

THE Freethinker

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PRICE TWOPENCE

*If Midge will pine and curse its hours away
Because Midge is not Everything For-aye,
Poor Midge thus loses its one summer day;
Loses its all—and winneth what, I pray?*

—JAMES THOMSON ("B. V.")

The Deity of Christ.

THE deity of Christ has always been rejected by a more or less numerous section of professed Christians. Learned books have been written to prove that the doctrine is inconsistent with the teaching of Christ and the utterances of the primitive Church. Even an outsider, who studies Christianity as he studies Buddhism or Brahminism, sees that the doctrine of the deity of Christ—or the dogma of God the Son—was slowly developed as primitive Christianity made its way among the Gentiles. It required centuries to reach its perfection in the metaphysical subtleties of the great Creeds, which are accepted alike by Protestant and Catholic. Peter, in the Acts of the Apostles, speaks to his countrymen of "the man" Jesus whom they had slain; the god Christ was an after construction of the Græco-Oriental mind.

We do not propose, however, to trouble the reader with laborious proofs of this position. We prefer to leave the historical ground—at least, in the present inquiry—and to tread the ground of common knowledge and common sense.

Apart from history and metaphysics, for which the popular mind has neither leisure nor inclination, and in which it is often as easy for a skilled intelligence to go wrong as to go right—there are only two ways in which the belief in Christ's divinity can be supported. It may be argued that he was not born, and that he did not live or die, like a mere human being; and that his supernatural career proves his deity. Or it may be argued that he taught the world what it did not know, and could never have discovered for itself.

We will take the second argument first; and in reply we have simply to observe that a very slight acquaintance with the teachings of antiquity will convince us of the truth of Buckle's statement, that whoever asserts that Christianity revealed to mankind truths with which they were previously unacquainted is guilty either of gross ignorance or of wilful fraud. The note of absolute originality is lacking in the utterances of Christ; what he said had been said in other words before him; and it is inconceivable that God should come upon earth, and go through all the painful and undignified stages of human life, merely to inform his creatures of what they had already discovered.

Let us now take the first argument—the supernatural career of Christ. We are told that he was born without a father; but whoever will read the Gospels critically, without the slightest reference to any other authority, will see that they do not contain the first-hand testimony of any valid witness. If the Gospels were written in the second century (as they were), they are no evidence at all. If they were written by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, they are still no evidence of the miraculous birth

of Jesus; for neither of those writers was in a position to know the facts. The only persons who could know anything about the matter were Joseph and Mary. Joseph himself could only know he was not the father of Jesus; he could not know who *was*. Mary, indeed, knew if there was anything uncommon; but she does not appear to have informed anyone; in fact, she is said to have kept all these things hidden in her heart. How, then, did the Gospel writers—or rather *two* of them, for Mark and John were ignorant or silent—how, we ask, did they discover the minute details of the annunciation and miraculous conception? Joseph and Mary appear to have kept the secret, if there was one to keep; and during all the public life of Jesus, as recorded in the Gospels, not a whisper transpired of his supernatural birth; on the contrary, he is unsuspectingly referred to as "the carpenter's son" by his neighbors and fellow citizens.

Were such "evidence" as this tendered in a court of law, it would damnify the case for which it was adduced; and Catholics are sagacious in reminding the Protestants that the witness of the Bible is insufficient without the living witness of the Church.

A miraculous birth is necessarily suspicious. The advent of a God should be entirely supernatural. It is not enough to dispense with a father; he should also dispense with a mother. Both are alike easy in physiology. But when there is a mother in the case, it is natural to suppose that there is a father somewhere.

With regard to the miracles of Christ's life, however they are acceptable to faith, they are not acceptable to reason. There is an utter lack of evidence in their favor—at least, of such evidence as would be admitted in a legal investigation. It is this fact, indeed, which induces advocates like Cardinal Newman to lay stress upon the "antecedent probability" of the New Testament miracles; which is only supplying the deficiency of evidence by the force of prepossession. Even the Resurrection is unattested. There is no first-hand evidence, and the narrative is full of self-contradictions. This is perceived by Christian apologists. They have abandoned the old-fashioned argument. They say as little as possible about the Gospel witnesses. They stake almost everything on St. Paul, who is not mentioned in the Gospels, who never saw Jesus in the flesh, who only saw him in a vision several years after the Ascension, and whose testimony (if it may be called such) would be laughed at by any committee of inquiry. They also argue, in a supplemental way, that the early Christians believed in the resurrection of Christ. Yes, and they believed in all the miracles of Paganism; for the question at issue between Christians and Pagans was not which miracles really happened, but which were wrought by God and which were wrought by the Devil. In any case, however, belief is not evidence; it is only, at best, a reason for investigation. The resurrection was a fact or it was not a fact, and the disinclination of Christian writers to face this plain alternative is an indication of their own misgivings. A counsel does not resort to subtleties when he has a good case upon the records.

The deity of Christ, therefore, is very far from proved; it is even far from probable. Faith may cry "He was God," but Reason declares he was Man.

G. W. FOOTE.

How Not to Do It.—IV.

(Concluded from p. 179.)

So far, then, the anti-Materialist attack fails, partly because the question is raised in the wrong way, partly because the scientific sense of the words used is not kept constantly in mind. Once the question is properly stated, there can be no valid objection, as Professor William James admitted, to speaking of thought as a function of the brain. It is a function of a special organ, or organs, because it always accompanies the activities of those organs. Mental phenomena varies with the physical condition in such a manner that experimental psychology is rapidly supplying us with formulæ that cover the quantitative as well as the qualitative aspects. In health and disease this correspondence is maintained. There is, indeed, no phase of mental life, no feeling or thought, that is not the equivalent of some disturbance, or of some molecular rearrangement in the nerve centres.

This being an admitted scientific truth, it is difficult to see on what grounds so eminent an authority as Dr. Mercier speaks of the "fathomless abyss that separates mind from matter." Surely invariable concomitance is fair ground for assuming causal relations. True, I cannot express a feeling or a thought in terms of molecular motion, any more than I can express a smell in terms of color, or a color in terms of smell, or, strictly speaking, heat in terms of motion. It can be shown that color, smell, heat, light, sound, etc., have a common basis in material motion, but that is all. As color, smell, heat, or light, each has to be dealt with in terms of its own phenomena as being greater or less, vivid or faint, strong or weak, or as different visual effects. In taking motion or undulations as the cause of these phenomena, all that is shown is that, given a certain rate and kind of motion, color, etc., result. I cannot say *why* vibrations of not more than 30,000 per second should induce a consciousness of a musical note, or why a greater rate of vibration should induce a feeling of heat or a consciousness of light. Still, no one assumes a parallelism and speaks of a chromo-physical phenomenon, as some speak of a psycho-physical parallelism in the case of the relations between thought and brain action. Yet there seems to me to be as much, or as little, justification for doing so in the one case as in the other.

For explanation, as I have said, is a question of establishing equivalents. A phenomenon is explained when by analysis we have discovered the factors from which it proceeds; and our complete knowledge of the subject is demonstrated when by synthesis we can reproduce the thing with which we are dealing. That we cannot do this in the case of thought and nerve structure only proves the imperfection of our knowledge, not the incorrectness of our assumptions. Or that we may never be able to do this is surely the weakest of all reasons for throwing over principles of reasoning that have yielded such splendid results when applied in other directions.

Finally, the anti-Materialist argument has the fatal quality of proving too much. If there be indeed an "impassible gulf" between action and thought, the fact is as fatal to the influence of thought on nervous action as it is to the influence of nervous action on thought. If no causal connection can be established between the two, the difficulty is the same, whether we approach the subject from the side of "mind" or from the side of matter. The distance between London and Glasgow cannot well be less than the distance between Glasgow and London. What, then, does the anti-Materialist make of the relation between brain and thought? He cannot hold that mind is the cause of brain action. He has already declared for an "impassible gulf" separating the two. True, if nerve action is not the cause of mental phenomena, the Spiritualist gains his point as to the autonomous character of mind; but this also involves the autonomous character of

matter. In this way matter is given the position of independent power and spontaneity that has all along been denied. In the very act of saving his life the Spiritualist comes very near committing suicide.

Here, again, is another Theistic argument that destroys itself in the very act of achieving success. Right through religious history—long before the special form of the argument became associated with the name of Paley—it has been argued that the complex character of both inorganic structures and organic forms could not be due to natural forces alone. Some controlling, selecting intelligence was necessary. Under various forms this is one of the stock arguments of all forms of Theistic belief.

Now, in criticising this position, one may admit the possibility, and even the probability, of the existence of the Theistic "supreme mind." How, then, stands the case? It stands thus. Natural forces are selected by the "supreme mind" and combined to produce a certain result. But unless the forces of the properties selected were capable of realising the end gained the selection and guidance would be fruitless. Selection, combination, guidance, can only utilise what is already existing. Nothing is added to what already exists save the bare fact of direction. Thus, in making out his case for a directive intelligence, the Theist has to admit, nay, he must assume, that the capacity for producing all the results we see belong to natural forces *in the absence of any directive intelligence*. But, in that case, if the end reached would be impossible unless natural forces were capable of realising that end, the statement that these forces need a directive intelligence is obviously false. This intelligence *may* be exercised, but it is not essential. At any moment there exists the possibility that what has been, hypothetically, brought about by the operation of mind, might have been produced in its absence.

Thus, the argument commences with the statement that natural forces need the co-operation of mind to produce a given result. But as this result can only be realised by utilising the capacities of the forces employed to produce it, the means taken to prove the necessary co-operation of mind results in proving the possibility of the production of all we see without the intervention of mind at any stage. The existence of a directive intelligence becomes, with this argument, nothing more than the slenderest of probabilities, while arguments drawn from other sources destroy its validity altogether.

As a final illustration of suicidal success, take the emphasis Theists lay upon the fact of natural order. Historically, the establishment of the conception of natural law was accomplished in the teeth of religious opposition. The uniformity of nature was felt to be inimical to the belief in the power and dignity of deity. Later, the fact of uniformity in nature was made the subject of innumerable essays and sermons designed to prove that it furnished one of the strongest proofs possible for the existence of God. For my own part, I believe the instinct that led religious people to oppose the conception of uniformity was much sounder than the opportunism that induced them to use it as a defence. For, in truth, it is the lack of uniformity in nature that might prove the existence of God; uniformity follows from the mere fact of existence, and so far negatives the necessity for any controlling mind in nature.

