of thing sooner or later. There will be more of it.

Some very odd things appear in Year Books and Encyclopedias. Pears' Shilling Encyclopedia, for instance, states that "the direct founder of Secularism was George Holyoake, and it was through him that affirmation was legalised in place of oath." The first of these two statements contains a partial truth; the second contains very little. Holyoake helped indirectly to extend affirmation to witnesses, but it was Bradlaugh who personally introduced and carried the Oaths Act in parliament, under which affirmation is open in all cases in all courts instead of swearing. Holyoake lived so long that Christians were apt to think that he had done all that Secularists had ever done between them. But that was a mistake. Holyoake never really was a man of action, and no one was ever more a man of action than Bradlaugh.

Once in a while a preacher lets the cat out of the bag. Canon Scott-Holland did so in his farewell sermon at St. Paul's. He regretted, he said, that he had relied so much on his own poor efforts, instead of allowing God to do his own work. That is to say, the Canon confessed that he had hindered rather than facilitated the coming of the Divine kingdom. If that be so, the wisest policy would be to shut up all churches and chapels and give the clergy of all denominations their *conge*. God would then, if there be one, have his *innings*.

A Catholic priest was trying to explain to a man he was instructing in religion what was meant by the eternity of God. When the priest asked his pupil the catechetical question, What is meant when we call God eternal? the answer was this: "He came from nothing, and will end in nothing." Many a true jest is spoken seriously.

The same Catholic priest asked a young woman, "Why did God make you?" She answered, "To increase the population." Who could deny it?

Mr. Carnegie assures the world that "there is no limit to the ascent of man." This is reassuring. Every country in the world, no doubt, will have its Carnegie and its—Pittsburg. Everything will then be for the best in the best of all possible worlds.

We gather from a printed circular—which curiously bears no date or address—that the Presbyterian Church of England is sadly lacking in funds for its missionary work abroad, and chiefly in China. This circular contains a number of "disheartening announcements." There is a "financial crisis in the mission" at Amoy, and things threaten to go to the dogs for the want of £180. The want of £220 threatens the same catastrophe at Swatow. Similar news comes from Harkaland, Formosa, and Singapore. Letters are printed from missionaries, without identifying the writers. "The present situation," one says, "is in fact becoming intolerable." "The whole situation," another says, "is lamentable." "Unless we are adequately backed up by the Home Church," another says, "we need look for nothing but ignominious defeat out here." Evidently the great want is money to keep the Chinese converts going, especially those who think they have a job *for life* as native preachers. The Chinese themselves seem to contribute next to nothing to the cost of their own salvation. They are a business people, and know what is worth paying for.

Dr. Peter Fraser, a well-known and popular medical missionary under the Calvinistic Methodist Mission in Assam, has been served by Major Cole, district superintendent, with official notification of summary banishment from Lushai, British territory, without having been brought to trial,—and the matter has been laid before Lord Morley and Mr. Lloyd George. It appears that Dr. Fraser refused to sign an undertaking that was demanded of him by Major Cole, one clause of which bound him "not to interfere in any way whatsoever in Lushai complaints or disputes of any description." Now this is one of the strongest complaints against missionaries in China and other Eastern lands. They persist in interfering in local disputes, and try to secure special advantages for their converts in spite of the laws and customs of the land. This has caused more than half the trouble in China, and it seems to be at the bottom of this quarrel at Lushai.

In response to clergymen's protests the Philadelphia police have prohibited the production of Sarah Bernhardt's religious play *La Samaritaine*, with which she has been touring in

America. The United States is full of "freedom"—not like the "effete monarchies of Europe." But it has less of that article, in many respects, than we have in England. It is really governed by the police.

Mr. H. B. Simpson's official report on the Criminal Statistics was the theme of a leading article in the *Daily Chronicle* of February 3. It appears that indictable offences have increased since the close of the nineteenth century. What is the cause of this deplorable state of things? Our contemporary refers to some phenomena that *cannot* be the cause of it:—

"The cause cannot be an increasing pinch of poverty, for the movement has been the other way. It cannot be drink, for the drink bill has shown an equally marked decline. It cannot be only the decline of church attendance, for this is a movement which set in earlier. It cannot be the schools, for education has improved."

Mr. Simpson's explanation is that compassion for the criminal has been allowed to outrun indignation at the crime. "A community," he says, "that no longer resented crime, and had learned to feel nothing but compassion for the criminal, would in time inevitably find itself faced by a flood of criminals against which police and prison authorities would struggle in vain." There may be something in this, but we believe it is far from being all. Crime seems to keep pace with the growth of great cities, where all sorts of unnatural conditions of life obtain, and where the temptations to crime are constantly increasing.

Hector Macpherson is a good old orthodox Scotch name. We are not surprised, therefore, to see that the gentleman of that name who writes in *Reynolds'* has an exalted idea of the value of religion. No doubt he takes his dose of it twice a week (or is it every four hours?) on the blessed Sabbath. He talks like any Auld Kirk exhorter about "modern luxury and materialism,"—just as if these two things had any possible connection with each other. Fancy the Büchners, the Haeckels, and the Bradlaughs being the great representatives of "modern luxury"! It is enough to make a rhinoceros laugh. But not a good old orthodox Scotchman.

