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We have been born out of the eternal silence; and now we will live,—live for ourselves,—and not as the pall-bearers of a funeral, but as the upholders and creators of our age.—EMERSON.

Shakespeare's Day.

APRIL the sixteenth was Easter Sunday, and Easter Sunday is the moveable anniversary of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. We may feel pretty certain, therefore, that the event it celebrates belongs to the region of romance. Historical anniversaries occur on the same day every year. When an anniversary depends upon the sun and the moon it is not historical but mythical.

April the twenty-third is St. George's Day—the date in the calendar devoted to England's patron saint. And who was St. George? Emerson says he was George of Cappadocia, an enterprising scoundrel who became a Bishop, and was deservedly lynched by the mob in A.D. 361. This account of him is fiercely repudiated by Ruskin. The real St. George, he argues, was a Cappadocian, it is true, but not a rascally bacon-seller and army contractor. He suffered martyrdom in A.D. 290, and was a most noble and praiseworthy character. But does it matter very much, at this time of day, whether St. George of England is the ecclesiastical gentleman who was martyred in A.D. 290 or the one who was lynched in A.D. 361? England's real patron saint, if we may use the phrase, is a very different person from either of them. His name is William Shakespeare.

These near-lying anniversaries of Jesus Christ, St. George, and Shakespeare suggest certain reflections. Of the first, little if anything is known; for the incidents in the Gospels are nearly all miraculous, and consequently incredible. Of the second the very identity is disputed. Of the third we know that he lived in England three hundred years ago; that he was a handsome man; that his nature was so sweet that the epithet of "gentle" was the one most frequently applied to him by his contemporaries, including Ben Jonson; and that he also happened to be the greatest poet of his native land, and probably of the whole world. We might say *undoubtedly* the greatest poet of the whole world, but the statement is not necessary to our argument. It is enough that Shakespeare is the greatest poet of England. That fact justifies his selection as our "patron saint." For what is a poet? Shelley said that poets were the "unacknowledged legislators of mankind." Others wield visible power; they wield invisible influence. They most profoundly affect the intellectual and moral atmosphere of our lives. They govern as by "looks of beauty and words of good." They move us through our higher natures. They are thus associated with all our upward tendencies and strivings. They kindle our imaginations, quicken our sympathies, and purify our passions. Such is the function of all true poets, and mankind has always instinctively placed them in the highest category. What then is the place and the value of the greatest poet? Carlyle said that England, if compelled to make the

choice, would give up her Indian Empire, rather than give up Shakespeare. The hero-worshiper meant well, but it was a weak comparison. The alternatives were incommensurable. The Indian Empire ministers to England's pride and very little else—except the personal interest of certain "upper" classes; if it were given up England would still be England—as sound, and perhaps sounder, in head and heart and hand; but to cut Shakespeare out of England's conscious vitality would be an awful operation and involve an unimaginable loss.

Setting St. George utterly aside, and taking Jesus Christ and William Shakespeare, we ask any candid and competent person, who is not under the glamor of early, though perhaps faded, belief in the former's divinity, whether there is any real comparison between them. Suppose we accept all that is ascribed to Jesus Christ in the gospels as having fallen from his lips, what sort of relation does it bear to the mighty mass of poetry and philosophy that came from the brain of William Shakespeare? It is idle to say that the Jew died twenty years younger than the Englishman. That may be true, but it cannot be helped, and we have to go by the facts as they are—not as they might be wished or conceived. And, judging by the facts, it appears to us, at any rate, that the central figure of the New Testament is a child in comparison with the profound and majestic spirit which informs the work of the myriad-minded poet who revealed himself to us through his wonderful creations. *Revealed*, we say, and *revealed there*; because, when all is said and done, and every record has been examined, weighed, and tabulated, the dictum of Emerson still remains true, that the only biographer of Shakespeare is Shakespeare himself.

Much eloquence has been expended on Jesus Christ, but little of it strikes us as really sincere, and most of it as strained and hectic. But as Jack Falstaff could say that he was not only witty in himself, but the cause that wit was in other men, so it might be said of Shakespeare that he was not only "inspired" himself but a source of "inspiration" to nearly all the best writers since his death. Goethe, Coleridge, Lamb, De Quincey, Carlyle, Emerson (to take only writers in English) have almost eclipsed themselves in praising Shakespeare. Arnold's sonnet has a grand air that is not easy to match in his other work. Even the dainty and rather dilettante Leigh Hunt rises into a more vivid and powerful expression when he says of some early work of Shakespeare's, in the midst of lesser men's, that "we feel the touch of his electric hand." Meredith's sonnets on Shakespeare are rich and splendid. Swinburne would have exhausted the resources of panegyric, if the eulogy of Shakespeare could ever come to an end. And even the wayward and somewhat histrionic Mr. Bernard Shaw—who is, nevertheless, solid and sincere enough at bottom—goes on "taking the cheek out" of Shakespeare with ever-increasing additions of positive glorification; so that we may yet live to see him declare with a laugh that he was not deprecating, but illuminating, the praise of Shakespeare all the time. Yes, if England must have a patron saint, let it be Shakespeare. We can *all* look up to *him*.

G. W. FOOTE.

"Christian Charity."

I WAS hoping it would be unnecessary for anything more to be said about my debate with the Rev. Dr. J. Warschauer, except an announcement of its publication. Unfortunately this is not the case, and the reader will find the explanation as he proceeds through the following paragraphs.

It will be recollected that the *British Congregationalist*, representing the Church to which Dr. Warschauer belongs, said it would have preferred that "he should not have got into conflict with the audience in his closing speech, despite their unfriendliness." I am sorry, though not now surprised, to see Dr. Warschauer defending and even aggravating his fault. This is what he allows himself to reply to his friendly critic:—

"It occurs to me, as it might to most of your readers, that a speaker on behalf of Theism is *ipso facto* 'in conflict' with an atheistic audience, and that when that audience indulges in constant interruptions and general rowdyism towards that speaker, the 'conflict' is merely intensified."

This calls for a little plain speaking. I believe Dr. Warschauer had never been in such a debate before; I have been in many, and I can say from experience that the two meetings at Caxton Hall were *not* disorderly. "Constant interruptions" is an absurd expression. The Christian chairman, at the close of the first night's debate, congratulated all concerned on the pleasant way in which it had been conducted. The interruptions occurred in the second half of the second night's debate, when Dr. Warschauer, for reasons of his own, not difficult to guess, deliberately kept on irritating his audience, talking *at* them instead of *to* them, and doing his utmost to stir up bad blood. Christians interrupted him as well as Freethinkers. They resented his insults. As for "general rowdyism" it is more absurd, if possible, than "constant interruptions." The only rowdyism I saw was Dr. Warschauer's studied provocations to the audience, and the extraordinary antics of his friend and ex-colleague, the Rev. Mr. Wallace, who sat next to him on the platform.

What on earth does Dr. Warschauer mean by "an Atheistic audience"? Let him ask the Christian half of the joint committee of management how many tickets they sold? The answer might show him that there was a greater proportion of Christians present than his arguments and eloquence succeeded in demonstrating.

The fact is, that Dr. Warschauer cultivates, probably without knowing it, an offensive, ill-conditioned manner. He addresses me, for instance, in some correspondence I have had with him about publishing the debate, as God Almighty, in a moment of forgetfulness, might address a cockroach. It does not make me angry; it only affords me amusement. But I can understand others taking it more seriously.

My correspondence with Dr. Warschauer has not led to anything. He does not accept my offer to publish the debate, and he makes no suggestion of his own. I have offered to publish it at my own risk, leaving him a share in any profit, or to let him publish it for the Christians while I publish it for the Freethinkers. He agrees to nothing. He says he does not want my "company." I am not offering him my company, nor do I seek his. I am merely suggesting how an opportunity may be provided for persons who wish to read our debate.

I have done my best to get the debate published, and I have failed. I conclude that Dr. Warschauer does not wish it to be published. Perhaps the best course is to let the matter drop, and try to forget both the debate and my opponent.

I am sorry, however, that it has ended in this way. It is the first debate of mine that ever led to a quarrel. I said some nice things about Dr. Warschauer before the debate, and I should have been glad to go on saying them, but he will have it otherwise. And I perceive that "Christian charity" is no better with the "New" Theology than with the Old.

G. W. FOOTE.

Determinism and Morals.

IT would be passing strange if in any examination of fallacies in reasoning such a verbal quagmire as the subject of Determinism *versus* Freewill has always shown itself to be, should not furnish some striking examples. As an illustration of this, I take one or two instances from the writings of Mr. F. C. S. Schiller, one of the most interesting and suggestive of the newer school of philosophical writers. Mr. Schiller nearly always writes with great force and acuteness, and it is, therefore, the more interesting to note that so careful a writer only succeeds in making out a case against Determinism by, in one case begging the whole question, in another by misstating, and in another by drawing conclusions that do not clearly follow from the admitted premises.

In the last edition of his *Riddles of the Sphinx* (1910), Mr. Schiller points out, quite correctly, that it is only rarely that a human being feels that he "must," or that he "ought" to do, a certain thing. In the vast majority of cases he simply acts. He then goes on to point out, in illustration of his contention, that a maximum and minimum consciousness of freedom is possessed by the man who is most vividly conscious of his capacity of choosing to do one thing or the other. (This is a question-begging way of putting the matter, since a man is not conscious of the capacity to choose one of two courses—or, at least, whether he is not is the question at issue. All he is clearly conscious of is the presence of conflicting desires, and that under certain conditions his choice might fall on this side or on that.) He is correct in explaining this as the equivalent of intellectual irresolution and of moral instability. To be conscious of the desire to do wrong is an admission of the near possibility of doing wrong. "It is the mark of the imperfection of his nature, of the lack of stability and harmony in the interaction of its elements."

Next, he points out that the man who experiences "the maximum consciousness of necessity," who feels that "can't help doing" a thing, is in the same position.

He is "in a high state of moral tension." His nature is ill-adapted to the functions of life, there is friction between the higher and lower elements, he succumbs to the temptation and is enslaved by it.

Both of these statements may be taken as substantially correct, although objection might be taken to some of the phrasing. A "high state of moral tension," for example, is characteristic of all action. Tension is a word descriptive of the state of forces before action; whether it be the tension of a bow before the arrow is discharged, or the tension of forces generated in the nerve centres that immediately precedes action. It is the tension that leads to the discharge. But what really emerges from Mr. Schiller's statement is not a presumption in favor of "Freedom," but a strong presumption in favor of Determinism. For if a consciousness of the fact of choosing, and a consciousness of a feeling of impulsion to act in a definite manner—and this feeling could not exist without a consciousness of the presence of conflicting impulses—are both illustrations of a nature that is imperfectly developed in relation to social requirements; it follows that the more perfectly developed character is one in which neither a consciousness of compulsion or freedom is present. The right action follows the stimulus as the spontaneous expression of the nature of the agent. There is not alone a decrease in a consciousness of choice, there is a decreased possibility of choice.

