

# THE Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

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PRICE TWOPENCE

*For there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave whither thou goest.*

—“ECCLESIASTES.”

## General Booth at Rome.

THE wheel has come full circle. Nearly two thousand years after the alleged birth of Christ one of the most characteristic products of Christianity has visited the City of the Cæsars. A recent headline in all the newspapers was “General Booth at Rome.” Was there ever a greater desecration? Even the Rome of the Papacy has hardly deserved this.

But before we pursue this topic we wish to say something about a matter which General Booth left behind him in England. We refer to the Salvation Army “Self-Denial Week.”

When this annual week's begging started it was a special effort on the part of the Salvationists themselves. Headquarters invented it as a device for extracting the last possible halfpenny from the poor rank and file. Some of them went without sugar for a week, some without coffee, some without tea, some without cocoa, some without butter, and some without soap. Some gave the “Army” the money they had saved for various garments, and “lasses” even went without their new Salvation bonnets. However mistaken these people were, one could but admire their enthusiasm and sincerity. But the Self-Denial Week soon changed its character. Contributors were sought from outside. Collecting-boxes were seen (and heard) at railway-stations, on tramcars, and at street corners. Finally the extreme measure of house-to-house solicitation was resorted to. Instead of “denying” themselves, Salvation officers, male and female, went round the town collecting the “self-denial” of their neighbors—or rather of the general British public.

How systematically this is done, and how indiscriminately, is obvious from the fact that a “Self-Denial Week” begging letter was left at our own residence, with a convenience for a donation, and an intimation that Sergt. Major So-and-So would call for an answer. The begging letter itself ran as follows:—

“101 Queen Victoria-street, London, E.C.

DEAR FRIEND,—

March, 1911.

God has mercifully spared me another year to carry on this glorious fight with sin, misery, and despair. During that time, thousands upon thousands have been assisted.

Though still suffering from my accident, I am more than ever determined to continue this blessed work, but cannot do so without money.

During Self-Denial Week I make a special appeal. Will you help me and thereby earn the blessing of God above, the thanks of the perishing below, and the gratitude of

Yours faithfully, WILLIAM BOOTH.”

This letter of William Booth's is full of bold assertion and pious impudence. It says that thousands upon thousands have been assisted during the past year. But where is the proof of this? No sensible person, at this time of day, would accept Salvation Army statements without corroboration. When the Suicide Bureau was started, more people were saved from committing suicide in one week than the total number of suicides for the whole preceding year.

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And there is another question to be asked. Is the whole of the Self-Denial Fund spent on social work? Is a half of it so spent? Is a quarter of it? Is not three-fourths of it, or more, spent on ordinary Salvation Army work? Is not a large part of it spent on ordinary Salvation Army work in foreign countries? Are not the public deceived, not by the express language, perhaps, but by the suggestion of this appeal?

General Booth claims that he is carrying on a “glorious fight” with sin, misery, and despair. He might leave other people to supply the adjectives. A part of his *glorious* fight consists in trading in the open market with “sweated” labor. He stands accused of this, not only by his victims, who are expected to regard him as their benefactor, but by responsible Trade Unions. He has been called upon by Trade Union Congresses to put an end to such sweating in the name of philanthropy. But he takes no notice of their protests, and they are too intimidated by the word “religion” to press the point home against him. So much for his shelters. And as for his “colonies” they are such monstrous failures that nothing but the glamor of that same “religion” could save him from open contempt and derision.

It is high time that somebody branded the Salvation Army as the greatest imposture of the age; and, as nobody else seems prepared to do it, we undertake the duty ourselves.

There is not the slightest proof that the Salvation Army exercises any appreciable influence on the character of the people of this country. Its claims are refuted by statistics at every turn. Even if General Booth's language in this Self-Denial letter were true, it would only be another demonstration of the falsity and uselessness of Christianity. Nearly two thousand years after the advent of the religion that was to save the world “the fight with sin, misery, and despair” is more necessary than ever. General Booth apparently stands between us and the fate of Sodom and Gomorrah. Surely we might have done as well as this, and perhaps much better, without Christianity at all.

General Booth's appeal is mechanical begging. He is not even in England during Self-Denial week. He is in Italy—travelling with his “suite.” Suffering from chronic swelled-head, he is obliged to go up and down on the earth (like Satan) and flatter himself that his empire is world-wide, and that if the Salvation Army is not a success anywhere it is a success everywhere.

Nearly two thousand years of Christianity! And the result is General Booth. Think of it. This narrow-minded, fanatical paritan, with the miserable outlook on life, and the old-fashioned, foolish theology, and the sort of brains for organising a public show or a public supply-store, goes off to represent Christianity at Rome, carrying with him “the blessing of God” which he dispenses to all who assist his projects, just like the bigger charlatan at the Vatican. This is our exchange for

“The glory that was Greece

And the grandeur that was Rome.”

Is it not enough to make the “shade” of Cæsar turn to that of Marcus Aurelius and ask what blight has fallen upon the world since they left it?

G. W. FOOTE.



### How Not to Do It.—III.

(Continued from p. 163.)

I PASS over with no more than a mere mention of the common confusion brought about by using "Materialism" in two distinct senses, without clearly distinguishing one from the other. In science, all that is involved in a materialistic theory is, as has already been pointed out, the belief that all natural phenomena are susceptible of an explanation in terms of mechanical causation, and in such a way that life and intelligence are mere links in the all-embracing sequence. But there is another and a quite distant meaning to the term. In morals we speak of an over-indulgence of material appetites (it would be easy to compose a lengthy catalogue of the ills resulting from an over-indulgence of "spiritual" appetites), we speak of a materialised people, or a materialised taste, and in each case the language is serviceable and defensible. Behind this division of tastes into "material" and "spiritual" there is a long, curious, and interesting history, into which I have now no time to enter. What I wish to point out is that, while a dislike to Materialism, in the sense of ethical Materialism, is evoked, this is utilised in discrediting scientific Materialism, solely because of the latter's hostility to Spiritualism. But between ethical and scientific Materialism there is really little or no connection in fact. The champion of scientific Materialism, as things go, is usually the last person in the world to indulge in an orgie of material dissipation. His life is often a long and thankless devotion to the least selfish of ideals. And, on the other hand, it is precisely those who, by temperament and conviction, are most avorable to a spiritualistic theory of things, who are most addicted to indulgence of "material" appetites.

A kindred fallacy meets us, not only in controversy of the more vulgar order, but may be met with in the writings of men of some scientific standing. In order to emphasise the limitations of science—and it is astonishing the pains some will take to stress a fact that scientific teachers are the first to proclaim—a writer, after dealing with gravitation or electricity, will assure his readers, "Of course, we have no knowledge of either gravitation or electricity in themselves," and then comes the religiously consoling conclusion that, as science asks us for a pure act of faith in believing in these things, religion is doing no more when asking us to believe in an unknown object of worship. Really, there is not the slightest analogy in the two cases. In the case of deity we are asked to believe in something the very existence of which is a pure assumption, and whose influence on phenomena is without the slightest proof. In the case of gravitation or electricity we are not asked to believe any more than our knowledge of things warrants us in believing.

The confusion in this case is a heritage from religious metaphysics. It assumes that science asks us to believe in something apart from the fact of gravitation in order to account for gravitative phenomena. But this is quite wrong. There is no gravitation apart from gravitative phenomena, any more than there is electricity apart from electrical phenomena. When I say I believe in the law of universal gravitation, I mean that, so far as my knowledge goes, all material bodies have an identical effect on each other, conditioned by mass and distance. Science means this, and only this. It does not ask us to believe in "gravitation in itself," because it knows nothing whatever of gravitation in itself. Belief is not really something different in kind to knowledge; the distinction between knowledge and belief is a quantitative one; and we are never asked, in scientific matters, to believe any more than our knowledge warrants. What has been said of gravitation and electricity applies all round. We first of all generalise the behavior of certain classes of phenomena—chemical, physical, biological, etc.—and, having summarised the results under the

names of chemical, physical, or biological laws, we sow the seeds of confusion by saying, "Of course, we know nothing of these things in themselves." The corrective to this kind of self-delusion is to abstract from any conception all that we actually mean, and then see what there is left to talk about. When we take away the observed notions of matter, what becomes of gravitation? When we take away the phenomena presented by living beings, what becomes of the laws of life? We know nothing of things in themselves, and we are not, therefore, called on to believe anything about these phantoms. The man who talks about electricity, gravitation, life, force, matter in themselves, is simply groping round in a metaphysical fog of his own devising. These things are all as they appear to us, and nothing else. "In themselves," to borrow a cant metaphysical phrase, they would not be electricity, gravitation, life, or force, and therefore the search for these things in themselves is sheer midsummer madness.

A long and instructive essay might be written on the confusion of thought, and therefore the obstructiveness of profitable thinking, resulting from this worship of "things in themselves." I go on, however, to note one or two other confusions and misunderstandings specially relating to Materialism. Mind, using the term in its widest and most inclusive sense, is to the Materialist a function of a special and exceedingly complex arrangement of material forces. He bases this conclusion upon a wide survey of the facts, and it is to be carefully borne in mind that there is not a single piece of positive evidence against it. Negative evidence, of an exceedingly inconclusive character, may be brought forward, but all positive evidence is on the side of the Materialist, and every advance in knowledge runs in the one direction. This is a fact of the position that needs to be carefully borne in mind if we are to have a right understanding of the question.

What is the position of the Materialist? Mind, he says, is a function of the central nervous system. Apart from the action of the nervous system we know nothing, nor can we even conceive anything, of mind or consciousness. Consciousness, indeed, is not coextensive with nervous action, but nervous action is coextensive with consciousness, and in such a manner that all scientific psychology takes the statement "No psychosis without neurosis" as an axiom. Looked at broadly, this is more than an axiom of physiological psychology; it is an expression in technical language of a commonplace of daily experience and of all scientific investigation. Scientists show us how a certain weight, quality, and arrangement of brain matter are indispensable to certain mental phenomena. Vary these, and the mental manifestations vary correspondingly. We are also shown how the correspondence has been gradually growing more complex; but, as correspondence, has been constant during the whole history of sentient existence. It has also taught us that certain forms of thinking are the function of certain areas of the brain. Common experience also tells us that mental phenomena are determined by feeding, by physical health, and by numerous other conditions. Accidents, alcohol, drugs, disease, all are familiar every-day agents in this matter. And in the famous case of an American railway worker, dealt with at length by Dr. Hollander in his *Mental Functions of the Brain*, we have as strong an illustration of this point as could be desired. A portion of the man's brain was literally carried away by an iron rod being driven through his skull. Nevertheless he lived for some years afterwards, and was able to follow his employment. But there was a marked change in the man. From being a trustworthy, mild-mannered man, he became untrustworthy, foul-mouthed, unsocial, and could no longer be placed in any position of responsibility. His fellow-workmen declared he was no longer the same man, and from a psychological point of view the statement expressed the exact truth.