"We resemble Rome," Hector Macpherson says, "which began to degenerate just when the belief in the ancient religion began to fade." There's history for you! Sunday-school history. Scepticism only prevailed amongst the educated and thoughtful Romans, usually of the higher classes; superstition never ceased to prevail amongst the masses; in fact, Christianity came just in the nick of time to take advantage of the popular credulity. For the rest, if Knox and Luther are leaders of modern civilisation, and if there is "no security for civilisation apart from religion," it is enough to say that the "security" ought to be perfect after nearly two thousand years of Christianity. Yet it isn't so; and Hector Macpherson weeps in consequence.

Brigadier Slater, of the Salvation Army, has been telling his "remarkable life story" at Gillingham. According to the local *News* he was once a well-known lecturer for the Freethinkers, and was co-worker with some of the leaders of that school of thought. *When?* It is time that this man got somebody to introduce him to the truth. We remember his lies about the "conversion" of our dear old friend and colleague, Joseph Mazzini Wheeler. Perhaps, after all, it is too late for him to turn over a new leaf.

Rev. S. D. Scammell has been preaching at Sheerness on the Resurrection. The subject is a romance, and the reverend gentleman's treatment was romantic. His imagination was evidently much excited. For he related how he had been "instrumental in bringing about the conversion of an atheist named Envis, a predecessor of Charles Bradlaugh." Charles Bradlaugh has been dead twenty years, and he was fifty years in the field as a Freethought advocate. Mr. Scammell's feat, in converting a predecessor of Bradlaugh, must therefore have been performed a terribly long time ago. And who the deuce was "Envis"? We never heard the name before. We invite Mr. Scammell to explain.

For nonsense has the amplest privileges,
And more than all the strongest sense obliges,
That furnishes the schools with terms of art,
The mysteries of science to impart;
Supplies all seminaries with recruits
Of endless controversies and disputes;
For learned nonsense has a deeper sound
Than easy sense, and goes for more profound.

—Butler.

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

February 19, Manchester; 26, Birmingham.
 March 5, Liverpool; 19 and 26, Queen's Hall, London.
 April 2, Stratford Town Hall; April 9, Glasgow.

To Correspondents.

C. COHEN'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—February 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, Failsforth; 26, Queen's Hall. March 5, Queen's Hall; 12, West Ham; 19, Glasgow; 26, Stratford Town Hall. April 2, Manchester; 23, Liverpool.

ROBUCRUAN.—A reply to something that appeared in the *Freethinker* several weeks ago is not very apt to catch the reader's attention or sustain his interest. Besides, the article by Mr. Jack Binns was not contributed to our columns; we stated plainly that we reproduced it from the *New York Truthseeker*. Why seek to initiate such a one-sided discussion? for you must know that Mr. Binns is not likely to reply to you, or even to see your criticism. Why not try to answer one of our regular contributors, or a correspondent on this side of the Atlantic? In any case, you should recollect that the mere statement of your own opinions is not debating. We see very little else in your present letter—if you will allow us to say so.

F. MARSHALL.—We are unable to refer you to any English translation of the poem. The "old piece" of ours was a Dialogue between Michael and Satan, originally published in this journal, and reprinted in *Satires and Profanities*—now out of print.

E. B.—We must let the notice that appeared in our columns suffice; but we are glad to see your fine tribute in the cutting you send us from the local newspaper. Your statement is profoundly true that—"Commandments, sermons, wise maxims, and addresses are futile unless lofty characters make the intellectual inheritance of the race a living force." There is a great sermon of Newman's on that theme; of course, from a Christian point of view. We are glad to have your thanks for whatever you believe you have learnt from us.

J. E. STAPLETON.—Always pleased to hear from you, and especially to receive your "best wishes for the work you are doing, and the way in which you are doing it."

G. D.—We desired to say something about the treason trials and executions in Japan, but we could obtain no positive information, and the partisan statements that did duty for it in England were not very illuminating. We hate writing without knowledge; silence is better than that. The one thing clearly to be objected to was the secret trial. But plenty of such trials have occurred in Europe. It is to be wished that an authoritative statement of the facts could be published to the Western world. To your second question we answer "Yes."

W. H. MORRISH.—Of course we are not alone in having a bad cold, but a man in our position, who makes public engagements, has to explain why he does not keep them. We are sorry to hear that you have been one of the sufferers from this wretched winter, which has everything diabolical about it except warmth. Glad to know you are better now. Keep so, if you can. You are one of our few *old* friends; and *that* list can never be recruited.

THOMAS JONES.—Sir Robert Anderson has had one good trouncing in the *Freethinker* lately—administered by "Abracadabra." We can't give him (R. A.) any more space at present.

HORACE DAWSON.—See "Acid Drops" for the answer.

VICTOR W. KNIGHT.—Pleased to see it. Thanks. Reverend gentlemen so often suffer from swelled head. The malady is incident to their profession.

"NONCONFORMIST MINISTER" who writes to us from Dublin is warned that anonymous communications go into the wastebasket.

R. AXELBY.—"Comparisons are odious" must have been a proverb, for Shakespeare makes the worthy Dogberry say in his muddled manner, "Comparisons are odorous." See *Much Ado About Nothing*, Act iii., sc. v.

JOHN CRAWFORD.—Holoake's *Public Speaking and Debate* would be useful. By far the best book we ever saw on the subject was the late Sergeant Cox's *Writing, Reading, and Speaking*. Unfortunately, we believe, it has long been out of print; but you might find a second-hand copy.

