

# THE Freethinker

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*Man can believe the impossible, but man can never believe the improbable.*—OSCAR WILDE.

## Views and Opinions.

### Slandering Atheists.

The abominable unfairness of the Christian mind in everything relating to those who differ from orthodox, is far from being confined to vulgar evangelical preachers. Many of the best and most distinguished Christians have displayed it, less malignantly, perhaps, but still in a very shocking manner. We will take two conspicuous instances—those of Wordsworth and Coleridge.

Wordsworth, in his *Prelude*—an unequal work, containing some rather ordinary writing varied with magnificent purple patches—refers to his experience in France, in 1790, when the French Revolution seemed to be promising a general millennium, and in particular to his experience on a certain evening in the native town of Robespierre:—

“That eventide, when under windows bright  
With happy faces and with garlands hung,  
And through a rainbow-arch that spanned the  
Triumphal pomp for liberty confirmed, [street,  
I paced, a dear companion at my side,  
The town of Arras, whence with promise high  
Issued, on delegation to sustain  
Humanity and right, that Robespierre,  
He who thereafter, and in how short time!  
Wielded the sceptre of the Atheist crew.”

Wordsworth must have known better than this. He wanted to dispose of the “monster” of the Reign of Terror, so he made a present of him to Atheism. But he could hardly have been ignorant of the fact that Robespierre did not belong to, and was never connected with, any “Atheist crew.” Robespierre sent several Atheists to the guillotine. He was himself a fanatical Deist. He declared in the Assembly that Atheism was aristocratic—the most hateful adjective then known to the French Republicans. He induced the national representatives to decree that a belief in God and immortality was a necessary to human society. A “Feast of the Supreme Being” was arranged. Robespierre, in the name of France, delivered a diatribe against Atheism, and set fire to an image of it which had been constructed by the painter David. Such was the leader of “the Atheist crew.”

Coleridge did a similar service to Thomas Paine. In one of the appendices to the first of his *Lay Sermons*—“The Statesman’s Manual”—he refers to the eighteenth century French philosophers, who taught people to believe “Christianity an imposture, the Scriptures a forgery, the worship of God superstition, hell a fable, heaven a dream, our life without Providence, and our death without hope.” And he asks: “What can be conceived more natural than the result: that self-acknowledged beasts should first act, and then suffer themselves to be treated, as beasts?”

“Thank heaven!—notwithstanding the attempts of Thomas Payne and his compeers, it is not so bad with us. Open infidelity has ceased to be a means of gratifying even vanity: for the leaders of the gang themselves turned apostates to Satan, as soon as the number of their proselytes became so large, that atheism ceased to give distinction.”

Of course, Coleridge was perfectly well aware that Paine was not an advocate of “Atheism,” but he felt

that “Atheism” was an ugly word with the orthodox mob, and he thought he would do a stroke of good business for the orthodox cause by fastening it upon the accursed author of the *Age of Reason*.

Wordsworth calls the Atheists a “crew.” Coleridge calls them a “gang.” This is how Christians set about teaching Atheists manners. Coleridge even brands all Freethinkers as naturally “beasts,” and pretends to think that nothing but vanity could lead a man to be an apostle of “infidelity.” But he knew a great deal better. In one of his sincerer moments he said: “Not one man in a thousand has either strength of mind or goodness of heart to be an Atheist.”

### Christianity Self-Condemned.

We were glad to see the City Peace Meeting, with the Lord Mayor in the chair, and Mr. Asquith and Mr. Balfour as the principal speakers. Specifically, of course, it was a demonstration in favor of the proposed Arbitration Treaty between Great Britain and the United States; but in a general way it was a demonstration in favor of Peace. Peace, that is to say, between nations that would obviously stand to lose more than they would gain by open war with each other. When the gain appears to be all on one side the taste for violence asserts itself as vigorously as ever. Great Britain in Egypt and India, France in North Africa, Germany in South-East Africa, Russia in Manchuria, and the United States in the Philippines, regard their own wills as the supreme law for the people they so kindly govern, and treat sermons about Peace with the most sovereign contempt.

There was a good side to the City Peace Meeting; one is glad to see securities taken against war even where war is most unlikely; nevertheless, there is a hypocritical aspect of the case that should not be overlooked. Mr. Asquith, however, must have overlooked it, or he would never have given his own religion away so completely as he did in an early part of his speech. We should imagine that he has since regretted the following utterance:—

“The Western world has been doing lip service to the gospel of peace for the best part of 2,000 years. And yet there has never been an era in human history in which the inventiveness and resources of mankind have been more lavishly employed on war and for the preparation of war. Nor need I remind you that some of the bloodiest and most wasteful wars in history have been waged between men of the same blood, language, and religion.”

Mr. Asquith did not see, at least at the moment, that he was speaking as a Christian of Christianity, which was thus practically self-condemned. After the best part of two thousand years of Christianity the Christian nations are more devoted than ever to the arts of bloodshed and destruction. That is the plain fact, Mr. Asquith admits it, and the admission is fatal to the claims and boasts of the pretended “gospel of peace” or “religion of love.” It was in a Christian country that Swift wrote that most men have religion enough to make them hate each other. And what a comment is Mr. Asquith’s final admission on the theory that a common religion promotes moral unity and international friendship. The most bitter and wasteful wars of modern times have been fought not only between people of the “same blood and language” but also between people of the “same religion.”

G. W. FOOTE.

## God and Morals.

THE study of fallacies is an unending occupation. It is, however, an instructive, and, to those whose sole desire is to get at the truth of a subject irrespective of that bugbear of timid minds—consequences—a profitable pursuit. For the discipline to which one treats others reacts on oneself. In pointing out the blunders of other people, we end by being, if not completely on our guard against similar fallacies in our own reasoning, at least a little more careful than we should have been without the exercise. In the nine articles that have preceded this one, I have pointed out a fair number of examples of wrong reasoning connected with subjects in which readers of this journal are interested; but, far from having exhausted the list, I seem to have started along a road the following of which need only end with one's repugnance to travel further.

Among the reasonings by which the believer in Deity attempts to justify his belief, there is one professedly based on the fact of morality. This world, he says, is a moral world, and from this statement he argues back, in a more or less tortuous manner, to the existence of God. In calling this world a moral world, he means one of three things—sometimes he implies all three. In the simplest sense, he means that, moral qualities existing, the world or its assumed author must be credited with their creation. A second meaning is that morality, in the best sense of the word, pays. A third and more important meaning is that the world is so constructed that in the long run morality gains the upper hand. The dice of fate are loaded in its favor, and the world of human nature becomes more surely moralised with the passing of the years.

The value of the first meaning may well be left to go with that of the third. The truth of the second, however, is only to be admitted in a general sense, and not at all in that required by theistic argument. For whether morality "pays" or not individually depends altogether upon the kind of person we are dealing with, and the general circumstances of the case. If a man is so constructed that a mean or ignoble action will always make him feel contemptible in his own sight, then we may safely say that morality will always pay a man of that stamp. A lie or a dishonest action might bring him the world's rewards, but it could never repay him the loss of his own self-esteem. Presently we shall see *why* this is so; at present it is enough to note the fact. But suppose he is an individual of an altogether different build. Suppose he is of coarser fibre, and values position or gain above all else. What then? Such a person will experience no great difficulty in dulling his conscience, and in course of time may quite forget the dishonorable methods by which he has achieved success. In what sense has the lack of morality been a loss to him?

Of course, it may be replied that he has degraded his own nature; and in that I agree. It may also be said that he has failed to reach the standard of excellence he might have reached; and, again, I agree. But in speaking thus we are endowing this particular person with the feelings, the ideals, and the susceptibilities of his critics. He feels no such longings, is sensible of no such ideals, and is aware of no degradation. His aim has been success. He has gained his end; and the "moral order," instead of awakening him to a sense of his loss, tends to deaden any such susceptibility as time passes. The power of habit is as effective in the direction of encouraging vice as in encouraging virtue; certainly so long as we restrict ourselves to a study of the individual. The truth is that the "moral order" of the universe takes as much pains to make one man oblivious to the higher ethical demands of life as it does to make another more keenly alive to ethical possibilities. It is entirely a question of the material. As the sun's heat hardens clay and softens wax, so natural law

makes here for virtue and there for vice, without having any intrinsic bias in either direction.