Now how does the anti-Materialist meet this position? In various ways; but all of them are either irrelevant or demonstrably inconclusive. It is argued



that certain obscure or complex mental phenomena cannot be explained by nervous action. But a scientific theory must be judged, not by what it does not explain, but by what it does; or at most by whether, in the class of facts to which it is applicable, there are any in contradiction with it. Otherwise the argument that we cannot show how this or that mental result is produced by brain action is no more than an expression of the fact that our knowledge concerning the relations of brain action to thought is still inexact and imperfect. And no Materialist would ever dream of denying the truth of that statement. What he would say is that to prove his ignorance only proves his ignorance; it does not demonstrate any other person's knowledge.

Again, it is argued that mind, thought, consciousness, and nervous action, are quite distinct and incommensurable things. Mind, it is said, cannot be a function of nervous matter, because we cannot see why the latter should become translated into the former. Well, if one goes out to find, what we find will be, to some extent, determined by what we take to be the object of our search. And a great deal here is determined by what we understand by the word "function." The prime function of a muscle, to take a simple illustration, is contractility. The constituent parts of a muscle are cells and cell fibres. Looked at singly, these cells possess the normal initiability of cells in general. It is their combination, their organisation, their development of different qualities in the course of their growth or evolution of a muscle that supplies us with the function of contractility. The cells are indispensable to the existence of muscle, but it is the peculiar combination of peculiarly developed cells that gives us the phenomenon of muscular activity apart from what we look for muscular activity apart from this condition our search will be fruitless. If we try and separate the "function" from the physical movement of which it is the expression we are doomed to failure—relation of function to structure being simply the relation of dynamics to statics. If we ask why the molecular movements of certain cells should result in the flexing of a muscle, the answer is, that the one thing invariably accompanies the other, and that no further explanation is either possible or useful. Contractility is here the functional expression of a particular organic structure.

A function is, then, biologically, the activity of an organ. Whether it be a muscle and contractility, brain and thought, or organism and life, the truth is the same. We have the structure and we have the function. Life, thought, and contractility are functional products, and to seek a function apart from its organ, or to separate it from its organ, is a manifest absurdity. Naturally, too, when we analyse an organ into its constituent parts, or an organism into its separate organs, we fail to find all that appears as the functions of either organ or organism. For the functions here are not merely the expression of the physical or chemical constitution of the tissues, they are the expression of the combination of the parts.

The difficulty, then, of translating brain action into thought, is fundamentally no greater than that of translating the activity of any organ into its function. In any case, we can only show that, given certain organic conditions, a certain activity follows. There is really no question of "why"; it is, at most, a question of "how." In simple matters, the answer has already been supplied by science. In more complex matters, the answer is delayed solely on account of the complexity of the problem. But as no one assumes a certain "contractility" existing apart from the molecular activity of muscles, one seeks in vain for a valid reason for "thought" apart from its appropriate organ.

C. COHEN.

(To be continued.)

## The Church's Function.

THE Rev. Charles Brown, in his opening address as President of the National Council of Evangelical Free Churches, declared that the Free Churches "are raised up of God to minister to the spiritual needs of this nation." How he made so important a discovery he did not disclose; and yet he spoke with a degree of assurance which can only be justified by the possession of positive knowledge. Political and social clubs, theatres, and music-halls are exclusively human institutions; but the Free Churches are God's gifts to the British Empire to preserve it from destruction. But having made that high claim for the Free Churches, as distinguished, one would naturally infer, from Churches which are bound, Mr. Brown proceeded immediately to expatiate on facts which prove that his claim is false. He said:—

"I shall not be accused of pessimism when I say that the Churches, whether Established or Free, Sacerdotal or Evangelical, preachers of new theology or old, are not marching as a conquering army with the light of victory in their faces. With the vast growth of population, most of the great denominations are faced with a diminishing membership. Men seem to be increasingly absorbed in material interests and pursuits. The sermons which once attracted and moved men seem to produce no effect. They do not seem to be thinking about the things of which the preacher speaks. Religion is pushed into the background of their thoughts. Nearly every kind of religious belief seems to be in the melting-pot."

All that is perfectly true; but its effect is to show that God's chosen instruments are total failures, and this is tantamount to proving God's non-existence, or at least his non-connection with his so-called instruments. And the President adduced other evidences of a similar nature:—

"A part of the present truth, unwelcome but certain, seems to be that *the weekly day of rest is being filched away from us*. The altered regard in which this day is held, the enormous and swift increase in Sunday pleasures, excursions, amusements, secular concerts in theatres and halls, cinematograph shows, golfing, motor-ing, boating, pleasure parties, Sunday trading, and Sunday newspapers, is a sign of our times that demands our most serious thought and inquiry. Is it not clear that indifference to religious observances has proceeded *pari passu* with this increase?"

From the ecclesiastical point of view all those facts must appear very dreadful, although Mr. Brown apparently did not realise their true significance. He worked himself up to a climax thus:—

"I speak in no narrow or bitter spirit, but I declare my personal conviction that the National Sunday League is one of the greatest foes of the Church of Christ, and is exerting a most pernicious influence on the religious life of this nation.

Nobody can tell whither the present trend will lead us. May we not expect, unless strong action is taken, that within a few years all our theatres will be opened on Sundays, and all our playing fields alive with tennis and cricket and football? Why not? If golf on Sunday, why not football? If boating and motoring, why not horse-racing?"

Why not? Mr. Brown is quite right. Horse-racing is not one whit more secular than boating and motoring, nor does football surpass golfing in worldliness. All the things enumerated are equally legitimate or equally illegitimate on Sunday. On the assumption that Mr. Brown's claim for the Churches is true there is no escape from the conclusion that the National Sunday League and all the other institutions that injure the Churches are being raised up by the Devil; and this leader of the Free Churches has so low an estimate of the power of God that he is convinced that, in open competition, the Devil would surely win. Given fair play, the Devil and his instruments would be more than a match for God and his. What Mr. Brown says, in effect, is this: "If we allow his Satanic Majesty the free use of his instruments, he will certainly be victorious, and we shall lose our Sunday. Therefore, let us all unite, let even Anglicans and Roman Catholics be invited into the running, and let us do our utmost to



prevent a fair fight. Let us take repressive and prohibitive action, and stop all Sunday shows and public games and trading. And at the same time let us do what we can to lend greater charm and attractiveness to our Church life and services."

Now, the assumption that Mr. Brown's claim for the Church is valid must be abandoned, because no facts can be produced in support of it. And herein is the real explanation of the ever-diminishing Church membership and attendance. The trend of the age is in the direction of the gradual secularisation of the whole of life. It is a world-movement. Everywhere the great disillusionment is in full process. The scales of superstition are dropping out of people's eyes, and the truth is beginning to dawn upon them. The Churches are utterly powerless to prevent, or even to modify, the revolutionary action of the light of knowledge once it enters a man's reason. They never worked with greater devotion and zeal than they do now, and their machinery was never so perfect; but, despite all this, they are simultaneously losing power and numbers. "Let us cultivate greater spirituality in our members," say the leaders; "let us give ourselves more and more to prayer; let us make the spiritual welfare of our land and Empire, and of the world, an object of constant solicitude; and let us fervently believe that God has raised us up specially that we might achieve these ends." But it is in the reality of prayer, and spirituality, and spiritual welfare that men are losing faith. Boating and golfing are health-giving exercises, ministering to body and mind, while church and chapel-going is wearisome to the body and deadening to the mind. "We recognise," said Mr. Brown, "that a nation requires something more than political justice and social righteousness and a healthy material environment"; but we should like to know what that "something more" is. And why does the reverend gentleman qualify environment by "material," thus excluding "mental" environment, of which "political justice and social righteousness" are vital parts? He seems greatly to under-estimate the importance of environment, for he says: "While we will help to mend the environment of the man, even as our Lord fed the hungry and healed the sick, it is the man himself, in the character and soul of him, the man in his relation to God, upon whom we must concentrate our attention." Is he not aware that the man himself can only be got at through his environment? The man himself is just what heredity and environment have made him; and whatever change in his character is desired can only be effected by a change in his environment. To the fruit of heredity and environment the sole access is afforded through the latter. "The man in his relation to God" is a man of whom science is wholly ignorant; is, in fact, a pure invention of theology. This being so, the function of the Church, as delineated by the President of the Free Church Council, is a farce. Man's "spiritual welfare," as distinguished from his physical, social, and moral welfare, is a myth of the Churches. "Walking with God in holy communion" is an emotional delusion, and possible only to the possessors of certain beliefs. "Our churches should be pre-eminently places of worship," said Mr. Brown; "houses of prayer, pervaded by a spiritual atmosphere"; but what is meant by a "spiritual atmosphere"? It is an atmosphere which, as Professor James said, can be secured by means of "nitrous oxide and ether—especially nitrous oxide"—which, "when sufficiently diluted with air, stimulate the mystical consciousness in an extraordinary degree, and depth beyond depth of truth seems revealed to the inhaler"; and such an atmosphere, however produced, is favorable to the emotional orgies called worship and prayer. Mr. Philip Vivian aptly quotes Mr. Leuba's remark that when this wonder-working gas comes into general use as a material aid to worship, the new beatitude will be, "Blessed are the intoxicated, for to them the kingdom of spirits is revealed."

What the Churches offer to their devotees is an emotional stimulant, an ardent spiritual appetiser,

a strong intoxicant for the feelings; and what is called high spiritual experience closely resembles alcoholic intoxication. And it is well known that Christians often go on the spree for weeks and months together. They work up a revival every now and then, and a revival is nothing but a big religious carousal conducted on scientific lines. This was the kind of thing Paul recommended to the Ephesians (v. 18) when he said: "Be not drunken with wine, wherein is riot, but in spirit, speaking one to another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your hearts unto the Lord." Be drunken, says Paul, not with wine, but in spirit, and you can induce that condition by talking to yourselves, and singing and chanting all sorts of psalms and hymns and songs—a recommendation of which the Church has taken the fullest advantage. What are the annual meetings of the Free Church Council but religious revels at which emotionalism plays the most conspicuous part? Conventions for the deepening of the spiritual life, for quickening the sense of sin, for heating the missionary zeal, or ordinary revivals managed by professionals, what are they but so many occasions for whipping the nervous system into a state of unusual excitement? Such conferences and conventions and congresses are more numerous now than at any previous period; and the more numerous and frequent they become the more indispensable they will be. It is on these fits of intoxication that the Churches subsist now; and they are being steadily ruined by them at the same time, in the same way that a confirmed drunkard is being killed by alcohol.

It is in proportion as the true nature and function of the Christian Church become known that she is being deprived of her power and influence, and the number of her members decreases. She no longer counts in the life of the people. Her ministers are no longer accepted as authoritative teachers and reliable guides in morals. It is only one here and there who gains the public ear, and he does it more by his personality and brilliant gifts than by the message he delivers. The Age of Reason has not yet arrived, but she is on the wing.

J. T. LLOYD.

## The Apocalypse.

THE last book in the New Testament—the so-called "Revelation of John the Divine"—has been a source of more error and bewilderment to orthodox Christian believers than, perhaps, any other book in the Bible. The many attempts on the part of pious Christians to elucidate and identify the supposed prophetic events symbolised in the book have all been doomed to failure; and for the very good reason that, with one exception ("the number of the Beast"), there are no prophecies in the book at all. This remarkable book derives its name from the first word in its first chapter.