Now, this is what scientific Determinism has always insisted is the case. Instead of a strong consciousness of choice, a strong sense of deliberation, being essential to morality, it is, except in cases where it is a matter of purely intellectual choice, the indication of an imperfectly adjusted character. The man who is conscious of a choice between lying and not lying, stealing or not stealing,

is a less perfectly developed character than the one who is not conscious of a struggle as to which he is to do. A struggle to overcome vice is not an indication of a strong character, but of an unstable one. The ideally perfect character would be conscious of no struggle to do right, because such an one would find nothing in his nature prompting him to do otherwise. And thus the common cry that Determinism destroys morality by reducing man to an automaton, is sheer nonsense, because all training and education tends in this direction. This, indeed, is the chief significance attached to the formation of good habits. The whole meaning of habit, and the whole importance of their formation, lies in their accomplishing what believers in Freewill assert ought not to be.

Curiously enough, in a succeeding chapter on "Choice," Mr. Schiller attacks Determinism in the orthodox manner, quite ignoring the significance of the point upon which he had previously placed so much stress. The real difficulty of Determinism is, he says, that in its world, events being fully determined, there can be no alternatives. The crime is inevitable, and so is the punishment. To speculate as to whether things could have been different to what they are is an indication of stupidity. Things are what they must be. They must be because they are. No man can help doing what he does. Nay, he asks, can we, in any genuine sense, say that he does anything at all? Every act of man is determined, and man himself is only a stage in a sequence unending and unbroken. "To imagine, therefore, that Determinism, after annihilating the moral agent, remains compatible with morality, simply means that the logical implications of the doctrine have never been fully explored." Morality goes under Determinism because the notions of agency, power, choice, and possibility lose all meaning.

This is what Mr. Schiller calls the "real difficulty" of Determinism. And Determinism, he says, has never answered it. Now, as a convinced Determinist, I do not take kindly to being accused of a lack of courage to explore the logical possibilities of Determinism, or to feel that an objection such as Mr. Schiller raises has never been answered. Personally, I believe it has been answered, and more than once. Of course, if Mr. Schiller means that the difficulty has never been answered to *his* satisfaction, no one can dispute the accuracy of his statement. But that is a horse of quite another color. And, of necessity, a great deal will depend upon the meanings we attach to the words used. Mr. Schiller himself says that the reason why the question is, in its ordinary form insoluble, is because neither party has sufficiently analysed the terms it uses. I think Mr. Schiller is hardly aware how fully this applies to his own argument. For, instead of taking the facts and giving meanings to the language used in accordance therewith, he is obviously coming to a study of the problem with ready-made meanings, and disputing the significance of the facts because they do not allow him to use language in the sense he desires.

The whole point of Mr. Schiller's attack is, it will be noted, that Determinism is incompatible with moral distinctions, and therefore annihilates morality. First of all, I may clear the ground by saying that I accept in the fullest and most unequivocal manner the position that all that is—including human conduct—is the exact equivalent of all preceding forces and circumstances, and that at no point is there any break in fact. I not only agree that the crime is inevitable and the social resentment which expresses itself as punishment equally so, but that resentment loses all significance and defies comprehension unless it is strictly determined by the action to which it relates itself.

Now, my first point is that, accepting all this in its most extreme form, nothing can suffer, nothing can be better or worse, because everything remains as it, and as it must be—including all the facts, feelings, and consequences of the moral life. Observe, it is part of Mr. Schiller's case against Determinism that on deterministic lines everything, down to the

minutest happening, is the necessary result of all antecedent and co-operating conditions. But if this be true, and if Determinism leaves no room for chance or absolute origination, it is surely approaching perilously near the absurd to argue that in seeing Determinism to be the true theory of things, we can really annihilate morality or anything else. The sequence, Mr. Schiller holds, is unbroken and unbreakable. Granted; but in this case how comes it that our acceptance of Determinism breaks an unbreakable sequence? It may alter our ideas of the nature of things; but in so far as it does this it is destroying nothing real—unless we call illusion a reality. Actually he is crediting Determinism with doing what he declares on lines of Determinism it is impossible for it to accomplish. So far as morality is a real thing, so far as the facts of the moral life are real things, Determinism must leave them substantially unaltered. Agency, power, possibility, choice, remain what they were, and with all the real value they ever possessed. The real question at issue is in what sense these terms are to be accepted. And this is to be decided, not by testing the facts with preconceived meanings, but by testing our meanings by reference to the facts.

Personally, I deny that morality is essentially concerned with the question of whether man's will is "free" or not. The rightness or wrongness of any action lies in its consequences. This is true whether we are of the utilitarian or any other school of moralists. The fact is expressed differently, but it remains. An action without consequences—assuming its possibility—could not be called either moral or immoral. But consequences remain, whether man has a free will or not. The effect of my actions on me, and their effect on other people, are what they are whether we believe in Determinism or Indeterminism. Murder, to take an extreme instance, is never likely to become an everyday occupation within a society, whether its members become convinced Determinists or remain upholders of an unscientific theory of volition. What a science of morals is really concerned with is the consequences of actions as they affect members of a social group, and with the feelings that prompt the performance of such actions. But it is in no way vitally concerned with the question of whether those feelings or actions are the expression of a "free" being, or whether they are the outcome of the most rigid Determinism. When a science of morals has determined what feelings and actions are of value in determining desirable relations between human beings, its task as a science of morals is done. The genesis of these feelings and ideas belong properly to psychology, as the maintenance of conditions that will give them opportunity for expression and development belong to sociology.

C. COHEN.

(To be concluded.)

The Cross and Criticism.

THIS is Low Sunday, so called because it lies at the bottom of Easter, and closes it. It is, therefore, a day on which we can appropriately discuss anew the Christian interpretation of Easter. As everybody knows, Easter is an ancient Pagan festival remodelled to meet the requirements of a religion that possesses nothing peculiar to itself. The most momentous event, alleged to have occurred during Easter, is the Crucifixion. The importance of the Resurrection, declared to have happened on Easter Day, is wholly dependent on the view taken of the Crucifixion. If Christianity were true, Good Friday would stand out as absolutely the most sacred day known to history. The object of the Resurrection was to declare to the whole world that the person put to death between two thieves on Good Friday was none other than the Son of God (Rom. i. 4). It is not at all surprising that Paul and the orthodox

Church should assign the supreme place to the doctrine of the Cross. This doctrine may be summed up in the statement that the death of Christ was "a supreme act of atonement for human transgression," or "the means of a world's redemption." The Rev. G. A. Johnston Ross, M.A., in an extremely well-written and interesting article in the current number of the *Hibbert Journal*, gives expression to his firm belief that the religion of the Cross, as orthodoxly understood, is destined to be the religion of the future; but the plaint of his article is that it is not the religion of the present generation of Christians, and this is the reason, in his opinion, why the Churches are in a moribund condition. This is how he puts it:—

"Thirty years ago, the ordinary intelligent Christian man based his personal religion on what Christ had done for him, conspicuously in his atoning death. This was the ground of his acceptance with and standing before God, the source of his freedom and joy in religion and in life and in the prospect of death, the reason for a perpetual attitude of gratefulness, a sense of infinite debt and of the infinitude of duty; and, above all perhaps, the cause of a sense of enshelterment and protection, the ground of an inexpugnable and imperturbable peace. To-day, if such experiences exist, they are somehow relegated to the field of the subconscious, or they are prolegomena assumed without a moment's emphasis, like the axioms of Euclid, they lie below the articulation-level in personal religion, and they do not rise above it because they are not needed in relating the personal life to the exigencies of the time."

Mr. Johnston Ross is seriously convinced that this doctrine and this experience of the atoning work done on the Cross must be restored to their former pre-eminence if Christianity is to survive. Under existing conditions, however, such a restoration is impossible. The old atoning Savior is no longer needed, because science has robbed mankind of the sense of sin and the fear of death. Mr. Johnston Ross once called on one of the most eminent of the Scottish clergy, whom he found preparing an address for the General Assembly of the Church of which he was the presiding officer. The great man said to him:—

"I am writing about the changes in the evangelical outlook. We older evangelicals know what Christ did for us on Calvary; but what precisely does *this beautiful Apollo*, whom your younger men adore, do for you?"

So enormously great are the changes in the evangelical outlook that it is impossible to contemplate them honestly without coming to the conclusion that in the majority of the Protestant Churches Christianity is a thing of the past. These are Mr. Ross's own words:—

"This, then, is the quintessence of the Christianity of the hour—helpfulness. In the dim background of a history semi-legendary, semi-mythological, lies the Titanic struggle of the Son of God with Sin and Death in the agonies of Calvary—flung back there as we flung back the legends of Arthur, Beowulf, and Siegfried, while the Christianity of the hour is, as Sir Oliver Lodge said of cultured men, 'not bothering about its sins,' but is reducing itself to the spurious simplicity of Helpfulness."

In reality, "the Christianity of the hour" is not Christianity at all, but Secularism wearing a Christian mask, or Humanism deceitfully using a Christian label, or Naturalism sailing under Supernatural colors. One has only to study the elaborate machinery resorted to by the Churches, or to examine the methods adopted in the conduct of revivals, in order to see clearly how radically false all Christian claims and professions are. But the point to be pressed just now is that the orthodox doctrine of the Cross has been finally discredited by modern science. Intelligent people can no longer hold the view that the human race is in a fallen and sinful condition, lying under the wrath of a righteous God, doomed to perish everlastingly unless it puts its trust in the atoning sacrifice of Christ. We have acquired knowledge during the last thirty years, and we are able to testify that we are members of a race that has been slowly rising for upwards of a hundred thousand years. Numerous and grievous imperfec-

tions cling to us still; but, on the whole, we stand higher and behave better to-day than we ever did before. Our mistakes and blunders and shortcomings are doubtless a great host; but they affect us only in our relations to our fellow-beings. Once a man accepts the theory of evolution he logically renders the belief in the natural sinfulness and lostness of mankind an intolerable absurdity.

Mr. Johnston Ross, speaking of the definition of sin as selfishness, rightly asks: "Do not the Christian Scriptures rather represent sin as primarily that warp in human nature which makes us refuse God, or what is called in the New Testament *unbelief*?" In the Gospels and in many of the Epistles the only thing that damns a man for ever is unbelief. The worst man that lives is saved, if he only believes; but the best man living is lost, if he believes not. Such has always been the teaching of Christianity, and the moment that teaching is dropped Christianity ceases to be. Those who aver that sin is nothing but selfishness in social conduct no longer hold "the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints," or, in other words, they have denied the faith and are worse than unbelievers.

The sense of sin and the fear of death are inseparable twins. Bereft of the consciousness of guilt, the modern man is also divested of the moral dread of the end. Mr. Johnston Ross little thought that he was surrendering the case for Christianity when he penned the following passage:—

"Everyone who has studied or tried to preach the Cross knows that a vivid apprehension of its value lives only in a certain atmosphere of moral hopes and desires, in the atmosphere of a specific moral condition. That moral condition is described in the New Testament as 'being saved,' an atmosphere which has two main constituent elements, those of consciousness of guilt and of fear of death. The impulse that cries out for atonement is that into which the man is wedged who sees his sin *there*, who feels that it has travelled up to God, who knows that that means the impossibility of cheap absolutions, who at once confesses and disowns the sin in that last paradox of the contrite conscience. Again, while death is airily defied, or its terror unrealised, the Cross may not be needed. If death be regarded on its physical side only, its terrors may be overcome by methods not strictly religious; but there is literally no fear like the fear that men have of death, to whom its moral meaning has been made plain."