Let me now take the last sense of the expression. Morality, I agree, does on the whole gain ground. Virtue tends to overcome vice. We grow more conscious of our duties and responsibilities; our concern for others covers a constantly expanding area. The tendency of the world is to a better balanced ethic, even though it may not in any given period be actually realised. What is the significance of this? The Theist says it is because there is a moral driving force behind the universe or animating the universe. The Atheist says the phenomenon is a perfectly simple one, and, given the world as it is and man as he is, it could not be otherwise. The real miracle, the real demonstration of an animating extra human intelligence, would lie in the fact of it being otherwise.

It is ultimately a question of what we mean, or of what we ought to mean, by morality. Of course, if morality is something apart from the cosmic order, if it is something imposed on organic nature, or on human nature, as a weight is placed on a pair of scales, then the fact of moral growth argues a growing power on the part of whoever is responsible for this addition to the order of things. If otherwise, we may well find a perfectly natural explanation of moral growth in a consideration of the conditions of human existence.

Morality is often defined as right action. But as right action is also defined as moral conduct, the definition does not carry us very far. Now, whether we believe morality to be a natural growth, or whether we believe it to be something added to human nature by an animating intelligence, there will be no dispute over the statement that at least one of its prominent characteristics is that of securing adaptation between man and some portion of his environment. The moral man is one whose emotions, thoughts, and actions bring him into a closer and more desirable relationship with his fellows. This description is not, I repeat, affected by whether morality is God-given or a natural development. The *fact* is there, and the most ardent Theist would agree that this was God's purpose in creating the moral sense.

We can also put on one side all discussion as to whether there is such a thing as individual morality or not. Personally, I should answer the question with a decided negative. All moral feelings, all moral rules, imply the existence of others similar in nature to ourselves. Even the question of whether we owe moral duties to animals or not turns upon whether they are susceptible to pain or pleasure in the same general way as ourselves. But stealing, lying, chastity, etc., all bear obvious reference to others, and are consequently only other names for the conditions of adaptation as applied to individual organisms. This is not the only aspect of the matter, but it is the only aspect with which I am now concerned.

It does not require any great powers of penetration to foresee my next point, which is, that what biological laws are to individual organisms, moral rules are to social groups. They are the laws of social adaptation. Again, the adaptation may be more or less perfect, but some degree of adaptation is inevitable if a social group is to persist. If an individual's nature happens to be so ill-adapted to the social life that he cannot, or will not, obey its rules—that is, if he is originally ill-adapted to the group—he is, in one stage of civilisation killed, at another cast out, at another placed under restraint. By a selective process, at work in all societies, high or low, the ill-adapted are placed at a disadvantage, while the better adapted flourish and multiply. Still more; in the contest of group with group, the ill-adapted group—that is, the group in which the members show little unanimity of feeling, or aim, or action—are placed at a serious disadvantage compared to another group in which the internal adaptations are in a more satisfactory state. The first group is destroyed or subjugated by moral association

with others. If each man sprang direct from the ground and passed his existence alone, morality would be a meaningless thing. Morality, then, has no existence apart from the group. It is, fundamentally, a social fact.

Objectively, therefore, morality represents, primarily, a degree of adaptation between an individual and his fellows, and, subjectively, the existence of such emotions and ideas as secure that adaptation. This adaptation may be simple, that of one member of a family to other members, more complex, as in the case of relations between the members of a group, tribe, or nation; or, most complex of all, when it covers the relations of people widely separated on the earth's surface. The quality of adaptation remains intact throughout.

But, from a biological point of view, we have all learned that adaptation is also the great law governing the existence of all animated beings. This is not affected by whether one is an evolutionist or an anti-evolutionist. An animal whose organs are not capable of doing a given amount of work, cannot live. If it lives it must be adapted to certain aspects of its surroundings. Well or ill-adapted matters not. There is a minimum, below which, it cannot sink and live; but there are endless degrees of adaptation above that limit. Biological adaptations of the one group are imposed upon those of other kinds. Of course, other factors—the accident of position, or the possession of superior weapons, etc.—may sometimes more than counterbalance lack of internal cohesion, but in the long run it tells; and where the cohesion of a conquered people is markedly superior to the conquerors, subjugation is often only a preliminary to the peaceful devouring of the conqueror by the conquered. Great Britain has, in a military sense, conquered the Transvaal, but the greater cohesion of the Dutch population bids fair in turn to subjugate the conquerors.

The statement, then, that nature is on the side of morality is only equal to saying that man as a member of a social group comes under the same general law that governs him as an individual organism. He prospers socially as he prospers biologically, in proportion to the degree of his adaptation to his medium. His morality, whether expressed in action or formulated in codes, is the expression of the laws of social life. The development of intelligence and the accumulation of knowledge still further aids the process. Man discovers the conditions of biological welfare, and applies his knowledge to hygiene, sanitation, the prevention and cure of disease, and the general improvement of the conditions of life. In the same way he recognises the significance of these moral adaptations that bring him into harmonious relation with his fellows, consciously formulates their laws, and encourages the cultivation of their subjective aspects as ideals.

C. COHEN.

(To be concluded.)

### Agnosticism Travestied.

THE overwhelming majority of preachers seem to be incapable of giving a truthful description of what they regard as heretical or sceptical teaching. They often deliberately misrepresent the views of their opponents, and almost as frequently calumniate their persons. Pretending to be the only people in possession of the truth, they naturally look upon all who differ from them as enemies of the truth and as being influenced by some unworthy motive. This haughty, overbearing attitude is to be accounted for, in a measure, by the fact that the utterances of the pulpit are not open to a direct challenge. Whatever the preacher says is taken for truth by nine-tenths of his hearers, while every tenth who may disagree with him has to hold his tongue. It is only human nature that such a man should pose as an infallible messenger from an infallible Lord, as the very mouth-

piece of heaven, whom to disbelieve or contradict is a sin. It is no wonder that he speaks with such an air of authority and finality, and treats his opponents so disdainfully. He sees everything, everywhere, through the mist of prejudice, and, consequently, never sees anything correctly. He looks down with something like contempt on all who do not mouth his shibboleths, and has not a good word to say of them. Whenever he refers to science, it is either to condemn it as an offence against God, or to claim it as an ally; but in either case he grossly misrepresents it. Mention Agnosticism to him, and he instantly begins to gird at it, acting the superior person to perfection. Only the other day an evangelical clergyman exclaimed: "We not only believe, we positively know, that God exists; we not only believe, we also know beyond a doubt, that we shall inherit immortality through faith in Jesus Christ." On this subject the *New Theologian* is no better than the *Old*. Mr. R. J. Campbell, in a sermon which appears in the *Christian Commonwealth* for April 16, speaks thus:—

"The typical Agnostic of the middle of the nineteenth century, whatever he may be now, was a person who was not prepared to say that he either believed or disbelieved in God and immortality, much less that he knew the meaning of our existence, or whether it has a meaning at all. The Agnostic, you see, is not an Atheist, nor is he necessarily hostile to religion; he is simply an inquirer who at present feels compelled to hold his judgment in suspense on the ultimate problems of our being and destiny for want of satisfying evidence."

It is quite true that Professor Huxley stated, in a letter to Charles Kingsley, written in 1863, that he had "by nature and disposition the greatest possible antipathy to all the atheistic and infidel school," but it is also true that in the same letter these words occur: "Nevertheless I know that I am, in spite of myself, exactly what the Christian would call, and, so far as I can see, is justified in calling, Atheist and Infidel." In the same way the Professor had an invincible objection to being called a Materialist; and yet he invariably spoke of natural processes in terms of Materialism. He even went the length of regarding everything known as having been evolved from matter, even consciousness itself. Huxley did not seek to hide the fact that he was illogical and inconsistent. On the one hand, he reduced consciousness to a product of matter; and on the other, he treated matter as a phenomenon of consciousness, thus landing himself in the absurdity of making consciousness a product of itself. The truth is that, in reality, Huxley was, on his own confession, both an Atheist and a Materialist. Now, an Agnostic is a person who does not know that there is a God; and, therefore, an Agnostic cannot be a Theist. Does it not inevitably follow, then, that an Agnostic, not being a Theist, must of necessity be an Atheist? Unless Mr. Campbell claims the Agnostic as a Theist, he is logically bound to admit that he is an Atheist, and Huxley was honest enough to concede that a Christian could attach no other label to him.