J. PARTRIDGE.—Glad to hear Mr. Cohen had good meetings at Birmingham. We hope Councillor A. B. Moss will also have good meetings to-day at King's Hall. The local "saints" should give him the hearty welcome he deserves.

L. GENTLE.—Being sent as requested. The parson's letter you enclose is twaddle, as you say; it calls for no criticism; it is beneath criticism.

J. E. T.—Pleased to recognise the identity behind the initials.

PRESSMAN.—Glad to know your hearing us lecture at Liverpool led to your becoming a regular reader of the *Freethinker*, and that you "look forward to it now with great interest."

W. C. B.—The people at the address we gave buy from us, so we presumed they would sell to you. Perhaps there is a mistake somewhere. We note that you have just read *Bible Romances* and were sorry when you came to the last page. You wish the

Freethinker were as widely circulated as the religious papers you name. So do we. But it won't happen in our day. Our readers, however, can push our circulation forward little by little, if they only try.

A. H. D.—What you refer to is only a part of the reactionary press campaign against the Portuguese Republic. The whole of it is mercenary or fanatical; sometimes, perhaps, a mixture of both. Such campaigns are carefully organised. The safest plan is to trust nothing that is not signed. A pseudonym, of course, is not a signature.

CLARA GUNNING.—See paragraph in "Acid Drops."

G. BOWDLER.—Will deal with it next week.

ANTI-DEVIL-DODGER, who sends a cheque for £5 towards the President's Honorarium Fund, is a man well known throughout the English-speaking world. "As I am a business man," he says, "I do not wish my name to be published, because I am told that if I offend the bigots they will retaliate, not only by attempts to injure my business, but also to lie about me and defame my character when I am dead." What a religion Christianity is, when, after nineteen hundred years of it, a distinguished and honorable man has to dodge its "charity"!

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

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Sugar Plums.

South Lancashire friends will please note that Mr. Foote does not lecture at Manchester *to-day* (Feb. 12), but *next Sunday* (Feb. 19). Having postponed his Glasgow visit, Mr. Foote thought it advisable to postpone his Manchester visit too, and thus give himself time to deal with a rather obstinate cold. Fortunately the postponement in this case was only for a week. It was not made in time for definite announcement in last week's *Freethinker*. We hope, however, that the change has not caused inconvenience to distant "saints" who had arranged to visit Manchester *to-day* (Feb. 12) according to the original announcement.

We are glad to hear that Mrs. H. Bradlaugh Bonner had a very good audience at Queen's Hall on Sunday. There were a number of ladies in the meeting, and a lady (Miss Kough) occupied the chair. Mrs. Bonner's lecture, we are told, was full of interest and information, and very pleasingly delivered. The audience will be looking forward to hearing her again.

One Christian, at least, attended Mrs. Bonner's lecture. As she walked on to the platform an old gentleman stood up in the hall and offered a prayer for God's mercy, which he evidently thought was wanted, especially as he repeated the performance after the lecture. Fortunately it was a Free-thought audience, and the old gentleman found them indulgent to his weakness. And we suppose his prayer was answered. Anyhow, there was no earthquake or any other accident; so the old gentleman's "God" must have been in a tolerable good humor.

Mr. Cohen now occupies the Queen's Hall platform for two successive Sunday evenings. His subjects will be found on the last advertisement page of this week's *Freethinker*. As the subjects are consecutive as well as the dates, many "saints" will probably decide to hear both lectures. We hope, also, that they will do all they can to circulate the February announcements, which are small and neatly printed, and can be obtained (for judicious distribution) from Miss Vance, 2 Newcastle-street, E.C.

The annual meeting of the Secular Education League will be held on Tuesday evening, February 28, in the Conference Room of the National Liberal Club. After the routine business is transacted, there will be a public meeting (at 8) addressed by various speakers. We ask for the support of London Freethinkers on this occasion. Secular Education is a subject in which they should be supremely interested. Mr. Foote intends to be present at this meeting.

There was a good meeting at South Place Institute on Tuesday evening, January 31. It was the inaugural public

meeting of the new Rationalist Peace Society. Mr. J. M. Robertson, M.P., the Society's first President, occupied the chair and delivered a very able and interesting introductory speech; perhaps a little too long, and perhaps a little too discursive, but, for all that, a powerful and illuminating address—justifying the formation of a new Peace Society, and showing how it might make its way and achieve success without ill-will or hostility to other Peace Societies that insisted on associating, and even identifying, the cause of Peace with the cause of Christianity. Mr. Robertson was deservedly applauded when he sat down. Mrs. H. Bradlaugh Bonner, who was cordially greeted, moved the following resolution: "This meeting welcomes the formation of the Rationalist Peace Society; and believes that it will form a powerful addition to those bodies which are working for international agreement and the supersession of war as a means of settling international disputes." Mrs. Bonner's speech was an excellent one and was warmly cheered. The resolution was seconded by Mr. G. W. Foote, who had the reputation that might have been expected from such a meeting. Two other speakers supported the resolution; Mr. S. H. Swinny, editor of the *Positivist Review*, and Mr. J. F. Green, secretary of the International Peace and Arbitration Society, who both added to the interest of the evening. Mr. John Russell, M.A., whose name was on the advertised list of speakers, was unfortunately unable to be present. Mr. H. Salt, of the Humanitarian League, was called on by the Chairman, but he said that he had not come prepared to speak—which many regretted, for Mr. Salt is always well worth listening to, being sure to say something pregnant with good sense and good feeling. It remains to add that the resolution was carried without a single dissident, and that the meeting broke up in the best of spirits after a few valedictory words from the President.