To see this clearly it must be borne in mind that the fact of existence, of something existing, is not open to question. All reasoning assumes this much, even the act of doubting it. It is the common datum of all disputes and the common property of all disputants. Given, then, the existence of something, and of necessity the manifestation of certain properties by which it is known to us exclude the idea of external interference, and a uniformity of operation becomes inevitable. Thus, if A B C D be the primary properties of existence, all that follows will be due to one of these, or to their combinations

in varying numbers and proportions. And, to take an illustration, so long as A B produce as an effect F, we shall not need to look beyond A B for an explanation. But assume that A B produces at one time F, at another time G, and at yet another time H, what will be the conclusion reached? Obviously that some new force or condition has supervened, and, by preventing A B producing its normal consequence, compels us to look elsewhere for the cause of the change.

Now, obviously, the uniformity of nature is only another way of expressing the fact of our belief in the persistence of like effects from like causes, and that under identical conditions natural forces will everywhere produce identical results. So long as this occurs there is neither scientific nor philosophic necessity to seek beyond known forces for an explanation of anything that occurs. Nay, we cannot even think of a lack of uniformity in nature unless we assume some extra-natural forces coercing natural forces. Thus every demonstration of the uniformity of nature is really a fresh evidence of the self-sufficiency of nature, an extra argument in favor of the dismissal of the theory of deity as useless. If nature were not uniform in its operations, Theism would really be more reasonable than is at present the case.

To put the essence of the last two arguments in a nutshell—A directive intelligence could not bring about any of the results produced unless the capacity for producing these results was possessed by the forces manipulated; but, once given the existence of something, its orderly manifestation is at once a necessity in fact and in thought, unless we assume a deity checking its uniformity of operation. Thus, while the first argument destroys the necessity for direction, the second destroys the probability, if not the possibility, of its operation. The more successful the Theist is with his argumentation the more surely does it undermine the position he is trying to uphold.

I have now gone over a few instances of the manner in which critics of the Freethought position either succeed in disproving their own case or spend their time in fighting something that no Freethinker upholds or that none deny. The list has not been by any means exhausted. The same plan might be carried out in the sphere of ethics and history, as well as in that of science. The case for religion is really very simple, and those who know it have no difficulty in exposing its weaknesses. The difference between a clever and a foolish, or an astute and a simple religionist, is that the former manages to confuse the issue more successfully by discussing matters that have no bearing on the real question, or by preventing his audience seeing what the vital question is. The cloud of words thrown out by the average theologian serves the same purpose as the cloud of ink thrown out by a cuttle-fish. It prevents the enemy seeing where the antagonist is. By the time the ink has cleared away the cuttle-fish has sought safer quarters; by the time the words have been sifted the meaning of the discussion has been too often forgotten. Perhaps a little of what has been said in these articles may serve to keep theological apologists nearer to the real points at issue between themselves and Freethinkers. C. COHEN.

What is Conscience?

COMMENTING on the article entitled "Freethought and Conscience," which appeared in these columns last August, an intelligent correspondent immediately called attention to the desperate attempts that are being made by defenders of the Christian faith, particularly by the Rev. Dr. Frank Ballard, to discredit the Secularist view of conscience. Inasmuch as Dr. Ballard now acts in the capacity of an itinerant Professor of Christian Evidences, it may be expedient to discuss some of the points raised by the said correspondent. The definitions of conscience

are many and various; but it is well known that there are but two schools of ethics, namely, the intuitional and the evolutionary. According to the former, conscience is a kind of storehouse filled with intuitive moral principles or judgments which never vary in the least, unless some obstruction prevents their full operation, and which are absolutely unerring everywhere and at all times. Conscience is an innate faculty possessed exclusively by man. The intuitive moralists call it a natural power of perceiving the distinction between right and wrong in conduct, and of feeling that the right ought to be cultivated and the wrong repressed. The divines go farther still, and pronounce it a supernatural faculty or power, or the voice of God within the soul. Socrates believed that he had within him "a divine monitor," "genius," or "dæmon," which never deserted him, and which always "pricked" him whenever his conduct was dishonorable, as, for example, when he made unworthy speeches to amuse his friend Phædrus as they both lay in the shade of the famous plane-tree by the Ilissus. The Christian divines are extremely divided in their opinions about conscience. Some maintain that it is incapable of making a mistake. Such is the position taken up by Dr. Ballard. "There is no variation in conscience whatever," he says. Then he adds: "In this, not only are the Nonconformist, the Romanist, the Rationalist, the Tory, and the Socialist, absolutely one, but they actually differ in all their views and conduct because they are all one in this. Their conscience are utterly one and the same." But this is very like the futile quibbling of little minds, to which a man with a dozen and more letters trailing after his name ought to be ashamed to descend. The quibble lies in making a distinction between moral judgment and conscience. He charges Secularists with palpably confusing the two, and consequently with making false statements regarding conscience.

As this is a point of considerable importance, let us look at it more closely. Butler was a great philosopher as well as a distinguished divine. This is how Professor Robert Adamson epitomises the Bishop's views in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*:—

"There is in man a faculty which takes into consideration all the springs of action, including self-love, and passes judgment upon them, approving some and condemning others. From its very nature, this faculty is supreme in authority, if not in power; it reflects upon all the other powers, and pronounces absolutely upon their moral quality."

In his *Three Sermons on Human Nature* Butler treats moral judgment as part and parcel of the faculty of conscience. Even the Dictionary is dead against Dr. Ballard. This is the definition of conscience in Webster's:—

"The faculty, power, or inward principle which decides as to the character of one's own actions, purposes, and affections, warning against and condemning that which is wrong, and approving and prompting to that which is right; the moral faculty passing judgment on one's self; the moral sense."

Dr. Ballard being palpably wrong in drawing a distinction between conscience and moral judgment, and in claiming that conscience is uniform, certain, and unerring, Secularists are justified in their contention that conscience is the most variable and self-contradictory thing in the world, and that it cannot possibly be the voice of a perfect Deity. With exceeding ingenuity the Rev. Dr. Orchard endeavors to show that conscience is the voice of God by identifying God with the ideal of conduct which any man may have in his mind's eye. To that there is no objection, if the identification divests the Deity of personality. The persons we feel we ought to be do not exist except in our own imagination. The ideals which we cherish are the products of our own minds, formed therein as the fruit of our own experience and observation of social conduct. About such ideals there is nothing superhuman or supernatural: they are the offspring of our own brains, and serve only as intellectual forecasts of the future. Now these ideals vary among different nations, and among

different classes in the same nation, and the variation, in each case, corresponds to the stage in the evolution of mental culture and social experience reached by the nation or the class concerned. What is looked upon as positively wrong in one country is elevated into a virtue in another. That which to Mohammedans is a source of ineffable delight is an abomination to Christians. Such a state of things is utterly inconceivable on the assumption that this world was produced by and is under the management of an infinitely powerful and benevolent Being.

What, then, is conscience? According to the old utilitarian school, it is "merely the organised registration in the modern civilised adult of his observations of the consequences of the actions of himself and others"; and, to a certain extent, this is true. But we must not forget that *something* is inherited from the past in the case of each individual. The human race, as clearly differentiated from all other species, has been slowly evolving for the space of a hundred thousand years, at least. In what did this evolutionary process consist? Very largely in "throwing off the brute inheritance," as John Fiske puts it. Tennyson speaks of "the ghost of the Brute that is walking and haunting us yet," and his exhortation is:—

"Move upward, working out the beast,
And let the ape and tiger die."

The significance of evolution is thus seen to be an upward trend as the result, mainly, of the struggle for existence and the survival of the fittest. With social life came, of necessity, social obligations, without the fulfilment of which, in some measure, social life could not continue; and social obligations may be summed up in the duty of acquiring and perfecting adaptation to the social environment. Good morals are essential in a society, and good morals spring from a well-developed social instinct. Now, all experiences and observations are carefully registered in the organism, and, although they are not transmissible, they make an impression which improves the quality of the organism, and this improved quality is transmissible. No infant is born in possession of moral ideas, but some infants are endowed with such pure, refined, and healthy natures that they acquire them much more easily and rapidly than others. There is not a grain of knowledge in a baby's brain, but some babies receive from their ancestors much more educable brains than others. And the more educable a brain is the more readily it gets filled with all necessary knowledge. Precisely in the same way has the moral sense been evolved. It is a growth of countless ages, and religion has retarded rather than quickened its development.

Dr. Orchard says that "we are all in touch with a moral demand that is infinite." What he means by that becomes clear in a moment.

"We are all in touch with a moral demand that is infinite. And the point at which it touches us all is the sense of obligation to be the highest we know. It all sounds very wonderful. It has been and can be questioned. But when the argument is over and we are quiet, back the feeling comes. It is undoubtedly God. When we realise that, then perhaps we shall be content to submit ourselves to the demand, because we know that behind it there is also infinite power."

That is a bold attempt to reconcile modern knowledge and the shadow of ancient superstition. What Dr. Orchard understands by the term "God" cannot be discovered from his writings. He still preaches the Christian Gospel, in which God figures as an infinite Person who loves and makes curious sacrifices for the fallen human race; but in his Correspondence Column in the *Christian Commonwealth* he tells us that God is the ideal, and that the ideal is cherished by Theists and Atheists alike, both, in so far as they are true and noble, being alike servants of God. But surely this is nothing but reckless fooling about with words. The ideal of the Secularist merely signifies the state of human welfare at which we all ought to aim. This is the highest he knows. But fancy identifying God with the moral ideal, and saying, "For the moral ideal so loved the world that it

gave its only begotten Son." Fancy standing up in a pulpit, before a crowded congregation, and praying thus: "O thou moral ideal, we thank thee that thou hast brought us together into this thy house of prayer, and we beseech thee to be gracious unto us and speak pardon and peace to our waiting hearts." No, "the sense of obligation to be the highest we know" is not undoubtedly God; it is simply our moral sense for which we are indebted to countless eons of evolution, and which animals much lower down in the scale, in a small degree, share with us. Our sole business in life should be to strengthen and ennoble it.

It is a highly significant fact that the moral sense grew weaker and less efficient in proportion as the Christian faith waxed stronger and more fervent. Morally, the world was never lower than in the ninth, tenth, and eleventh centuries. For hundreds of years the Church spent all her strength in heated and scandalous disputes over the Trinity and the Incarnation, and allowed the state of morals to sink lower and lower until it touched the lowest depth of degradation in the eleventh century. From the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries forces came into operation which were calculated eventually to destroy faith and redeem morals. Those forces are gaining strength every day, and, as a result, the Church is decidedly on the wane, while the cause of morality is visibly waxing in power and momentum. The prospects were never so bright as they are at this moment. Supernatural sanctions and incentives never succeeded in bringing mankind together in the bond of a common brotherhood; but in proportion as the natural sanctions and incentives, which inhere in our own nature, are being discovered and brought into operation, the passion for social reform becomes stronger and stronger. At last humanity is beginning to discover itself.

J. T. LLOYD.

The Apocalypse.—II.