Mr. Campbell has nothing but sneers for present-day Agnostics. He questions "whether Professor Huxley would feel flattered if he saw the quality of some of his more modern imitators"; but, surely, on reflection, the reverend gentleman will realise that to indulge in such an innuendo was by no means a creditable action. That oblique mud-throwing is followed by this remarkable utterance:—

"But there is a sense in which the word 'Agnostic' would describe everybody, even the most convinced and saintly believers. How little we know for certain of what lies behind the veil of sense. As the late Father Tyrrell put it in the last book he wrote, we simply do not know what our own spirits are, nor where they came from, nor what their ultimate destiny is to be. There are a thousand things in this connection about which we should be glad of authentic information, but none is forthcoming."

The question is, does Mr. Campbell know anything at all, "for certain" or otherwise, "of what lies behind the veil of sense"? Is sense a "veil" hiding

things existing behind it, or is it an avenue of knowledge? Is it not rather the fact that our senses are the only channels along which information about Nature can reach us? The region called "Behind the Veil" exists only in imagination. Mr. Campbell himself expatiates upon our profound ignorance of God and Immortality. "Why is God so silent," he asks, "when there is so much that we want to know?" Why are there so many different religions, each one of which offers an infallible solution of the mystery of existence? Christianity itself is broken up into seven hundred and fifty sects, every one of which congratulates itself upon its superiority to all the others. If God existed, there would be only one religion, and all mankind would profess it. If God existed, doubt would be an impossibility, for he would be known to all alike. The very existence of Atheism is the strongest possible disproof of Theism. A totally silent and inactive Deity is unthinkable. If God existed, man could not be in ignorance of his own origin, nature, and destiny. As a matter of undeniable fact, we have no idea as to why we are here at all, and, certainly, no vision is vouchsafed to us of any Hereafter. Mr. Campbell points out "the strangeness of the fact that the curtain between seen and unseen is so impenetrable. Our friends go hence and we see them no more, and not a word comes from the further side to assure us that all is well with them and us." Then he quotes the following lines from Omar:—

"There was the door to which I found no Key:  
There was the Veil through which I could not see:  
Some little talk a while of ME and THEE  
There was—and then no more of THEE and ME."

Such is the sense in which Mr. Campbell thinks that "Agnostic" would be an accurate description of everybody; but he stoutly maintains that there is another sense in which everybody may be a Gnostic. He says, "We do know—in part." What do we know in part? The preacher does not tell us. Instead, he gives us this:—

"Have you ever reflected upon the astonishing fact that there is a kind of orthodoxy upon which all men make haste to agree, and, indeed, vie with each other in proclaiming? I mean the orthodoxy of righteousness. No matter to what school of thought a man belongs, no matter whether he be Theist or Materialist, Christian or Mohammedan, he declares in unequivocal terms his belief that all men ought to seek to do right.....One of the commonest contentions of those who declare themselves unable to believe in God and the life to come is that their fruits of character are as good as those of professing Christians. Why should they feel obliged to say this, and why do we all feel it necessary to put forward some claim of the same sort? When we come to think of it, this is really one of the most remarkable things in our common experience.....Nietzsche notwithstanding, the ordinary man of the ordinary world believes this with all his heart."

The reference to Nietzsche is most unfortunate, being entirely unjust. What Nietzsche attacked was not morality, but stereotyped morality; not good and evil, but the good and evil of two thousand years ago unalterably fixed as the good and evil for all time. But what on earth has this "orthodoxy of righteousness" to do with the statement that "we do know in part"? If Atheists are as capable of doing good as Theists, of what use is the belief in God? If Mohammedans are as moral as Christians wherein does the pre-eminence of Christianity consist? What need is there of any religion at all? Mr. Campbell, however, jumps from the fact that men generally believe in good and evil in conduct to the assumption that "at the back of all the turmoil and suffering of our earthly lot there is a holy, divine purpose which could find fulfilment in no other way." It is a stupendous leap, and there is nothing whatever to justify it; and even when it is accomplished there is nothing gained. The assumption is wholly unwarrantable, being insusceptible of verification. Neither Mr. Campbell nor anybody else knows that there is "a holy, divine purpose" at the back of human life. It is a pious sentiment, and nothing more. It can be utilised with enormous results by an expert player upon human nerves. That it is

nothing but a matter of nerves is proved by the paucity of response when the player is but slenderly gifted. Mr. Campbell is a perfect master in his art, and he is rewarded with overflowing crowds of highly emotionalised religionists. But the fact remains that his stock-in-trade is composed not of ascertained truths, but of flighty speculations; not of different items of knowledge, but of superstitious beliefs disguised as revealed verities.

Christian knowledge is a glaring misnomer. We have absolutely no knowledge of anything beyond and above Nature. As Huxley said, there is no likelihood of a satisfactory solution of the mystery of existence ever being found. He rejected Christianity, root and branch, as utterly incapable of promoting human welfare, and of the existence of the Christian God he failed to perceive a single scrap of evidence. Intellectually, the majority of the clergy are in agreement with him, only with them the intellect is in subordination to their feelings. Again and again has Mr. Campbell declared that logically Pantheism and Determinism are unopposable, but that religiously, that is, emotionally, or as a Christian minister, he must believe in a personal God and free-will. His Agnosticism is a mere travesty, and his Gnosticism a palpable delusion. J. T. LLOYD.

### The Apocalypse.—VIII.

(Continued from p. 277.)

IN Rev. ix. 13-21 we have a similar scene to that in which the locusts appear. The writer of the Apocalypse says that when "the sixth angel sounded" four destroying angels, who had previously been bound "at the great river Euphrates," were loosed in order that "they should kill the third part of men" (Rev. ix. 13-15). Then, without any explanation, he introduces in the next verse an immense army of cavalry. He says:—

"And the number of the armies of the horsemen was twice ten thousand times ten thousand: I heard the number of them" (Rev. ix. 16).

The writer does not say where these armies came from; we are therefore left to infer that they were the heavenly host, led by the four destroying angels. The number of the celestial war-chariots mentioned in one of the "holy books" is thus stated:—

Psalms lxxviii. 17.—"The chariots of God are twenty thousand, and thousands upon thousands."

Here we have the "twice ten thousand," which the Apocalypticist has multiplied by "ten thousand" to make up the additional "thousands upon thousands"; he has then the impudence to say that he "heard the number of them." In the next two verses this veracious writer says:—

"I saw the horses in the vision and them that sat on them, having breastplates as of fire and of hyacinth and of brimstone: and the heads of the horses are as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths proceedeth fire and smoke and brimstone. By these three plagues was the third part of men killed, by the fire and the smoke and the brimstone which proceedeth out of their mouths" (Rev. ix. 17, 18).

Thus the office of the four destroying angels was a sinecure; the horses of the armies that followed them did all the killing. This portion of the writer's "vision" was suggested by the account of the doings of a certain "Son of man" in 2 Esdras, from which I quote the following:—

2 Esd. xiii. 10, 11.—"He sent out of his mouth as it had been a flood of fire, and out of his lips a flaming breath, and out of his tongue he cast forth sparks. And these were all mingled together.....and fell upon the assault of the multitude which was prepared to fight, and burned them up every one; so that of an innumerable multitude nothing was to be perceived but dust of ashes and smell of smoke."

The writer of the "Revelation" makes his horses kill only "the third part of men"; the "Son of

man" in the "holy book" kills all who were opposed to him. The Apocalyptist goes on to say:—

"And the rest of mankind, which were not killed with these plagues, repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship demons, and the idols of gold and silver.....they repented not of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornications, nor of their thefts" (Rev. ix. 20, 21).

The foregoing statement, which brings chapter ix. to a close, was suggested by the following passage in the same "holy book":—

2 Esd. xvi. 19, 20.—"Behold, famine and plague, tribulation and anguish! they are sent as scourges for amendment. But for all these things they shall not turn them from their wickedness, nor be always mindful of the scourges."

In chapter x. the writer of the "Revelation" says that he saw "another strong angel coming down out of heaven.....and he had in his hand a little book open." The writer then heard a voice from heaven telling him to go and take the book from the hand of the angel, and, upon his approaching the latter, he was told to "take it and eat it up." He says:—

"And I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey. ....And they say unto me, Thou must prophesy again over many peoples, and nations, and tongues" (Rev. x. 10, 11).

Turning now to the "holy book" of Ezekiel, we find it recorded that that prophet, when in the spirit, "heard a voice of one that spake" to him, and looking up he saw a hand holding "a roll of a book." The owner of the hand then said to him, "Son of man, cause thy belly to eat it, and fill thy bowels with this roll that I give." The prophet then says:—

"Then did I eat it; and it was in my mouth as honey for sweetness. And he said unto me, Go, get thee unto the house of Israel and speak with my words unto them" (Ezek. i. 28; ii. 9; iii. 1—3).