We have pleasure in printing the following extract from the letter of the Rev. U. Dhammaloka, Tavoy Monastery, Rangoon, Burma, accompanying his subscription to the President's Honorarium Fund for 1911, which has already been acknowledged in our columns:—

"If I had the millions that are spent on Foreign Christian Missions, I would utilise it for the cause of Freethought and Humanity. I am glad to see in the *Freethinker* that Mr. G. W. Foote is once more engaged in the great work of fighting against the forces of darkness and Christian superstition. May he be long spared to carry on his noble mission."

Some of our newest readers may be astonished to see a "Rev." writing in this way. But the writer in this case is a Buddhist monk, and orthodox (primitive) Buddhism is Atheistic, being rather a philosophy than a religion, as that term is understood in the Western world. Our "Rev." friend is as Atheistic as we are and hates superstition as we do.

Several of our newer readers have expressed a wish to see our old article on "Ridicule," written more years than we care to count. To revise it would really mean to re-write it, which might, after all, not be an improvement. We therefore let the article appear again in this week's *Freethinker* just as it was first published.

The best advertising of the *Freethinker* is done by its friendly readers, whom we beg to do all that they can to promote its circulation during 1911. The great thing is to get the paper into fresh hands. This can be done in all sorts of ways, which a friendly reader who means business will soon find out for himself (or herself,—for we want the help of the ladies). It is curious what a lot of people there are who never heard of the *Freethinker*, or, if they did, have forgotten it. A good many of our most appreciative readers came across the paper at first quite accidentally. We have just received a letter from a young man at Dublin, who found a copy of the *Freethinker* for November 13, 1910, in his letter-box, and thinks it "splendid." He had been considering religious questions for himself, and was delighted to find in our pages the very reading that would help him towards right conclusions. Let our friendly readers scatter the seed of Freethought as persistently and widely as possible. They can do private missionary work just as well as we do it in public. We ask them to do it with new energy this year.

President's Honorarium Fund, 1911.

Fifth List of Subscriptions.

Previously acknowledged, £104 6s. 8d. Richard Johnson, £5; William Horrocks, £2; R. J. A., £1; Electron, 5s.; Frederick W. Walsh, 2s. 6d.; J. Samner, £1 1s.; F. J. Voisey, 10s.; A. S. Vickers, £1; J. E. Stapleton, 5s.; J. E. T., 5s.; N. S. Mundy (India), 10s.; Anti-Devil-Dodger, £5.

The Church in Politics—Americans, Beware!—II.

BY M. M. MANGASARIAN.

(Continued from p. 85.)

NOW we are in a position to appreciate the sudden and complete change of front on the part of the French clergy. From staunch imperialists they had been converted, judging by their professions, to the principles of the French Revolution. An era of peace and brotherhood seemed to open before that much troubled country. Priest and magistrate had both buried the hatchet; Church and school would now, after endless disputation, co-operate in the work of education, and the Vicar of Christ and the President of the Republic shall join hands in the service of the people. The new Republic promised all this. The skies were serene and clear, and the church bells rang in honor of the era that had just dawned.

Having inaugurated the Republic, the next business before the country was the election of a President. The Catholic Church, having disarmed all suspicion and given tangible proofs of its conversion to republicanism, succeeded in nominating its own candidate to the presidency. This was Louis Napoleon, the nephew of the great Napoleon. To elect its nominee, the Church engaged in a most active campaign; sermons were delivered in every church; a house to house canvass was undertaken, and even the confessional was utilised to secure votes for "the Star of France," as they called Napoleon.

On election day, each priest led his parishioners to the voting booth and saw that the ballots were properly deposited. The result was that Louis Napoleon was elected by 5,534,520 votes, out of a total of 7,246,252 votes cast. That is to say, he had a majority of nearly three millions.

What made Louis Napoleon a favorite with the Church? To answer that question we shall have to step on to the stage and peep behind the scenes. But to see what was transpiring behind the scenes in France we shall have to go to Rome.

About the time we are now speaking of, the Papal States in Italy were up in arms against the Pope, who at this time still enjoyed his temporal power. He was still both priest and king. He had his own soldiers, his own generals, his cannons, guns, and powder. He went to war; collected taxes, administered the courts, and possessed all the prerogatives of a secular sovereign. He was, of course, besides all this, also the Vicar of Christ on earth. Unfortunately, like any other sovereign of those days, the Pope oppressed his subjects, and it was to put an end to their grievances that the Italian States revolted, and made an attempt to establish a republic in Rome. No doubt our own example in this country, as well as that of the French, encouraged the Italians in their efforts to free themselves from oppression. The republican movement spread rapidly—like the rushing waters of a reservoir that had at last broken loose. The whole peninsula was athrill with new aspirations. The Italians remembered the days of their Pagan ancestors and took heart. The charmed and charming words, "Liberty! Constitution!" were upon every lip. Soon the heavens would beam with the radiant star of Garibaldi. The movement was so irresistible that the Pope, Pius IX., was compelled to make terms with the leaders. It was agreed that henceforth the country, instead of being governed exclusively by the clergy as heretofore, should be governed by two chambers, the members to one of which should be appointed by the Pope; the members to the other should be elected by the people. The two chambers, however, as was to be expected, could not get along together. The priests were not used to obeying; they were used to commanding. They obeyed only God. Moreover, the secular members undertook to interfere in Church matters, which the priests would not tolerate, although they themselves never refrained from interfering in secular matters.