(Continued from p. 182.)

THE writer of the article "Apocalypse" in the *Encyclopædia Biblica*, in referring to some of the theories advanced by scholars upon the nature and origin of that book, says of Vischer (who considered the work to be a Christian redaction of a Jewish writing): "He has neither proved the Jewish character of chapter ix. and following, nor justified his fundamental thesis regarding the unity of the book," etc.

A little further on, the same writer says of Weizsäcker: "He has rightly discerned in the Apocalyptic's thrice repeated number of seven the fixed plan of an author who wrote the Apocalypse as a whole, and gave to his work the character of a literary unity." According to the last-named scholar, "the Apocalypse is a literary unity proceeding from a single author, into which, however, Apocalyptic fragments of various dates have been introduced by the author himself." And then among the portions of the book which this critic has set down as interpolations are chapters xi. and xii.—the chapters which we were told Vischer had not proved to be of Jewish character. As a simple matter of fact, those chapters merely contain some Christian interpolations, consisting chiefly of a few words, inserted in Rev. xi. 8, 15; xii. 10, 11, 17.

I will now look through the sections which I have named as forming the original Jewish Apocalypse to see if they contain any marks which point unmistakably to their purely Jewish origin. The fact that the Christians, in taking their religion from Jews, took over also the Jewish scriptures, renders this task more difficult; but the following circumstances narrated in that portion of the book will, I think, suffice to settle the question.

1. The twenty-four elders sitting on thrones around the throne of God (Rev. i. 4) were Jews, and represented the twenty-four members of a Jewish council in foreign cities where Jews formed a considerable

portion of the population. Had the book been the work of a Christian, we should have seen the Hebrew deity surrounded by the twelve apostles, as in the promise said to have been given to them by Jesus Christ—"Ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Matt. xix 28).

2. The "servants of God" who were "sealed" with the "seal of the living God" on their foreheads (Rev. vii. 2-4) were all Jews "sealed out of every tribe of the children of Israel," the total number being 144,000. It is true that in verse 9 of the same chapter we are told that "a great multitude, which no man could number, out of every nation, of all tribes and peoples and tongues," were "standing before the throne" shouting praises to God; but the paragraph in which this verse appears (Rev. vi. 9-17) is admitted by all rational critics to be a later addition, and is, in fact, a Christian interpolation. This will be seen from the following statements in the original sections:—

(1) In Rev. ix. 3-4 it is stated that locusts were sent upon the earth, with power to torment men—"but only such men as have not the seal of God on their foreheads." Now only the 144,000 Jew believers had this mark upon their brows; consequently, the "great multitude" of converts from other nations "which no man could number" were not included among the "servants of God" who were to be rewarded and protected.

(2) In Rev. xiv. 3 the 144,000 Jews who had been "sealed" are stated to be those "that have been purchased out of the earth"; that is to say, they comprised all the people upon the earth who were to be "saved."

(3) In Rev. xxii. 3-4 an angel of God is represented as saying: "And his servants shall do him service; and they shall see his face; and his name shall be on their foreheads. And there shall be night no more.....for the Lord God shall give them light; and they shall reign for ever and ever."

It thus becomes clearly evident that the writer of the sections from which the three foregoing passages are taken knew nothing about "a great multitude which no man could number" of non-Jewish believers.

3. In Rev. xiv. 6-7 we read:—

"And I saw another angel flying in mid-heaven, having an eternal gospel to proclaim unto them that dwell on the earth.....And he saith with a great voice, Fear God, and give him glory.....and worship him that made the heaven and the earth and sea and fountains of waters."

This was the "gospel" of the writer of the original Jewish Apocalypse. The word "God" stands for the Hebrew deity, Yahveh, who in the book of Genesis is represented as creating the Universe. This "gospel" may be summed up in five words—"Fear, land, and worship Yahveh." Jesus Christ has no place in this plan of salvation. The Christian doctrine is: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."

4. In Rev. xi. 19 we read:—

"There was opened the temple of God that is in heaven; and there was seen in his temple the ark of his covenant."

The "temple" and the "ark of the covenant" had to do only with the old Jewish religion: the writer assumed, as a matter of course, that they would always be necessary.

5. After the old heaven and earth had passed away, the only dwelling place for the "servants of God" upon the new earth was "the holy city, new Jerusalem," which came down ready built from heaven (Rev. xxi. 1-2). Upon the twelve gates of this city were "names written thereon" of "the twelve tribes of the children of Israel" (Rev. xxi. 12). The names of "the twelve apostles of the Lamb" in verse 14 is a Christian interpolation.

It may, perhaps, be contended that "the Lamb," which appears several times in the original portion of the Apocalypse, was intended to represent Jesus Christ. This, however, is not the case: that inoffensive quadruped corresponds with the Son of

man, the Elect One, and the Righteous One of the books of Daniel and Enoch—that is to say, a man chosen by the Lord God to be Master of the Ceremonies at the last Judgment.

In the first scene in which "the Lamb" appears, one of the twenty-four elders is represented as saying: "Behold the Lion that is of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath overcome, [and is worthy] to open the book and the seven seals thereof" (Rev. v. 5). Then, instead of the "Lion" coming forward, and doing as the elder had said, something else happened.

"And I saw.....a Lamb [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], and he came, and he taketh the book out of the right hand of him that sat on the throne" (Rev. v. 6, 7).

Thus, the great Jewish "Lion" has been transformed into a Passover "Lamb," and, strange to say, we never hear of the Lion again: his place is always taken by the Lamb. The words placed within brackets are regarded by Volter as a Christian interpolation, a fact which goes almost without saying. Could anything be more ridiculous than a Lamb "standing as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes"? The man who wrote such balderdash could scarcely be sane. Furthermore, the eyes of this animal, the interpolator says, are "the seven Spirits of God"; but if he had looked in the preceding chapter (which contains no interpolations) he would have seen that "the seven lamps of fire burning before the throne" were said to be "the seven Spirits of God" (Rev. iv. 5): there can therefore be no doubt as to the words being an interpolation. Half a century later, the "lamps of fire" idea is reproduced in the Acts of the Apostles (ii. 3), in which "tongues, like as of fire" are described as the visible manifestation of the "Spirits of God." It is also significant that the "seven horns and seven eyes" are never referred to in any other passage in which "the Lamb" is mentioned. Similar interpolations of the Lamb having been slain, etc., are found in verses 9, 10, and 12 of the paragraph Rev. v. 9-14; but the latter is a later addition made by the writer of section Rev. v. 9-17—the two additions treating of the same subject, the second being a longer and more detailed account than the first.

Again, in Rev. xiv. 1 we read:—

"I saw.....the Lamb standing on the mount Zion, and with him 144,000, having [his name and] the name of his Father, written on their foreheads."

Here the words within brackets are an interpolation. The Jew believers had only one name stamped on their foreheads—that of the Lord God. If we turn back to Rev. vii. 2, 3, we find an angel, having a seal of "the living God"; there was no other angel with a seal for the Lamb: obviously, the elect were marked only with the seal of God. In Rev. ix. 3, the locusts received the command to torment only "such men as have not the seal of God on their foreheads"; in Rev. xxii. 3-4 the "servants of God" are stated to be those that have "his name" on their foreheads. There was therefore no name of "the Lamb" written upon them.

With regard to this Apocalyptic "Lamb," the chief problem requiring solution is the origin of that symbolical figure. We know, for instance, that in the Fourth Gospel John the Baptist is upon one occasion represented as calling Jesus Christ the "Lamb of God" (John i. 29). Did the writer of the original Jewish Apocalypse take his "Lamb" from this source? To this question we can return a decided negative: the Fourth Gospel was not written until nearly half a century after the Apocalypse, the author being probably John the Presbyter, a friend of Papias (A.D. 130-150). To get at the origin of this enigmatical quadruped, we must turn back to the first scene in chapter v., in which the Almighty sitting on his throne holds in his right hand a book "sealed with seven seals," and an angel proclaims in stentorian tones, "Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals?" To this question there was no response, and the seer of the vision "wept

much." Then one of the twenty-four elders said: "Weep not; behold, the Lion that is of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath overcome, [and is worthy] to open the book and the seven seals." This "Lion" was "the Lamb"; and in the short interval between the elder speaking and the Lamb's appearance the change had been effected: we have, therefore, to find the "Lion of the tribe of Judah."

In Gen. xlix. 9 the dying Jacob is represented as saying: "Judah is a lion's whelp." This statement refers, however, to the tribe of Judah, and to its aptitude for war.

In Isaiah xi. it is predicted: "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his root: and the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might," etc. David was the son of Jesse, and of the tribe of Judah; the reference was to a king descended from David, who should administer justice impartially, to the rich and poor alike: but no lion is mentioned.

In 2 Esdras xii. the writer of the vision sees a lion reproving an eagle that represented a line of kings, the explanation of which is given as follows:—

2 Esd. xii. 31—34.—"And the lion whom thou sawest rising up out of the wood, and roaring.....this is the Anointed One, whom the Most High hath kept unto the end of days, who shall spring up out of the seed of David, and he shall come and.....reprove them for their wickedness.....and when he hath reprov'd them, he shall destroy them. But the rest of my people shall he deliver with mercy.....and he shall make them joyful until the coming of the end, even the day of Judgment."

Here the reference is to a Jewish king—"the Lord's Anointed"—the "Anointed One," in the Greek, being "Christ," from the verb *chrío* to anoint. Hence the word "Christ" by itself has no connection with Jesus. The writer of 2 Esdras took the idea from the passage in Isaiah; the writer of the original Jewish Apocalypse took his "Lion of Judah" from 2 Esdras. There were, of course, no visions such as these two pious writers have described, and no revelation from the Lord God.

ABRACADABRA.

(To be continued.)

Acid Drops.

Mr. Justice Darling passed the customary sentence of death on Stinie Morrison, with its hypocritical "May God have mercy on your soul!" On hearing these words the condemned man cried out defiantly, "I decline mercy; I don't believe there is a God in Heaven." Upon which fact the *Daily Telegraph* made the following comment:—

"A man who, when he is sentenced to death, takes the opportunity of one of the most solemn moments of the Judge's exhortation to asseverate his disbelief in God's existence, can hardly expect to receive much sympathy, either from the jury which patiently tried him or the public which accepts the sentence as justified."

We should require a good deal more than Morrison's heated exclamation to satisfy us that he is an Atheist. As a matter of fact, when he was in the witness-box he took the oath, and at one point of his evidence declared that he would repeat what he was saying if he stood in the very presence of his Almighty Maker. So he was apparently a good Theist then. But even if he really is an Atheist, we protest against the principle that a murderer's claim to sympathy rests upon his religious orthodoxy. This is carrying bigotry to a most extravagant pitch.