Commencing chapter xi., the writer of the Apocalypse says: "And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and one said, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein" (Rev. xi. 1). The only reason for this ridiculous statement—more especially with regard to the measuring of the worshipers in the temple—is that the prophet Ezekiel states that "a man.....with a line of flax in his hand and a measuring reed" led him, when in the spirit, all over the temple and its environs, measuring every object and place they came across (Ezek. xl. 3—xlvii. 5).

The writer of the Apocalypse next introduces what he calls "two witnesses" *apropos* of nothing in particular. Without any previous explanation he says:—

"And I will give unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days clothed in sackcloth. These are the two olive trees and the two candlesticks, standing before the Lord of the earth" (Rev. xi. 3, 4).

With regard to these "two witnesses," the writer of the article "Apocalypse" in the *Encyclopædia Biblica* says that Biblical critics are "generally agreed" that they were intended for Elijah and Enoch. Here the critics are in error. The Apocalyptist, apparently, never gave a thought to these two men; he simply reproduced statements he found in the holy books, and worked them into his grand prophecy quite regardless of anyone to whom they might best apply—his source in this case being the books of Zechariah and Haggai. The two last-mentioned prophets wrote just after the return from the Babylonian Captivity, and exhorted the leaders of the returned exiles—Zerubbabel the prince and governor of Judah, and Joshua the high priest—to commence rebuilding the Lord's holy temple.

In the book of Zechariah these two leaders are symbolised as olive trees, and the temple by a candlestick with seven lamps prefiguring "the eyes of the Lord." Respecting these symbols Zechariah says:—

"Then answered I, and said unto the angel, What are these two olive trees upon the right side of the candle-

stick, and upon the left side thereof?.....Then said he, These are the two Anointed Ones, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth" (Zech. iv. 11—14).

The "Anointed Ones" were Zerubbabel and Joshua, one having been anointed as prince and lineal descendant of the last king before the Exile, and the other as high priest—kings and high priests being appointed to their office or position by anointing with oil. That these were the two "Anointed Ones" referred to is evident from the following passages: Hagg. i. 12; ii. 4, 23; Zech. iv. 6—10; Zech. iii. 1, 7; vi. 11—13. The Apocalyptist calls them "the two witnesses," and says that they should preach for 1,260 days "clothed in sackcloth." Zechariah says of one of the "anointed ones": "And he shewed me Joshua the high priest.....Now Joshua was clothed in filthy garments."

The writer of the Apocalypse next borrows several expressions relating to time from the book of Daniel, and inserts them in his narrative with little regard to sense or reason. These expressions are:—

Dan. vii. 25; xii. 7.—"for a time and times and half a time."

Dan. ix. 27.—"for *half of the week* he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease."

Dan. xii. 11.—"for a thousand, two hundred, and ninety days."

Dan. viii. 14.—"Unto two thousand and three hundred evenings and mornings" [*i.e.*, 1,150 days].

In the book of Daniel each of these periods refers to the 3½ years during which the daily sacrifices at the temple were not allowed to be offered. The text in the last two passages is corrupt, the figures in each case being intended for 1,278 literal days. The passages in which the Apocalyptist makes use of these expressions are the following:—

Rev. xi. 2.—"and the holy city shall they tread under foot *forty and two months*."

Rev. xi. 3.—"they shall prophesy *a thousand two hundred and three score days*."

Rev. xi. 9, 11.—Men shall "look upon their dead bodies *three days and a half*.....And after *three days and a half* the breath of life from God entered into them."

Rev. xii. 6, 14.—The woman went into the wilderness for "*a thousand two hundred and three score days* .....where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time."

Rev. xiii. 5.—Authority was given to the Beast "to continue *forty and two months*."

Here the "forty and two months" give us 3½ years. The "three days and a half" is the equivalent of Daniel's "half of the week," which signified 3½ years. The expression "time, and [two] times, and half a time" is another of Daniel's methods of signifying 3½ years. Lastly, the Apocalyptist's 1,260 solar days were taken from Daniel's 1,290 and 1,150 days, which in the first century were probably both given as 1,260. In the Septuagint they are said to be 1,290 and 1,200 days. Whatever may have been the original number, there can be no doubt as to the Apocalyptist having taken these expressions from the book of Daniel.

With regard to the "two witnesses," the writer has a lot of absurd things to say, as, for instance, that "if any man desireth to hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies"; that they had "the power to shut the heaven that it rain not during the days of their prophecy"; that they had "power over the waters to turn them into blood"; that they were slain, and lay dead for "three days and a half," after which interval they came to life again "and stood upon their feet," and then "went up into heaven in a cloud"; their translation being followed by an earthquake in which 7,000 persons were destroyed.

In these statements also the writer has followed the "holy books." The fire coming out of the two witnesses' mouth was suggested, like that of the horses, by the "Son of man" in 2 Eadras xiii.; the turning water into blood was copied from one of the plagues, said to have been brought upon Egypt by Moses (Exod. vii. 20); the withholding of rain for a season was suggested by a statement made respecting Elijah (1 Kings xvii. 1); the idea of the "two

witnesses" coming to life again came from the Bible story of a dead man thrown into the sepulchre of the deceased Elisha—"and as soon as the man touched the bones of Elisha, he revived, *and stood upon his feet*" (2 Kings xiii. 21). The words in italics are those employed by the Apocalypticist.

As regards Elijah and Enoch, the first-named is stated to have been carried up to heaven by a whirlwind in a chariot of fire (2 Kings ii. 11). Of Enoch we only know that he "walked with God: and he was not; for God took him" (Gen. v. 24)—a statement which may mean that he was taken to heaven without dying. The Apocalyptic's "two witnesses," however, *did die*; so there can be no analogy between the two. In any case, Enoch and Elijah were not the "two olive trees"—that is to say, "the two anointed ones"—that "stood by the Lord of the whole earth" when that deity had not even a temple which he could call his own.

ABRACADABRA.

(To be continued.)

### Acid Drops.

Considering what abominably wicked people Atheists are, according to the Christian theory, it is astonishing that they so seldom get into trouble with the criminal authorities. It is the Christians who give work to the police, the magistrates, the judges, and the prison warders. Even in the grossest cases of cruelty to helpless little children it is a million to one that the culprit is a "believer." Mrs. Mary Dorcas Wilesmith, the lady of independent means, who is found guilty on a charge of cruelly treating Florence Pastorfild, and sentenced to two years' hard labor, is a Christian Scientist.

A curious thing was said by the Worcester solicitor who had the prosecution of Mrs. Wilesmith, her son, and her bailiff, in hand. "No heathen child," he said, "could have been treated more abominably." This legal gentleman evidently thinks that ill treatment of children is common amongst the "heathen." But he is very much mistaken. Children are better treated in "heathen" than they are in Christian countries. Japan and Burma, for instance, are children's paradises. Even the Zulus—nay, even the African negroes—would be unable to understand how England could need a Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. If you told them that such a Society *was* needed, and very much needed, in England, they would think you were "getting at" them.

The missionaries in Africa are greatly distressed at what they call the "Moslem Peril." The fact is that Mohammedanism spreads much more rapidly than Christianity does. The Rev. Mr. Bayliss complains that in many places the representatives of the two religions are competitors for the affections of the natives. In the Gomba country, for example, the Christians decided to build in one of the big towns, at a cost of £3,000, a large school for their own boys; but that was soon matched by £10,000 spent on the erection of a Mohammedan mosque. The mosque is a curse, while the church is an unmixed blessing. Mohammedanism represents the Kingdom of Darkness, and sets in operation the powers of evil, while Christianity stands for all that is good and noble and elevating. And yet God is permitting the corrupt and corrupting religion to make "an abnormal advance" in several South African countries, while the perfect religion of his only begotten Son is suffering defeat at every turn.

The Chinese Government, which is purely Pagan, is firmly resolved to put an end to the wicked traffic in opium, and it is highly significant that the strongest opposition comes from the Indian Government, which is, of course, a Christian Government. And yet the Churches are doing their utmost to flood China with Christian missionaries. It would be more appropriate for China to send out missionaries to moralise the British Empire.