The deliberations became anarchic in parliament. The priests declared they represented God, and could never be in the wrong. Whoever they may have meant by the word "God," he was invariably on the side of the priests. This, the other members declared, was not fair, as it tied up their hands and made them as helpless as the delegates to a Russian Douma are to-day. Things went from bad to worse; murders became daily occurrences. The Pope, fearing assassination, fled from Rome. His departure was hailed with joy. Rome unfurled the republican flag from the dome of St. Peter's. The Pope was a fugitive. Rome was free.

To crush this republican movement and restore the runaway Pope to his throne, the Church needed an agent. The agent must be strong enough to strangle the Italian Republic and to recover for the Pope his temporal power. Spain was too decrepit to be summoned to the task. Austria had already too much of Italy in her grip; the only nation that could disinterestedly fight for the Pope would be France.

Observe now the double rôle which the Church was playing: In France she was an ardent republican, in Italy she anathematised the Republic as a blasphemy against God. In France she was ringing bells in honor of the rights of man, in Rome she was firing shot and shell into the Italian republicans. In France the Republic was of divine origin, in Italy it was the work of the Devil. Let us state it frankly, the Church was a republican in France, not from love but from policy. History will confirm our statement.

But we have not yet answered why Louis Napoleon was such a favorite with the Church. On the eve of the elections in France, Napoleon, who was one of the candidates for the presidency, sent a letter to the *nuncio* of the Pope in Paris, in which he expressed his personal opinion, an opinion which at the time looked quite harmless, that, for the peace of Italy and the prestige of the Catholic world, the temporal power of the Pope should be maintained. Few people were reflective enough to suspect that there was in those words a pledge on the part of the candidate to employ, if elected to the presidency, the resources of France in the service of Rome.

Naturally enough, not long after his election, the Church called upon Napoleon to fulfil his promise. But to make a promise is very much easier than to fulfil it. How was the President going to persuade the French to make war upon a sister Republic? It was clearly to the interest of the French to have the republican form of government spread. But it was to the interest of the Church to overthrow the Italian Republic and restore the Pope to the Vatican. The French must, therefore, prefer the interest of the Pope to the interest of their own country. Americans, beware!

On the 30th of March, 1849, Louis Napoleon succeeded in getting a favorable vote from the assembly upon the following proposition:—

"If for the maintenance of the integrity of the Kingdom of Piedmont, and for the preservation of the interests and honor of France, the executive power shall deem it necessary for the enforcement of its negotiations to occupy temporarily any given point in Italy, the National Assembly shall lend him its cordial and effective support."

A short time after, Napoleon dispatched to Rome a force under the command of Oudinot, with secret instructions to reseal the Pope on his apostolic as well as temporal throne. On the 30th of April the French republican army opened fire on the Italian republicans defending Rome. The French were repulsed. When the news of the disaster to the French forces reached Paris it threw the country into a state of delirium. Scarcely anybody not in the conspiracy had suspected that the innocent-looking measure presented to the Assembly by the President of the Republic really authorised the declaration of a war against Italy; and no one so much as imagined that "a given point in Italy" meant Rome, or that "the interests and the honor of France" required the restoration of the principle of absolutism in Italy. But it was too late; the

Assembly had been caught in a trap. The disgrace and the defeat were matters of fact which could not be undone.

A moment ago I called attention to the double rôle of the Church. I now ask you to see how the Church was trying to drag the French nation into the same insincerity and duplicity. Think of a nation which had created the Revolution, which had overthrown the monarchy, and had inscribed upon its banner "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity"—think of such a nation going to war against one of its neighbors for following its example! The creators of liberty were urged to become its assassins. Into this ludicrous, absurd, nay, infamous rôle, was the French Republic dragged by Napoleon and the power that had made him President of the Republic. Americans, beware!

On the 29th of June the French forces made a second attack upon Rome, putting the republicans to rout and restoring the Pope to the Vatican, whence a short time before he had fled to a place of safety. The French Republic has now destroyed the Italian Republic. The words "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity" shall no longer be heard in Rome. The republican flag has been taken down from St. Peter's. The Pope is king again. Mazzini, Armellini, Saffi, Garibaldi, and their colleagues, become exiles. France refuses them an asylum. France, the country of the Revolution, of the rights of man, of the Republic with its glorious motto, "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity"—refuses to shelter the Italian republicans! It was to the interest of France to give these men the hand of fellowship; it would have been to the honor and glory of France to have opened her doors to these deliverers of an oppressed nation, but it was not to the interest of the Church, and the Church comes first; France must be sacrificed to Rome. Americans, beware!

The Italian patriots crossed the Channel and found in Protestant England the asylum which the country that had introduced the Republic into modern Europe denied them.

It was then that our great friend, George Jacob Holyoake, opened his heart and his home to the patriots of Italy. For many years and at frequent intervals both Mazzini and Garibaldi were his guests, and he helped to win for them the friendship of generous men who raised the funds to continue the rebellion, which was ultimately crowned with success.

"Pioneers! O, Pioneers!"