The reader has doubtless noticed the wrong use of the adjective "moral" in the above extract. The condition described in the New Testament as "being saved" is a purely emotional, but not in the remotest sense a moral, condition. What on earth is the "moral" meaning of death? Death simply brings a man's moral life to a period. In dying we pass out of all moral relations with our fellows. It is the total lack of "moral meaning" that characterises death. The truth is that both the consciousness of guilt and the fear of death are emotional conditions into which people easily work themselves when their belief in the holiness of God and in their own exceeding sinfulness is sufficiently strong and vivid. This two-fold belief is infused into the child's mind at the earliest possible moment, and it is by means of this belief that the preachers, in later years, so artistically play upon the feelings in order to produce what they call a conviction, or realisation, of sin. They paint their hearers in the blackest possible colors, and they do it so persistently that their hearers begin to think that the portrayal is true. Then the emotion of fear is awakened and carried up to the highest pitch of excitement. As soon as it is thought that the tension of the feelings is sufficiently developed, when convicted sinners tremble on the brink of the Bottomless Pit, then the Cross is pointed out as the God of love's graciously provided way out of the hands of the God of wrath.

Nothing is more certain than that most preachers and professional revivalists are, superficially, exceedingly sincere; but it is equally undeniable that the sense of sin and the fear of death are not inherent in human nature. They are in every case preceded by the belief in a God who can either

punish or forgive what is described as sin against him. Those who grow up without such a belief go through life in a state of great mental tranquility, without the slightest twinge of guilt, or the least "dread of something after death" which only "puzzles the will," and "makes cowards" of all who have it; and to them the Cross has absolutely no meaning, except merely as an abandoned instrument of barbaric execution. The legend of "the Titanic struggle of the Son of God with Sin and Death" they treat in exactly the same way as they treat the legends of Arthur and Beowulf and Siegfried, or just as Christian divines treat the innumerable Sons of God and God-men who figure in Pagan mythologies. That is the only rational course to follow. No stronger or more conclusive argument for the non-existence of the Christian God can possibly be framed than the Christian doctrine of the Cross, which is mocked by history and demolished by Reason.

J. T. LLOYD.

Sabbatarianism and Cinematograph Shows.

IF we refer to the Book of Common Prayer of the Established Church, and turn to the "Communion Service," we find that it opens with the "Lord's Prayer," a "Collect," and the Jewish "Decalogue" or ten commands to the people of Israel, said to have been given by Yahveh, through Moses, to that people, then called "Children" of Israel. It is with the Decalogue we have to deal in this article.

We would naturally expect to find in this book—the sole exponent of the faith and ritual of the Established Church of this country—quotations from the Bible rendered faithfully and honestly. But what do we find in this instance? The opening words are: "God spake these words and said: I am the Lord thy God, thou shalt have none other gods but me." These words are from Ex. xx. 2. On referring to the original, we find that the quotation has been garbled, the dedicatory words being omitted, for the passage reads: "God spake these words and said: I am the Lord thy God, *who brought thee out of the land of Egypt; out of the house of bondage; thou shalt have none other gods before me.*" Now, why was this deliberate omission of the words given here in italics? There can have been but one object, viz., to suppress from the thoughtless the fact that these commands were given to a special people—those who were brought out of Egypt and away from slavery—the "Children of Israel," and to them only. Those who manipulated the text in the sixteenth century, doubtless foresaw that were the passage reproduced in its integrity, it would be useless for the purpose for which it was obviously intended, viz., to impress the people with the notion that Sabbath keeping was still obligatory upon Christians and so act as an indirect force to drive an unwilling people into the churches of the new establishment. But, if Sabbath keeping was obligatory, so was circumcision. Both were signs of those who came under what was in Judaic days known as "The Law," and the two ceremonial obligations were generally linked together. None but the "chosen people"—the "Children of Israel," of the "seed of Abraham" (Gen. xii. 3), came under the law. Addressing them, Yahveh is reputed to have said: "And I will establish my covenant between me and thee.....every male among you shall be circumcised" (Gen. xvii. 7-11). "Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath for a perpetual covenant.....as a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever" (Ex. xxxi. 16-17). That any except this particular tribe came under the law is disproved by the account given in Gen. xxxiv. of Shechem, the Hivite Prince, who desired to marry Dinah, the Jewess, when the objection was raised by her people that he was not of the circumcised, i.e., he was not under "the Law."

But if we turn to the New Testament, there is every evidence that it was the intention of those

who were the chief instigators in introducing the new faith, which eventually became known by the name of "Christian," to abolish absolutely "the law," of which circumcision, Sabbath-keeping, and the Decalogue formed constituent parts. And whether the account given in the New Testament of the sayings and doings of the Christian "Avatar" be veracious or not does not concern us at the present moment. It is sufficient that it is accepted as true by Christians themselves; for out of the mouth of their own divinity, as it were, we will judge them, and expose the illogical position which the presence in the Prayer Book of an obsolete code of laws belonging to an alien Eastern tribe commits the Established Church. Their own special and favorite teacher, the apostle Paul, in his Epistle to the Romans (vii. 4, 6), said that they (Christians) were "dead to the law," and were "delivered from the law"; and by the law was meant *the whole of the law*. And why? He tells the Colossians (ii. 14) because the Savior, by his death, "blotted out the handwriting of [written] ordinances, and took it [the law] away, nailing it to his cross." He continues: "Let no man judge you.....in respect of a holy day, or of a new moon [festival], or of the sabbath day" (16). And again to the Romans (xiv.) he said: "One man esteemeth one day above another, another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind"—i.e., let everyone act according to his own sweet will; which is equivalent to saying that Sabbaths and new moon festivals had disappeared as far as they (Christians) were concerned, with the abrogation of the old Jewish or Mosaic law. And this view—the only logical one—of the matter is corroborated by the act of the new Church when the convert Pharisees, who, having fallen away, excused themselves by accusing the Church of not observing "the law." The apostles and elders assembled, we are told, to consider the matter, and, this done, protested against such a yoke being placed upon the Church (Acts iv. 10), stating (24) that the heretical sect had "troubled them with words subverting their souls, saying, Ye must be circumcised and keep the law, to whom we gave no such command. In the Matthew Gospel (xix.) is given a very good code of commands or precepts, ostensibly to a rich young man who asked what he should do to save his soul, which was evidently intended to supersede the old Mosaic Decalogue. This "Hexalogue" is reiterated in the Epistle to the Romans (xiii.), and herein is shown the inclusive intention of the authors—whoever they may have been—for the last of the precepts is given in the following words: "And if there be any other command, it is summed up in the following: Love thy neighbor as thyself." What could be stronger evidence of sufficiency and completeness? Then where, it may be asked, in the Christian cult, does the Decalogue, and with it Sabbath observance, come in? It is impossible logically to see. If the Mosaic Law were abrogated, so were these integral parts of it. There is not only negative evidence in the Hexalogue of the abolition of these with the rest of the law, but the Savior himself is reputed, both by precept and example, to have encouraged his followers to break the Sabbath, and as a consequence "the Jews sought to kill him" (John v. 18). Had it been intended that any portion of the Mosaic Law was to be excepted and retained, special mention would surely have been made of such exception; but the Hexalogue is carefully made to include the moral precepts of the law only, omitting everything of a ceremonial character.

It must be perfectly clear to anyone, then, that neither the Decalogue nor Sabbath observance have any claim whatever upon the allegiance of any but the people now known as Jews. So that we can only accept the presence of the former in the Prayer Book, and the proposal of the Dean of Winchester (in the Lower House of Convocation) to alter this to suit modern requirements, as a piece of illogical absurdity. And, as to the suppressed dedicatory words, this was nothing but a piece of pious deception for the purpose of giving a handle to the clergy

to enable them to teach Sabbatarianism for mercenary ends.

We have thus before us the edifying picture of dishonesty in the Prayer Book of the Established Church of our country, which has done more than anything to foster and bolster up an illogical doctrine of Sabbath observance, which is contrary to the New Testament teaching, contrary to the practice of the early Church—testified to, also, by the ecclesiastical historian Eusebius—and which is at variance with the belief and practice of a large section of Christians in this country, and every Christian in every other country of Europe. We have also the edifying spectacle of the withholding by the Sabbatarian section of the Christian community (a very small minority of that community impressed) the usual pecuniary assistance from the London hospitals because these institutions have accepted a portion of the Sunday receipts of cinematograph shows. Mr. Sydney Holland tells us that this action on the part of these fanatical Sabbatarians means a loss of from £1,200 to £1,400 a year to one hospital alone. Can we be anything but amazed at such a manifestation of ignorance, bigotry, and intolerance? And yet our country boasts of its enlightenment, of the love and goodwill of Christian people, and of liberty and freedom, when every place of amusement and recreation is closed to the people on one day of the week by legislation at the voice of the small Sabbatarian minority.

X.

NONCONFORMIST TEACHING.

Somehow or other, and yet it is not altogether strange, it is to the non-established Churches that we must always turn at the end of this discussion. Sir Robert Stout uttered memorable words to his interviewer when he said, "The attitude of your Nonconformists and Liberals in England amazes me. They seek to disestablish a Church, and yet seek to maintain the State school as the Children's Church." It is not unnatural that a State Church should endeavor to carry its religious teaching into the State schools. Professor Inge hails the Anglican schools as "little citadels of the Established Church." But where is the justice or the consistency of those who are opposed on principle to all Established Churches who seek to turn all the Council schools of England into State-established citadels of their religion? That is what they are doing. They deny that it is specific Nonconformist religious teaching that is given in the Council schools, but they cannot deny that it is the religious teaching that is acceptable to and supported by the non-established Churches—which, in the circumstances, is practically the same thing. The fact is that the bulk of the Free Churches went wrong in 1870. Leading ministers like Drs. Dale and Guinness Rogers and leading laymen like Mr. Henry Rickard and Mr. Illingworth, with a substantial following, tried to keep them in the right path, and failed. The essential principle for which they stood was betrayed. Those who cried for "a Free Church in a Free State" did not realise that the same principle demanded a Free School in a Free State. Happily, many of them have learned the lesson of forty years' strife; they see the mistake that was made and desire to undo it. Happily, too, they are a growing number. And the return of the non-established Churches to their foundation principle and their old traditions would achieve a speedy victory for secular education.—*Halley Stewart, "The Policy of Secular Education," Nineteenth Century—and After (April).*

As we old men get up home to the end of the road we grow deep, and I often surprise myself now wondering at the Almighty's reasons. He han't called to offer us creatures a reason, of course, and I be the last to demand it; but sometimes to the thinking and prayerful soul He lets truth be seen, and I reckon why it pleased the Lord of the harvest to smite the harvest be this: the hungering and hankering for foreign corn—God made this a corn-bearing land, you understand. 'Twas arranged for that purpose, but less and less corn be growed, and more and more comes from foreign parts; so the Almighty, if I see his drift, be coming to feel that man thinks he knows best. And so he says, "If these here humans won't grow corn as I meant 'em to grow it, be blessed if they shall grow corn at all! Let 'em eat their messy foreign corn." He says, "and presently, when they are sick to death of paying too much money, and the country's ruined, they'll come back to reason, and then I'll bless their crops with increase in the old way." 'Tis something like that I doubt be in the Everlasting Mind.—*Eden Phillpotts, "Demeter's Daughter."*

Aboard the Vessel of Life.