How those Atheists—as Talmage and Torrey have shown—will go on committing suicide. Here is another case. Rev. W. M. Fleet, having just accepted the pastorate of Zion Baptist Chapel, Burnley, was so overcome by the honor (or the work) that he hung himself in a lavatory at Victoria Station, Manchester.

A farmer named Murphy, having committed suicide, was buried in consecrated ground at Newtown, near Waterford. This was resented by the peasantry, who dug up the coffin by night and left it lying on one of the footpaths of the graveyard. The corpse was buried again in a plot set apart for suicides at a graveyard two miles from Waterford. No

doubt it will rest there quietly enough. The dead never complain of what is done with them. It is the living that make all the fuss.

"The decline of Militant Secularism" is the title of the first front-page article in last week's *Methodist Recorder*. The writer, Walter H. Armstrong, is probably a reverend gentleman, and that may account for his Rip-Van-Winkleism. One of the latest things he quotes derogatory to Secularism was written by George Standring more than twenty years ago. It must be admitted that this is remarkably fresh. Several dead Freethought papers are mentioned, but we do not see the name of the *Freethinker* nor that of Mr. Foote. What on earth do Christian advocates imagine that they gain by such tactics? The pursued ostrich does not save its life by hiding its head and pretending that its unseen enemies do not exist. It only perishes ignominiously.

Mr. Armstrong (whoever he is) states that "a goodly number of journals have appeared and disappeared" in the Freethought movement. He does not state that the *Freethinker* has existed for thirty years, and has an improving circulation. Neither does he state that it had the support of the late George Meredith—the foremost man of genius in England. Mr. Cohen and Mr. Lloyd are treated as non-existent. There is no reference to St. James's Hall and Queen's Hall meetings, or to Birmingham Town Hall meetings. The *Methodist Recorder* writer proves the decadence of Secularism by recording the names of the dead and omitting those of the living.

How well-informed the Methodist scribe is will be obvious to veteran Freethinkers who remember the Secular movement forty and fifty years ago. After praising Bradlaugh (they all do that now he is dead), he mentions "able and powerful writers and speakers who co-operated with him," and includes amongst them Joseph Barker and Thomas Cooper. Thomas Cooper was out of the field before young Bradlaugh entered it. Joseph Barker opposed Bradlaugh as long as he could and then retreated to America. But one need not be surprised at these peculiar accuracies. Christian historians are noted for such things. Many of them find it difficult to be really accurate when they try. So great is the power of habit.

Just as a parting word to the *Methodist Recorder* and its staff. The success of Militant Secularism is seen in the changed character of Christianity. Every historic religion dies by slow degrees. When the process of dissolution sets in it keeps its name but it keeps nothing else. Christian teaching is not what it was fifty years ago—far from it. What was once Destructive Freethought is now preached from scores, perhaps hundreds of Christian pulpits. Militant Secularism keeps Christianity on the run, and it has to drop one doctrine after another to keep from breaking down. Hell is gone, the Devil is gone, exclusive salvation by faith is gone, the plenary inspiration of the Bible is gone; in fact, the real difficulty is to see what remains.

The new President of the Free Church Council is the Rev. Charles Brown. In his presidential address he was greatly concerned with the lack of recognition by the State of Free Church representatives. He asked the meeting, "Why should the chaplain of the People's House of Representatives always be an Episcopalian? Why should not a Free Church minister's voice be heard there occasionally asking for Divine guidance and blessing on the labors of our legislators?" Well, what we are concerned with is, why should any of them be there, at the expense of the State, to pray for a Divine guidance that no one relies on? As a Nonconformist, Mr. Brown should have protested against any minister of religion being there at all. Instead of that he merely cries out for a share of the plunder and the privilege—in the name of morality and religion, too.

Mr. Brown also asked—quite legitimately this time—why Nonconformists should be excluded from the head teachership of State supported schools? This is a clear injustice, but it is one that Nonconformists have only themselves to thank for. Had they been true to principle such an injustice would by now be an impossibility. But others besides Dissenters suffer in this direction. All over the country there are cases where teachers who are Freethinkers have to sacrifice promotion if they are brave and honest enough to express their opinions. And this not in schools whose constitution provide for a religious head, but schools that have been built and are maintained by the State, and in which religion forms no part of the legal qualification for headships. They are not legally excluded, but they are excluded all the same. And none are more active in thus punishing

freethinking teachers than are Nonconformists—a fact with which Mr. Brown must be perfectly familiar.

Naturally the Dissenting Churches are running Sir Oliver Lodge's recent address to the Free Church Congress for all it is worth. The *British Congregationalist* describes it as epoch-making, which can only be so on the ground that so few leading scientific men openly support Christianity. Although even here, we may note, Sir Oliver is not a Christian in the sense that those who listened to him were Christians. The *Congregationalist* remarks: "Here was a great scientist affirming, and that on scientific grounds, the entire reasonableness of the Christian revelation." We beg to point out that Sir Oliver Lodge was not doing, nor could he do, anything of the kind. It is not possible for any man to establish the reasonableness of the Christian revelation on scientific grounds. A scientific fact is one that is open to all, common to all, and which can be appealed to without reference to personal idiosyncrasies. None of Sir Oliver's arguments come under this heading. What the Christians have in Sir Oliver Lodge is, not scientific support, but the left-handed patronage of a prominent man of science. And that is a very different thing; although it does not pay Christians to observe the difference.

The *Methodist Times* is greatly impressed by Sir Oliver's likening of man in the universe to a white corpuscle in the blood, and that if this were endowed with consciousness it might as reasonably deny the mind of man as man denies the mind of the universe. A similar illustration, with the substitution of a small worm for a white corpuscle, was used with great effect against the Design argument by Spinoza. But the argument is capable of numerous modifications. Thus: a maggot living in a cheese might, if it were endowed with consciousness, conclude that the combination of circumstances resulting in its own being could never have happened unless with a view to the production of itself. And if it were a maggot of eminence among other maggots, we can imagine it being invited by a United Free Maggots' Association to address them upon this important topic. And every argument used to prove that the object of existence was the production of man would be used under such circumstances, and with equal effect, to prove that the design of the whole universe—that is, the cheese—was the production of maggots. The trouble would only arise when some Atheistic maggot ventured to point out the completely fallacious nature of the Theistic maggot's reasoning.

This parade of specially selected scientists to give their opinions on the relations between religion and science, is all a part of the solemn humbug that keeps Christianity alive. If the Free Church Council really wish to know how religious beliefs look from a scientific standpoint they should ask those who do not believe in Christianity as well as those who profess such opinions. And if both classes were invited to speak from the same platform we imagine that those who now speak would be a little more cautious in their utterances.

There is a pretty little trouble in America over one of the new battleships. The vessel is to be called the *Utah*, and in recognition of the name the Mormon State has presented it with a service of silver plate. The service, however bears a picture of Brigham Young and of the Mormon Temple, and this has roused the indignation of other American Christians. They say it is an insult to the Christian people of the country. But the Mormons are as Christian as most, and more Christian than many. In practising or in teaching polygamy they are, or were, only carrying on an institution the legality of which is admitted in both the Old and the New Testaments. There is nothing incogruous in preaching non-resistance and building and blessing battleships, but the Christian conscience is outraged when it is graphically reminded of an institution that was supported by, to use Milton's language, "the holy patriarchs and pillars of our faith," and which was fully "allowed by the law of God."

The Brighton Dome Mission's report states that "At the lowest estimate, out of a combined population of 169,000 in Brighton and Hove, there are 100,000 who never darken the door of a place of worship." That is one way of putting it. Another way would be that 100,000 people out of 169,000 in Brighton and Hove never allow the door of a place of worship to darken them.

Trade Union officials write to the local press alleging that the Church Army Home at Gateshead sent out men to take the places of the "cleaners" on strike. "As the institution," they say, "is kept up by public subscription and by collections taken in the churches, to which the working men

are asked to contribute, we think it only right that these facts should be made public."

The *Baptist Times* is down on the Roman Catholics for reporting as part of its work among the heathen the baptism of 137,224 infants *in articulo mortis*. Well, it is a curious, not to say a mean, thing to chronicle. But all Protestant missions regularly report the baptism of young children, and there really seems little to choose between baptising young children who are healthy, but cannot understand Christianity, and young children who are dying. Consider, also, the large proportion of children who are "convicted of sin" by professional evangelists, and we have a more degrading thing still. The *Baptist Times* remarks that the Roman Catholic practice degrades Christianity into "mere magic." Well, we should like to know what else it is to the uncivilised converts about whom Protestants boast? When they are not "rice Christians," Christianity is "mere magic" to the converts, as the reports of the various societies show plainly enough.

Rev. J. A. Shaw, of Wolverhampton, says, "You will never get the people to believe in God until you remove the slums." But why then? The happier people are in this world the less they care about the next one. The poor and wretched have always been the best supporters of religion.

Rev. William Riley, of Budge-street Congregational Church, Walsall, has been preaching recently on "The Benefits of Suffering." It would be cruel to wish him a liberal supply of these benefits. But we don't see what right he would have to complain.

Another theme of Mr. Riley's eloquence was "Why Jesus Failed?" We don't see that it matters *why*; the only thing that matters is that he *did* fail. Some people would say that he made a frightful mess of it. We don't say so, of course. We should be sorry to hurt the reverend gentleman's feelings.

The famous preacher who always looked a difficulty boldly in the face—and passed on, has many disciples in the modern pulpit. The Rev. J. D. Jones, of Bournemouth, for example, is one of them. The other day he explained to an audience that faith was sorely tried by such things as Congo atrocities, Italian earthquakes, and Lancashire pit explosions. More, he admitted that it was impossible to say why such things were permitted in a world governed by a wise and good God. Well, in face of this contradiction between faith and fact, what is to be done? A sane course would be to drop the faith until the facts justified it. Mr. Jones replies that we must keep on praising God, for, if there is a God, all must be for the best. So our only way of whether there is a God, or if there is what he is like, is by a study of the facts. But the facts, as Mr. Jones admits, do not point to a God who is greatly concerned for human welfare. Nevertheless, we must believe to the contrary, and that, says Mr. Jones, "is the A B C of the Christian faith." Mr. Jones thinks the Christian displays courage in clinging to a belief in the face of evidence. To our minds it is sheer cowardice, trying to screw up a little "dutch courage" by parading a conclusion that reason shows to be utterly unwarranted.