I cannot think of these brave men and their work without recalling Whitman's bugle call:—

"Pioneers! O, Pioneers!
Till with sound of trumpet,
Far, far off the daybreak call—hark, how loud and clear
I hear it wind,
Swift! to the head of the army!—swift! spring to your places,
Pioneers! O, Pioneers!"

But let us proceed:

One day, somewhere about 1852, the people of France, when they rose in the morning, found that their Republic had disappeared. Not only was the Italian Republic no more, but the French Republic had gone too. The same power that had driven the republicans out of Rome had driven them out of France. As if by a sponge, the free institutions of the country and the constitution were wiped out by one sweep of the hand. The first places which, after this *coup d'état*, Napoleon III. visited, were the churches. He walked up to the altar in each church which he visited on his triumphal journey through France, and knelt down for prayer and worship. How did the clergy receive him? What did they say to this betrayer of the nation, this traitor, who had violated his solemn oath? Let me reproduce the words of the oath which Napoleon took on the day of his inauguration as President of the Republic:—

"In the presence of God and before the people of France, I solemnly swear to remain faithful to the Democratic Republic, one and indivisible, and to fulfil all the duties which the Constitution imposes upon me."

What did the Church say to this man who had trampled the Constitution of the country under his feet, and had commanded French soldiers to fire upon

Italian republicans in the streets of Rome, and upon French republicans in the streets of Paris? History has preserved the exact words of bishops and cardinals addressed to Napoleon, the usurper: "You, sire, have re-established the principle of authority, as indispensable to the Church as it is to the State." Again: "How can we worthily express our gratitude to a sovereign who has done so much for religion?" and the Bishop of Grenoble proceeds to enumerate the services of Napoleon to the Church: The restoration of the Pantheon to the Church, which an impious government had converted to secular uses by dedicating it to the Atheist poets and philosophers of France; the creation of a national fund for the saying of mass for the indigent poor; the appointment of chaplains on all vessels flying the imperial flag; the suggestion of a pension for aged priests; the granting of perfect liberty of action to the ministers of the Church, which liberty of action the Church will use to confirm the principle of authority and to teach the nation submission to the government and its laws. "Behold," cries the bishop, after enumerating these benefits, "our reason for the gratitude we feel." The Cardinal of Bourges, the Bishops of Marseilles, of Frejus, of Aix, of Bordeaux, of Poitiers, and, in fact, of every important diocese in the country, in the same way praised Napoleon, the Emperor, and declared he was the special messenger of heaven and the savior of Christianity, "whom God will never forsake, because in the hour when God's Vicar on earth was in trouble he saved him from his enemies."

They called Napoleon a Constantine, a Charlemagne. And the same clergy who, a few years ago, had pronounced the words "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity" as the holiest in all the world were now busy erasing them from the public buildings and monuments of the country. If the Republic was after "God's own heart," if the rights of man were first proclaimed from Calvary, as the clergy declared during the Republic, why did they make almost a saint of the man who restored oppression and absolutism in France? Were they not sincere when they published in the papers that there were not in all France more loyal republicans than the Catholics? The interest of the Church required the overthrow of the French Republic, as it did of the Italian, and the interest of the Church is first. Already in France people were displaying banners on which were inscribed the words, "God save Rome and France." Rome first. Americans, beware!

On the 16th of October, Napoleon entered the Palace of the Tuileries as Emperor. The cheers and cries of the populace, congregated in the gardens and shouting "*Vive l'Empereur*," brought him out upon the balcony. He stood between King Jerome upon his left, and the Archbishop of Paris upon his right. On that same day Victor Hugo fled from Paris for his life. The Archbishop in the palace with Napoleon; Victor Hugo in exile! My countrymen, beware!

Under the Napoleonic regime the schools rapidly passed into the hands of the clergy. France had labored sincerely and made many sacrifices to reform the schools and to oust the priest—the priest who had declared that "the brains of young Frenchmen should be pinched, if necessary, to make them obedient to the authority of the Church." Michelet, the glorious Michelet, was deposed from his chair in the College of France and a clerical given his post. The same fate overtook Vacherot and Renan. No professors in the Sorbonne, or in any institution, who did not bow to the Pope and his creature on the throne of France, were permitted to teach. Secret orders and religious schools sprang up everywhere like mushrooms over-night. The emissaries and the missionaries of the faith became exceedingly busy in the acquisition of property. In a small town, suddenly, as it were, a few beggarly monks and nuns make their appearance; they have not where to lay their heads; the community has to provide them with the necessaries of life. A short after, this same religious colony is in possession of

the finest establishments in the town, with long bank accounts to their credit. Wealth flows into their coffers from rich widows and dying millionaires. Every faithful Catholic leaves his estate to the parish priest or to some religious order. Property accumulates by leaps and jumps. What happens in one town happens in every other; the country is overrun with the agents of a foreign power. The Church is making hay while the sun shines. As some of the principles of free government were still in force, even with Napoleon on the throne, these religious orders were asked to obey the law and secure a permit before pursuing their vocation. They answered that the Church was above the State, and that they must obey God rather than men. The Emperor advised them, from policy, at least, to apply for a licence, which would certainly be given to them, but it is of no use. "We are citizens of heaven" declared the monks and priests, "we do not obey laws, we make them." What! Shall the Bride of Christ wait upon the secular powers for permission to serve God? Abomination! The Church that can elect a president and afterwards elevate him to the throne, can afford to dispense with the laws as it did with the constitution. Under the Republic it was "Long live France," with the Catholics in power it is "Long live Rome and France."