(Reprinted from the New York "Truthseeker.")

I'm a-shipboard, a mere common sailor
On the weather-worn Vessel of Life—
Cast in with a crew mixed and motley,
And compelled to take part in the strife;
For by day we contend with foul weather,
And by night with the dark and the cold;
But we frolic and dance when the sun shines—
Or we wrangle o'er pieces of gold.

I was shanghaied—in some subtle liquor
My senses were deluged and drowned;
And I know not the port whence I started—
Nor the anchorage whither I'm bound.
I first came to myself on the deck here—
And of dunnage I felt a sad lack;
For I had neither budget nor bundle—
Nor raiment nor rag to my back.

Of my life ere I sailed—I recall not
A single impression or act;
Of the life I shall lead when I've landed—
I know less than nothing, in fact.
All I know is I'm here and a sailor—
A poor landlubber out of his realm!—
On a ship where grim Fate stalks as captain
And blind Chance holds the place at the helm.

Our vast cargo consists of huge bundles
Of human hopes, flagons of tears,
Great boxes of fond aspirations—
And of sad disappointments and fears;
Bags and bales of mixed mercy and madness,
Pearls of knowledge—strung strand upon strand;
And coils of the cords of affection—
Frayed and broken like ropes of sand.

There are passengers, yea—but I know not
If many there are, or but few,
For they keep to themselves in the cabin—
They so fear the piratical crew;
And they feast and they drink and they gamble—
Thus they squander the many hours long,
But I fancy a cadence of pathos
Is heard in their merriest song.

Sometimes, when the midnight is blackest—
Or the sun blazes bright in the sky,
I catch the dull thunder of breakers,
And a weak, inarticulate cry;
Then I hear the hoarse murmur of voices
And the faint dip of oars, in accord—
And I know that another poor mortal
Has been shanghaied and bundled aboard.

And sometimes, when the red sun is rising—
Or is sinking from sight in the west,
I discern the dim blue of a shoreline,
The white curl of a long comber's crest;
And a small boat puts off from the vessel—
While a dirge through the rigging is crooned
By the breeze!—and one more pale-faced seaman
Has been left on some island, marooned.

'Tis the sad lot that comes to each sailor
And passenger here on the ship;
So I wonder how many the moments,
Or the hours, till the muffled oars' dip
Shall separate me from my comrades
And bear me away through the fog,
Or the shine, to some never-known island—
And my name be erased from the log.

I'm a-shipboard—in some subtle liquor
My senses were deluged and drowned;
And I know not the port whence I started—
Nor the anchorage whither I'm bound.
All I know is I'm here and a sailor—
A poor landlubber out of his realm!—
On a ship where grim Fate stalks as captain
And blind Chance hold the place at the helm!

—JAMES BALL NAYLOR.

A HEART-BREAKING PICTURE.

The solemnity of the meeting was somewhat disturbed when the eloquent young theologian pictured in glowing words the selfishness of men who spent their evenings at the club, leaving their wives in loneliness at home. "Think, my hearers," said he, "of a poor neglected wife, all alone in the great dreary house, rocking the cradle of her sleeping babe with one foot and wiping away her tears with the other."

Acid Drops.

Christianity is always demonstrating its Pagan origin. Easter eggs were distributed at St. Mary Woolnoth and other City of London churches on Easter Day. It is a wonder that Christians don't ask what hen's eggs have to do with the alleged resurrection of Jesus Christ. They have nothing to do with that imaginary event. Easter is really the ancient spring festival, and eggs are the symbol of fecundity, for all life comes from an egg. Easter does not commemorate death; it commemorates life—the eternal life of nature. Hence the eggs, and hence the flowers.

The savage origin of religion is evidenced every now and then in its ceremonies. During Easter, for instance, the ritual of blessing fire and water was performed at the Catholic Cathedral, Westminster, in the presence of a large congregation. The performer was the Bishop of Cambray. Fire was struck from a flint at the church door and a triple candle was lighted from it. This was carried in a priestly procession to the high altar, where the paschal candle was lighted. Our readers will note the use of flint to procure light for the candles. Matches are too new-fangled for religion, which loves the ancient, being ancient itself. In the same way, we read in the Bible that the rite of circumcision was performed with a *stone knife*.

Easter has been celebrated at the Court of Bavaria in the usual way. The Prince Regent, who is ninety years old, washed the feet—à la Christ—of the twelve oldest men in his dominions. These old gentlemen are (facetiously, we suppose) called "apostles." Besides going home again with clean feet, each "apostle" carried a purse containing £5. This feet-washing is one of the mock humiliations with which some royal personages in Catholic countries cheat themselves, and perhaps others, into the belief that they are meek and humble Christians.

That mountebank priest, the Bishop of London, headed a silly religious procession from Trafalgar-square to St. Paul's Cathedral on Good Friday afternoon. The procession included 300 clergy, 750 choirmen, and some 2,500 unrobed laymen. Plenty of mummeries took place at the Cathedral. The following prayer shows the intellectual calibre of the crowd:—

"That it may please Thee to make all the subjects of his [King George's] Empire to be mindful in Whose Name he, our sovereign, is to be crowned, that they may faithfully serve, honor, and humbly obey him in Thee and for Thee."

What a mediæval idea of the British Constitution these supplicants must have! Fancy the citizens of this country, at this time of day, being expected to "humbly obey" the King! What they have to obey is the law. And the King does not make the law; they make it themselves.

The original Johnnie Kensit is supposed to be in heaven, but Johnnie Kensit junior still carries on the old business—or plays the old game, just as you prefer. He raised a rare old rumpus at Holy Trinity Church, Hoxton, on Good Friday. This appears to be a very ritualistic establishment, and the program includes "the veneration of the Cross." On Good Friday morning the choir passed from their stalls to the front of the altar, where the crucifix was placed, and seemed to be in the act of kissing it. At this point Johnnie Kensit junior advanced to the front of the chancel and cried out, "This idolatry in the Church of England must cease." And it did cease—for it gave place to a free fight, in which the crucifix got broken to pieces. The police had to be called in to restore order. "How these Christians love one another!"

Rev. B. Staunton Batty, vicar of Balsover, who is described as "a fine specimen of muscular Christianity"—whatever that is—recommends physical opposition to Mormonism. "I strongly advise," he says, "that where a personal call is made at a private house, the family should kick the offender into the street." The reverend gentleman offers to officiate as kicker-out himself if the family will send for him. It does not occur to him that similar treatment might be recommended for priests and parsons who make personal calls at private houses without an invitation, with a view to "leading silly women captive," in which they are as fine adepts as the most successful Mormon propagandist.

Several Bishops have sent the replies that might have been expected to the *Daily Mail's* question as to whether there should be legislation in England against Mormonism.

Not one of them says a word on behalf of free discussion. "Mormon missionaries," the Bishop of Bristol says, "should be cleared out of these islands." "I am in favor of any steps," the Bishop of Exeter says, "that would rid our country of the Mormon pest." Any steps will do. The Bishop of Manchester says: "I strongly desire that Mormon teaching should be made illegal." Just think of that intolerant utterance! And then consider how this same Right Reverend Father in God and his episcopal brethren are prepared to howl at any moment over the Pagan "persecution" of the early Christians, and over the Chinese objection to Christian missionaries.

Mr. W. T. Stead doesn't share the common idea that the Churches are working energetically for peace. He spoke at Whitefield's, Tottenham Court-road, on Sunday afternoon on the suggested Anglo-American Arbitration, and moved the following resolution:—

"That this meeting, noting with surprise and regret that the appeal of the Lord Mayor of London to the various religious bodies to create a committee of appeal for an expression of opinion from all the religious organisations in the United Kingdom in favour of the proposed Anglo-American Arbitration Treaty seems to have fallen upon deaf ears, resolves to address an earnest request to all Churches and religious societies that they should, without any further delay, take action upon the Lord Mayor's suggestion, and thereby afford a practical demonstration that the religious organisations of this nation are capable of acting as a unit in support of the cause of peace, to which they all profess their allegiance."

According to the leading spokesmen of the Churches, and especially the "Free" Churches, you would imagine that the Churches do all the work that is being done for the cause of peace. According to Mr. Stead, they hold back for the work, apparently because of their sectarian jealousies.

Mr. Stead's resolution, seconded by Mr. H. S. Porris, was of course carried, and it was decided to send copies to the Anglican and Roman Catholic Archbishops, to the Moderators of the Presbyterian Churches in the three kingdoms, to the President of the National Free Church Federation, the P. S. A. Brotherhood, the Liberal Christian League, the Unitarian Association, the Jewish Rabbi, the *Ethical Society*, and other religious bodies. The italics are ours.

Mr. George Cadbury told the delegates of the Independent Labor Party who visited the famous cocoa establishment at Bourneville that "That the Labor Party is the only party which dares to advocate carrying into national life the teaching of the New Testament." We hope this is not true. If it is, the leaders of the Labor Party should plainly say so; if it is not, they should repudiate Mr. Cadbury's statement. Are they afraid to do either the one or the other? We wonder.

A youth of eighteen was charged at Bolton with stealing quilts from his employers. He appears to have suffered from religious mania, and to have stolen in order to get money to buy crosses and crucifixes. Crosses were marked on his body, and he had an altar in his room. He was placed on probation for twelve months. Let us hope he will recover his sanity. But such cases of insanity are often peculiarly intractable.

Not satisfied with stopping cinematograph shows on Sunday, the clergy are beginning to start cinematograph shows of their own. The Rev. A. Tildsley, of the Poplar and Bromley Tabernacle, is running them at his Sunday morning service, and they have increased his congregation sixfold. What is more, they all pay threepence or sixpence for admission. The pictures are scenes from the Life of Moses, the Life of Christ, etc. And the reverend caterer is doing so well that he is preparing to introduce the pictures on Sunday evening. There's money in it. Yes, but will the game last? And was it for this that Jesus Christ passed through Gethsemane and Calvary?

Rev. Frank J. Day, pastor of Zion Congregational Church, Montreal, was one of a party of ministers who sampled a burlesque performance at the Theatre Royal; and on the following Sunday evening he took care to denounce such amusements from his pulpit—by way of getting up his moral fervor before the sermon. He declared that the performance he witnessed went through all stages of vulgarity and immorality, and called upon parents to move against burlesque in Montreal. But is it not extraordinary that a gentleman who was mentally and morally suckled on the Bible should be so sensitive? There are many things in that "holy" book far more vulgar and immoral than would be permitted for a minute in the lowest place of entertainment in the

world. The clergy who burn with such zeal against "obscenity" should really begin the clearing process with their own sacred scriptures.