The maxim that liars should have good memories applies with equal force to those who slander intellectual opponents. We have a vivid recollection of the Rev. R. F. Horton once advocating the exclusion from human society of all who did not accept the belief in immortality, because they bestialised life and lowered the tone of everything. Now, in illustration of another point, he tells his congregation of a man of science—"an unbeliever or an Agnostic"—who, to find a remedy for pit explosions, "shuts himself up in an atmosphere so dangerous that he literally takes his life in his hands, and he may at any time succumb to his intellectual and practical effort to save the lives of unknown miners who are toiling beneath the ground." We are not surprised at this, but Dr. Horton *ought* to be, and when he gets over his surprise he ought to be ashamed of the creed that induced him to describe such men as "bestialising life" and deserving to be outcast from human society.

Dr. Horton adds to his slander of a class an insult to this unnamed individual, by saying that this scientific worker is filled with the "passion for God." It is the same greasy sort of piety that delighted in saying that Bradlaugh was a Christian without knowing it. As though men of first-rate intelligence and character need to go to a parson to have their feelings and ideas explained. On the whole, we much prefer the direct, if unfair, hostility of men like Dr. Horton,

than an intended compliment that would place Freethinkers upon their level.

Secularism is a word which, like Materialism, has more than one application, some of them—thanks to Christians—not over pleasant. We are not quite sure, therefore, although we have our suspicions, in what sense Canon Hensley Henson is speaking when he traces many undesirable aspects of present day life to the prevalence of Secularism. If he means that people attach too much importance to the pursuit of money and purely sensual pleasures, and in their pursuit neglect other and more important aspects of life, we agree with him. Only we would point out that this is most marked with those who would repudiate the philosophy of life that goes by the name of Secularism, and who would claim to be firm believers in God and a future life. The truth is, that the exaggerated "spiritualism" of Christianity has always been accompanied by a highly developed sensualism. It is highly significant that the lives of a large number of highly religious people have alternated between outbursts of asceticism on the one side and of sensualism on the other. The conclusion to be drawn from the things that Canon Henson deprecates, is that Christianity has quite failed to produce that harmonious development of life which would allow all phases of human nature to find a legitimate, and, therefore, a beneficial expression. Other philosophies have to supply what Christianity lacks, while astute Christians work hard to claim the credit for the purifying influence they exert.

According to a *Star* report of a lecture at Islington by the Hon. J. L. Griffiths, U.S. Consul-General in London, the pious story of little George Washington and the hatchet is purely mythical. It was invented by the Rev. Mason Locke Weems, an itinerant preacher, book canvasser, and pamphleteer, in order to push a failing business. The story caught on and helped to sell large numbers of Weems's collection of anecdotes. "Great is humbug," the *Star* reporter says, "and it hath prevailed."

As we go to press we receive a Shanghai paper containing a full report of the prosecution we referred to last week, of a man who circulated as a leaflet a portion of Sir Hiram Maxim's article on Missions and Missionaries translated into Chinese. We intend to deal with the matter at length in our next issue.

We have always said that the history of Ancient Roman Society needs to be quite re-written if it is to be properly understood. In the main, it has been written by Christians, and the systematic falsification of Pagan life on the one side and of early Christian life on the other, in the interests of Christian teachings and theories, has become a settled thing. Professor Dill's book, among others, marked a saner view of things. And now we are glad to see the *Church Times* pointing out, *apropos* of a review of Deissmann's *Light from the Ancient East*, the falsity of the orthodox Christian picture. It says, "The pictures of a corrupt society, painted in lurid colors by men of letters, are greatly exaggerated, at least so far as the provinces are concerned. We have pictures instead of a quiet domesticity, of simple piety, of steady industry. There was a conventional phraseology of religion which was found adequate for Christian expression." It adds that "some pious notions on this head must be given up." We venture to say that when the truth is generally known and accepted it will be found that to the end of the catastrophe the better intellectual and saner social and moral life were to be found among the Pagans. When they were completely submerged, darkness settled down.

The Sabbatarian bigots have been soundly beaten at Dover. The fight for a Sunday service of tramcars has just come to a finish by a poll taken by ballot, which showed 3,074 *for* and 1,910 *against*—a substantial majority of 1,164 in favor of sense and freedom.

The Christian bigots raised great opposition to the opening of cinematograph theatres at Brighton on the blessed Sabbath or Lord's Day. The Watch Committee, considering that such places of amusement kept people out of the public-houses on Sunday, recommended the granting of seven days' licenses to six cinematograph shows, on the condition that all the employees of such places should have one day's rest in seven. But the Christian bigots were strong enough to induce the Council, by 21 votes to 17, to refer the matter back to the Committee.

"Providence" has been very active in Manchuria, where the plague has carried off millions. Many villages are quite

deserted, all the inhabitants having fled or perished. At Fudziadin, the Chinese quarter of Harbin, there were 40,000 inhabitants, and hardly 4,000 are now left alive. Most of these are helpless children, for this plague, which is pulmonary, seldom attacks children under fourteen.

Mrs. Besant's letter of congratulation to Mr. W. T. Stead ends with the words, "May God bless you." Think of the Mrs. Besant of the late seventies and early eighties, and then reflect on poor Ophelia's exclamation: "We know what we are; we know not what we may be."

Rev. Harold Greenwood, of St. Thomas's Church, Sunderland, has been preaching against the immorality of the age. People have lost the sense of sin, he says, and are fond of amusement and pleasure. "We are getting so refined," he said, "so gloriously refined, that we are too refined for reproduction." This is a reference to the falling birth-rate. The reverend gentleman believes in old Jehovah's primal commandment, "Be ye fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth." Apparently he forgets that there were (so the story goes) only two persons alive then, and that the world wanted a bit of filling up. We beg to remind him, also, that sex teaching is very different in the New Testament. Jesus and Paul both taught celibacy and no "reproduction" at all. Tolstoy was undoubtedly a good Christian when he denied that there could be such a thing as Christian marriage.

We have just received a telegram from Mr. White, the victim of the latest Malthusian prosecution, whose present address is Durham Prison. He says he was arrested on Monday, and asks us to "see that his friends know about it in our next." We have already said that we never knew a case so badly mismanaged from a public point of view. Those who run the Malthusian League have no idea of fighting, and Mr. Holmes, whose pamphlet was attacked, although he provided counsel for Mr. White's defence, seems to be indifferent about the fate of Mr. White himself. That old man's fine of £25 should have been paid somehow. His only crime is selling works which other people publish. For twenty years, we understand, he has sold all sorts of "advanced" literature in the market-places of the North of England. He has done no more. And he ought not to be rotting in Durham Prison.

The Bishop of Southwell complains that "the income of some colliers is better than that of a large number of the clergy." Suppose it is. What of that? A collier's work is useful and even necessary. A clergyman's work is of no importance to anybody but himself. It brings him bread.

The *Statesman* (Calcutta) of February 26 remarks that "Doubtless among those who have not heard Mr. Lloyd George the impression prevails that he is a loud-voiced ranting demagogue of the style of the late Mr. Bradlaugh." We quite agree that Mr. Lloyd George is not a Bradlaugh, but we raise our eyebrows at the description of Bradlaugh as "a loud-voiced ranting demagogue." Gladstone as a judge of oratory stands higher even than the *Statesman*—if the editor will permit us to say so. And what was Gladstone's opinion of Bradlaugh? It will be found on p. 16 of vol. iii. of Morley's *Life of the great statesman*. Writing to the Queen after Bradlaugh's speech at the Bar of the House of Commons on June 23, 1880, Gladstone said: "His address was that of a consummate speaker." Comment is unnecessary.

THE GOD OF MR. JONES.

Of all conceivable forms of enlightenment the worst is what these people call the Inner Light. Anyone who knows anybody knows how it would work; anyone who knows anyone from the Higher Thought centre knows how it does work. That Jones shall worship the God within him turns out ultimately to mean that Jones shall worship Jones. Let Jones worship the sun or moon, anything rather than the Inner Light; let Jones worship cats or crocodiles, if he can find any in his street, but not the God within.—G. K. Chesterton.

THE ABBOT'S NOSE.

The rose on the nose doth all virtues disclose:
For the outward grace shows
That the inward overflows,
When it glows in the rose of a red, red nose.

—T. L. Peacock.

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, March 26, Queen's (Minor) Hall, Langham-place, London, W. : at 7.30, "Christianity and Peace."

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

To Correspondents.

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

J. BATES.—Thanks for cuttings, etc.

FREDERIC DIXON.—We have no taste—perhaps no faculty—for conundrums. If you do not officially represent the Society whose official letter-paper you use, you should plainly say so—every time you use it. Adieu.

W. A. (Ayr).—We will think it over again.

T. THELWALL.—May your good wishes be realised.

E. B.—See paragraph, Thanks.

S. PERRIS.—Professor Fraser's *Golden Bough* was first published in two volumes, and afterwards in three. A new edition is now being issued in six.

W. P. BALL.—Your cuttings are always welcome.

T. OAKLEY.—See paragraph. Thanks.

H. G. HODSON.—We really cannot answer such inquiries by post. We have no copies of the *Bible Handbook* left. A new and cheaper edition will be published before long. You will see the announcement in due course in our pages.

G. BRADFIELD.—Your letter will do good. We wish Freethinkers would get letters into newspapers more frequently than they do.

PALMER BROTHERS.—Pleased to hear your advertisement in the *Freethinker* brought you as many answers as two advertisements in another paper with a 200,000 circulation.

H. T. H.—Thanks for cuttings, etc. Glad you "immensely enjoyed" our Birmingham lectures.

A FRIEND.—Thanks for the tickets, though we are too busy to use them. Our time is always mapped out a great deal in advance.

H. SILVERSTEIN.—Glad to hear you say, "My admiration for your conspicuous ability and whole-hearted integrity grows stronger with the years." As a member of the N. S. S. Executive, you are in a position to view our actions behind the scenes, as it were; which gives all the more value to your tribute.

WALTER BRADFORD.—There is nothing novel in it. Begging is carried on as a fine art in so many churches.

T. H. WHITEHOUSE.—May not the letter be ironical? We rather fancy it is. If serious, it is too silly for anything.

F. E. WILLIS writes: "I earnestly hope you will long live to edit the only free press of this country. I regard the *Freethinker* as being the finest weapon in the long fight of brains *versus* superstition." This correspondent says that several of the Birmingham "saints" would like to see the Warschauer-Foote debate printed.

C. HEATON says of his subscription to the President's Honorarium Fund: "It is so small a return for the pleasure and benefit I have received during the years since the first issue of the *Freethinker*."

H. MEREDITH.—You will see we have dealt with it. Thanks.

W. A. RICHARDS.—A fresh resolution, with the additions you suggest, might very well be passed at Queen's Hall to-night (March 26).

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

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

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

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

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

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.

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

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 19s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months, 2s. 8d.

President's Honorarium Fund, 1911.

Eleventh List of Subscriptions.

Previously acknowledged, £159 18s. 8d. S. E. M., 4s.; H. Silverstein, 10s.; A Friend, 2s. 6d.; T. Thelwall, £1; S. H., £1; F. E. Willis, 2s. 6d.; C. Heaton, 5s.; R. B. H., 2s.