Encouraged by the flatteries of the Church, Napoleon invited the Pope to Paris to place the crown upon his head, even as a former pope had crowned his uncle, the first Napoleon, in the church of Notre Dame. The Pope was beside himself with joy. The opportunity had come for the Vicar of Christ to ask for greater concessions from France—yes, from infidel France, which had converted the church of St. Genevieve into a Pantheon for Atheist poets and philosophers. He sent word to the Emperor that he would be glad to go to Paris to crown the faithful son of the Church, but—but, the other Catholic sovereigns would not like it. It would make them jealous. Could not, therefore, Napoleon come to Rome to be crowned in St. Peter's Cathedral? But the Emperor realised that if he went to Rome he would never be thought as big a man as the first Napoleon, who not only brought the Vicar of Christ to Paris, but who also took the crown from his hands and placed it himself upon his own head. He wrote an autograph letter, which he sent to the Pope by a clerical messenger of great influence, urging the Pope to come to Paris. Then the Pope threw aside the mask and opened his heart to the Emperor: Yes, I will come; you have done much for the Church, for our holy religion, but I will not come until you have altogether purged the country of every kind of heresy. How could the Emperor expect the Vicar of Christ to set his foot upon a soil where Protestant and Jew enjoyed equal freedom of worship with the Catholic—listen to that; how could the Pope visit a country that allowed freedom of thought and speech, and of the press; that allowed civil marriages; that did not legally compel everybody to go to Mass on Sundays; that did not punish with pains and penalties all those who departed from the Catholic faith? Let the Emperor exalt Catholicism over all the sects—make it the religion of the State, abolish civil marriages, refuse freedom of assembly to heretics; and then will the tiara of the Pope lend its *clat* to the crown of the Emperor. And this is the Church that shortly before had pledged its word of honor to the principles of the Republic—"Liberty, Equality, Fraternity!" See what happens to the Republic when the Catholics are in power. "The lamb and the lion shall lie down together." Yes; but what will happen to the lamb? The divine Church and a merely human Constitution can co-exist in the same country only on one condition—the "divine" shall swallow up the human. This is what has happened in Spain; this is what has happened in Italy; this is what happened in France under the Catholic regime, and this is, in our opinion, what will happen in America, should Rome ever come to be installed at the White House in Washington! "Ab,"

you say, "the Catholics will never do in America the things they they have done in Europe." No? Are there two kinds of Catholics? Is the Church of Rome divided? Is there any reason why they should hesitate to sacrifice America, if need be, to the "Glory of God," if they did not hesitate to sacrifice France? At any rate, all one can do is to give warning and to point the lesson of history. More than that no one can do at present, at least.

(To be continued.)

Everlasting Existence.

FREQUENTLY it is asserted Christ brought into this world a new Gospel of hope; the news of an eternal life. That it is not true the Galilean first preached this doctrine—it has been entertained by many who never heard his name—is no argument against the possibility of a future everlasting life being a fact. It is either true or false irrespective of who ever first broached the matter. Countless thousands will assert they know life is eternal and they find consolation and joy in the knowledge. In both cases it is probable they have deceived themselves. The truth is they have neither knowledge of nor desire a never ending life. Very few persons, it may be, could calmly contemplate the sudden ending of their existence at any given moment, but fewer, I believe, would view, with anything but feelings of horror, the prospect of a non-ceasing prolongation of the present life. Any other form of life than that which we know would not be an extension of this life, but an altogether different one. The identity would be different if the materials were the same. The life which is eternal must have practically the same characteristics at all stages of its career. Everyone now alive must have lived in some circumstances since the event of the primordial little globule of living matter from which he has descended. The reproduction of life, in all known conditions, is invariably by segregation from previously living matter. A living connection has existed between the highly civilised European of to-day and the lowly ascidian which spent its life on the shores of some forgotten coast, many millions of years since. Not one of these highly cultured men would claim that their individual life has obtained over this vast period of time because of this fact; and, if in the same way at our apparent death, we passed into another form of life, carrying no recognisable recollection or similarity to the present mode, all that can be counted as identity would be lost. In effect, one individual would die and another be born. Therefore, eternal life, unless it be prolongation of this, is meaningless; and it is incredible that any person should desire a perpetuity of the life we know. Its horrors would loom large did we know they would be unceasing. It is not the result of thought that men claim that the idea of a life for ever and ever is a message of hope and joy to them. They know, as a whole, they enjoy life because their minds are so constituted as to minimise the evils and magnify the joys that they have gone through. Therefore, they take it for granted that they would like its prolonged existence. In the same way men love their friends, and, after parting, really imagine they would enjoy a re-union. Hence, they argue, the prospect of meeting again in another world all the loved ones who have left this, is a supremely agreeable one. The meeting of one-time intimate friends, after a considerable absence, dispels this illusion. At such much anticipated happenings each is conscious that the other is vastly different to the friend he knew in the past. Each has changed, and the absence has emphasised the alterations. Instead of a time of profound peace and joy the meeting is a sore trial; each is trying, unsuccessfully, to be interested in the other, and each miserably fails. Relief comes when they are enabled to wish each other good-bye. Life-long friendships are only possible when intercourse has been so constant that changes in the individual are imperceptible, because so gradual. A breach in friendship generally arises from a change in one friend not congenial to the other. After a prolonged parting such changes have developed and intensified as to be positively distasteful to the one-time intimate friend. Similar changes will take place in the individual if he lives again after he has died. A reunion with the dead would be one of the most heart-breaking experiences ever conceived. After calm reflection it is impossible to feel any elation at the idea of again having intercourse with the departed. The joys of the past can only be remembered, not revived. The illusion of a future life is not even attractive.