At a meeting of the China Inland Mission the other day some of the speakers deplored the fact that the smoking of cigarettes and the consumption of rum and whisky were growing in China. These, they said, were being imported from England and America, and bade fair to become as great an evil as opium. We daresay that, as usual, one has to discount to a considerable extent the speeches of these missionaries; but it is instructive to note that, so far as smoking

and drinking are injuring the Chinese, it is the Christian nations that are responsible for the evil. Still, it will all make good for trade—the missionary trade. For after Christian England and America have made the Chinese an alcohol-soaked nation, there will be a glorious opening for Christian Temperance Missions, with nice comfortable jobs for home officials. Thus does Providence use all things to its own ends, and out of evil produce good—for the missionaries.

This year the Church Missionary Society reports a deficiency of £12,000, the Baptist Missionary Society £10,000, and the London Missionary Society £4,000. The *Christian World* says it looks as though the all-round deficiency will be about £50,000. Perhaps some of our readers would like to contribute. The old Yankee story of a cent. for the heathen and a dollar to pay the missionary for carrying it to its destination may serve as a guide for those who desire to give.

The Vicar of Melton Mowbray writes to the *Guardian* pointing out that many Churches are under-insured owing to want of funds. But what on earth do they want to insure a Church for? One would think, protected by the providence of God and helped by the prayers of the incumbent, every Church should be well protected against fire. At any rate, if prayers are of any value, insurance companies ought to quote a really nominal premium. Companies are keen enough in such matters. Other things equal, though, an insurance company wants the same rates for a church as for a gambling-hell. Which doesn't say much for the prayers of the faithful.

Agnosticism "is now widely employed to designate the rather crude conception of multitudes of people who scarcely even take the trouble to think about anything." So says the Rev. R. J. Campbell, and he adds, "It is easy to dismiss all great themes with the one pronouncement, 'I do not know.'" We beg to differ. Far from a confession of ignorance in relation to religious matters being easy, it is usually the most difficult of utterances. There are really few people who will say "I do not know." They prefer a dogmatic statement of belief or of faith, and when it suits their purpose preachers are the first to point out that people cannot rest in an attitude of suspense. Hence, they say, the unsatisfactory character of disbelief. It is when the number of those who disbelieve are too large to be ignored, or because it suits the argument of the moment, that the other card is played, namely, that Agnosticism is the refuge of mentally lazy individuals. And the one plea is quite as false as the other.

We are not in love with Agnosticism as a descriptive epithet; it is too often used as a shield against the social persecution that a frank confession of Atheism might invite. But it is simply ridiculous to describe it as the hall-mark of the unthinking, while, by contrast, the Christian is the thoughtful person pondering over the problems of life. We are all, with a few exceptions, made religious by education and home influence. We become religious without any effort on our own part—unless it is the effort to abstain from criticising. Right or wrong, in order to reach the Agnostic—or Atheistic—position one has to do *some* thinking; and the clear inference is that, while all disbelief involves some degree of mental exertion, no such inference is warranted by a profession of religion. Mr. Campbell, of course, takes himself very seriously, and many other people seem to take him at his own valuation. The pulpit, too, breeds a habit of regarding oneself as an authority upon philosophic questions; first, because the congregations are not accustomed to criticise, and, secondly, because no talking back is allowed. But we wonder whether Mr. Campbell could have gained a reputation anywhere else but in the pulpit, and on any other subject than that of religion.

Another deliverance from the City Temple chair of philosophy is that Professor Huxley coined the word "Agnosticism" to denote the attitude of mind of those who feel themselves unable to arrive at any definite conclusions concerning the fundamental questions of life. This is not exactly untrue, but it is rather misleading. Professor Huxley said he used the word to express the fact that he knew nothing concerning certain things of which other people professed to know a deal. But we imagine he would have strongly objected to these being called "the fundamental questions of life." For they are not fundamental in any genuine sense of the word. The question of *Deity*, of a soul, or of a future life, may be interesting; they may be insistent—thanks to our education; but they are not fundamental for the simple reason that the business of life can be satisfactorily conducted without reference to either or all of them. We might go further, and say that the essential busi-

ness of life is disturbed by their presence, but we put the matter in its mildest form. This is, again, part of the religious game of depicting the unbeliever as a poor bewildered creature, drifting aimlessly around, while the Christian pursues a steady and confident course. And the instructive thing is that this habit of misrepresenting the position of opponents has been practised for so long in the pulpit that it has assumed all the qualities of an indispensable virtue.

Christians are marvellously grateful for very small mercies nowadays. The *Methodist Times* reports that "there has been a wonderful spiritual movement at Caerau, Maesteg, South Wales. So exceedingly wonderful was it that the writer boldly calls it a "a revival." But here comes the anti-climax. This "wonderful spiritual movement," this great revival, resulted in the adding of the amazing number of nine persons to the membership of the Church. What a triumph won by the Omnipotent Savior.

In the leading article in the *British Weekly* for April 27 it is frankly admitted that the Christian Church is in a most parlous condition. Both its membership and the attendance at its various services have been steadily decreasing for a number of years, and the writer is of opinion that the signs still point in the same direction. What is to be done? Sir William Robertson Nicoll's advice is a thoroughly sound one: Capture the children before they learn to think for themselves. From the age of four let them be made to attend church or chapel with the utmost regularity. Cram the dogmas down their throats day in and day out. This is a splendid exhortation, and, if it is carried out, the results will be entirely satisfactory—to Christians. But, oh! what shocking injustice to the children! It is a dark crime to victimise the darlings in so brutal a fashion. But nothing matters, of course, if the Church but prospers.

The question of expense threw cold water on Church fanaticism at Cardiff. They were holding the Easter vestry meeting at St. Mary's Church, and the question of disestablishment came up for consideration. Mr. H. J. Thatcher, the people's warden, being full of fiery indignation against the disestablishers, proposed a resolution pledging the meeting to "take up arms rather than allow the poor people of Wales to be robbed of the spiritual administration they had received for at least three centuries." This bubble of Dutch courage burst at once when another warden asked what was the use of talking about force of arms when they had to pay 7s. 6d. to carry a revolver. Civil war in Wales is postponed. The 7s. 6d. did it.

Rev. R. F. Horton, the gentleman who once suggested that all Atheists should be wiped off the world, visited Liverpool to orate at the centenary celebration of the local Auxiliary of the British and Foreign Bible Society. After lauding the Bible in a most extravagant way, Dr. Horton pathetically asked how it came that "this Book, the maker of nations and of individuals, was to so large a number of people unattractive. They were told," he added, "that boys coming up from the public schools knew wonderfully little about the Old Testament, and that there might come a day when a reference to Adam might lead an intelligent child to ask what Adam's other name was." Of course, the Bibliolators, who are naturally a long way behind date, laughed at this ancient joke, which is almost as musty as their theology. Being Protestants, too, they cheered Dr. Horton's absurd statement that "the use of the Bible was the measure of national greatness." The difference between agricultural Holland and industrial Belgium he put down to the fact that the former read the Bible and the latter didn't. Geographical and racial differences, of course, have nothing to do with it.

Dr. Horton was both optimistic and pessimistic about the Bible. It was the secret of England's greatness, but at the same time "our young men read anything against the Bible ('Shame')—but they did not read the Bible." At that end the holy book is being played out—and we are glad to have Dr. Horton's testimony to the fact.

The *New Age* remarks that it draws no [it must mean little] revenue from advertisements, and that it "relies upon circulation alone." And it adds that "No other paper in England does." Nonsense! Several do. As the *New Age* knows very well, for its ignorance on this matter is pure affectation. The *Freethinker* has to depend on its circulation, its income from advertisements being not worth troubling about. It may, perhaps, be thought that we derive something from the lavish advertisements enjoyed by the National Secular Society and the Secular Society, Ltd.,

in our columns; but this is a mistake,—we charge nothing for these things, not even the cost of setting them up.

Some readers of the *New Age* appear to have asked why it is not obtainable on every bookstall. "For the simple reason," the answer is, "that this would involve printing ten times as many copies as we sell." We doubt it. Anyhow, for our own part, we should be glad to take the risks with the opportunity. We are confident that putting the *Freethinker* on the railway bookstalls would make a difference of £1,000 a year to us in twelve months.

Pastor Russell must spend a terrible lot of money in advertising himself. Wherever he goes the most elaborate "puff preliminary" goes before him in the newspapers. We have one of these puffs before us, taken from the *Liverpool Courier*, with relation to his lecture in Hope Hall on "The Hereafter"—a subject on which he is as well informed as other people. We learn from this puff that Pastor Russell, at the early age of fifteen, used to try to frighten the inhabitants of Pittsburg by going out at night and chalking up announcements of "Hell Fire." When he was eighteen he had a narrow escape himself. A conversation he had with an Atheist nearly overthrew his faith. Of course. Something of that kind is always in the story. He is now known as the "World's Ubiquitous Preacher"—though we never heard of him till lately. And he has written a book, which has sold to the extent of three million copies—the largest circulation of any book except the Bible. There now! Jesus Christ occupies the seat at God Almighty's right hand; the seat at the left hand is booked for Pastor Russell—if it isn't already occupied by the penitent thief.