Special.

I SEE by the newspapers that the "Rev. Mr. Dixon, of Chicago" has been unanimously invited to become the pastor of Spurgeon's Tabernacle. I understand that this is the Dixon (then of Brooklyn) who was the authority appealed to by the Rev. Dr. Torrey in support of his statement that Colonel Ingersoll was in the pay of the vendors of obscene literature in America. Dixon visited England during the time that Mr. W. T. Stead assisted in exposing Torrey's slanders on Paine and Ingersoll. He called on Mr. Stead, and a communication from him was inserted in the *Review of Reviews*. Mr. Stead pointed out that Dixon's communication contained Dixon's word, but no other evidence, and let the matter rest there. But I obtained evidence from America, through the kindness of the late Eugene Macdonald, of the New York *Truthseeker*; and I was able to show that Dixon was as unscrupulous a liar as Torrey. A lot of matter was published by me in the *Freethinker* at the time; and if Dixon settles down in London I feel that I ought to reprint most of it in pamphlet form; for the slanderer has never apologised, nor shown the slightest sign of repentance; indeed, I hear that, being in London, he has already resumed his dirty work. No doubt he feels pretty safe. So did Torrey—but he found he was not; the exposure inflicted upon him barred his return to this country. Dixon is not safe either. He may laugh, but let those laugh who win.

I think the Freethought party will trust me to do a job like this thoroughly. I never scamped a bit of work in all my life; at least I possess *that* virtue. And I loved Ingersoll. *Loved*, do I say? Why use the past tense? I love him still. Death has no power over my affection for him. I would have been happy to do him any service while he was living; I am proud to do him any service now he is dead. And what better service can I do him than defend his character against Christian slanderers?

Torrey came to London—and met his fate there. Dixon is coming to London—and—I leave the reader to fill in the rest—at the finish.

G. W. FOOTE.

Sugar Plums.

There was a much improved audience at Queen's (Minor) Hall on Sunday evening, when Mr. Foote lectured on "Deity Up to Date," with special reference to Dr. Russel Wallace's new plea for God in the *Wonders of Life*. The audience evidently enjoyed the lecture from the first sentence to the last, and there was great applause at the end. Several questions were asked and answered. Prior to the lecture Mr. Foote moved, and Mr. Victor Roger, the chairman, seconded the following resolution: "That this meeting hails with pleasure and satisfaction the recent speech of Sir Edward Grey on Peace, and earnestly hopes that the suggested arbitration treaty between Great Britain and the United States will soon be accomplished." This was carried unanimously.

Mr. Foote's lecture to-night (March 26) winds up the Queen's Hall course. His subject will be "Christianity and Peace." He will have a good deal to say about both, and particularly about the impudent way in which the Christian Churches are (as usual) appropriating the Peace movement now that it is on the road to victory without them. Prior to the lecture there will be vocal and instrumental music, and a poetical reading by Miss Florence Foote (Mrs. Walter).

Mr. Cohen opened the special course of lectures at Stratford Town Hall on Sunday evening. Mr. Lloyd occupies the platform to-night (March 26). We hope the local "saints" will do their best to get the hall crowded.

The Warschauer-Foote debate (see advertisement), which takes place at Caxton Hall, London, next Thursday and Friday evenings, appears to be exciting a good deal of interest. Tickets are going off well, and several of them are in the hands of provincial Freethinkers, who are coming up to London to hear the debate. With regard to the tickets, the two shilling ones are for special front seats that will be reserved for the holders under any circumstances. The shilling tickets will entitle the holders to a seat for cer-

tain up to eight o'clock, after that it will be impossible to reserve them. Shilling seats are not numbered; the number written on each card is for a different purpose. We may add that double tickets for both nights are not printed. Those who mean to attend both nights have simply to buy two single tickets.

Miss Vance will be glad to hear, at 2 Newcastle-street, E.C., from able-bodied "saints" who will act as stewards at the Warschauer-Foote debate. Disorder is not anticipated, but tickets have to be taken, people have to be shown to their seats, and not allowed to monopolise too much space individually, especially if there is a crowd demanding accommodation, as is very likely to be the case on this occasion. These are some of the services which stewards will be called upon to render. We hope Miss Vance will find plenty of volunteers.

Several "saints" have begged us to get the Warschauer-Foote debate reported and published. That matter lies, of course, in the hands of the two disputants. The copyright of the debate is theirs. No one has a right to report it in any manner without their permission. It is entirely different from an ordinary public meeting, as there is a charge for admission, and no entrance at all without payment. Dr. Warschauer is naturally averse to the report of the debate appearing in a paper identified with one side. Whether it would be advisable to publish the debate in pamphlet or book form is not yet decided. A first-class verbatim report is expensive, and our own experience of the sale of debates, at the price necessary to cover the cost of production, does not make us feel very optimistic in this instance.

Mr. Herbert Burrows lectures at South Place Institute this morning (March 26) at 11 o'clock on "B. V. and the City of Dreadful Night"—"B. V." of course, being James Thomson, who was a thorough-going Atheist as well as a powerful writer both in verse and prose. Mr. Burrows' lecture should be interesting, and some London "saints" will probably be glad to hear it.

Laindon is a sequestered, but a growing, place on the London, Tilbury, and Southend Railway, and a most astonishing place to find a Freethought agitation in. Its existence there is due to Mr. R. H. Rosetti, who has taken up his residence there. We hear that he has now succeeded in fixing up a public debate on "Is Christianity the True Revelation from God?" Such a debate is enough to shake Laindon to the very centre. It is to take place in the New Council School on Saturday evenings, April 1 and 8. The Christian champion is Mr. W. Skinner, of the International Bible Students' Association. The Freethought champion is Mr. Rosetti himself. Mr. A. W. Turner takes the chair on the first evening at 7, and Miss H. Pankhurst on the second evening. Some of our readers may happen to be able to drop in and hear this debate.

We understand that an important article on "The Policy of Secular Education" is to appear in the April number of *The Nineteenth Century—and After*. Its author is Mr. Halley Stewart, the new President of the Secular Education League, in succession to Lord Weardale. We understand it is not an apologetic but a fighting article, hitting out at the enemies of Secular Education all round. No doubt Freethinkers will turn to it with much interest. We hope to give some telling extracts from it next week.

Scientists and Religion.

"It is undoubtedly true that the investigation of science runs contrary to the unscientific thought has been tangled up with religion, as one tradition becomes affiliated with another. As I once said, much that we called religion is only the debris of our grandfathers' science."—PROFESSOR DAVID STARR JORDAN.

"Regarding your last question, if in my experience I have found men of science irreligious and anti-Christian, my observations and acquaintance with a few scientific men indicate that in the same way that most Churchmen are unscientific, so are most men of science irreligious."—DR. W. C. KENDALL.

"Scientific men, as far as I have found, are divided on these questions much as is the case with other people." PROFESSOR D. H. SCOTT.

See *Religious Beliefs of Scientists*, pp. 99, 154-159.

ARE scientific men religious or anti-religious? That is the question professed to be settled by a book, lately published by the North London Christian Evidence League, entitled *Religious Beliefs of Scientists*, by Arthur H. Tabrum.

Man has been described as a "collecting animal." Some go collecting with a shotgun or a net. Mr.

Tabrum has stalked his prey with a pen, and his bag consists of over a hundred letters from eminent men of science in England and America—only ten are American—whom he claims to be neither anti-Christian or anti-religious. These letters are eked out with extracts from works of other scientific men, bringing the number up to 163.

Mr. Drawbridge—who is the chairman of this five-words-long League—writes an introduction, in which he expresses an "earnest wish that the reader will approach the subject in a thoroughly critical and scientific spirit." Well, we shall be most happy to oblige Mr. Drawbridge.

We do not want, says Mr. Drawbridge, "the unsupported dogmas" of "Atheist demagogues in the parks," we want to know "What are the facts?" Well, some of the facts are rather curious. For instance, Lord Avebury will be surprised to find himself—in the list of Contents—under the heading "Chemists, Physicists, etc." And Sir J. Burdon-Sanderson, Sir W. Thiselton-Dyer, and Sir E. Ray Lankester, besides their other qualifications, will be astonished to find themselves under the heading "Philologists and Orientalists." But these are trifles, mere gnats, compared with the camels we shall meet with before we have finished.

In reply to a question by Mr. Drawbridge as to whether he had selected the letters for publication and kept others back, Mr. Tabrum replied that he had received forty-eight others besides those published, of which eighteen stated they could not reply to his questions; "of the remaining thirty letters, which are marked 'private,' or for which permission to publish has not been received, seventeen are from correspondents who are distinctly Christian; one, perhaps two, are Agnostic, and the remainder are favorable to the Christian position."

So we do not get all the letters. Under one pretext or another forty-eight of them are kept back. Having a pretty extensive acquaintance with "Christian Evidence," the withholding of these letters gives cause for the deepest suspicion and reduces the whole inquiry to a farce. For, mark, seventeen are claimed as "distinctly Christian"; but many of those published are claimed as supporters of Christianity who are nothing of the kind. And if a public man—writing upon religion—marks his letter "private," it is generally because it contains some heresy which he does not wish to be publicly known. But how many are marked "private"? We do not know. They may only number half-a-dozen, or less, for Mr. Tabrum says thirty "are marked 'private,' or for which permission to publish has not been received." This is the way the trick is worked: if the letter will not suit Mr. Tabrum's collection, it comes under the heading of "Permission to publish has not been received"; if it is found suitable, in it goes, or part of it. Christian evidences require handling as carefully as vipers.

Mr. Drawbridge also tells us that "none of the letters has been edited" (notice the "has been"). But what does he mean by edited? There is evidence all through the book that the letters have been edited. For instance, instead of giving us Sir Victor Horsley's letter, we are told what he said, and in its place given a quotation from an article of his in the *Nineteenth Century*. Only four lines are cited from Dr. Harmer's letter; from Professor Dixon's, three. Professor George Chrystal's is not given at all. In fact, you cannot be sure that you have the whole of any letter in the book. As an independent investigation the book is quite worthless. But let us investigate this jumble a little further.

Some of the greatest of modern scientists are absent, such as Darwin, Clifford, Tyndall, Huxley, and Spencer. Darwin and Spencer figure larger in the history of thought than any of the names included in this book; and Clifford, Tyndall, and Huxley are more than the equal to any of the scientists in their own special sciences—and they all rejected religion. And whereas we only get a few lines from those letters which do not answer Mr. Tabrum's purpose, we have pages of twaddle

from Professor Frank Cavers, who informs us that his duties include "turning out with the football and barriers teams," that "many of Darwin's theories have fallen to the ground," and that "the whole question of Evolution is in the melting-pot." Professor Cavers is singularly out of touch with the progress of modern science upon this subject, as he would find if he consulted the volume on *Darwin and Modern Thought*, published on the centenary of Darwin's birth, and containing twenty-nine essays by leading scientists of the day.