Men of undoubted ability or genius are necessarily conscious of their superiority to the ordinary or normal man, and this sense of greater value has led some to postulate a future life, not for all life, nor for all human life, but for such

men as are of superlative value in this world. A pardonable vanity has caused them to argue that all the causes, through all the ages, which have resulted in the birth of a capable man could not be wasted at his death. Most, if not all, who have used this argument have been Deists, who have seen a divine purpose in the universe, and the argument is more forcible if Deity be granted. But it is not conclusive. It is futile for finite minds to dogmatise as to what an infinite mind can or would direct. Nevertheless, it appears reasonable to suppose a God who created a great man for a grave crisis could, and would, when another such crisis arose, create another man able to deal with it, and would not be under the necessity of employing ancient specimens of his handicraft. Should it be that a God rules this universe and supplies the necessary sentient beings for the successful carrying on of the desired work, it is obvious that for terrestrial matters he has to make new and special creations for each occasion. Paine, who used the argument for a special and selected eternal life, can give no particular guidance in any fight for human liberty that is now going on or which may hereafter take place. Some general principles may be gathered from his writings, but that guidance would be as available if he were as dead as nails or only seemingly defunct. A man who has died is as dead as dead can be as far as this world is concerned, and can only place the services of a living intellect at the disposal of the inhabitants of another sphere. The reasoning is reduced to this: God, who is capable of creating sufficient intelligence to carry out the work of this life, feels the need of making extraordinary provision for the next by saving the best for its service. The finite mind which can reason in this manner can have but a very poor opinion of the meagre abilities of the Infinite. The conception is childish, and even grotesque. Omniscience and omnipotence compelled to rely upon the continued existence of one of its creations! Granting even the very large assumption that a God, the creator and ruler of the universe, exists, the argument has not sufficient force to appeal even to a reflecting child.

The idea of eternal life is found associated generally with a belief in a deity. But the association is by no means essential. The Deist is not always a believer in a future state, and it is conceivable that the natural causes which eventuate in life here could prolong life hereafter without divine interference. But there is no evidence, or even a reasonable presumption, that life does not cease at apparent death. All the evidence and all the reasoning available point to death as the end of the individual. "The tidings of great joy" appear not to be in accordance with the facts, and, if true, not a matter of rejoicing.

W. J. LIVINGSTONE ANDERSON.

MOTHER'S RELIGION.

Another thing which the independent teacher does which is not "nice" is that he takes away the religion of our mothers. What about taking away the religion of heathen mothers? Why is it right to take away the religion of a Chinaman—a religion handed down to him by his mother—and wrong to disturb the religion of an American because it was his mother's religion? Did not Protestants take away from Catholics the religion of their mothers? Did not Catholics take away from the pagan Romans the religion of their mothers? Is it only taking away the religion of our mothers that is not "nice"?—*M. M. Mangasarian.*

It is opinion governs all mankind,
As wisely as the blind that leads the blind:
For as those surnames are esteemed the best
That signify in all things else the least,
So men pass fairest in the world's opinion
That have the least of truth and reason in 'em.

—Butler.

PLACING THE BLAME.

Deacon Skinner: "Waal, Silas, our church got struck by lightning last night, and we'll be forced to repair the steeple!"

Deacon Grinder: "Waal, then, by heifer, we'll take the cost out uv the parson's salary. I knew suthin' or other would happen after them free-and-easy sermons he's been preaching lately."

Grandma Jackson: "Does de Bible say dat dar will be no marryin' in heaven, pahson?"

Parson Johnson: "It surely does, sistah Jackson."

Grandma Jackson: "Den, parson, I must seriously doubt de authenticity of de Bible; fo' a fortune-teller done tole me on'y las' week dat I'd hab foah husbands. I'se on'y had free, so far, an' I suttinly don't see how I'se gwine t' gait de foah 'less I gaits him in heaven."

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, C. Cohen, "Christianity in its Cradle."

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Public (Minor) Hall, Canning Town): 7.30, Miss Kough, "Old Wines in New Bottles."

OUTDOOR.

EDMONTON BRANCH N. S. S. (The Green): 7, W. J. Ramsey, "Noah's Water Excursion."

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

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N. S. S. (King's Hall, Corporation-street): 7, A. B. Moss, "Christianity and Modern Thought." Preceded by a Dramatic Recital.

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Henry Major, B.A., B.Sc., "Some More Books: A Romantic Story."

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N. S. S. (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 7, C. Wilson, "The Evolution of Man."

MAESTEG BRANCH N. S. S. (Coegnant Library, Caerau): 6, T. Bennett, "Is it Reasonable to Believe in the Orthodox God?"

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

RHONDDA BRANCH N. S. S. (Parry's Temperance Bar, Tony-pandy): 3, E. H. Evans, "Christianity and Progress."

SOUTH SHIELDS BRANCH N. S. S. (Above Tram Hotel, Market-place): 7, Lectures and Conference.

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

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

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