Unwilling compliments from our enemies are always welcome. The *Methodist Times* says that the "serious decline" in membership in the great industrial districts of the North and Midlands is partly due to the "active campaign on behalf of Secularism which has been carried on in some of these localities for several years." Quite so; and we need only add that the campaign has been carried on under the greatest difficulties. Not alone has there been a general press boycott, and a difficulty in getting announcements of meetings suitably displayed, but Christian pressure has been brought to bear to refuse halls for Freethought meetings. If only Freethought literature had a fair chance with newsgents and bookstalls, and Freethought speakers a fair opportunity of making themselves heard in suitable halls, there would be a much more "serious decline" than is at present the case.

Principal Edwards, President of the Baptist Union, pleads for the settlement of social questions on Christian lines. We do not quite know what Principal Edwards understands by "Christian lines"; but if it is based on the New Testament, the Christian solution of social questions should include polygamy, slavery, the cure of disease by faith, of insanity by expelling demons, of non-resistance, the absence of thought for the morrow, unquestioning obedience to all authority, and, above all, no votes for women. This would be a sound Christian social campaign; but we don't expect to see Principal Edwards advocate it.

A semi-orthodox writer, who contributes "This Workaday World" column to the *Liverpool Weekly Post*, signs himself "Ben Adhem"—probably after Leigh Hunt's well-known poem "About Ben Adhem." Does the Liverpoolian writer imagine that "Ben" in this instance is short for Benjamin? Many of his readers will, anyhow. Of course it means "the son of." It occurs a good many times in proper names in the Old Testament.

"Ben Adhem," the Liverpool one, has been replying to "A Working Man's Wife," who has read Haeckel, Ingersoll, and similar writers, and prefers them to the Bible. He has a tough task, and he uses a lot of words without performing it. The lady must have smiled at his labored reply.

No less than twenty-four religious bodies petitioned the Brighton Town Council against granting seven days' licences to the cinematograph theatres. When they do agree their unanimity is wonderful. There are no greater Protectionists than those who run the gospel-shops. When they take their shutters down they want everybody else's shutters up. The Lord's Day means *their* day.

In Bethnal Green, according to the local *News*, no fewer than five Nonconformist chapels have already been, or are being, converted into cinematograph theatres. Yes, the world *does* move.

Mr. Henry, Librarian of the John Rylands Library, Manchester, delivered a lecture on "The Story of Our National Bible" before the Young Men's Christian Association recently, and one thing he said shows that a man may be a good librarian and a very poor man of letters. "If one took out of Shakespeare, Tennyson, Wordsworth, and Browning," he said, "all that they owed to the Bible, and took also all that was owed to the Bible from Macaulay and Gibbon, and even from Byron and Shelley, the pages would be almost void of sequence." Could there be a greater absurdity? The man who said that is like Voltaire's Habbakuk, *capable de tout*—capable of anything.

The following cutting has been sent to us as from the March number of the *Meldourne Hall Magazine*, Leicester:—

"The final meeting of the session will be on Tuesday, March 29, when the Rev. J. Moffat Logan, of Accrington, will be the speaker. Mr. Logan has many claims to our regard, but the outstanding bit of his experience which may be mentioned in connection with the men's meeting is his debate with Mr. Foote the Atheist, when Mr. Logan was declared the victor even by his opponents, and the audience which had gathered for several nights rose at the end and sang 'All hail the power of Jesus' name.'"

We have corrected the old wheeze so often that we are tired of doing it. Mr. Logan's opponents did *not* declare him the victor. It is pure romance, which probably emanated from Mr. Logan's own brain; for he is one of those little men who have no need to ask the Lord to give them a good conceit of themselves,—while, as to his accuracy, it is enough to say that he declares he saw an Atheist lecturer at Glasgow do the "God strike me dead" performance. The result of the debate was the formation of a large and active Bristol Branch of the National Secular Society, whose doings can be read of in the *Freethinker* of the time, and several lectures by Mr. Foote to fine audiences. The Branch went on well until the South African War broke out, when it perished from within, through the incessant discussion of politics by a number of the members, who should have been attending to Freethought. With regard to the "hymn," it is perfectly true, not that the audience, but that the Christians, sung it. They were in an overwhelming majority, and they behaved so that only a speaker with Mr. Foote's platform experience could have got any hearing at all on the second night. The hymn was the climax of their Christian manners. The Freethinkers, including Mr. Foote himself, laughed at them.

Rev. Charles Brown, President of the National Free Church Council, preached at Swansea lately on "The Creed of the Fool"—which he is as competent to talk about as any man we know. By the "fool" the reverend gentleman explained that he meant the Atheist, but there was really no need to go so far afield.

"'Tis a Christian country, and them that set up to be Christians and call 'emselves such, must take the rough with the smooth and abide by the church where it pinches 'em as where it don't." [Samuel Angel.]

"That's just what the weaker members don't see," answered Teddy Grills. "Them that fancy their singing, like the hymns; and them that haven't no music—they say the organ be in vain. But a proper Christian goes the whole hog and swallows the jam and the powder both—as we all should; for 'tis the powder in this world as will put a flavor to the jam in the next. We shouldn't know how good Heaven tastes if we hadn't sucked in a lot of the nasty medicine of earth."—*Eden Phillpotts, "Demeter's Daughter."*

#### AN HISTORICAL FRAGMENT.

King Solomon and King David, they both led naughty lives; Each had four hundred concubines, and each one hundred wives.

When they arrived at riper age, they both were seized with qualms,  
So, one, he wrote the Proverbs, and the other wrote the Psalms.

#### WHO WON?

The late Duke of Wellington got a letter once from a lady, saying she was soliciting subscriptions for a certain church, and had taken the liberty to put his name down for £200, and hoped he would promptly send her a cheque for that amount. He forthwith replied that he would respond to the call; but he, too, was interested in a certain church which needed subscriptions, and, counting on his correspondent's well-known liberality, he had put her down for £200. "And so," he concluded, "no money need pass between us."

#### THE DEVIL AND HIS FIRE.

The definite function of this personage was brought puzzlingly before me one Sunday evening in a Banffshire manse. All the family were sitting quietly reading in the drawing-room, when the youngest boy, with a laudable thirst for knowledge, went up to his mother and asked a question, for the answer to which she referred him to me. Coming to me, he said:—

"Mr. Kerr, is it true that the Devil goes about like a roaring lion?"

"It must," I replied, "be true, for it is in the Bible."

This was followed by another question which I did not attempt to answer, "Then wha keeps his fire in when he's gaun about?"—*Dr. John Kerr, "Memories Grave and Gay."*

"If you see any man at his trade, you'll mark him do a lot of things that puzzle you; and if you watch God at His trade 'twill be the same. You'll catch yourself wondering again and again, and saying to yourself, 'What the dickens be God up to?' But if you're a man of sense, you know in your head, if not in your heart, that 'tis all right. The Almighty may look a fool, and He often does do, but you must remember the eyes He looks a fool in. In fact 'tis a very ticklish thing to say anybody's wrong, just because you think they are. Do we know enough about 'em to speak? Have we figured out the plan of their minds? So 'tis with life; no great thing falls out unplanned, in my opinion; therefore, it must be right."—*Eden Phillpotts, "Demeter's Daughter."*

#### INVITED TO PROVE HIS PRAYER.

Old Governor McCreery was not a religious man, and did not have much respect for religion. He preferred a race-horse to a church, and a mint julep to a hymn-book. One morning Mr. Sutherland, who was the chaplain of the Senate, had some distinguished divine as a guest, and invited him to officiate in his place on that day. The stranger, not having ever enjoyed the honor before, thought he would make the most of the case, and delivered a very fervent prayer, which was intended for the spiritual benefit of the senators. There was more truth than compliment in his utterances, and at the conclusion of his prayer Senator McCreery sent to the clerk's desk a resolution.

Mr. McDonald, who was then the chief clerk of the Senate, took the resolution, read it over, and colored up to his ears, and, turning around, held a whispered conversation with Mr. Ferry, who was in the chair.