Rev. i. 1.—"Apocalypse of Jesus Christ, which God gave him, to show unto his servants the things which must shortly come to pass: and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John."

Thus we get the title "apocalypse," a Greek word signifying the uncovering or unveiling of events hidden in the womb of futurity; which word is translated "revelation."

The way in which this alleged revelation was given to men is, to say the least, extraordinary. First, "the Lord God" made the events known to an angel; next, Jesus Christ made them known to his servant John, not by telling him plainly what events were predestined to happen, but by means of a series of panoramic scenes shown to the latter in a vision. Why the Hebrew deity could not communicate directly with his servant John passes understanding; but, judging from a passage near the end of the book, it would seem that the Lord God had not taken



Jesus into his confidence after all. This passage reads:—

Rev. xxii. 6, 8.—“The Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, sent his angel to show unto his servants the things which must shortly come to pass.....and I John am he that heard and saw these things.”

According to this statement, it was the Lord God who sent the angel, not Jesus Christ; and this discrepancy at the very beginning of the book raises the question of the unity and authenticity of the Apocalypse as a whole. Upon these subjects there can be no possible doubt: the “Book of Revelation,” as we have it now, contains many additions and interpolations, inserted at an early period in the original Apocalypse. The first written or original document was a purely Jewish apocalypse, which now commences with chapter iv. To this were afterwards added several other apocalyptic scenes, also Jewish, by another hand. Finally, the composite work was taken up by a Jewish Christian, who prefixed the first three chapters, and after inserting a number of short interpolations throughout the Jewish portion, transformed the whole narrative (apparently) into a grand Christian Apocalypse. Moreover, the first three chapters are regarded by Vischer, Volter, Weyland, Pfeiderer, Holtzmann, and Schmidt, “as having been originally separate from the rest of the book, and as having been prefixed only after the Apocalypse had in other respects assumed its present form”—a view which, in all probability, is correct.

The original Apocalypse appears to have consisted of the following sections, when read connectedly in the order given: Rev. iv. 1—11; v. 1—8; vi. 1—17; vii. 1—8, 11—12; viii. 1—18; ix. 1—21; xi. 14—19; xiv. 1—7; xviii. 1—24; xix. 1, 3, 4; xiv. 14—20; xix. 5—9; xxi. 1—6; xxii. 1—15. The foregoing is a modification of Volter's theory of the origin of the Apocalypse. The Jewish additions to the original document comprise nearly all the remainder of the book following chapter iv. These include: the eating of the book, the Woman and child, the War in heaven, the great Dragon, the two Beasts, the Seven Vials or Bowls, the Harlot in scarlet, the Rider on a White horse, the Supper of the Birds, the Reign of the Saints for a thousand years, and the last Judgment from the Book of Life.

Besides prefixing the first three chapters, the Christian editor inserted the following interpolations in the original Apocalypse:—

Rev. v. 6.—“standing, as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God, sent forth into all the earth.”

Rev. vi. 16.—“and from the wrath of the Lamb.”

Rev. xi. 15.—“and of his Christ.”

Rev. xiv. 1.—“his name and.”

Rev. xiv. 4.—“and unto the Lamb.”

Rev. xviii. 20.—“and ye apostles.”

Rev. xxii. 1.—“and of the Lamb.”

Rev. xxii. 3.—“and of the Lamb.”

It may also be noted that the words “The third was is past” have fallen out from the end of Rev. xi. 19.

The Christian interpolations of the later Jewish additions to the Apocalypse comprise the whole of the following paragraphs: Rev. v. 9—14; vii. 9—10, 18—17; xxii. 16—21; in addition to which are also interpolations of a few words in the following passages:—Rev. xi. 8; xii. 10, 11, 17; xiii. 8; xiv. 12; xvi. 15; xvii. 6, 14; xix. 10, 13, 16; xx. 4, 6; xxi. 14, 23.

With regard to the first three chapters, I do not feel at all certain that they are Christian documents. In the Epistle to the seven churches (chaps. ii. and iii.) there is but one statement which may fairly be said to point to a community of Christians. This is:—

Rev. ii. 2.—“Thou didst try them which call themselves apostles, and they are not, and didst find them false.”

The word “apostle” simply means one sent on a mission. There were apostles among the orthodox Jews, as well as the doubtful twelve that are said to have been sent out to preach by Jesus Christ. Paul

called himself an apostle, when he set up preaching on his own account. There is not a word said about members of the church being saved by faith in Jesus Christ in any one of the seven epistles. In every case salvation is the reward of good works. Moreover, the “seven churches” to which the epistles were addressed may, as likely as not, have been seven branch societies of Essenes, the writer being the president of the central society, who praised or blamed according to the nature of the reports he had received from the society's apostles. This question I will, however, leave for the present.

The original Jewish Apocalypse, as we have it now, commences: “After these things I saw, and behold, a door opened in heaven,” etc. (Rev. iv. 1). This, of course, was not the beginning of the prophetic show: the opening paragraph must be looked for in the first chapter. From the latter I select the following as probably the original introductory paragraph:—

Rev. i. 4—6, 9—11.—“John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace to you and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come. Unto him that loveth us, and loosed us from our sin, to him be the glory and the dominion for ever and ever. Amen. I John, your brother and partaker with you in the tribulation and kingdom and patience, was in the isle that is called Patmos, and I heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet saying, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it to the seven churches.”

Rev. iv. 1—2.—“After these things I saw, and behold, a door opened in heaven, and the voice, which I first heard as of a trumpet speaking with me, was saying, Come up hither, and I will shew thee the things which must come to pass hereafter. Straightway I was in the Spirit: and behold, there was a throne set in heaven,” etc.

Here we have the voice “as of a trumpet” in the first paragraph, and the reference to it in the second, the two following in order. The great personage “which is, and which was, and which is to come” is “the Lord God, the Almighty” (Rev. i. 8, iv. 8, xi. 17, xxi. 6, xxii. 13).

Later Jewish additions to the original Apocalypse may, perhaps, be better understood by the following example:—

(1) Original paragraph: Rev. xxi. 1—6.

(2) Later addition: Rev. xxi. 9—27.

(3) Original paragraph: Rev. xxii. 1—6.

In No. 1 is described the New Jerusalem coming down from heaven, after which is the promise of “the fountain of the water of life.” No. 3 is a continuation of No. 1, and gives a description of the “river of the water of life,” and the other good things in store for the saints, etc. No. 2 contains a second account of the coming down of the New Jerusalem, and was obviously written in order to represent the new city as built and paved with gold and precious stones, and its gates made of gigantic pearls. Similarly, the section Rev. x. 1—11; xi. 1—13 is a later addition; Rev. xi. 14 follows naturally after ix. 21. The making of the Apocalypse is but another illustration of the Hebrew methods of writing and editing from the very earliest times. The Laws ascribed to Moses in the Old Testament include the earliest code of laws—“the Book of the Covenant”—and the later Deuteronomic Code, as well as the very late Priestly Code made after the Exile. The Book of Isaiah is made up of fragments written before, during, and after the Exile. The first three Gospels contain an older portion—that which is common to the three—and later additions found only in Matthew and Luke, the sources of which are unknown. Similarly, the Acts of the Apostles is a compilation made from older documents. The apocalypse of the Book of Daniel (chap. vii. to end of book) was all written by the same author, and is therefore an exception to the rule: but this is because the writer had to do with past history—the period from the time of Nebuchadrezzar to his own days.

As regards the date of the “Book of Revelation,” it is probable that the original Apocalypse was written before the breaking out of the war with the Romans, and the Jewish additions shortly after the fall and destruction of the holy city: the whole book



was probably completed a decade or so before the end of the first century. Hence, with the exception of some of the Pauline epistles, the Apocalypse appears to have been the only book of the New Testament written in the first century.

ABRACADABRA.

(To be continued.)

### Acid Drops.

Men of God know how to keep themselves before the public eye, as well as they understand the necessity of doing it in this age of advertisement. King George's Coronation takes place on June 22. All the previous day a series of intercession meetings will be held at Queen's Hall, London. These wrestling matches with the Lord will be led by such pious gladiators as the Bishops of London, Durham, Ripon, Derry, Liverpool, and probably others. "Intercession" suggests that these professional supplicators will entreat the Almighty to let the Coronation go through without a hitch. King Edward's coronation had to be postponed on account of his dangerous illness. The Bishops must see that a similar accident doesn't occur to King George. It is pretty certain that they will take the credit of the King's safety.

Coronation shows are all jingo affairs—and probably always will be. The National Peace Council has written to the Earl Marshal, the Duke of Norfolk, begging "respectfully to enquire whether and what consideration will be given to the representatives of science, art, industry, and commerce in the forthcoming Coronation pageant." The reply is that nothing can be done now, as the arrangements are all settled. Of course.

A pious contemporary—and not a Tory one, either—refers to the Rev. Dr. Jowett's fifteen years' ministry at Carr's-lane Chapel and "his powerful influence upon the civic and public life of Birmingham." His powerful influence hasn't saved Birmingham from falling completely under the yoke of the Chamberlain tyranny. Those who knew the liberty-loving Birmingham of thirty years ago hardly recognise it now. Nor do we remember that the Rev. Dr. Jowett ever raised a finger, or uttered a whisper, against the infamous persecution to which the local Secularists were subjected by the old School Board before 1902—a policy which was adopted and continued by the Town Council when the School Boards were abolished under Mr. Balfour's Education Act. Men like Dr. Jowett, and even Sir Oliver Lodge, are as useless to real freedom of thought and speech as any Anglican parson or Catholic priest.

A biography of Dr. Jowett has been hurried out. Of course it is flattering. Such things always are. With regard to the reverend gentleman's change of address from the capital of the English Midlands to the capital of the Eastern States of America, the biographer says that "he will go to New York to a work wider and more far-reaching in its possibilities than anything that could be offered to him in this country." But how is that? Are human "souls" of more value in New York than they are in Birmingham? And is not Dr. Jowett simply a soul-saver? That is his professional work. Anything else he does he can only do as an amateur. Prophecy, of course, is a risky business in a general way; but we venture to predict that America will be as much affected by Dr. Jowett's ministrations as an elephant would be by the attentions of a flea.

The National Sunday League must be on its guard. The President of the Free Church Council has solemnly declared that it is "one of the greatest foes of the Church of Christ, and is exerting a most pernicious influence on the religious life of the nation." From the Christian point of view we daresay this is quite correct. From any other point of view it is the cry of unsuccessful competition. The National Sunday League has grown up in face of bitter opposition from the Christian world, and without depending upon underhanded or dishonorable methods of getting financial support. It has aimed at giving the people a clean and healthy entertainment, or an opportunity of spending a few hours at the seaside or in the country, on the one day when it is really of use to them. If the Churches were really sincere in their cant about the moral welfare of the people, above all, if they really desired to breed a sober population, one would imagine they would be at least sympathetic towards the work of the N. S. L. For the influence of good music is at least as enduring as that of a sermon, while sea air and country breezes play no small part in giving tone even to the moral character of a man. Its unforgivable offence has

been that it has kept people away; and what shall it profit the parson though the whole world grow saner and sweeter if it comes not to church and chapel, and piously contributes to the collection-box?