Montreal is a very pious city. Our readers may recollect that the last Eucharistic Congress was held there, and that the Host was carried in procession and guarded by Catholic soldiers with loaded rifles and naked bayonets. No wonder that the half-million population support four hundred disorderly houses and a thousand and fifty licensed retail liquor dealers. The police, who are nearly all good Catholics, won't enforce the liquor law, or any other that the Pope's faithful children dislike. This must be taken as a further corroboration of the great truth that morality is impossible without religion.

"Stop the paper, as wife doesn't like it; and to please her, not myself, I wish it discontinued until further notice." So writes a subscriber to a Freethought journal in America. We pity him. A husband who lets his wife dictate what he shall read is hardly entitled to the name of a man. And the dictating wife is—well, what the most intolerant religion on earth has made her.

"It is a terrible thing," the Bishop of London says, "to hear that Indian chiefs, whose sons were inclined to Christianity, had sent them to London to cure them." We shouldn't call it "terrible." We should use a lighter word.

Here is a good Sabbatarian joke. A Jew of Tewkesbury fell into a well on the Earl of Gloucester's estate one Saturday in 1260. Out of reverence for the Jewish Sabbath he would not allow himself to be drawn out. The next day (the Christian Sunday) the Earl would not allow his servants to labor in rescuing the Jew, who, on Monday morning, was found to have emigrated to Abraham's bosom.

Christ was poor, but his "bride," the Church, doesn't share his complaint. What would he have thought if he had been told that the day would come when it would be possible for burglars to break into one of his churches and steal £2,000 worth of jewels? This has recently happened at the Cathedral of Florence. A diadem studded with brilliants, a pearl necklace, a diamond crescent, seven gold rings, and other valuable jewels, valued at £2,000, have been stolen from one of the Cathedral side-chapels—the chapel of the Immaculate Conception. They belonged, of course, to Mary, the simple "Mother of God"—who might be expected to help the police in detecting the burglars, only she doesn't.

Having tried hard, for a month, to convert Swansea, Dr. Chapman and Mr. Alexander were forced to admit that, though their meetings were attended by some 200,000, only 3,000 were persuaded to sign the "Covenant card." That is to say, the Holy Ghost, using two of his most competent agents for the space of a month, has failed to win Swansea. But the Christians thoroughly enjoy the wild orgy, and have requested the two professional entertainers to work them up into another drunken revelry at as early a date as possible.

What infinite twaddle preachers do talk from the "coward's castle." A Sunday or two ago, the Rev. Dr. Horton is reported to have delivered himself of the following ridiculous claim concerning "the hand that holds":—

"I do not tell you cunningly devised fables. When my hand reaches out to that Hand, and my trembling feet rest upon that unseen Rock that emerges out of the mist and shadow of death, I am speaking that which, thanks to God, I know."

We frankly acknowledge that the first sentence in that brief extract is perfectly true. None of Dr. Horton's fables deserve to be described as "cunningly devised." Every one of them is as transparent as it can be. Take the second sentence in that quotation, and you will see, at a glance, how utterly false it is. It displays not the remotest hint of cunning. The reverend gentleman affirms that he knows what is beyond knowledge. His belief in "a hand that holds" may be sincere enough, but belief is never equivalent to knowledge. Surely, Dr. Horton's reason must have been drowned in the sea of his emotionalism. Can anybody but a religious neuropath prate about resting his trembling feet upon that "unseen Rock that emerges out of the mist and shadow of life and death"?

The following interesting sentences are from the pen of the Rev. J. E. Roberts, of Manchester, who, of course,

greatly deplores their truth:—

"The spirit of the time is against us. Men and women are being tempted to drop the accent of conviction. It is considered bad form; it is condemned as provincial—a sign that we come from the country. The age coddles doubt. Agnosticism is a cult."

Poor old age. Ever since it began it has had nothing but vulgar abuse from the men of God. There are no terms bad enough rightly to describe it. The curious thing is, however, that Christians denounce the age only when they are in converse with one another. Whenever Freethinkers tell them that Christianity is dying they vehemently resent the statement, and declare: "Nothing of the kind. At bottom, this is the most profoundly religious age in the world's history. Jesus was never so popular as he is to-day." It was to pious young people, who are supposed to read the *Baptist Times and Freeman*, that Mr. Roberts addressed the words quoted above. Had he been dealing with unbelievers he would have adopted another tone and language.

Mr. Roberts vilified the age simply in order to glorify the Cross, evidently forgetting, or not knowing, that it is the Cross, mainly, that is responsible for the doubt of the age. "A sight of the blood is an infallible antidote to the miasma of doubt," said this man of God, in effect; but we claim that "a sight of the blood" makes faith absolutely impossible to every right-thinking person. However interpreted, the Cross is a symbol of supreme foolishness, cruelty, and barbarism, and, as the means of a world's redemption, a shrieking farce.

We ask any "soft" Freethinker (though there can't be very many) amongst our readers to consider the following extract from the *Homeward Mail* of March 25 quite carefully:—

"EDUCATION OF CATHOLIC STUDENTS.—The Travancore Government have disposed of a joint memorial signed by the Archbishop of Veropoly and five bishops, in which they pleaded that Catholic students of the State should be compelled to receive education only in Catholic schools. Their lordships pointed out that in India, especially at the present time, no serious and intelligent person would fail to see the need of a sound moral education based on religious principles in preference to the godless education imparted in most other schools which, with the godless teaching elsewhere have caused, and cannot but cause, most harmful effects in society. In the course of an order, the Government replied that they were wholly unable to act on the principle that the Catholic children shall hereafter receive education only in Catholic schools. They also expressed their regret that the memorialists have chosen to reflect unfavorably on the education given in other schools generally, and saw no adequate ground for the implication that the education imparted in non-Catholic schools generally is either godless or is causing harmful effects on society. The Government order concluded with the remark that an exceptionally difficult question like this could not be advanced if the heads of one denomination take it on themselves to speak disparagingly of the work done by other denominations."

It must be a humiliation to a Christian Archbishop to be snubbed in this way by a Heathen Government and to be taught a lesson in charity and toleration. Travancore is a Native State (Hindoo) at the extreme south of India, and is governed on enlightened lines. And this impudent effort of the Catholic Church there shows what it will always do when it sees or suspects an opportunity.

Of course the Church must have a look in at the Shakespeare Festival at Stratford-on-Avon. There is a Shakespeare sermon to be preached, as usual, in the parish church—this time by Canon Beeching, on Sunday, April 23, which was Shakespeare's deathday and apparently also his birthday. Canon Beeching is so simple as to believe (at least he says so) that the greatest of poets and greatest of Freethinkers was a sort of a Christian. How the Master would smile if he could hear the sermon in the coffin where his bones lie seventeen feet underground! Oh the childishness of tying up the philosophy of that mighty brain to the "pathetic exaggerations" of the Sermon on the Mount!

FORESIGHT.

Being requested by the disconsolate weeping widow of one of his late fellow townsmen to place on the slab of her dear departed the words, "My sorrow is greater than I can bear," he took care to space the sentence so that room was left for an addition.

A few months later she called to inquire how much it would cost to efface the inscription and substitute another. "No need of that, marm," he answered, soothingly; "you see there's jes' room to add 'alone.'"

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

(Lectures suspended for the present.)

To Correspondents.

- J. T. LLOYD'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.**—April 23, Liverpool.
- A. HOPKINS.**—We omitted to answer your question. Surely you might have answered your Christian opponent yourself. It is quite absurd to argue, as he does, that the commandment against adultery is meaningless if polygamy is scripturally allowable. Adultery is the same whether a man has one wife or a thousand. This is too obvious to be labored.
- A. J. ARMSTRONG.**—We have so often asked that orders for literature be not sent direct to Mr. Foote or the Editor of the *Freethinker*. We have handed your letter over to our shop manager to deal with if possible. Thanks for your good wishes.
- W. H. DEAKIN.**—We dealt with the matter some weeks ago.
- T. BOLTON.**—The article in last week's *Freethinker* on "The Foote-Warscheuer Debate" was written by Mr. Cohen, and bore his initials "C. C." The previous week's article was written by Miss Kough, and bore her initials "K. B. K." Mr. Foote never uses any other signatures or initials than his own.
- W. J. RAMSEY.**—Thanks for the reference.
- E. B.**—Your cuttings are always welcome.
- W. P. ADAMSON.**—Didn't you overlook the fact that the words were in quotation marks? It rather spoils an otherwise good joke.
- J. LIVESLEY.**—Shall be sent as requested. Our friends do us a favor, and really assist us, by forwarding us the names and addresses of persons to whom we might advantageously post six consecutive numbers of this journal gratuitously.
- JOHN VASEY.**—Thanks; but too late for this week, owing to the Easter holidays. Our editorial and publishing offices were both closed on Good Friday and Easter Monday.
- A. B. CATHAM.**—We will look at it. Thanks.
- JAMES NEATE.**—We wish your Branch all success, as the workers in it deserve.
- JOSEPH BRYCE.**—Received. Always pleased to hear from you.
- HOWARD WILLIAMS.**—Not too late for use, but too late for this issue.
- W. SIMCLOGG.**—Thanks for cuttings. Such things are always welcome.
- C. T. HALL.**—Subscription for paper duly credited. You will receive formal receipt for that. Your donation to the President's Honorarium Fund is acknowledged in this week's list.
- W. P. BALL.**—Thanks for your useful cuttings.
- WILLIAM OWEN.**—We will give it attention. Thanks.
- 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.
- PERSONS** remitting for literature by stamps are specially requested to send *halfpenny stamps*.
- The *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months, 2s. 8d.

Sugar Plums.

The next "social" under the auspices of the N. S. S. Executive will be held at Anderton's Hotel, Fleet-street, London, on the first Thursday evening in May (4th). It will begin at 8 p.m. and end before midnight. The program will include vocal and instrumental music and some dancing. Members of the N. S. S. are all welcome, and they are also free to introduce a friend. Other Freethinkers who wish to be present should apply for (free) admission tickets at the N. S. S. office, 2 Newcastle-street, E.C.

We beg to call the attention of members of the Camberwell Branch to the special general meeting which is to take place on Friday evening (April 21), at 8.30, at the Lambeth Baths Committee Room. The reorganisation of the Branch, with a view to securing a hall and carrying on an active propaganda, including lectures on Sundays—and also the outdoor propaganda in Brockwell Park during the summer—are the topics for consideration. There ought to be a strong rally of members. Well-wishers who are not yet members will likewise be welcomed.

Notices of Motion for the N. S. S. Conference Agenda must be in the hands of the General Secretary, Miss E. M. Vance,

by May 15. Individual members, who have joined the Society through headquarters in London, are as free as Branch delegates to attend the Conference, and even to place Notices of Motion on the Agenda; but, of course, they must attend to take charge of such motions if they wish them to come on for discussion. The Conference takes place on Whit-Sunday, as usual, and at Birmingham this year. A more detailed announcement will be made in due course. Meanwhile, we hope Branches will be arranging to be effectively represented.