Mr. Ferry declared at once that the resolution of the senator from Kentucky was not in order. Mr. McCreery demanded that it should be read, and there was a little breeze, in which the chair conquered, as he usually does on such occasions.

Several senators rushed up to the desk to see what the paper was about, and it was afterward passed around quite freely. It was a series of whereases, which set forth that the gentleman who had just occupied the floor did not address his remarks to the President of the Senate, as required by the rules, but to a being not recognised by the Constitution of the United States and entirely unknown to that body:—

Whereas, In the remarks of the gentleman he asserted that the Senate of the United States was composed of men who were weak and sinful, and wanting in Christian grace; and

Whereas, If these remarks were true, the persons so described were unfit to represent the several states or to frame laws for the people; therefore be it

Resolved, That the committee on privileges and elections be instructed to summon before them at once the person who had offered the prayer, and compel him to prove the truth of his assertions or retract them.

At the end of the tenth century the doctrine of the Second Coming was revived. The people were led to believe that the old serpent's thousand years of bondage was nearly up, that he would be let loose about the year 1000, that Anti-christ would then appear, and that the end of the world would follow. Churches and houses were therefore left to decay, as they would cease to be wanted. Whenever an eclipse of the sun or moon took place, the people ran into caverns and caves. Multitudes hurried off to Palestine, where they supposed Christ would make his descent. They transferred their property to the priests, who could say with Iago, "thus do I ever make my fool my purse." Others not only gave their property to the priests, but actually became their slaves; hoping, says Mosheim, that "the supreme Judge would be more favorable to them if they made themselves servants to his servants."—*G. W. Foote, "Flowers of Freethought."*



## Mr. Foote's Engagements.

(Lectures suspended for the present.)

## To Correspondents.

**PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1911.**—Previously acknowledged, £228 16s. 9d. Received since:—S. Holmes, £2 2s.; J. F. Anst, 5s.; J. Dunlop, £1.

**J. F. AUST.**—We wrote an article on the subject some three years ago in *John Bull*, mainly in reply to Mark Twain's ridiculous and ill-informed little book on Shakespeare. We may write a more special article in the *Freethinker*, as you ask us to, or we may keep it for our projected volume. Meanwhile, at any rate, we may say that you are very much misled if you "understand there is absolutely no evidence extant that Shakespeare wrote one word attributed to him; all that remains being one or two of his signatures spelt differently." Different spellings of signatures was common then. Sir Walter Raleigh, statesman, soldier, scholar, and one of the first gentlemen of the age, spelt his name a dozen different ways. If you mean that we haven't the manuscripts of Shakespeare's plays, it is enough to reply also that this is a common occurrence. We have no manuscript of Ben Jonson's plays, or Webster's, or Ford's, or Marlowe's—not to make too long a list. Manuscripts of plays and poems were very rarely preserved. Why should they have been? Shakespeare's writings, many of them, were published in his lifetime, with his name attached to them. It must be borne in mind that biographical matter about actors and playwrights was not likely to be kept and accumulated then. "Seldom," says Dyce, in his introduction to Webster, "Seldom has the biographer greater cause to lament a deficiency of materials than when engaged on the life of any of our early dramatists." We know far more of Shakespeare than of any of the rest of them, with perhaps the one exception of Ben Jonson, who had other causes than his dramatic productions to bring him into publicity.

**W. P. BALL.**—Many thanks for cuttings.

**H. J. HUDSON.**—There is a whole chapter devoted to "Pious Forgeries" in our *Crimes of Christianity*. The Josephus passage, which is given in full there, is only one of them. It occurs in the *Antiquities* xviii., 3, iii. It briefly relates the miracles, crucifixion, and resurrection of Christ. You do not mention the name of the Encyclopædia in which you find it admitted that "The famous passage about Jesus is an interpolation"—which, of course, it is. Thanks for cuttings.

**R. H. ROSETTI.**—We wish you all success in the admirable effort.

**J. C. HUSBAND (S. Africa).**—We have no other address than the general one given. Sorry you wrote to Mr. J. H. Dean, secretary of the new Freethought Society at Capetown, and got no reply. Perhaps some Post Office bigot took advantage of the "insufficient" address.

**SWANSEA TRUTHSEEKER.**—Always glad to receive useful cuttings.

**C. WOOLLEY.**—We should like a fuller report of the reverend gentleman's address on Shelley than the one you kindly send us. What he says about Shelley's Atheism seems to us very absurd, and rather hypocritical, as it stands.

**"ANONYMOUS" (Birmingham)** sends us £2 2s. towards the cost of the Debate report, and says "I can only hope that other Freethinkers will come forward and help you clear of all loss." This correspondent is distributing a good number of copies of this journal while the debate is running in it.

**G. HULL.**—Too late for *this week*.

**L. ANDERSON.**—Why leave it till too late for a paragraph? You could have sent a week ago if you liked. We have strained a point—for Mr. Cohen's sake.

**W. STEWART (Wood Green).**—How often must we repeat that Tuesday is too late for "Sugar Plums"?

**J. TWIGG.**—The books you mention are all out of print, but some will be obtainable again before long.

**D. W. A.**—Apply to A. Bonner, Church-passage, Chancery-lane, E.C.

**S. LIDGETT.**—We do not see that Spiritualism necessarily leads to Theism. Glad you are taking extra copies of the *Freethinker* for distribution while the debate is appearing.

**W. DENTITH.**—Pleased you have "much to thank the *Freethinker* for, considering both father and mother were Sunday-school teachers."

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Sugar Plums.

The National Secular Society's Annual Conference takes place at Birmingham on Whit-Sunday. Both the business meetings in the morning and afternoon and the public meeting in the evening will be held in the King's Hall, Corporation-street—the use of the Town Hall not having been granted this time as on previous occasions. The King's Hall is a large and fine one, standing conspicuously on a main thoroughfare. It is sure to be crowded in the evening. The Birmingham "saints" are making all arrangements for the comfort of expected delegates.

In connection with the Conference there will be an excursion on Whit-Monday to Stratford-on-Avon. With fine weather this should be a delightful trip. A visit of Freethinkers to the birthplace and deathplace of the greatest Freethinker (as well as the greatest poet) that ever lived! The Birmingham "saints" are begging the N. S. S. President to join the party this time, and he has promised to make an effort.

Mr. Cohen lectures to-day (May 7) at the Secular School, Pole-lane, Failsforth. Further particulars are not sent us. District "saints" may see the local advertisements.

Freethinkers will never forget Mr. W. T. Stead's brave and generous action in co-operating with Mr. Foote in vindicating Paine and Ingersoll against the slanders of the Rev. Dr. Torrey. Mr. Stead has a genuine love of fair-play. He has also a genuine love of liberty. His letter to the *Times* against the anti-Mormon crusade in this country does him infinite credit. He calls it an "undisguised appeal to the hateful spirit of religious persecution"—"none the less because it is masked by the hypocritical and mendacious pretence of a desire to protect English girls from being lured into polygamous harems." "It is one of the most familiar devices of intolerant religionists," Mr. Stead points out, "to invent malicious falsehoods to serve as a cloak for persecuting those who dissent from the faith of the majority." Father Vaughan, who yelps in the front of this Mormon-hunt, is reminded that "Nothing would be easier than to follow up this anti-Mormon crusade by a far more popular and dangerous agitation against the Roman Catholics, whose conventual institutions, so rapidly multiplying in our midst, have often aroused the passions and prejudices of the Protestant mob."

Mr. Stead gives some statistics which ought to be printed in every paper in the country—beginning (may we suggest?) with *John Bull* :—

"The falsehood that thousands of English girls are being shipped to Utah every year is sheer unmitigated rot. Last year about 550 persons left England for Utah, 60 of whom were under eight years of age. Of the remainder many were married couples, and among the single emigrants there were as many men as women."

The whole crusade, Mr. Stead says, is "an outbreak of sectarian savagery worked up by journalists" with a zest for profitable sensation. We thank him for saying so. Our thanks may not be very much, but Mr. Stead will probably recognise them as sincere.

Mr. R. H. Rosetti intends carrying on a summer course of Freethought lectures at Laindon, in Essex—one of the places growing up so rapidly on the London and Tilbury Railway between Barking and Southend. Meetings are to be held every other Saturday evening opposite Duff's hair-dressing saloon. We are not informed of the hour. A start is to be made on Saturday evening, May 13. Miss H. Pankhurst will take the chair, and Mr. A. C. Rosetti will look after the literature. This brave experiment should be supported by "saints" in the immediate vicinity.