The National Sunday League held its Annual Dinner at the Holborn Restaurant a few days ago after the Rev. C. Brown's denunciation, and Sir William Treloar, the president, took occasion to defend the League. He should have told the reverend gentleman to mind his own business, even on Sunday, and leave other people to mind theirs. Instead of doing that, he tried contradiction and argument in the following fashion:—

"Some of us try to practise the Christian religion if we do not preach it, and I do not think Mr. Brown is practising the Christian religion when he speaks of a body of respectable citizens in that way. I think any clergyman who can publicly brand the members of the National Sunday League as foes of Christ is speaking in a disorderly and improper manner, and if he had said it in my presence I should have called him to order. I hope he will come to see the error of his ways, and realise that when we want to see people enjoy themselves in a rational way on Sunday we are not foes of the Christian religion."

This is the language of a Christian and not the language of a Sunday Leaguer. Whether rational enjoyment on Sunday is, or is not, opposed to Christ, is a question with which members of the League, as such, have no sort of concern. We hope, too, that Sir W. Treloar does not imagine that the League members are all Christians; nor even the public who come to hear the Sunday concerts. On the whole, it is highly probable that Mr. Brown's business instincts are sounder than Sir W. Treloar's Christianity. The reverend gentleman is most likely to know what is beneficial and what is injurious to his own profession. For our part, we think it is quite natural that he should hate Sunday rivalry; and it is as clear as daylight that the people who are at a concert cannot be a church.

Sabbatarianism has had another field day at the recent meeting of the Council of the Metropolitan Hospital Sunday Fund. The business of the Council is simply to receive and allot the funds collected on Hospital Sunday; but some members of the Council think it is a part of their business to help the churches against opposition. Archdeacon Sinclair moved a resolution that hospitals should receive no money from Sunday cinematograph shows. If they did they would lose the contributions of some of the big churches. This was seconded by Lord Cheylesmore. But it was vigorously opposed by the Hon. Sidney Holland, chairman of the London Hospital, which, he said, had received from £1,200 to £1,400 a year from these shows. If the hospitals didn't get the money other charities would, and the cinematograph shows would still continue. He moved that the Council take no action in the matter. This was defeated by nineteen votes to ten. Eventually, however, it was decided to send the whole matter back to the general purposes committee for consideration. Could anything be meaner than the attitude of the Sabbatarians in this matter? They would rather starve the hospitals than let them receive money from other than church collections realised on Sundays. They cannot stop the cinematograph shows, but they can vent their spite on doctors, nurses, and the sick. Such is Christian charity.

Poor Jesus Christ! He is played out, even amongst his own lot. "If one smite thee on the one cheek," he taught, "turn unto him the other also." But the Rev. Frank Swainson looks upon that as terribly old-fashioned. Being struck in the face by a lusty and abusive beggar, he knocked him down, and detained him till the police were fetched. "Turn the other cheek," solemnly said the Master, "No other cheek for me," gaily says the Apostle.

Sir John Gorst talked great nonsense to the London Branch of the Church Socialist League at Sion College. He told his audience, according to the *Chronicle* report, that "Jesus Christ was a Socialist, and that the early history of the Christian Church revealed the existence of an ideal Socialist society." But as we read the New Testament there was nothing of the kind. The early Christian Church was not Socialistic, but Communistic, and we know how rapidly it came to grief. Instead of being an "ideal" society, we venture to say it was one of the very last that Sir John Gorst would ever care to live in. The teaching of Jesus Christ, also, was Communistic. His disciples were to share and share alike, and take no thought for the morrow—so that the sharing wouldn't take place frequently; in fact, the first sharing would probably be the last.

Rev. Humphry Farrar Hall, of Monmouth, left £11,472. Not so big a hump as some clerical camels have had, but still a lot too large to go through the needle's eye.



The "glorious free press" is the mercenary debaucher of the public mind. It does more evil, perhaps, than any other institution in the country. All it wants is readers with pence or halfpence to pay for a printed sheet of lying infallibility,—one infallible liar lying against another infallible liar, and each devoutly believed by his particular lot of dupes. To this is added the most vulgar sensationalism. The wielder of a flamboyant pen, even if he has a most limited stock of information, and little more real brains than a domestic rabbit, is always welcome in the newspapers and commands a great salary. One of these writers is Mr. Harold Begbie. This gentleman writes as freely as a parish pump pours out water when the handle is worked. Borrowing a phrase from Heine, one might call him a dictionary with a diarrhoea. His style is a verbal dysentery. One of his principal objects is to fill space. He uses several times as many words as are necessary, and multiplies adjectives as if he were emptying out a dictionary of synonyms. Editors regard this sort of thing as highly pleasing to the British public, as indeed it is. But in France, which the average Englishman, and especially the Nonconformist Englishman, still looks down upon, in spite of the *entente cordiale*, no journalist could write like that and live. For there is a literary tradition in France, which influences the general reader, and which even the commonest journalists have to respect.

Mr. Harold Begbie devotes his incontinent pen chiefly to morality and religion, which have a peculiar attraction for scribes of his character and calibre. But of the two he most affects religion, though he never quite neglects morality, and always manages to keep them more or less in association. He has just been gushing in a most shallow and ignorant way about India, which he seems to have been visiting lately like a good Britisher, with the highest admiration for everything belonging to his own white Christian people, and the utmost contempt for everything pertaining to the dusky Heathen. Amongst other things, he has made the discovery that woman counts for nothing in India; not so much, we suppose, as she counts outside a London public-house on a Saturday night, when she is trying to get her "old man" home at the risk of a broken nose or a pair of black eyes. If this peripatetic moralist would only spend a few months in learning something about Indian history, Indian literature, and Indian life, he might catch a glimpse of the abysmal depths of his present ignorance. He is probably too conceited ever to do that. To learn is so difficult, to chatter is so easy, to please the Christian public of England is such child's play. Mr. Begbie prefers to tell the said public—just as you stroke a cat or rub a dog's ears—that Christianity started civilisation when it took woman to be man's equal companion. Unfortunately, he doesn't say when this start took place. The fact is, it never took place. Principal Donaldson, who is a scholar as well as a clergyman, is far better informed on this subject than Mr. Begbie is, besides having a superior respect for truth and accuracy. And what does he say? "It is a prevalent opinion," he says, "that woman owes her present high position to Christianity, and the influences of the Teutonic mind. I used to believe this opinion, but in the first three centuries I have not been able to see that Christianity had any favorable effect on the position of women, but on the contrary, that it tended to lower their character and contract the range of their activity." Much more to the same effect may be seen in Principal Donaldson's famous article in the *Contemporary Review*. Not that such statements depend in any way on his authority, for everyone who has carefully studied the subject knows that they are historical commonplaces.

Let us now address a word to the editor of the *Daily Chronicle*. He is probably a much better informed man than Mr. Begbie. Perhaps he even smiles at this gentleman's fireworks. In that case he ought to be thoroughly ashamed of himself. A Piccadilly prostitute is not as bad as an editor who deliberately deceives his readers; in short, who prints lies for a living. When a poor girl wants bread there are not many ways open to her; when a man wants bread he can do many things—for instance, crack stones. It is an ill-paid but an honorable occupation.

The editor of the *Daily News* told the Free Church meeting at Portsmouth that the function of the press was to act as a searchlight of society. It should, he said, "be as wide as the sun," and "inasmuch as it excluded any phase of life from its survey it failed in its duty." These be charming sentiments, and one would like to see them in active operation in the *Daily News* office. We only instance our own particular concern, leaving it for others to look after theirs. And we would like the editor of the *Daily News* to inform us how much could the readers of his columns glean concerning

the activity of Freethought work in Great Britain? There is no denying this to be a large and important "phase of life," and its advocates are to be found in every rank of society. Yet a Roman Catholic journal does not more carefully exclude articles in favor of Protestantism than does the *Daily News* exclude news in favor of Freethought. A man who restricted his reading to the *Daily News* would discover that there were various forms of Christian belief in Great Britain; but the man who disbelieved in Christianity altogether would appear in its columns as a rather rare character, and one whose mental and moral sanity was open to question. In this respect the *Daily News* may not be worse than other papers, but then it claims to be so much better. It is bigoted in the name of toleration, unfair in the name of justice, partial in the name of fairplay. In a word, it is a Christian newspaper. When that is said, all is said.

During the course of the same meetings a paper on "Christianity and the Poor" was read by Mrs. Sidney Webb. We agree with her that "all mere relief of destitution was unsatisfactory; they must aim at prevention." But why on earth does she advocate the application of the "principles of Christianity" to the poor? There is not much prevention of poverty in the New Testament teaching of indiscriminate charity, nor in the promise "the poor ye have always with you." To do Christians justice, they have in this respect applied their principles more consistently than in any other direction. They have preached and practised charity, and have substantially held up the ideal of a multitude of paupers dependent upon the charity of a few. This is, indeed, one cause of our social ills. But any such thing as a reorganisation of society that should prevent social destitution is as far removed from Christianity as it is from the Newtonian theory of gravitation. It is a pity that workers like Mrs. Webb should waste their time in flattering a system and organisations that have found nothing repulsive in the existence of the gravest social evils, and have often had no small hand—even though it were done unconsciously—in their production.

The Bishop of London advises all who are sick to seek the "God-given physician and the God-given priest." Now we wonder, if the Bishop himself were ill, and he had to choose one of these two, which he would select? We have a very strong suspicion that it would not be the priest.

At the Portsmouth Free Church gatherings, when the time came for a lengthy period of prayer, the stewards promptly closed all the doors. We are not told whether this was to prevent people from coming in, or to keep those who were in from going out. Probably long experience had taught the stewards that the latter was the more likely event.

How they love one another! A Southsea parson, the Rev. E. B. Cornford, vicar of St. Matthew's, looks down with scorn and disgust on the Free Church delegates who have been "congressing" at Portsmouth. "Dissent," he says, "is the sewage in the river of God, and the Devil was the first Dissenter." He also calls them "false teachers and political desperadoes." Possibly they would call him worse if they dared.

Sir Oliver Lodge turns up with equal impartiality at Church Congresses and Free Church Congresses. At both he poses as a supporter of religion in the name of science. His real function seems, more and more, that of jackal to the beast of superstition.

One thing that Sir Oliver Lodge told the Free Church Congress is quite true. He said that the Christian conception of God "appeals to the man in the street, it appeals to the unlettered ignorant, it appeals to babes." This was noted by the great Erasmus in his *Praise of Folly*—a book which, if Sir Oliver Lodge hasn't read it already, we recommend to his attention, in the belief that it would do him good. "It is observable," Erasmus said, "that the Christian religion seems to have some relation to Folly and no alliance at all with Wisdom. Of the truth whereof, if you desire further proof than my bare word, you may please, first, to consider that children, women, old men, and fools, led as it were by a secret impulse of nature, are always most constant in repairing to church, and most zealous, devout, and attentive in the performance of the several parts of divine service." Sir Oliver Lodge was thus anticipated by some four hundred years. And it might be alleged that both of them were anticipated by St. Paul.