The Bethnal Green Branch opens its new season's outdoor work in Victoria Park to-day (April 23) with a lecture by Mr. Allinson in the afternoon. Mr. Cohen lectures on April 30 and May 7. The latter date sees the opening of the evening lectures. East London "Saints" should rally round the Branch platform and do their best to secure big meetings.

Mr. Lloyd delivers two lectures at the Alexandra Hall, Islington-square, Liverpool, to-day (April 23), under the auspices of the local N. S. S. Branch. Admission, to those who have not obtained tickets from the secretary, will be by silver collection at the door. We hope to hear of crowded meetings. Mr. Lloyd deserves them—from every point of view.

"E. B." sends us an interesting reply to Mr. Lloyd's letter in our last issue on the sex of "Jean" in "The Land o' the Leal." Owing to the Easter holidays, it only reaches us on Tuesday morning, and is too late to appear this week. It will appear next week.

We have received a subscription to the President's Honorarium Fund from the President of the South African Rationalist Association, whose name is not disclosed in the interesting letter which is signed by Mr. J. D. Stevens, the honorary secretary, and which we shall deal with next week.

We are always specially pleased with friendly words from America. For one thing, it is so far off that readers over there must relish the *Freethinker* for what is of general and permanent value in its contents; which shows that we are not wasting our energies on the local and transient. An American reader who has forwarded a subscription to our Honorarium Fund, acknowledged elsewhere, says he does so "only regretting that I cannot make the amount more commensurate with my appreciation of your ability and courage." We haven't prurient modesty enough to pretend that we don't like that. What we particularly like is the compliment in the last word. Ability is not so uncommon; courage is one of the rarest things in the world. If we have indeed put that quality into the service of Freethought we shall not have lived in vain.

"We were seven, two women and five men," writes a Scottish correspondent, "on Sunday morning when we went from Dumbarton to Glasgow to hear you lecture on 'Man's Discovery of Himself.' The ladies would have liked to shake your hand [why didn't they?] but, having no one to introduce them, were too shy to approach you alone [Sorry!]. All of us have been Church members, some but a short time ago; but now we are wise enough to go to Glasgow to see and hear you, and find great pleasure and profit. Two new readers for the *Freethinker* is the result. Long may you be spared to us!"

Shakespeare, the supreme Freethinker, the magisterial genius of this planet, was honored at Stratford-on-Avon on Monday by the inauguration of the Annual Festival there. The flags of fifty-three nations flew in the breeze at the sound of a trumpet. All of them were represented at this commemoration. There was nothing to gain and no need of hypocrisy. Everything was natural and spontaneous. The great name of Shakespeare had called them together from all parts of the earth. Nothing else. "Shakespeare no longer belongs to England alone," said the Chinese Ambassador; "he is a household word in Asia as well as in England." Think of it! And he has not been dead quite three hundred years. No missionaries have done this. It is due to the force of a sovereign genius. Behold the true Messiah!

President's Honorarium Fund, 1911.*Fifteenth List of Subscriptions.*

Previously acknowledged, £218 5s. 8d. C. T. Hall, £1 10s.; Alfred Galpin (U. S. A.), £1; President of the South African Rationalist Association, £4; Firenze (per W. Heaford), 10s.

The Apocalypse.—VI.

(Continued from p. 252.)

TAKING up the so-called prophetic narratives in the "Revelation" where I left off (Rev. vi. 8) I come to "the Lamb" opening the fifth seal of the scroll which he had taken from the hand of the Lord God. As soon as this was done, the scene which the writer says he beheld is thus described:—

"I saw underneath the altar the souls of them that had been slain for the word of God.....and they cried with a great voice, saying, How long, O Master, the holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?.....And it was said unto them, that they should rest for a little time, until their fellow servants also and their brethren, which should be killed even as they were, should be fulfilled" (Rev. vi. 9—11).

It is scarcely necessary to ask whether the writer really saw and heard what he here narrates. He may possibly have had some such scene in his mind when he wrote; but this was not until *after* he had read the following passages in the "holy books":—

Enoch xlvi. 1—2.—"In that day the prayers of the holy and the righteous shall ascend from the earth into the presence of the Lord of Spirits. In that day shall the holy ones assemble, who dwell above the heavens, and with united voice, petition, supplicate, praise, laud, and bless the name of the Lord of Spirits, on account of the blood of the righteous which had been shed..... that for them he would execute judgment, and that his patience may not endure for ever."

2 Esd. xv. 7—9.—"Therefore, saith the Lord, I will hold my peace no more.....Behold the innocent and righteous blood crieth unto me; and the souls of the righteous cry out continually. I will surely avenge them, saith the Lord, and will receive unto me all the innocent blood from among them."

2 Esd. iv. 35—36.—"Did not the souls of the righteous ask question of these things in their chambers [in the under-world] saying, How long are we here? When cometh the fruit of the threshing-time of our reward? And unto them Jeremiel the archangel gave answer and said, Even when the number is fulfilled of them that are like unto you."

The writer of the Apocalypse was acquainted with all the foregoing passages; but he appears to have followed 2 Esdras in preference to Enoch. He places, however, the souls of the Jewish martyrs "underneath the altar," though all he describes is supposed to take place in heaven, where no altar would be necessary. In Enoch, it is the angels in heaven who beseech the Lord to avenge the blood of the righteous; in 2 Esdras it is the souls of the righteous themselves who cry out from their abode in Hades, under the earth. The Apocalypticist does not mention the archangel Jeremiel; but he evidently refers to that personage when he says "*It was said unto them that they should rest for a little time,*" etc.

When "the Lamb" had opened the sixth seal, the events which followed are thus described:—

- (1) "There was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the whole moon became as blood" (Rev. vi. 12).
- (2) "And the stars of heaven fell upon the earth, as a fig tree casteth her unripe figs, when she is shaken by a great wind: and the heaven was removed as a scroll, when it is rolled up" (Rev. vi. 13—14).
- (3) "and every bondman and freeman hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains; and they say to the mountains and to the rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth upon the throne" (Rev. vi. 15—16).

These are certainly the most remarkable occurrences imaginable. The falling of the little twinkling stars to the earth like figs shaken from a tree is suprisingly graphic; and more wonderful still is the fact that no one upon the earth suffered much inconvenience from that event. No one, of course, would expect the writer to know the effect of even one star striking the earth: there were no Board Schools nor science manuals in those days; the Lord's holy books being considered the only text-books containing reliable information. The passages upon which the writer

relied for the foregoing statements are the following:—

(1) Isa. xxix. 6.—"They shall be visited of the Lord of hosts with thunder, and with earthquakes, and great noise."

Joel ii. 31.—"The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of the Lord come."

(2) Isa. xxxiv. 4.—"And all the powers of the heavens shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled up like a scroll; and all the stars shall fall like leaves from a vine, and as leaves fall from a fig-tree."

(3) Is. ii. 19.—"And men shall go into the caves of the rocks, and into the holes of the earth from before the terror of the Lord."

Hos. x. 8.—"And they shall say to the mountains, Cover us, and to the hills, Fall on us."

The second of these passages (Isa. xxxiv. 4) is taken from the Septuagint, as being nearer to the original than the Authorised or Revised Versions. Moreover, the stars in the "Book of Revelation" bring to mind the cattle of Egypt in the record of the ten plagues.

In the case of the stars, first we are told that "*the stars of heaven fell upon the earth,*" which, of course, means "*all the stars*"; for, at the same time, "the heaven" or firmament, in which they were believed to be placed, "was removed as a scroll," leaving a blank space overhead. Yet, though the heaven had been removed, we find from Rev. viii. 10 that "there fell *from heaven* a great star, burning as a torch, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of the waters." This had the effect of making the waters bitter, "and many men died of the waters"; but no one was injured by the star. After this, in the starless heavens, we are told that "the third part of the stars" was smitten (Rev. viii. 12), from which it would appear that the stars and the heavens had resumed their places before the former fell down again. Next, in Rev. ix. 1, the writer says that after the fifth angel "sounded," he saw "a star from heaven fallen upon the earth." Lastly, after the narration of many other wonderful things, we have more of these sky-rockets falling: the writer says he saw appear "a great red dragon," whose tail "draweth the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth" (Rev. xii. 4). The effect produced by the fall of all these stars was like that of the letting off of fireworks—no one was harmed, and "no one seemed one penny the worse."

We come next to chapter vii., in which the writer says: "After this, I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds, that no wind should blow on the earth, or on the sea, or upon any tree" (Rev. vii. 1). From this surprising statement we may draw some inference as to what the writer's ideas were with regard to winds. He certainly did not know that the action of the sun on the atmosphere in one locality caused a current of air to flow towards that place from colder regions. His ideas were drawn from the Book of the prophet Enoch, whose inspiration is vouched for by the apostle Jude (verses 14—15), which antediluvian prophet tells us that the winds, when not in action, were kept in "wooden receptacles" beyond the extremities of the earth, and that when they were sent to blow upon the earth, they came through twelve gates, left open for them upon those extremities, three being on the north, three on the south, three on the east, and three on the west. He also says that from "four of the gates proceed winds of blessing and health; but from eight of them proceed winds of punishment," which injure or destroy everything on the land or in the waters (Enoch xli., lxxv.). The winds which the four angels in the apocalyptic narrative were "holding" were of the latter maleficent character; for the writer goes on to say:—

Rev. vii. 2—4.—"And I saw another angel.....having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a great voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads. And I heard the number of them which were sealed.....144,000 out of every tribe of the children of Israel."

Rev. vi. 11.—“And there was given them to each one a white robe.”

In the case of the foregoing statements, the writer of the Apocalypse appears to have drawn his inspiration from the prophets Ezekiel and Esdras, as may be seen from the following:—

Ezek ix. 3—4.—“And the Lord called to the man clothed in linen, which had the writer's ink horn by his side, and said unto him, Go through the midst of the city.....and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men *that sigh and that cry* because of all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof.” [Words italicised in Septuagint read: “that groan and that grieve.”]

2 Esd. ii. 38—40.—“I beheld the number of those that be sealed in the feast of the Lord.....Look upon thy number, O Zion, and make up the reckoning of thine that are clothed in white, which have fulfilled the law of the Lord.”

No precise number of the marked or sealed is named in Ezekiel or 2 Esdras; the writer of the “Revelation” therefore did “the reckoning” himself by allotting 12,000 to each of the following tribes: Judah, Reuben, Gad, Asher, Naphtali, Manasseh, Simeon, Levi, Issachar, Zebulum, Joseph, and Benjamin. This, however, is not a correct list of the ancient tribes of Israel. In the first place, the tribe of Dan is omitted. In the next place, there was no tribe of Joseph; the descendants of the two sons of this patriarch, Ephriam and Manasseh, took their places among the tribes. The writer has given Manasseh as a tribe without knowing that he was included in the name “Joseph.” There were thus thirteen tribes.

Continuing his veracious narrative, the writer of the Apocalypse says:—

“I saw, and behold, a great multitude, which no man could number.....arrayed in white robes, and palms in their hands; and they cry with a great voice, saying, Salvation unto our God which sitteth on the throne..... These are they which come out of the great tribulation, and they washed their robes, and made them white” (Rev. vii. 9, 10, 14).