Sir Ray Lankester, who speaks with far higher authority than Professor Cavers, comes down heavily upon these pious detractors of Darwin. In his *Science from an Easy Chair*, published last year, chapter v. is entitled "Darwin's Theory Unshaken," in which he remarks:—

"It seems ill-mannered, if not ill-natured, that the year of the centenary of Charles Darwin's birth should be chosen by owners of anonymous pens in order to alarm the public mind with the preposterous statement that his celebrated and universally accepted theory of the origin of the species or kinds of plants and animals by natural selection, or 'the survival of favored races in the struggle for life,' is undermined and discredited. Such a statement once coolly made in the public press is necessarily believed by a large number of uninformed readers, and, for the moment, none the less harmful, because it is baseless. Those who seek to belittle Darwin's theory show, whenever they venture into particulars, that they do not know what Darwin's theory is" (p. 27).

After describing Darwin's theory, Sir Ray Lankester declares, "It is not possible to find any naturalist of consideration who does not accept it."

Upon the occasion of the celebration at Cambridge, in 1909, of the centenary of Darwin's birth, Sir Ray Lankester was chosen, as our leading scientist, by the Chancellor of the University to deliver an address as the representative of the Naturalists of the British Empire; other addresses being given by the leading scientists of the United States, of Russia, and of Germany. In his address, Sir Ray Lankester declared that the large majority of British naturalists proclaimed, "with no doubtful or qualifying phrase," that Darwin's "theory of the origin of species by natural selection.....remains whole and sound and convincing, in spite of every attempt to upset it."*

Professor Cavers appears to be a religious man first and a scientist afterwards. Let him stick to his football and barriers.

Mr. Tabrum approached these scientists in the guise of an innocent whose faith had been shaken by listening to an Atheist lecturer. Now, the great majority of professor's are engaged in teaching science in our universities, public schools, and technical institutions, and are not in a position of freedom and independence, for they have to teach the children of parents of the most diverse beliefs, mostly religious—at least, on the maternal side—and an open profession of Atheism would, in most cases, lead to strained relations, if not dismissal. A science teacher once told the present writer that he would not hold his position for a week if he were to publish his real opinions on religion.

In the circumstances, it is idle to expect an independent answer to a question dealing with religious belief.

Moreover, scientific men are no more fond of fighting theological bogies than other men. As Professor Huxley remarked, they "have no such aggressive tendencies":—

"They may, now and then, be stirred to momentary wrath by the unnecessary obstacles with which the ignorant or the malicious encumber, if they cannot bar the difficult path.....but they have better than mere antiquarian business in hand; and if dogmas, which ought to be mere fossils but are not, are not forced upon their notice, they are too happy to treat them as non-existent."†

Then, again, we find—even in the emasculated letters contained in this book—that scientists them-

selves flatly contradict one another. We reproduce a few opinions upon one subject: The Bible and Science:—

THE BIBLE SCIENTIFICALLY TRUE.

"Moreover, it is recognised that the Bible, as a record of truths, never falls foul of science in its search after truth."—*Prof. G. Sims Woodhead.*

"The more I study the Bible (the foundation of all real religion) the more convinced I am of its Divine origin and authority."—*Prof. Henry Mackintosh.*

"I am a student of science, and honestly say, that so far from there being antagonism between the Bible and physical science, the reverse is the case."—*Sir William de Abney.*

"The longer I live the more evidence meets me of the complete harmony between the Bible and Science."—*Prof. H. Orchard.*

THE BIBLE UNSCIENTIFIC.

"Many of the statements made in the Sacred Record in regard to the natural world are not consistent with actual fact. That has long been recognised."—*Prof. James Geikie.*

"The Genesis story of creation is to me a story, an allegory, and while it interests me greatly, it does not form a part of my religion."—*Prof. F. L. Charles.*

"It is, of course, true that scientific research has shown the imperfection of the cosmogony of the Old Testament, but it has done nothing more."—*Prof. Boyd Dawkins.*

"It is quite true that there are some facts of which we believe to be now well-ascertained which are at variance with some statements in the Bible; but these statements in no way affect matters of Faith."—*Prof. S. A. Saunders.*

It is noteworthy that out of this collection of one hundred and sixty-three scientists, less than half-a-dozen stand out for the scientific accuracy of the Bible. In fact, the great majority of them never mention the Holy Book; they avoid it as the Devil is said to avoid holy water. Those who uphold the science of the Bible to-day are fossil representatives of a bygone generation; even the Church has given up its defence. "The faintest resemblance of harmony," said Dean Farrar, in *The People's Bible History*, "between Genesis and physical science, can only be obtained by a licentious artificiality and casuistry of exegetic invention." And Canons Driver and Ryle are of the same opinion. More than forty years ago, Dr. Samuel Davidson, the learned Hebrew scholar, declared, "The reconcilers of Scripture and Science labor in vain."* It is far too late in the day to attempt to revive the belief in the scientific accuracy of the Bible.

It is useless for these Rip Van Winkle's—aroused from their slumbers by Mr. Tabrum—to vouch for the scientific truth of the Bible. Do they believe that everything was created in six days? That Adam was created out of dust and Eve out of one of Adam's ribs—surreptitiously extracted during his sleep? Do they believe in a universal Deluge and the fable of Noah's Ark? Do they believe in a talking donkey? In walls that fall down at the sound of trumpets, and all the other fairy tales contained in this book?

Science knows nothing of creation. Science teaches that things have arrived at their present condition through a process of evolution from the simple to the complex. It traces the evolution of man himself, down through various phases of civilisation, to the savage, feeding on raw flesh, without fire, without speech. Lower still, we find in the remains of the *Pithecanthropus Erectus*—the man-like Ape discovered by Dr. Dubois at Java—the link between man and the lower animals from which he descended. That is the teaching of Science. What does the Bible tell us about the origin of man?

The Bible knows nothing of the rise of man through countless ages from lower forms. It teaches that Adam was created suddenly—like the conjuror produces the rabbit from the empty hat. Instead of the rise of man, we are told of his fall. He was created perfect, he sinned and fell, and it is upon this dogma of "The Fall" that Christianity is founded. St. Paul declared that it was to redeem mankind from the consequences of Adam's sin that God sent his Son to suffer on the Cross.

Now, if instead of "The Fall," there was a rise of man, the whole fabric of Christianity collapses to the ground. Not one of the scientists in Mr.

* *Science from an Easy Chair*, 1910; p. 34.
† *Lay Sermons*, 1874; p. 277.

* *Fresh Revision of the English Old Testament* p. 101 published in 1878; but written in 1870.

Tabrum's book deals with this flat contradiction between the teaching of Science and the teaching of the Bible. What is the use of a thousand testimonies to the truth of the Bible unless these glaring contradictions are explained away?

It is a fact, well known to the legal profession, that you can very often obtain the answer you require by a judicious framing of the question, and Mr. Tabrum has an acute perception of this fact. In his letter of inquiry—or rather in the fragment of it we get on p. 7 of his book—after “freely acknowledging the very limited extent of his reading on the subjects referred to,” he adds, that he has come to the conclusion that “between true Science and true Religion there is no real antagonism.” Then he puts the following questions:—

- “1. Is there any real conflict between the facts of Science and the fundamentals of Christianity?”
2. Has it been your experience to find men of Science irreligious and anti-Christian?”

Of course, this is easily answered and commits the answerer to nothing. All depends on what you mean by “the fundamentals of Christianity.” Most educated people, who call themselves Christians, have given up all belief in the Old Testament and all the miracles in the New. The *fundamentals* of Christianity, for them, being the moral teachings of the New Testament. So that, having eliminated all the points wherein the Bible and Science come in contact, it is easy enough to subscribe to the first question, and, it is needless to say, most of the answerers gladly avail themselves of the non-committal character of the first question to get rid of Mr. Tabrum and his impertinent questions. Many of them assert that there is no conflict between “true science and true religion.” It would be just as sensible to say there is no conflict between “true arithmetic and true astronomy.” Two truths cannot come in conflict. What we want to know is, what they mean by “true religion”? Professor Turner, the astronomer, in his answer, goes straight to the point; he says:—

“Your questions can only be answered if they are made much more definite. ‘The essential teachings of the Christian religion,’ for instance, is a phrase which has meant many different things at different times, and generally much more than it ought to have meant..... Present opinion as to what is essential differs widely. The man of science naturally feels a disinclination to accept statements on mere authority, when authority proves so fickle” (p. 219).

We may remark here, that we nowhere get the letter which Mr. Tabrum addressed to the scientists, but we may gather a very fair idea of its contents from the answers given; for instance, on p. 100, Professor Boulger writes: “You quote a lecturer as saying that ‘no scientists are Christians.’” In a footnote to this, Mr. Tabrum explains, “This assertion was made in the spring of 1909.” We are not given the name of the lecturer or where he lectured; he appears from the blue, suddenly, with the marks of mythology strong upon him. Professor Boulger, with Christian meekness, remarks: “This is a lie, a monstrous lie.” No one will be surprised to hear that Professor Boulger is a Roman Catholic. But we should like to read the whole of Mr. Tabrum's letter, if it was only to see whether “a lecturer” made an “assertion” in the summer or autumn to match this spring chicken which arouses such unscientific excitement in the Professor's breast.

Professor A. H. Keane, says Mr. Tabrum, “writes that he does not think that ‘Christianity’ and ‘Science’ are reconcilable”; but, of course, we do not get his letter.

No doubt the forty unpublished letters contain many severe snubs to our inquisitive author; witness how he is fubbed off by Professor Arthur Church, who says:—

“I drew up a pretty full account of my own convictions in these matters; but, after further consideration, I could not but feel that I was scarcely justified in placing such a statement in the hands of a complete stranger.”

Professor D. S. Jordan is another scientist who does not extend much sympathy, for he cruelly remarks that, “much that we called religion was only the debris of our grandfathers' science.” It is to be feared that this caustic remark applies only too faithfully to Mr. Tabrum's own religious beliefs.

Professor Ball is included among the believers on the strength of his citing a hymn verse in a lecture to children, and a reference to a “Higher Power” in a lecture at the pious Victoria Institute.

Nikola Tesla is also made to testify, although he declared himself incompetent to answer the question. He also speaks of a “Higher principle,” but what this has to do with the Bible, Christianity, or God, Mr. Tabrum leaves us completely in the dark. Perhaps he thinks that when they use the Lord's Prayer, they commence “Our Higher Power, who art in heaven.” As Voltaire remarked of the prophet Habakkuk, he seems to be capable of anything.