A *Daily News* special correspondent announces that "Mr. C. M. Alexander and Dr. Chapman, the American evangel-



ists, are going to set the English people singing the 'Glory Song' again." Why will people prophesy unless they know? How on earth can the English people sing the Glory Song again? They never sang it once yet.

Last week's *New Age* contained an article signed C. Stanhope on "Judges and the Administration of Justice." The writer holds some strong opinions on the subject, and does not hesitate to speak plainly of certain judges. He calls Mr. Justice Phillimore "one of the most conceited and incompetent judges on the bench." Mr. Justice Grantham, who presided at the trial of Mr. J. M. Robertson's libel action against the *Leeds Mercury* some years ago, is accused of rendering it "one of the most iniquitous mistrials even in the judicial history of that learned judge." All sorts of irrelevancies, including Free Love and the Boer War, were allowed to be dragged into the hearing of the case, merely in order to prejudice and confuse the jury; and the judge, in his summing up, treated Mr. Robertson—and practically invited the jury to treat him—as one whose Atheism and Radicalism very properly excluded him from all claim to justice and fair play. We said, for our part, at the time, that Mr. Robertson should never have expected anything else. We have always avoided the courts in defending ourselves against personal defamation. A prominent Atheist, for certain, would stand very little chance—virtually no chance at all—of getting justice at the hands of Christian bigots on the bench and in the jury-box—to say nothing of the license of speech and cross-examination that would surely be allowed to counsel on the (in all probability) orthodox defendant's side. The result of a libel action in such a case would only be to make a bad matter worse, and give greater circulation to the libels complained of. This is what we said then, and we understand that Mr. Robertson felt obliged to accept our view of the matter. The same view is expressed by the *New Age* writer. "As a general principle," he says, "the present writer would always take the responsibility of advising persons of unconventional views" not to avail themselves when they are libelled of the "protection of the Law Courts, because it will not be extended to them."

We learnt what was the justice that might be expected by Freethinkers if they had recourse to the Law Courts for any purpose whatever. When we applied in person before Mr. Baron Huddleston and Mr. Justice North for a writ of *certiorari* to remove our own "blasphemy" indictment from the Old Bailey to the Court of Queen's Bench, as it was then, both judges acted with the most reckless bigotry. Mr. Justice Huddleston held the *Freethinker* up in open court and declared that no man could doubt it was a blasphemous libel against our Blessed Lord and the Holy Scriptures. But that was not the point at issue there and then. That point was to be tried later on by the jury under the indictment. The point to be decided then was whether circumstances justified the removal of the trial from a common jury at the Old Bailey to a special jury in the Supreme Court. We prepared our case with much care, and were highly complimented upon it by several counsel in court, who said that we ought to have had the writ. Baron Huddleston, however, never took the slightest notice of our argument. All he did was to anticipate the verdict of the jury—which is one of the most impudent offences of which a judge can be guilty. Mr. Justice North fully agreed with his learned brother. And his conduct was the worse of the two—for he was going to preside at our trial at the Old Bailey a few days later. *And he knew it.*

When our trial arrived at the Old Bailey the bigotry and insolence of Mr. Justice North were so unrestrained that many newspapers were forced to protest against his conduct of the trial. The jury also could not agree upon a verdict, and were discharged. But the Sessions were prolonged into another week, in order that Mr. Justice North might have another try at getting us into his net, which he did—for the simple reason that as there was no case but ours left for trial it was not a difficult thing to secure a docile jury. Everybody in court noticed the difference between the first jury and the second, even after several members of the second had been challenged and thrown out.

Let no Freethinker—at least, no open, and especially no well-known Freethinker—ever be so foolish as to take his own reputation into a court of law, with a view to vindicating it against slander or libel. The good Christians in the court will knock his reputation down, kick it about, roll it in the mire, and let it go out again a hundred times more covered with dirty lies than it was before. He gives them their opportunity, and he is foolish to expect them not to make use of it. He is simply flying in the faces of history

and experience. "No justice to infidels" is an immemorial Christian cry. But they may change, you say? Yes, when the Ethiopian changes his skin and the leopard his spots.

The Protestants are highly indignant because the Catholic Church is strongly condemning mixed marriages as no marriages at all, and the children born of them as illegitimate. Even in the House of Lords the matter has given rise to hot speeches, one of them calling it "a most outrageous attack on the liberties" won by Protestantism several centuries ago. Now, in our opinion, this is an absurdity. Why should the State be troubled by the religious squabbles of rival Churches? The proper thing is for the State to provide the machinery for universal civil marriage, leaving the sects to worry each other as much as they please over their theological and metaphysical ideas of the marriage institution. People who like to invoke the blessing of gods and priests on their nuptials should be perfectly free to do so; but the civil ceremony should alone constitute marriage in the eye of the State.

The *Eton College Chronicle*, under the heading of "The Eton Mission," suggests that this effort to Christianise a bit of the metropolis might be transferred from Hackney Wick "to a poorer and less Christian part of East London." On the very same page is a record of some pursuits of the Christianisers of the East End Heathen, which shows how much the latter have to gain, from a moral point of view, in allowing themselves to be Christianised. Listen to this:—

"Hounds slipped away with another, and ran very fast towards Maidenhead, where three hares were on foot in a cabbage field, but they stuck to the hunted one and killed her in the Britwell Coverts after a nice hunt of 30 min."

*A nice hunt of thirty minutes!* A lot of men and dogs all after one poor little hare. Such is the "sport" the East End heathen may look forward to when they find Christ at the Eton Mission.

Rev. Newton H. Marshall says that his friends ask him, "Are you not looking forward to going to America? Are you not excited by the thought?" And yet, he says, if he were to ask them, "Are you not looking forward to the resurrection? Are you not excited by the thought of heaven?" they would receive the inquiry with coldness. Naturally. So, we believe, would Dr. Marshall himself. Would he go to America if he thought it would be likely to hasten his acquaintance with heaven or make him an eligible candidate for the resurrection? In that case he would decide that the Lord wished him to stay at home. People who do dwell overmuch on heaven are looked on even by their religious friends as cranks; and the only people who look forward to the resurrection are those who are saying good-bye to this world. Normal, healthy human nature thinks little of either, and it is only the elaborate humbug of current Christianity that pretends otherwise.

Dr. Forsyth says the Christian Church has not lost the democracy, for the simple reason that it has never had it. The Church is only now setting out to win. We think very little of the Church's chance of ultimate success; but Dr. Forsyth's deliverance is a straight blow from the shoulder at sentimentalists like Mr. R. J. Campbell and Mr. Keir Hardie. The Christian Church has always had an eye on the democracy; but it was at first for the purpose of keeping it in order, and latterly to cajoling it into rendering support to what in practice is one of the greatest obstacles to its development.

"If every workshop," the Rev. Dr. Downes says, "held workmen like Him who worked in the carpenter's shop at Nazareth the labor problem and all other workmen's problems would soon be solved." We agree with him. There would be no labor problem because there would be no labor. All the workmen would be out on the high road as tramps. But the rich women who ministered unto J. C. of their substance wouldn't be enough to go round the crowd.

Just as God sendeth his rain alike upon the just and the unjust so do burglars visit holy and profane places with impartiality. A syndicate of these enterprising practitioners broke into Walton's Café, South Shields, and also took the opportunity of visiting the new building next door belonging to the Young Men's Christian Association, where they appropriated the contents of the collection-box for Foreign Missions. This is inexpressibly sad. The money in that box was intended to keep poor heathen out of hades. Perhaps there was enough to pay for the salvation of one, who now, alas, must go to the everlasting bonfire. Let us weep



### Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, March 19, Queen's (Minor) Hall, Langham-place, London, W. : at 7.30, "Deity up to Date."

March 26, Queen's Hall, London.

April 2, Stratford Town Hall; April 9, Glasgow.

### To Correspondents.

C. COHEN'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—March 19, Stratford Town Hall.

J. T. LLOYD'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—March 19, Glasgow; 26, Stratford Town Hall. April 2, Manchester; 23, Liverpool.

GEORGE PAYNE.—Being overloaded with "Acid Drops" we have found a place for it in "Sugar Plums," where it happens to be just as appropriate. Thanks.

A. A.—We presume your initials are to be used, as before. Glad to have your "sincerest thanks for all" we "have done for Freethought." We hate being photographed, but we suppose we must submit—shortly.

J. PARTRIDGE.—Pleased to hear Mrs. Bonner had a good audience at Birmingham in spite of the heavy rain.

W. P. ADAMSON.—We quite agree with you. Lord Swaythling's will was full of the bitterest essence of religious bigotry, especially in relation to his daughters. We meant to write about it, but other matters interfered.

J. G. (Birmingham).—Pleased to have Mrs. Wright's able pamphlet, and may make an extract from it in our columns, if there is no objection. We don't understand how you failed to gain entrance to the ante-room at the Town Hall meeting. You should have asked to see Mr. Foote.

D. K. (Japan) writes: "I read the *Freethinker* with great satisfaction and appreciate the bold and fearless way in which the truth is always uttered."

J. C. WADE.—Such letters are full of encouragement. Money, even heaps of it, is as nothing to the knowledge that you and your friends so warmly acknowledge being indebted to us for "emancipation from the depths of superstition."

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

R. CHAPMAN.—See paragraph. Thanks.

W. C. B.—Glad you found Freethought works—Strauss's, Paine's, etc.—in the Free Library at Bootle, after being unable to find any such literature in Liverpool. Glad, also, that you were so delighted with your first Freethought lecture at Alexandra Hall on Sunday evening, March 5, and that your only regret is that you missed the afternoon lecture.

HARRY ORGAN.—Thanks for your cheering letter. Debates are few nowadays, as you remark. Too few. We should be glad to debate with the whole bench of bishops—each in his own diocese.

JAMES WHITE.—Your letter to hand; too late for this week; we will deal with it in our next.

H. SMALLWOOD.—Tuesday is too late for the issue then preparing. Kindly remember this.

T. O'NEILL.—Squire Vernon isn't worth returning to.

W. WILBER.—Had to shorten a bit, as it arrived on Tuesday. We liked Mrs. Leeson's honest and homely face. We offer Mr. Leeson our sympathy.

A. W. G.—No. Sorry, but can't be helped.

R. GARDINER.—You will find Strauss still valuable. His detailed destructive criticism has never been excelled, and never will be. But you must be sure to get the *Life of Christ* that was translated by George Eliot.

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

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

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

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

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

### Sugar Plums.

Mr. Foote has now to wind up the three-months course of Sunday evening lectures at the Queen's (Minor) Hall. His subject this evening (March 19) is the one that drew such a crowded audience at Liverpool recently, and so interested and entertained people who were packed something like herrings in a barrel: "Deity up to Date," with special (not exclusive) reference to Dr. Russel Wallace's new book, *The World of Life*, in which he puts forward another plea for God. There will be music, vocal and instrumental, for half-an-hour before the lecture and a dramatic reading by Mr. Foote.