Here, again, the writer appears to have drawn his inspiration from the prophet Esdras, who says in the chapter from which the last passage is quoted:—

2 Esd. ii. 42, 45.—“I Esdras saw upon the mount Zion a great multitude whom I could not number, and they all praised the Lord with songs.....These be they that have put off the mortal clothing, and put on the immortal, and have confessed the name of God: now are they crowned, and receive palms.”

In the next verse of the same chapter the writer of the Apocalypse says of the saints who were holding palms and shouting praises to their God:—

“Therefore are they before the throne of God; and they serve him *day and night* in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall spread his tabernacle over them” (Rev. vii. 15).

The foregoing statement was suggested to the writer by the following passages in two of the “holy books”:—

Enoch xiv. 17—24.—“It contained an exalted throne.One great in glory sat upon it.....Yet did not the sanctified, who were near him, depart from him, either *by night or by day.*”

Isa. iv. 6.—“And there shall be a pavilion for a shade in the day-time from the heat,” etc.

In the two following verses of the “Revelation” the writer says of the same saints holding palms:—

“They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun strike upon them, nor any heat: for the Lamb.....shall be their shepherd, and shall guide them unto fountains of water of life: and God shall wipe away every tear from their eyes” (Rev. vii. 16—17).

This last paragraph, which brings chapter vii. to a close, was written after the writer had read the following passages in the book of Isaiah:—

Isa. xlix. 10.—“They shall not hunger nor thirst; neither shall the heat nor sun smite them: for he that hath mercy upon them [*i.e.*, “the Lord God”] shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall he guide them.”

Isa. xxv. 8.—“and the Lord God shall wipe away tears from off all faces.”

As will be perceived from these passages, it was the Lord God who was to be leader and shepherd, not “the Lamb,” as may further be plainly seen in Psalm xxiii.—“The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters,” etc. The original writer of the Apocalypse, there can be little doubt, followed the reading given in the “holy books.” Some later editor is responsible for “the Lamb.”

ABRACADABRA.

(To be continued.)

Dawn and Darkness.

IN the early morning, when our minds and bodies, refreshed by sleep, respond in joyous harmony to the music of the birds, and, re-invigorated by the keen, pure air, leap forward as if possessed of some entrancing elixir, we are glad and happy because Nature seems glad and happy. Our eyes reflect the radiance of the silvery sun and look upwards undismayed and undisturbed. A fellow-feeling with Nature floods our whole being. Her beauty and happiness are ours, because we are hers. We take, she does not give; yet does she not withhold from us of her superabundance? Religion is our last thought, if it intrudes at all. We have no need of it. The freedom that is ours, the purity, the music-laden peace, the inspiring perfumes, the brightness, banish it from our minds. Happiness irradiating from all the feelingless surroundings, undimmed by the mad might of men, untouched by his pilfering hand, is sufficient—is complete. Religion enters not to make us kneel. We are at once rich with Nature, and we approach on terms of strict, unquestionable equality; neither kneeling nor worshipping at her fern-clad feet. Unconscious are we of any supernatural, bountiful giver of joy; unconscious, too, of any need for forgiveness of sins we have forgotten. We are free. On the wings of the lark our early religious instructions with their attendant predispositions and leanings and faults and restrictions, are lightly borne into nothingness of space. The song that drops down upon us conveys no recollection of them to our music-filled minds; they are gone, and we know it not. The wind that blows over the heather-hidden hill-tops whispers no remembrances of those days of adolescence and their lessons. We have become Nature's children now, and she clears our minds of the stories our father's taught, and fills them with the freshness and sweetness of her streams and her flowers. We live with her, beside her, not above or beyond her. Religion is dead. We are, for the time being, our real selves. Thoughtfulness charms and delights us. Unimpeded, it partakes of the speed of the breeze and animates us with a strange and subtle strength, previously unknown. Mentally, as bodily, we bathe in a pure vitality, splashing the laughing waters about us with a glee outrivalling that of a boy fighting the oncoming waves. That gossamer cloudlet, from whose delicacy of form the pink slowly fades, as we look, and whose fleecy, marginal incurvature seems to imprison the first silvery sun rays, evokes in us no mystical sense of an incomprehensible, permeating spirit. Its glorious beauty alone dominates our minds. The “why” and “wherefore,” the causes, the effects of its existence, hanging on the northern horizon, silently serene, are of no moment to us; they have no place in our minds beside the beauty. And so it is with all around us. The fascination of the cloudlet verifies itself in the trees, the grass, the heather, the streams, the hills, the birds. We do not question, because we cannot. We forget the unceasing and unseen life-warfare working out its inevitable survival and its inevitable elimination under our feet, above our heads—everywhere. We forget we are individuals participating in this never ending struggle. The beauty of the surface sinks deep into our beings, and we feel glad because we think Nature is glad; and all the rest, to us, in the morning, is as the ether at all times.

But at night, when the shadows gather, and the birds sleep quietly, silently, in their nests, and the winds awake weird songs in the dusky trees, and the hills loom, strange and distant, from their misty garments, and the air is cold, our minds, too, become dusky, and somnolent, and strange. Gloomy religion, with its countless emissaries of shuddering and shifting hopes and fears, steals like a thief into our hearts. Taking possession of our bodies and minds, it would govern us with an inflexible, uncontradictable command. Religion comes to us through the back doors of the past, and enters through the back doors of the present. It is upon us before we are aware of its presence, menacing our peace, disquieting our thoughts with inconsistency's swervings, or wholly subduing us by its insidious power. There is little, if any, real joy in this unreal captivity. The mother's lul-

laby, singing through the years, reaches our minds only with a mournful cadence, as if it were, indeed, conscious of its own shortcomings, and felt as if its words could only touch the fringe of our innermost love. It comes from the darkness of time, illumed but with attenuated streaks of brightness that are soon swallowed by the hordes of association and bigoted belief. We lose ourselves in the night-enswathed quagmires our remembrances have led us into, and chase the inconsistent fireflies with a despondency of recklessness born from a solitary, dogged belief in their power to guide us safely out. Yielding ourselves to the influences of religion, we lose ourselves. We are sons of the darkness. Forgetting our mud-covered feet for some few intermittent moments, we look upwards to the stars, and read in their loveliness and light an unknown something we enshroud in the name of Deity. Downwards again to the darkness we look, and, if it so happen, we longingly retain some dim remembrance of the star-studded sky and the spirit-speaking thoughts that flashed, we fancied, from God, through our minds, at the sight of its wonderfulness, the darkness is not made less dark, nor the insecurity of our foothold less insecure, by the recollection. Our thoughts we mistake for God's voice; the stars and the fireflies for the manifestations of his omnipresence. The mind is the birthplace, the manger, of God; but so engrossed are we on these fancies that we do not even ponder one minute over the fact that we are both father and mother to this strange, distant, vague being whom we name God. Blundering along with half-closed mind, we sons of the darkness draw from our half-conceived notions some sickly endeavor, some crooked courage, some stumbling strength. We call them divinely inspired. They are but gleams in the darkness that surround us. We have bent and broken our reason for the feeble flutterings of a false pleasure, and we assume rejoicings of "soul," neither felt nor displayed except in words. Into the filtered waters of the present the past has poured its black impurities. Knowledge we have allowed to bow its head before imaginative ignorance. The darkness, fit time, it may be, for retrospective mental glances, is yet a better time for the approach of religion, and religion's votaries and servants know it.

Ignorance, religion, darkness! They are brothers whose arms are linked inseparably together. Their characteristics are identical. Each influences the other without modification, unless it be intensification. Each has the poison of evil in its blood, and each erects an abode for misery, mockery, and madness. Co-residents with all debasements, depravities, degradations, they feast on the excrements for which they are responsible, and applaud their own attempts at destroying an insanitary condition and immoral state which they introduced and developed, and cannot possibly abolish. Nature's darkness affrights and terrifies the child because the vision is closed, and the young mind, previously played upon by ignorance and religion, can only resort to stored-up, contorted, but powerful, impossibilities. And on through life the early fear, implanted by others, finds resuscitative potency in the darkness from which it came.

In the darkness is it not better for us to remember the dawn? The joy of the morning can, if we will, be the night's true inheritance. Against it the darkness may expend its subtle powers vainly. The gathering gloom may advance its many mystical shadows futilely, impotently, yet often; but they must retire at last baffled by stronger forces and acknowledging defeat. For is it not true that religion, which is the darkness of the mind, the etheralised shadows, it may be, of the past, bitterly hates laughter, which is the light of the mind, the brightness and beauty of morning, the delight of the child at life's dawn? Religion and laughter are enemies to each other—enemies whose warfare stretches farther into the depths of life and time than the mind can conceive; whose enmity can only terminate with the death of the one or the other. They cannot co-habit, nor even assume a superficiality of friendship. They cannot abide together, but must ever be to each other strangers whose eyes look askance. Their enmity is peculiar. Seldom do they come to blows, and seldom, too, are they face to face. Where religion is laughter never comes; where laughter delights religion forsakes. And their coming and going are accomplished when it seemed as if they would fortuitously meet, with an often mouse-like quietness. The one gives place to the other, as if meekly yielding, unreservedly and completely, all the prizes of victory, and tacitly admitting its vanquishment. Yet under all this seeming absence of bitter conflict there runs the acidity of hate confluent with rippling pleasure. Religion knows well it is doomed when laughter comes too near its solemnity, for laughter prevails over sanctimoniousness, as the bright cheery flames consume the dark coal, or as the sun makes sadness incongruous. On solemnity religion builds its superstructure, and guards it with a constantly vigilant over-seeing. Recognising how needful it is for survival that laughter should be kept off as far as possible, it permits of no encroachment. To this sanctimonious solemnity nothing

is more dangerous than merriment. Immediately joyfulness penetrated the holy courts, religion would vanish. Hence the approaches are lined with protective powers, and the curtains are thick, and the windows are heavy with coloration, and hearts are engarmented with thickly-woven seriousness, and the minds with preponderating phlegm. Yet laughter is the light of life. It is the tonic whose refreshing potency can never be overrated. It enlivens and relumes. It conquers fears and overthrows depression. It puts hopelessness to shame and evil to rout. It pushes despondency to one side and melancholy to the other, leaving them to starve, and die, and rot. Where it is life grows buoyant, and beautiful, and good. Dispersing the mists of the mind as easily and quickly as the sun sucks into invisibility the mists of the morning, it throws a brightness over all that was unhealthily dark and gloomy, and supplies a nourishment to young shoots that otherwise would have perished. Evil cannot prosper, nor develop, where laughter abides. Where laughter is heartiest, and readiest, and truest, life is grandest and noblest, and purest; for it purifies what was impure, ennobles what was ignoble, elevates what was degenerate, and strengthens what was weak.

Why, then, is it that religion robs man of the privilege to laugh? why is it that religion has always hated laughter, has always carefully guarded against its encroachment? Why is it solemnity, the food of religion, is powerless to retain its severity when impinged by mirth?