However, we have had one good laugh out of Mr. Tabrum's book—it is in the connection he traces between Christianity and the rise of Japan. Professor Ewing, in replying to his questions, sends a lecture delivered by him at Tokio twenty-five years ago, while in the employ of the Japanese Government. This, with three others by different authors, dealing with Christianity, were published in both English and Japanese. Mr. Tabrum evidently regards this as what Dick Swiveller would call “a stagerer,” for he gravely and impressively remarks:

“It is necessary to place these facts before the reader on account of the sweeping assertion, often made by the enemies of religion, that the civilisation and progress of Japan during the last twenty years are not in the slightest measure due to a knowledge of Christian thought.”

So that it was through these tracts making the Japanese acquainted with the religion of the so-called “Prince of Peace” that enabled them to smash the Russian battleships and repulse the armies of the Czar on the battlefields of Manchuria.

If Mr. Tabrum's reading—as he acknowledges—had been less “limited,” he would have known that when the Japanese Government began to put their national affairs in order, a Commission was appointed to inquire into the advisability of making Christianity the established religion of the State. After an exhaustive inquiry, the Commission reported against making the change. The Japanese adopted the European civilisation but they would have nothing to do with our religion, they knew too much about it.

Then we come upon Dr. Andrew Crommelin, who writes “As an enthusiastic adherent of the Catholic Church,” and Professor Windle, who cites Volta, Ampere, Coulomb, Pasteur, Mendel, and Butler Burke, as adherents of the Roman Catholic Church. But what are these doing in Mr. Tabrum's galley? Mr. Tabrum is not a Catholic. But why not? Here are distinguished men of science who are. The whole of Mr. Tabrum's argument—if it can be called an argument—is an attempt to bludgeon the unbeliever into submission by the weight of great names, and yet he flatly refuses to believe in the religion of the great men last cited! Mr. Tabrum, like the veriest quack doctor, refuses to take his own medicine; it may do for other people, but he is not taking any himself.

The fact is, as Professor Scott says in his letter in the same book, “Scientific men, as far as I have found, are divided on these questions much as is the case with other people” (p. 99). Scientists are agreed as to the facts of astronomy, physics, mathematics, and all the other sciences in so far as they are proved. But when it comes to religion, we find all varieties of belief and unbelief—because the subject is not capable of proof.

When we first departed from the religion of our grandmother, we were sarcastically asked whether we knew better than believers like Newton and Faraday? We see the same argument advanced in some of the letters in this book. We find the names of Newton and Faraday, among others,

cited as a proof that science is not incompatible with religion.

In a future article we will show what they did believe, and why, and inquire whether they are safe guides for us in this matter.

W. MANN.

TOLERATION AND BLASPHEMY.

No quarter whatever should be given to the bigotry of people so unfit for social life as to insist not only that their own prejudices and superstitions should have the fullest toleration but that everybody else should be compelled to think and act as they do. Every service in St. Paul's Cathedral is an outrage to the opinions of the congregation of the Roman Catholic Cathedral at Westminster. Every Liberal meeting is a defiance and a challenge to the most cherished opinions of the Unionists.....I deny that anybody has the right to demand more from me, over and above lawful conduct in a general sense, than liberty to stay away from the theatre in which my plays are represented. If he is unfortunate enough to have a religion so petty that it can be insulted (any man is as welcome to insult my religion, if he can, as he is to insult the universe) I claim the right to insult it to my heart's content, if I choose, provided I do not compel him to come and hear me.—*Bernard Shaw, Preface to "The Showing Up of Blanco Posnet."*

THE TRIUMPH OF SECULARISM.

It is Secularism that is hastening on the cause of moral and intellectual freedom in every land, spreading abroad the good news that science is beginning to formulate the laws of life, asserting in the face of all selfish institutions that human nature has a right not merely to its daily bread, but to its daily love and joy. It is only in so far as Christianity is itself secular that it is of the slightest influence upon the age in which we live.—*Robert Buchanan.*

TRUE SECULARISM.

Human love and self-respect, human science and verification, human perception of the limitation of knowledge, have done more in half a century than the doctrine of other-worldliness has done in nineteen hundred years.—*Robert Buchanan.*

Obituary.

We deeply deplore the death of Mr. George Payne, of Sorn Lea, Whalley Range, Manchester, which occurred from heart failure on Saturday night, March 18. He went to bed in good spirits, and was found dead in the morning, with no sign of anything but a sudden and peaceful passing out of life. Mr. Payne had been associated with the Freethought cause for more than thirty years, and was always one of its most generous supporters. In the eighties he was an active leader of the Secular movement in Manchester. Of late years his health had been too unsatisfactory to allow of his doing more than subscribe. This he did to some purpose. He was the largest subscriber to the N. S. S. President's Honorarium Fund, and within the last two or three years he has donated £250 to the Secular Society, Ltd. Mr. Payne was one of our oldest friends, and we always held him in the highest respect. He was both intellectually and morally a very noticeable man; one never likely to be forgotten by those who knew him. As a husband and a father he was as near perfection as human nature could reach. There was nothing malicious, nothing unkind about him; his impulses were all in the direction of considerateness and humanity. He seemed devoid even of the little vanities of human nature. His mind was turned to the great interests of life and to serious principles. As a Freethinker he was thorough-going and strongly in favor of the forward policy. The longer he lived the more he was convinced of its wisdom. Mr. Payne's remains were cremated at Manchester on Wednesday at one o'clock. Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner delivered the funeral address. Mr. Foote being unfortunately unable to attend, Mr. Lloyd was present to represent the National Secular Society and the Secular Society, Ltd.

At Borough-road, North Shields, on the 14th inst., aged 37 years, Annie Caroline, dearly beloved wife of John Lawson, daughter of George and H. M. Duncan, and granddaughter of the late Thomas Thompson. Interred at Preston Cemetery on Saturday last.

American Piety.

We have been favored with the following lively cutting from a London evening newspaper:—

"FIGHT AT A PRAYER MEETING.

MINISTER KILLED IN THE PULPIT.

As the result of a duel with knives, fought in the pulpit of the Rock Creek Baptist Church at Williamsbury, Kentucky, the Rev. Robert Vanover is dead, his throat being badly cut, and the Rev. Isaac Perry and his cousin, Mr. Blaine Perry, are in gaol under indictment. More than 100 prominent residents of the county who witnessed the fatal fight have been subpoenaed as witnesses.

This duel (according to the *Daily Telegraph* correspondent in New York) was fought at the opening of the evening prayer meeting. Recently charges had been preferred against Dr. Vanover, and pending the trial, Dr. Perry filled the pulpit last night. Dr. Vanover had been excluded from the meeting by the trustees, but when the prayer meeting was convened he walked up the aisle and stepped into the pulpit.

According to the witnesses, Dr. Perry immediately hastened toward Dr. Vanover, followed by Mr. Blaine Perry, and forthwith both ministers clinched and swayed about on the raised platform on which stands the pulpit. The men had been struggling but a moment when several knives flashed out, and in another moment Dr. Vanover was dying from a gash in the neck.

Those nearest the combatants assert that Mr. Blaine Perry took a hand in the fight as soon as knives were brought into play, and held Dr. Vanover while the Rev. Isaac Perry deliberately drew the blade across his adversary's throat. A panic ensued when the flock realised what had happened. Dr. Vanover died within a few minutes after sinking down near the pulpit, and both the Perrys were arrested and hurried to gaol.

Several of the relatives of Dr. Vanover say that the fight between the two families has just begun, and two of them stated openly that they will kill Dr. Perry unless the jury finds him guilty of murder in the first degree and the judge sentences him to be hanged. They say that the charges brought against Dr. Vanover do not warrant the murder of their relative. The Perrys, however, claim that Vanover first drew a knife.

Dr. Vanover was one of the most widely known mountain preachers in Kentucky. He 'rode circuit' for many years, and had acquired a considerable reputation as a preacher of the gospel in remote country districts."

The correspondent who favors us with this lively cutting sends us the following lively letter with it:—

"MY DEAR FOOTE,—

I am sending you herewith a cutting from a newspaper which explains itself.

Kentucky is for the most part a mountainous country, and it is said that, physically, the Kentuckians are the tallest and finest specimens of the English race to be found anywhere in the world. It appears that their bodies must have grown at the expense of their brain, for we find that their intellectual capacity, especially as regards religion, is no farther advanced than in our neighboring principality—Wales. They have the same religious orgies, the same revivals in which the same people are converted and saved over and over again, and, in fact, all the religious tomfoolery that one finds in Wales. Moreover, it is that particular State in the American Union where the internal Revenue Officers have the greatest trouble in performing their duties. It is the land of Illicit Stills, where the greater majority of the people are extremely pious, and where no work is done on Sunday except to shoot Revenue Officers. As many as twenty Revenue Officers have been killed in a single raid. Kentucky is the land of family feuds. Some of the Kentuckian families have kept up a feud for more than a hundred years, and some families have lost over a hundred members in the continuous fight that has been going on for so many years. The Kentuckians are said to be the makings of the best soldiers in the world. It was the Kentucky riflemen that defeated the British General, Pakenham, at New Orleans; and in the Mexican War of 1848 they proved themselves to be made of the right kind of stuff.

In civilisation they have not advanced very far, as is witnessed by the numerous religious revivals which have been going on for so many years.

Yours sincerely,

AMERICAN."

THE CHURCH OF THE DEAD GOD.

Suppose one could bring one of the rough Galilean fishermen who sowed the seed of the faith into a cathedral, and say to him, "This is the fruit of your teaching; you, whose mouths never spoke a word of art or music, who taught poverty and simplicity, bareness of life and an unclouded heart, you are honored here; these towers and bells are called after your names; you stand in gorgeous robes in these storied windows," would they not think and say that it was all a terrible mistake?—*A. C. Benson.*

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, "Christianity and Peace."

STRATFORD TOWN HALL: 7.30, J. T. Lloyd, "The Tragedy of Calvary and Modern Criticism."

OUTDOOR.

EDMONTON BRANCH N. S. S. (The Green): 7, W. Davidson, "How the Church Treasured Books."

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

COUNTRY.**INDOOR.**

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 12 noon, Class; 6.30, Miss Pemberton, a Lecture.

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): J. A. Hobson, M.A., "The Referendum as an Instrument of Democracy."

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N. S. S. (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 7, Bert Killip, "Christianity and the Social Revolution."

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, "Esperanto." With blackboard illustrations.

RHONDDA BRANCH N. S. S. (Parry's Temperance Bar, Tony-pandy): 3, Thomas Evans, "The Soul and its Temple."

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

Secretary—Miss E. M. VANCE.

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

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

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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.

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