The new series of Sunday evening Freethought lectures at the Stratford Town Hall—under the auspices of the Secular Society, Ltd., with the co-operation of the West Ham N. S. S. Branch—opens to-day (March 19). Mr. Cohen delivers the first lecture this time, and he is going to deal with "What the World Owes to Unbelief." The local "saints" should do their best to crowd the hall on this occasion, as well as on the two following Sunday evenings, when Mr. Lloyd and Mr. Foote occupy the platform.

Mr. Lloyd pays his spring visit to Glasgow to-day (March 19), lecturing twice (at 12 and 6.30) in the Secular Hall, Brunswick-street. Mr. Lloyd has made many good friends in Glasgow. No doubt he will have large meetings on this occasion.

Mr. A. B. Moss lectures twice (afternoon and evening) for the Liverpool Branch, at Alexandra Hall, to-day (March 19). We bespeak for him good audiences and a hearty welcome. Admission will be by ticket and silver collection as usual.

We hope Freethinkers are providing themselves with tickets for the Warschauer-Foote debate at Caxton Hall on the last two evenings in March. We should be sorry to see any who are anxious to hear this debate disappointed of obtaining a seat—and the way to secure a seat is to secure a ticket.

One reader informs us that Dr. Warschauer is a fine speaker and a keen debater. But this reader also informs us apparently for the consolation of Mr. Foote, whom he has never heard lecture, that the Freethought champion has truth on his side. This reader ought to be thanked for his kind consideration, but we don't think he need worry about Mr. Foote. The better speaker and debater Dr. Warschauer proves to be the better Mr. Foote will be pleased—as we are sure the audience will. A poor debate is nothing; a good debate is much. From what we know, and from what we hear, of Dr. Warschauer, we feel confident that this debate will be one worth remembering.

Our esteemed contributor, Mr. Joseph Bryce, gave an interesting and instructive address last Sunday to the South Shields Branch on the subject of the Heathen Chinese and his civilisation. The lecture was highly appreciated by a good audience.

On Thursday evening, February 16, the Independent Religious Society (Rationalist) of Chicago held its eleventh Annual Meeting and Banquet in the Congress Hotel—the finest hotel in the city. There was an attendance of over three hundred. The chairman reported that the Society, financially and numerically, was in a healthier condition than ever. He suggested that steps be immediately taken to build in Chicago a "Hall of Reason," which would be a perpetual monument to Mr. Mangasarian's work for Freethought in the fourth largest city in the world. When Mr. Mangasarian rose to address the meeting he was greeted with round after round of applause. The whole of the proceedings was characterised by a spirit of warmest enthusiasm.

Here is a pretty tag to a letter from a "saint" who sends a subscription to the President's Honorarium Fund:—"From five Welsh colliers, one of whom walked six miles to hear you speak in the Rhondda valley, and says he could easily have walked sixty coming homewards after you had distributed your medicine."

Our veteran South London friend, Mr. Side, whose great age, and a cold on top of it, kept him from the Annual Dinner in January—much to the regret of all who were accustomed to see him at this enjoyable function—has sent in his annual subscription to the President's Honorarium Fund, with a number of other subscriptions, which we have put together in the list of acknowledgments under the sub-heading of "The Side Family Subscription." We rather like the idea of associating whole families in such efforts. As we win ladies over we ought to have Freethought families



too; and one way of securing this is to get them all practically interested in the welfare of the movement in some way or other.

The late Sir Francis Galton, the author of *Hereditary Genius* and other Darwinian studies, left £45,000 for the establishment of a Chair of Eugenics in connection with the London University. This will be the first of the kind established in Europe. Dr. Galton was, of course, a Freethinker—though not a militant one. It was he who intervened so effectively in the old discussion between Tyndall, Thompson, and orthodox champions like the Rev. Dr. Littledale, on the subject of prayer. A proposal was made that a hospital experiment as to the actual value of prayer should be tried in London, but it was replied that this was approaching God in a spirit of intellectual pride, and no one could expect it to be a proper test. Dr. Galton then came forward with a study of prayer *in the past*, which God himself could not alter. It was the greatest stroke in the controversy.

We are delighted, though astonished, at a sensible decision of the Salford Board of Guardians. The Tramps Mission offered to supply the Workhouse Committee with a quantity of Bibles, Testaments, wall-cards, and a small library of Gospel literature "of a non-controversial character." The Committee recommended, and the Guardians agreed, that "the Mission should be thanked for the offer, but should be informed that, judging from past experience of the manner in which the books were received and treated by the tramps, the Guardians did not feel able to take advantage of the offer so kindly made and with such an excellent intention." Excellent! We might call it "the revolt of the tramps."

### President's Honorarium Fund, 1911.

#### Tenth List of Subscriptions.

Previously acknowledged, £150 10s. 2d. A. W. G., 1s.; D. K. (Japan), 10s.; A. A., 5s.; Five Welsh Colliers (per J. C. Wade), 5s.; Two Kilwinning Freethinkers, 5s.; John Foot, £1 1s.; Harry Organ, 1s.; F. Rich, 2s. 6d.

*The Side Family Subscription*:—R. H. Side, senr., £2; Bartrum Side, £1; E. D. Side, £2; Mrs. S. Side, 2s.; Mr. and Mrs. Wilkinson, 4s.; Mr. and Mrs. Knight, 4s.; Mr. and Mrs. A. C. Side, 4s.; Mr. and Mrs. R. H. Side, junr., 5s.; R. D. Side, 5s.; H. W. Side, 2s.; E. B. Side, 2s.; Beatrice Side, 2s.; Miss M. Side, 2s.; Robin Side, 2s.; total £6 14s.

### Shakespeare's Rationalism.—III.

BY M. M. MANGASARIAN.

(Concluded from p. 172.)

SHAKESPEARE in this play wields a mighty sword, flashing and scintillating as it cuts its way into the very motives which inspire hate in the breast of man. Why is Shylock so bitter against Antonio? "I hate him for he is a Christian," that seems to be his best reason.

See what his religion can do for him. In Lessing's *Nathan the Wise*, human nature triumphs over the religious; but in Shylock, the religious perversion seems to be too radical to be cured.

If the Jews of to-day exhibit all the virtues and humanities, they owe it, not to their Old Testament religion, but to the development of human nature in them which is older and, under favorable conditions, surer to triumph over all hindrances. Likewise, if the Christians of to-day are tolerant, neighborly, and progressive, they owe it to nature and environment, and not to their infallible religion.

When Jessica, Shylock's daughter, says, "Our house is hell," Shakespeare uses these words to give further proof that orthodoxy and virtue are two different things. Religion is not morality. There was Shylock, Antonio, Bassanio, Salarino, Salanio, and Lorenzo; they were all quite religious, but what had religion done for them? The last-mentioned Venetian, Lorenzo, stole not only Shylock's daughter, but also his property; while Bassanio not only consented to borrow money at his friend's risk, but he plainly intimates that he is after Portia's fortune. No doubt he was also charmed with her beauty. But listen to his confidential words to his friend, Antonio:—

"In Belmont is a lady richly left."

That is the first mention of Portia to Antonio,— "richly left,"—and he further tells his friend that

if he succeeds in winning Portia he will be in a position to repay all his indebtedness. Was he not something of an adventurer?

Again, when at the conclusion of the trial scene Antonio is asked for an expression of opinion, he says that one-half Shylock's fortune should go "unto the gentleman that lately stole his daughter." Shakespeare is sharp and caustic here. His words crack and smart like a whip,— "the gentleman that lately stole his daughter"—this same gentleman stole, also, Shylock's property, and Antonio approves of his theft and recommends him to the Venetian Senate to be honored by a further reward. This may be religious, but it is neither moral nor human. There is a further argument the poet uses, which, perhaps, is even more telling against the mischief for which religion is responsible.

Very often Shakespeare puts his boldest thoughts in the mouths of clowns or fools. He did this, perhaps, to defend himself against fanatical criticism. Children and fools are pardoned for speaking the truth. In *The Merchant of Venice* it is Launcelot, the simpleton, who is the mouthpiece of the poet. In a conversation with Jessica, the daughter of the Jew, who has been brought up under the influence of the Old Testament, Launcelot tells her that she cannot be saved because her father is a Jew. Shakespeare has made Launcelot the interpreter of the orthodoxy of his day. Just as the Jew has been taught by his Bible that the rest of the world should be exterminated, the Christian has been brought up to believe that none but a Christian should be saved. To Launcelot's remark Jessica answers that she is going to be saved through her Christian husband. Shakespeare is again very aggressive here. There is a rich humor in the answer of Jessica that though she is a Jew, she is going to be saved, not through the virtue of her husband who was a kidnapper and a robber, but because he possesses the right belief. Does not the idea strike us as absurd, viewed in the light which Shakespeare has thrown upon it? Yet that was the doctrine and the practice in Shakespeare's day. To this argument of the Jewess, the fool, Launcelot, makes reply that there are enough of Christians already, and that "this making of Christians will raise the price of hogs; if we grow all to be pork-eaters."

Jessica informs her husband what Launcelot has just told her—that there is no mercy in heaven because she is the daughter of a Jew. "You are not a good member of the commonwealth," she says to her husband, "for in converting Jews to Christians you raise the price of pork." It is impossible not to believe that Shakespeare is purposely exposing the terrible superstition of his day, and holding it up to the ridicule it deserves. All that the various and expensive missionary agencies accomplish by converting a man from one set of beliefs to another is worth no more than raising the price of pork. Ridicule in the hands of Shakespeare was as powerful a weapon as it was in that of Voltaire, and both these great minds have laughed many a superstition out of existence.

The baneful effect of religion in leading one party to resort to sophistry, and the other to become rooted in error, is again shown in the great trial scene. Both the Duke and Portia denounce the Jew as a stony adversary without a dram of mercy,—an unfeeling man, beyond all hope of being softened and mellowed by prayers or tears; all of which is true. But Shakespeare shows that this plea for mercy was in the nature of a subterfuge; for, if the Christian pleaders really believed in mercy, they would not have wreaked such crushing vengeance on the Jew by forcibly converting him out of one belief into another. To talk of mercy and to persecute is to seek in religion an ally for an evil cause. The sequence of the play proves that, when they had the opportunity, they showed Shylock no mercy at all.

Mercy is not natural to an infallible religion. To show mercy is to countenance heresy or the heretic. "Believe or be damned" is the teaching of both



Judaism and Christianity, and is, in fact, the spirit of every religion claiming infallibility and possessing the power to enforce it. Science, art, philosophy, literature, commerce, law, medicine, can be merciful, for they are in need of mercy themselves; but religion cannot be merciful, for it claims to be perfect and infallible!