Religion would keep its dominancy over the human mind. Laughter, by causing a blight on the food-producing elements for religion, would starve it to death. If we believe that happiness only is life's imperishable crown, that it alone justifies life's shadows and sorrows—and who within his innermost honesty would deny it?—and when we know how laughter dethrones religion from its long residency and supremacy, and when we recognise religion's avowed antagonism to laughter, what other conclusion can we come to but that religion is an enemy to man? Then it can only be by the subjugation of the natural promptings to merriment, to happiness, to laughter within us that religion can hope to prevail. The laughter of a child awakes all the chords of our hearts, producing in us a vibrancy perhaps unequalled by any other appeal. We hear in it and see in it the untainted purity of morning. We hear the whirr of the birds' wings, the gurgling of the burns, the swish of the wind. It has the sparkle of the sun-rays in it. We see the flashing waterfall, the glint of the sailing cloud, the happiness of nature in it. There is no joy so pure as the little one's. There are no shadows about it. Untainted, the very exuberancy of it deepens into what might well be called a crystalline intensity, and we are in the presence of the absolute. Few persons are there, I would hope, to whom the laughter of a child has no significance; in whom is no immediate natural response; for whom is no harmonising pleasure, upspringing, like love, from the depths of our natures. The man or woman whose heart has no hearing for the happiness of a child, has forsaken or lost his birth-right. Worldly affairs have clogged the springs of his being and ruined his simplicity, have worn thin the golden links connecting him with undespoiled innocence. Inevitably unredemable, the close relationship with child life must be, for him, for ever a closed book. He has ruthlessly flung away one of the choicest inheritances we possess, or has allowed himself to be enrolled amongst those unfortunates whose lives partake not even of the happiness of the lower animals. But to those others, whose minds are free from the obnoxious excrements of degradation, from the unreal and superficial frivolity that denudes all things of their true meaning, from the unsightly prejudice that comes from premature conclusions and personal opinions engendered by ill-considered, misshaped likes and dislikes, there is in a child's laughter a preciousness worthy the most careful and tenderest regard. Were all our children continuously happy and continuously guarded against the many enemies of their natural happiness, man would assuredly move more rapidly over the obstacles strewn in the way of social progress. For child life is manlife and womanlife, and those two must either mean progression or retrogression, better or worse, good or bad. In the child lies the solution of all problems.

The dawn of life, so decisive in its effects over the noon-day and evening, we should preserve and keep green for the children, as we preserve and keep green memories that have become part of our real selves. Clean and wholesome, and healthy, and happy, can we wonder that, to the young mind, darkness is unnatural, dangerous, and revolting? Is it not, then, criminal to roll the heavy, dark clouds of religion over a mind inspired by bodily energy to natural mirth and music? The darkness of life comes too soon for us to fling shadows over the dawn, and touch the brightness with our life-stained thoughts. We do wrong to the children to stand between them and their bright sunshine, and throw upon them the dark shadows of our own personal prejudices and religious bigotry.

ROBERT MORELAND.

Freedom in the Future.

WHATEVER may have been the failures and disappointments of the past year, there can be no doubt that they have been largely outbalanced by its successes, and more especially by the promises of still greater successes that came as the year drew towards its close.

The International Freethought Congress at Brussels drew together a great band of Liberals from all parts of the world, and gave prominence to the fact that the intelligent classes in all the Latin countries—so long ground in the dust by the Papacy—had at length declared war on their oppressors, and were making rapid strides in education and the cultivation of the spirit of freedom.

From France and Italy, Spain and Portugal, and the South American Republics, even from Cuba and Porto Rico, as well as from Austria and Russia and Scandinavia, came large and enthusiastic deputations to tell of the determination of their fellow countrymen to throw off the cruel yoke of the priest and to protest against the murderous alliance of Church and State that had done to death the great Spanish reformer, Francisco Ferrer.

The revolution in Portugal, headed by a great Freethinker, was another significant event. Followed as it was by a great Freethought Congress at Lisbon, opened under the chairmanship of the President of the Republic, one cannot fail to see the immense change that must have taken place during recent decades in the mental condition of the Portuguese people.

In contrast with these events, the attitude of the people of Britain and the United States seems inexplicable. Scarcely a baker's dozen of delegates represented the whole of the two great Anglo-Saxon nations at the Brussels Congress; while the two Freethought Congresses of Chicago and Indianapolis, enthusiastic as they were, were little more than reminders of days long passed away, and of insidious encroachments now being made by Protestants as well as Romanists on national freedom, and especially on education, set off as they were by the Eucharistic Congress at Montreal, at which Canada was degraded and humiliated by the presence, in their official uniforms, of the Premier and some of the leading Government officials at ceremonies involving abject submission to a Papal envoy.

It seems impossible that freedom should make equal progress in all lands. While the United States were working out their national freedom, the people of Europe were mostly the victims of the despotic tyranny of degenerate and debauched princes and priests. To-day, while the most cruelly crushed of these European peoples are rapidly driving out their kings and priests, and organising their governments upon a solid, secular, and democratic foundation, the British and American peoples are suffering from the despotism of plutocracies and hierarchies that in many directions are crushing out all semblance to real freedom.

Under this system, indeed, Canada and the United States, instead of being democratic countries, are rapidly becoming Policeocracies of the Russian type.

A beam of sunshine came to Canada in the closing months in the shape of Bishop Fallon's exposure of the bi-lingual schools of Ontario. The exposure showed clearly, what we have often asserted, that wherever the Catholic priest has control, there education is utterly neglected; and we call Bishop Fallon's exposure a ray of sunshine, because whatever may be his motive in making it, it seems to be the only possible method of calling attention to the disgraceful facts; and to expose them is the first step towards providing a remedy.

Protestants, indeed, are agreed that a remedy should be provided, but, as in Britain itself, they are so bigoted and so unreasonable that they refuse to accept the only rational and permanent solution—a purely secular system of education.

It seems ridiculous for a journal like the *Toronto Telegram* to object to a "Protestant slate" in the School Board election on one day, and the very next day to strongly advocate the retention of simple "undenominational" religious exercises in the public schools.

The fact is, the Catholics are justified, from their point of view, in considering all schools as Protestant schools in which the Protestant Bible is read. And they will be fully justified in their objection while both Protestants and Catholics fail to recognise the fact that morality and dogmatic religion are two totally dissimilar things. If ever they do recognise it, they will see the absurdity of connecting religion and education.

Another bright ray came from Winnipeg, where, after some six months' detention and against the strongest efforts of the Russian agents, Federenko, the Russian refugee who was arrested only a few days after reaching Canada, was released after being twice arraigned on a charge of murdering a police constable, the prosecution failing to prove that it was a civil and not a political crime.

Every lover of freedom will feel gratified to think that a Canadian judge has had the backbone and manliness to refuse to lend himself to the machinations of such a travesty of Government as that now existing in Russia. The Emperor Alexander is supposed to have given freedom to the serfs, but the combined State and Church tyranny known as the police system inflicts far more deadly injuries upon the peasants and workmen of Russia than they suffered under the old system; and if, under such a system, a political suspect opposes arrest with all the means at his disposal he is surely fully justified.

But perhaps the most promising indications of future progress come from that despised Far East which has hitherto been the Happy Hunting Ground of the greedy missionary, the piratical trader, and the fire-eating soldier. Japan is one long stage on the road to commercial and industrial independence, and China and India are already well started. When these three peoples—one-half of the human race—are able to hold their own commercially and politically, a large part of the causes of recent wars and present-day risks of them will be abolished. The bugbear of Foreign Trade having largely vanished, the Western manufacturers and traders will have to face the problem of employing their resources and talents in the service of their own people, and without the possibility of exploiting and demoralising the hitherto weaker Easterns.—*Secular Thought* (Toronto).

Correspondence.

ARE VIVISECTORS MATERIALISTS?

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—In your issue of February 26 you quoted me as saying that vivisectors are "Materialists," and invited me "to indicate a single one who accepts that designation." If it is not too late, I would like to say that, from your attitude of indignation, I feel like one who has offended a friend, and that, rather than attempt to justify myself, I would prefer to apologise. I admire you for repudiating the idea that "Materialists" could sink to the position of vivisectors; and, knowing the hypocrisy throughout all sections of the Christian Church—there are noble exceptions, of course—and as I keep hearing of various eminent vivisectors who are "good Christian men," I feel that I did wrong in assuming that Christians were incapable of the conduct of savages, and that "Materialists" alone are guilty.

However, as you only ask me for one instance of the latter, I will name Professor Metchnikoff, of the Pasteur Institute, who says: "Complete annihilation at death is the conception of the vast majority of enlightened persons..... Since the awakening of the scientific spirit [the craze for vivisection] in Europe it has been recognised that the promise of a future life has no basis of fact to support it." At a lecture in London some time ago this notorious vivisector claimed that "morals should take second place to knowledge," which sentiment was loudly applauded by his audience of *English doctors!* If that standard of morality is adopted, not only is animal vivisection right, but *human* vivisection would be fully justified; for no one will deny that experiments on 100 men will teach us more than 1,000,000 experiments on dogs, cats, and rabbits. If we allow the former, the latter follows as the inevitable and logical result. As a matter of fact, human vivisection is already being practised.

J. FRASER HEWES.

[Mr. Hewes' letter is several times as long as our paragraph, yet he does not answer it. He gives no evidence that Metchnikoff accepts the designation of "Materialist." And we were rather thinking of England, to which Mr. Hewes' remarks must have referred. We may add that the only Freethinker who defends vivisection, to our knowledge, is Mr. Eden Phillpotts, the novelist. Voltaire, Bentham, Schopenhauer, Ingersoll, and Bradlaugh were all opposed to it. And the National Secular Society has for many years had for one of its immediate practical objects "the extension of the moral law to animals."—*EDITOR.*]

SUMMER EVENING.

The frog half fearful jumps across the path,
And little mouse that leaves its hole at eve
Nimbles with timid dread beneath the swath;
My rustling steps awhile their joys deceive,
Till past, and then the cricket sings more strong,
And grasshoppers in merry moods still wear
The short night weary with their fretting song.
Up from behind the molehill jumps the hare,
Cheat of his chosen bed, and from the bank
The yellowhammer flutters in short fears
From off its nest hid in the grasses rank,
And drops again when no more noise it hears.
Thus nature's human link and endless thrall,
Proud man, still seems the enemy of all.

—John Clare,

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.

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Fountain): 3.15, Mr. Allison, "God."

ISLINGTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Highbury Corner): 12 noon, Ivan Paperno and Walter Bradford. Wednesday, at 8, Ivan Paperno, a Lecture.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (outside Maryland Point Station, Stratford): 7, E. C. Saphin, "Christianity and its Christian Critics."

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 12 noon, Class; 6.30, D. Ross, "Tolstoi."

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, A. B. Talbot, "Sabbatarianism."

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N. S. S. (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): J. T. Lloyd, 3, "Christian Falsification of History"; 7, "Is Life Worth Living?"

RHONDDA BRANCH N. S. S. (Parry's Temperance Bar, Tony-pandy): 3, Discussion, "Christianity and Woman."

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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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