Professor Hudson speaks of the Christian liberality of Antonio; but can a Christian afford to be liberal when to be liberal requires the admission of virtue in an infidel? If an infidel, or a non-Christian, can be virtuous, what is the value of a revealed religion? And has Christianity been liberal toward Paganism, or Buddhism, or Mohammedanism? Has it not called the founders of these faiths imposters? Did not Jesus call other teachers "robbers and thieves"? Has Christianity been liberal toward unbelievers? Has it not burned them at the stake? And if today she can no longer burn people here, does she not predict for them the torments of hell? Charity is a natural, not a religious, virtue, as may be gathered from the beautiful speech of Portia:—

"It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven  
Upon the place beneath; it is twice bless'd;  
It blesseth him that gives, and him that takes;  
'Tis mightiest in the mightiest; it becomes  
The throned monarch better than his crown.  
His sceptre shows the force of temporal power,  
The attribute to awe and majesty,  
Wherein doth sit the dread and fear of Kings;  
But mercy is above this sceptred sway."

This is natural, human, broad, sound, and sweet above and over and beyond all sectarian prejudice and hate.

When Portia proceeds, however, to say that this mercy is an attribute of God himself, she becomes theological, and we are inclined to asked, "Which God?" Is mercy the attribute of the Mohammedan Allah? Is it the attribute of the Jewish Jehovah? Is it the attribute of the Christian Christ, with his "depart ye cursed into everlasting fire"? Do they not all menace with eternal punishment their enemies? No; mercy is not an attribute of Gods; it is the attribute of those only who themselves stand in need of mercy from one another.

Let us return once more to Shylock. When he has his enemy Antonio in his clutches he looks transfigured. A pound of that merchant's flesh is his, "The court awards it, and the law doth give it." But is he really going to take it? If ever a man needed his religion to help him into good sense and justice, Shylock was the man. But, alas! Shylock's religion only made him whip out his knife and whet it on the leather of his shoe. What a criticism that is on the helplessness of religion to restrain or humanise a naturally vindictive man. Judaism and Christianity, as restraining influences, this play seems to say, are more ornamental than real. The real thing is nature. We repeat that had Shylock never gone to a synagogue in his life—never heard read to him from the word of God the injunction, "Destroy the heathen; thine eye shall have no pity upon them," and again: "Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate thee," he would have been a better neighbor and citizen. Reflect upon the words: "Thine eye shall have no pity upon them." It expressed the fear of religion lest human nature should interfere to make men brothers, hence the words: "Thine eye shall have no pity upon them." In Shylock, human nature was completely overpowered by his religious prejudices. "I have an oath in heaven," he cries. And again: "An oath, an oath," which means that it is a matter of religion with him,—it is of the sacredness of an oath that he should show no mercy to his fellowmen. "Shall I lay perjury upon my soul?" is another way of saying: "The salvation of my soul requires, or it is a matter of life and death with me, to hate my Christian neighbor and to thirst for his blood." Was it not appalling? Here we have a man who thinks that it is a religious duty that he should bite off or cut out with a knife his neighbor's flesh. The horror of it! Into what depths of degradation does not superstition drag a human being!

Shakespeare has put this cry of Shylock: "I have an oath in heaven," in the Jew's mouth to show what a fearful thing it is to profess such a religion. Again, when Shylock cries,—

"By my soul I swear  
There is no power in the tongue of man  
To alter me,"

he means to say that his hatred is God-inspired, and is a matter between his *soul* and his *God*. His hatred is as eternal as his religion, and both are *inspired*. Thus religion, instead of being a stone of Ajax, was a millstone around Shylock's neck, as it was around the neck of Antonio.

It will be objected to by some that the poet was simply reproducing an ancient tradition without any intention to enter into a religious argument such as we have read into his lines. Both Shylock and Antonio are unreal, it has been said, and to select them as religious types, and to draw from their behavior toward one another the conclusion that both Judaism and Christianity are failures as moral forces, is to do violence to Shakespeare's thought.

That the Shylock story is not history does not in the least affect the lesson we have drawn from the conduct of the principal actors in the drama. The "pound of flesh" episode is a fiction, but race prejudice is not; religious hatred is not; nor are intolerance and persecution, religion-inspired, a fiction. To both the Jew and the Christian, Shakespeare gives an opportunity to act, and their acts show what little good religion of one brand or of another has done for them. But they do more than this. They also show how these religions have perverted the instinct of humanity in them, and inflamed their worst passions.

Had Shakespeare believed that one sect produced better moral results than the other, or that by professing Christianity instead of Judaism, or Judaism instead of Christianity, one acquired virtues not otherwise attainable, he could not have helped bringing out so vital a truth in his treatment of the relation between Antonio and Shylock. Neither would he have described in such strong terms the complete bankruptcy of both Judaism and Christianity, when pitted against reality, did he not believe at heart that if the Christian forgot that the Jew was human, and that he, too, had "organs, dimensions, senses," etc., it was due to his religious training which had taught him to look upon the non-Christian as a heathen and a publican; and if the Jew would commit the most odious act in the world—tear or cut a pound of flesh from his brother's breast—alas, it was because he had been taught to pray, "Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate thee?"

Antonio's religion was Christianity; Shylock's, Judaism. The one could never have loved the other unless the other was converted to his own faith. But there is a religion which teaches the brotherhood of man, irrespective of race or creed—it is the *Religion of Humanity*.

### Mr. Edison's Religion.

(Reprinted from the New York "Truthseeker.")

THE *Columbian Magazine* begins the New Year, January, 1911, with an article entitled "Thomas A. Edison on Immortality," by Mr. Edison himself through Edward D. Marshall, who acts as scribe. The article is embellished with pictures not only of Mr. Edison (the frontispiece), but of Robert G. Ingersoll, Dr. William H. Thomson (Edison's critic), Charles Darwin, Ernst Haeckel, Herbert Spencer, and Thomas Henry Huxley. Although accused of Atheism, Mr. Edison reiterates his belief in a Supreme Intelligence, always, however, with the qualification that his "God" is not the God of the Churches or of the prevailing religion. And he does not believe in immortality, in heaven or hell. "Religions," he says for the *Columbian*, "are nothing but formalities and side issues," and he proceeds:—

"When the Churches learn to take this rational view of things, when they become true schools of ethics and stop teaching fables, they will be more effective than they are today. Now they are hampered by innumerable isms and formalities—a multitude of side issues which keep them from the proper emphasis of that one great truth, the



Golden Rule. There are men of vast ability connected with the Churches. If they would turn all that ability to teaching this one thing—the fact that honesty is best, that selfishness and lies of any sort must surely fail to produce happiness—they would accomplish actual things. Religious faiths and creeds have greatly hampered our development. They have absorbed and wasted some fine intellects. That creeds are getting to be less and less important to the average mind with every passing year is a good sign, I think, although I do not wish to talk about what is commonly called theology.

I seriously doubt if Christ, the greatest moral teacher of them all, laid claim to actual divinity. He, like the other mighty moral teachers, arrived at the conclusion summed up in the Commandments, but his conclusions were much clearer, finer than the others were, less hampered by extravagance and superstition. Indeed, I do not think that these things hampered Christ at all. I am not in the least convinced that he laid claim to any power to perform miracles. Such claims are not in keeping with the fine, strong, simple, truthful character of the great man, and the records which have come to us from those far times are probably imperfect and inaccurate. It may be that, in the past, the fables, misconceptions, and misstatements which have, from the beginning, infiltrated the creeds, have made it easier for folks to conform to the mighty moral laws which tend toward rightful life, and, therefore, toward true happiness; but if that ever was the case, I think it now has ceased to be."

With reference to the criticisms of Dr. Thomson and the ministers, he says:—

"The criticisms which have been hurled at me have not worried me. A man cannot control his beliefs. If he is honest in his frank expression of them, that is all that can in justice be required of him. Professor Thomson and a thousand others do not in the least agree with me. His criticism of me, as I read it, charged that because I doubted the soul's immortality, or 'personality,' as he called it, my mind must be abnormal, 'pathological,' in other words, diseased. I greatly admire Thomson. What he said about my mind did not disturb me. I try to say exactly what I honestly believe to be the truth, and more than that no man can do. I honestly believe that creedists have built up a mighty structure of inaccuracy, based, curiously, on those fundamental truths which I, with every honest man, must not alone admit but earnestly acclaim.

I have been working on the same lines for many years. I have tried to go as far as possible toward the bottom of each subject I have studied. I have not reached my conclusions through study of traditions; I have reached them through the study of hard fact. I cannot see that unproved theories or sentiment should be permitted to have influence in the building of conviction upon matters so important. Science proves its theories or it rejects them. I have never seen the slightest scientific proof of the religious theories of heaven and hell, of future life for individuals, or of a personal God. I earnestly believe that I am right; I cannot help believing as I do. But that does not imply that I am surely right. I work on certain lines—what might be called, perhaps, mechanical lines. A man who worked along another line might disagree with me with perfect honesty, and might be right. But I cannot accept as final any theory which is not provable. The theories of the theologians cannot be proved. Proof, proof! That is what I always have been after; that is what my mind requires before it can accept a theory as fact. Some things are provable, some things disprovable, some things are doubtful. All the problems which perplex us now will, soon or late, be solved, and solved beyond a question through scientific investigation. The thing which most impresses me about theology is that it does not seem to be investigating. It seems to be asserting, merely, without actual study.

It is a pity, too. There are great minds in the pulpits. If they would stop declaring the unprovable, and give their time to finding what is really Truth, the world would move more rapidly. Moral teaching is the thing we need most in this world, and many of these men could be great moral teachers if they would but give their whole time to it, and to scientific search for the rock-bottom truth, instead of wasting it upon expounding theories of theology which are not in the first place firmly based. What we need is search for fundamentals, not reiteration of traditions born in days when men knew even less than we do now.

We have merely scratched the surface of the store of knowledge which will come to us. I believe that we are now a-tremble on the verge of vast discoveries—discoveries so wondrously important that they will upset the present trend of human thought and start it along new lines completely."

He questions the existence of God and the soul in these words.

"God? God? A Supreme Being, sitting on a throne and commending human individuals to eternal peace or condemning them to everlasting punishment for what they have achieved or failed to do upon this earth? The thought to me seems as abhorrent as fallacious. Remember that each man, each woman, is made up of myriads of cells. They, not the men and women, are the individuals. We know very little of them, but are slowly learning something. The man is not the individual—the cell is. We are no more individuals than cities are. Cities will not go to heaven or hell, will they? A man's intelligence is the aggregate intelligence of the innumerable cells which form him—just as the intelligence of a community is the aggregate intelligence of the men and women who inhabit it. If you cut your hand, it bleeds. Then you lose cells, and that is quite as if a city lost inhabitants through some tremendous accident. Nations have been punished for the sins of individuals among their citizens, but no one who is honest thinks that has been just. The citizens who had not sinned were punished with the citizens who had. To send a human entity—a man-intelligence—to hell would be a similar injustice, if the thing were really conceivable, which, to me, it is not. I cannot imagine my own self as individual—I am a collection, just as a rock is a collection, though of another sort."

Asked if his belief in a Supreme Intelligence implied that he rejected Darwin and the theory of evolution, he said emphatically:—

"I accept Darwin and revere him as a mighty influence toward final truth. The accuracy of his theory of evolution has, I think, been perfectly established, but, perhaps, there may be more behind it all than even he quite realised. A coast's discoverer may be ignorant of mountain chains inland. I believe in evolution, absolutely, but in assisted evolution. We have studied many of the finer problems of mechanics very deeply in this laboratory. Some extremely clever men have helped me work, and all of us have watched with care and what we think is understanding, the work of all the other clever men who have been working elsewhere. We have tried to reduce the phenomena of nature down to mechanics, pure and simple, but have found a multitude of things of which mechanics, unassisted, seem to be incapable. The human ear, for instance, illustrates this fact, and the human ear is not more wonderful than the dog's ear, or any other ear; the eye is still more wonderful, if that is possible, but I have not investigated sight as I have the phenomena of hearing.

The story of evolution fails to explain these matters satisfactorily. I cannot feel convinced that evolution—the mere passage, by development, of organism from lower into higher forms—could have resulted in the marvellous perfection of such wondrous mechanisms as the ear and eye. Our phonographs are perfect as machines, and our phonograph is far, far from the almost perfection of the human ear and tongue. The more accurate we make our copy, the better are results, for we humans have originated very little, really.

Indeed, almost all our so-called great inventions are mere attempts to imitate the things which nature has already done, and done much better than the best of us can do. We have accomplished some small things toward utilising Nature's forces, but we have not, in the entire history of our endeavor, created one new force.

Evolution will not, to my mind, entirely explain the wondrous facts of Nature. With all our cleverness we cannot duplicate the marvels of even the lowest forms of life; and we are really clever. Therefore, I believe in a Supreme Intelligence, but in the gods of the religions—no!

We are clever and are moving forward slowly. The best part of progression is that part which finds the false and then discards it. We cannot get the truth without first throwing out the false. The decline of the religions is a part of that essential process.

We are machines. Machines are governed by unalterable laws. We know that. Therefore, we are governed by unalterable laws. But this worship of an individual God, all this creedism and theology, is wrong. There is no human individual except the cell, and of the cell we know but little. The brain is what loose thinkers have mistaken for the soul, and the brain is but an aggregate of cells. Accident can take from it, disease can sicken it and ruin it, surgery can take from it and add to it. It is a mere machine, the highest type of all machines, but still a mere machine.

The sooner this fact is accepted and used as the foundation of investigation, the sooner will the mysteries of the universe be solved, if ever, by mankind. Study, along the lines which the theologians have mapped, will never lead us to discovery of the fundamental facts of our existence. That goal must be attained by means of exact science, and can only be achieved by such means. The fact that man, for ages, has superstitiously believed in what he calls a God does not prove at all that his theory has been right. There



have been many gods—all makeshifts, born of inability to fathom the deep fundamental truth. There must be something at the bottom of existence, and man, in ignorance, being unable to discover what it is through reason, because his reason has been so imperfect, undeveloped, has used, instead, imagination, and created figments, of one kind or another, which, according to the country he was born in, the suggestions of his environment, satisfied him for the time being.

Not one of the gods of all the various theologies has ever really been proved. We accept no ordinary scientific fact without the final proof; why should we, then, be satisfied in this most mighty of all matters with a mere theory?

Nor have we been. We have devised a thousand theories, each man according to the dictates of his own imagination. Or, at least, each considerable group of men according to the dictates of their grouped imaginations.

But now we are becoming more inquisitive, far more insistent in our search for the real things. We do not now, as easily as our forefathers did, accept things upon faith. And our children will be still more sceptical of mere unproved assertion; their children more than they will be. Increasingly the race demands real accuracy, real thoroughness, the fundamental truth. When it demands it earnestly enough, works hard enough to get it, and has had a chance to give the matter time enough, then it will certainly discover it. We are ever searching for the Why, and, now and then, not entirely by accident, for the accidents are nearly always incidents of intelligent search, we gain some further inkling of it. Many things which would have readily passed muster in the past decade are now subjected to suspicious scrutiny—and that is a good thing. More theologians than one admit this, and finding that the old religions do not lead them to the fundamental truth, are going on beyond, searching, searching, searching for the ultimate. The highest type of mind, when devoted to the moral leadership of other people, must inevitably be willing to cast aside traditions as they are disproved, accept new facts as they may be discovered."

Mr. Marshall inquired whether "the best in human happiness" might not be involved in the destruction of religious beliefs; to which Mr. Edison replied:—

"Destruction of false theories will not decrease the sum of human happiness in future, any more than it has in the past. I think modern man demands things more substantial than mere theories. The days of miracles have passed. I do not believe, of course, that there was ever any day of actual miracles. I cannot understand that there were any miracles at all. My guide must be my reason, and at thought of miracles my reason is rebellious. Personally, I do not believe that Christ laid claim to doing miracles, or asserted that he had miraculous power. He was too wise a man to credit miracles, too good a man to claim things which were not precisely true."

There was a return to the subject of immortality, when he was asked if that doctrine formed any part of his philosophy:—

"No; not immortality as spoken in the theologies. Life goes on endlessly, but no more in human beings than in other animals, or, for that matter, than in vegetables. Life, collectively, must be immortal; human beings, individually, cannot be, as I see it, for they are not the individuals—they are mere aggregates of cells.

Spirit? There is no such thing as spirit unless mind is spirit, and mind is merely the manifestation of the brain-machine's activities.

There are many things remaining for humanity to learn—many mysteries unsolved; but all are manifestations of the natural law. There is no supernatural. We are continually learning new things. There are powers within us which have not yet been developed and they will develop. We shall learn things of ourselves, which will be full of wonders, but none of them will be beyond the natural. We are developing new abilities, developing new senses. Animals have some which we have not, because the emergencies of their environment have demanded them, while ours have not. We have some which animals have not and shall have more because our mode of life is changing and will make more necessary. I will not prophesy except along the lines of purely rational and natural development, but these are wonderful enough."

Can sins of moment claim the rod  
Of everlasting fires,  
And that offend great Nature's God  
Which Nature's self inspires? —Pope.

"Fitz-Cooper is a close-fisted landlord." "Close-fisted? If he owned a haunted house he would get a spiritual medium to collect the rent from the ghost."

## The Results of Revivalism.

WHAT are we to expect, after all, as the result of the three weeks' campaign, when the last cheque has been handed to the revivalists' business manager, and the chastened Toronto church workers, having divided the lists of penitents among their churches, find that nine-tenths of them are veterans at the penitents' rôle, and add nothing to the paying strength of any church?

Why is it, if these repeated revivals have any good effect, that Toronto is so full of vice that policemen are continually busy censoring plays and play-bills and raiding drinking and gambling-dives and houses of worse reputation? How can we prove that these revivals have any good effect whatever?

While the revival is going on the streets are just as full of pedestrians, workmen, or roysterers, as at other times; drunks are as numerous in the police-court; and theatres and saloons, dens, dives, and bucket-shops go on just as usual, most of the frequenters being probably unaware that the revival is going on, or jeering at it when it is mentioned. The only noticeable effect is the slight addition to street crowds at closing time.

We conclude that the bulk of the revivalists' auditors are only ordinary churchgoers; and it is perhaps something to their credit that they know they need salvation as much as their pagan neighbors, and are willing to plank down \$35,000 for Chapman and Alexander to try to save them.

As a matter of fact, the revivalist comes and goes, he is listened to by the same excitable band which attends all such events, he may induce a few hundred epileptics to "accept Christ," and so on, but he has no message that can appeal to the heart or mind of a rational man or woman, and not even the faintest idea of anything that would tend to the moral or material welfare or uplifting of the people.

But there are two very definite and well-known results, for which the revivalist takes no credit, but which invariably follow the excitement he induces. The one is provided for by maternity hospitals, the other by lunatic asylums. Alienists well understand the connection of these two effects with religion, and here is a despatch just to hand with an instance:—

"Richmond, Ind., Jan. 4, 1910.—Afflicted with religious mania, said to be the result of too close attention at revival services and prayer meetings, four of the six members of the family of John McCormick, Delaware Co., have been placed under surveillance. A lunacy commission has pronounced Miss Mary McCormick insane. The mother and three adult daughters are afflicted."

These results were noted on a large scale after the last great revival in Wales under Roberts, Roberts himself being one of the victims of lunacy. At the present time, not only are our asylums all overcrowded, but our gaols are in a more crowded condition, because insane criminals who cannot be squeezed into the asylums are sent there for safe keeping.

—*Secular Thought* (Toronto).

## PROGRESS OF CREMATION.

At the annual meeting of the Cremation Society of England, in London on Friday, March 11, the President, Sir Charles Cameron, said that the number of cremations in England and Wales during 1910 was 840, or 15 less than in 1909.

The prejudice with which the practice had to contend for many years had practically disappeared. Even the Vatican was reported to be modifying its unfriendly attitude towards the practice. In Germany last year the cremations included no fewer than 445 Roman Catholics. The Germans were a more sentimental people than the English, but in Germany (notwithstanding that in Prussia and Bavaria cremation had not yet been legalised) the reform was making immense strides.

## Obituary.

It is with deep regret that I have to record the death of Mary Ellen Leeson. She, with her beloved husband, who is happily still with us, was one of the oldest members of the Leicester Secular Society. She was heavily afflicted the last few months of her life, but bore it with true stoical fortitude. Her family of grown-up daughters and sons are all Freethinkers of sterling integrity. She was a firm and consistent believer in the principles of Secularism, and proved by her life and work that these are capable of producing what she was herself—a faithful and an affectionate wife, a good and loving mother, a kind and helpful neighbor, a dear and loving friend. She was laid to rest on Tuesday, March 7, in the presence of a large company of relatives and friends. The service, which was a purely Secular one, was conducted by the undersigned, who for many years had enjoyed an unclouded friendship with the deceased.—Wm. Wilber,



**SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.**

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

**LONDON.****INDOOR**

QUEEN'S (MINOR) HALL (Langham-place, W.): 7.30, G. W. Foote, "Deity up to Date."

STRATFORD TOWN HALL: 7.30, C. Cohen, "What the World Owes to Unbelief."

**OUTDOOR.**

EDMONTON BRANCH N. S. S. (The Green): 7, W. Davidson, "God's Bet."

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

**COUNTRY.****INDOOR.**

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): J. T. Lloyd, 12 noon, "Christian Falsification of History"; 6.30, "Intolerance, a Christian Virtue."

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): Dr. Rudolphe Broda (of Paris), "Results of Secular Moral Instruction in France."

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N. S. S. (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): A. B. Moss, 3, "The Philosophy of Life in the Twentieth Century"; 7, "Christianity and Modern Thought."

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, John Scott, "Is Gambling Wicked? The Doctrine of Chance." Blackboard illustrations.

NEWCASTLE BRANCH N. S. S. (Wilson's Café, Clayton-street): 7.30, General Meeting.

RHONDDA BRANCH N. S. S. (Parry's Temperance Bar, Tony-pandy): 3, E. H. Evans, "Snatches from Freethought Poetry."

SOUTH SHIELDS BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Hall, Second Floor): 6.45, Music; 7, Readings.

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Secretary—MISS E. M. VANCE.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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