One of our oldest readers and friends, Mr. S. Holmes, sends us what may be the last of many subscriptions, as he is shortly leaving England for America. Here are a few sentences from his farewell letter :—

"You, your work, and the noble cause you stand for, have been in my daily thoughts for the past twenty years, and more. When you come to lay down your arms, which I hope is far distant, you will be able to say truly that your life has not been in vain. You will have the satisfaction of knowing that you have broken the fetters and liberated thousands of your fellow men.....The good results of your steadfast labor will live after you and remain imperishable."

We wish our old friend a good time in America during the days that are still left him.

## "Theism or Atheism?"—II.

### A Public Debate

BETWEEN REV. DR. WARSCHAUER AND MR. G. W. FOOTE.

(Continued from p. 285.)

The CHAIRMAN: Dr. Warschauer will now speak to you for a quarter of an hour. (Applause.)

Dr. WARSCHAUER: Mr. Chairman, Mr. Foote, ladies and gentlemen, it is a great pleasure to take some share in a discussion that is proceeding with such good temper and such good feeling on both sides. (Hear, hear, and applause.) My friend Mr. Foote spoke pityingly of the ease with which I had given myself away in a certain instance. Well, you know, I could almost find it in my heart to be sorry for Mr. Foote, who gave himself away in the very first words he uttered. Mr. Foote said that he had been in many debates, and this was the first one in which he had been asked to answer questions. May I ask Mr. Foote to look at this debate which he held in 1895, at which he made exactly the same complaint—that he had been asked questions? It seems Mr. Foote's memory is not so good as it might be. I asked Mr. Foote questions for that particular reason—he made it so plain in his debate with Mr. Lee that he has a particular, unaccountable, a coy, maiden-like shrinking from answering questions. But as a matter of fact Mr. Foote in his reply has done most things—he has done anything and everything except answer my questions. (Applause.) Now, ladies and gentlemen, let us have plain speech about this. Mr. Foote throws himself upon your indulgence by saying that he could not, he could not be expected to, answer carefully excoagitated questions at a moment's notice. Now is Mr. Foote or is he not a controversialist? He is a controversialist of many years' standing. I, in my church, in my coward's castle as some of the friends here would call it, and in my pulpit, offer myself to questions after service, and answer them there and then. Yet Mr. Foote did not do it to-night; but I will say more—these questions were not irrelevant to my lecture; these questions grew out of my lecture; they summarised my address, what I had said, in the form of questions; it was for the purpose of making it easy for Mr. Foote to deal with the points which I had raised; but he does not choose to do it, and I can only say I am sorry for a cause which cannot answer plain questions when they are plainly put. (Hear, hear.) These questions simply summarised what I had said in my address; I did not put Mr. Foote in the witness-box; he knows quite well that that is only a rhetorical form of speech. I had stated a certain case; it was for him to rebut that case, and in order to make it easy for him I handed him the substance in questions; he has handed me my questions back; he has not answered them, and I leave you friends to form your own conclusion as to the motive. (Hear, hear.) As to the motives which lead a controversialist, an old fighter, to leave questions unanswered, I know exactly what my people would think if I left their questions unanswered—(Dissent in the audience)—I am speaking of the people in my congregation.

The CHAIRMAN: May I explain, please, that Christianity and Theism are on its trial not only on the platform but also in the audience?

Dr. WARSCHAUER: My difficulty is that of finding my way among the many things which Mr. Foote has said. I cannot possibly answer half-an-hour's remarks, many of them quite irrelevant and ungermane to the lines which this discussion should follow; I cannot do it in the few minutes that remain to me, but I will explain one or two points. Mr. Foote says that the first of my two axioms was—every effect has a cause. That, he was good enough to tell you, and to tell me, was a tautology—it was an abuse of language. It is certainly an abuse of language on Mr. Foote's part to misquote what I said. I did not say every effect had a cause. I may be a mere tyro in philosophy compared to my friend Mr. Foote; but I know that would have been a tautology. I said every phenomenon had a cause, which is quite different. Mr. Foote says I stated that every cause is able to produce its effect. Again, most unfortunately, he hasn't taken me down correctly. I said quite a dozen times in my address that every cause must be at least adequate to produce its effect, and explained that that was implied in the very notion of cause. Well, he wants to know how I know that the universe was caused, because the universe, he says, isn't a phenomenon. Well, I would say that the universe is the sum of phenomena; and if a phenomenon, if every phenomenon is caused, then what applies to its parts must apply a thousandfold to the whole. Then he told me about all having been produced out of the primitive ether. Well, "produced" is rather an unfortunate word, because "produced" seems to me to imply a producer. Produced how? Produced why? Produced by whom? But you cannot

use language without getting back to the idea of a purposive cause.

How do I know that God created matter? My friend forgets that I particularly said I would not urge the point of the eternity of matter. I did not say that God created matter. I might have done so; but as it happens, I did not. What is the use of charging me with language with which I do not charge myself? It did not occur in my address; but supposing God did not produce matter; supposing that, on some Monistic theory, matter is an eternal aspect of the Deity, yet what produced the changes in matter? If there had always been this primeval fire-mist, well and good; but this primeval fire-mist has developed; it has developed into a universe; it has developed into life; it has developed into sentiency, into intellect, into purpose; it has developed into Mr. Foote and myself. Now, I want to have some reason and some account of that, and I confess I did not get it in Mr. Foote's address. He told me about a type that was set out. When he saw the book similarly set out in Nature, then he was able to think there was intelligence at the back of it. Well, I am very sorry neither Mr. Foote nor myself was consulted when the type was set up; but he has read many a book which he did not see set up, and yet he believed there was some printer, some poor "comp." at work. Now, Mr. Foote has seen that Nature; he has seen the book set up, and he can read parts of it, and, therefore, there is intelligence at the back of it all. It is quite true I did not define chance; there are certain things which define themselves by common sense. Chance is just the opposite of design. When only eleven planets were known, De Morgan, the great mathematician, showed that the odds of their moving in one direction round the sun, with a slight inclination in the planes of their orbit, would, if chance had determined their orbits, have been twenty-five millions to one; and that, after all, is only one phenomenon out of an infinite number of phenomena which happen according to law; but I am glad Mr. Foote surrenders the idea of chance, because if chance is surrendered there only follows one alternative, and that alternative is design. Where there is design there is purpose, and where a purpose there is a person. Well, Mr. Foote made a brilliant debating point, which I am glad you appreciated (I appreciated it myself) when he said that you grow the roses and God sends the weeds—to punish you for your laziness in not growing roses. (Interruption.)

The CHAIRMAN: Order, please; play the game!

Dr. WARSCHAUER: God sends the weeds; he sends a great many ills when men do not plant roses either in the soil of their gardens or the soil of their souls. That is when weeds spring up, and I admit that is when weeds spring up, and I admit that they are sent.

Now, Mr. Foote is, after all, contented with small mercies, and I think that shows a delightful disposition. He is contented because half the people in this room—three quarters of the people in this room—do not believe in God. That is a great ambition. It is wonderful. You have come from great distances and you nearly fill three quarters of this room; if those are the victories of Atheism, then I confess as a mere Christian, I want a great deal more of victory for my cause. You are, after all, a very small minority, even though you do fill the greater part of this particular room. Yes, I turn to one last point, and I must apologise to you for the disjointed nature of these remarks, because I am trying to follow Mr. Foote over a great deal of ground. Mr. Foote said all followed if the "if" was admitted. If there is intelligence in Nature, then that intelligence must be conscious, then that consciousness must be purposive, and that purposiveness must be personal. He said it all followed with logical necessity if only the "if" were admitted; but he says the "if" is the stumbling block. Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, I admit it; that "if" is the stumbling block on which Atheism breaks its neck. (Loud applause.) Very very briefly let us say this. There is no necessity, Mr. Foote said, to account for the creation of something of which we do not know that it ever began to exist. Yet supposing we do not know that it began to exist, yet it has been changing and evolving all the time. Mr. Foote said that the alternative to chance was natural causation. Ladies and gentlemen, if I did not define chance, Mr. Foote was particularly careful not to define natural causation. If things arose by chance, he said, we should not be here. Most true! If things happened by chance there would be only chaos; but there is not chaos, there is cosmos, there is intelligibility. The very fact that things have happened by chance proves overwhelmingly the whole contention of Theism, because where there is no chance there must be design and purpose. (Hear, hear, and applause.)

The CHAIRMAN: I now have pleasure in calling upon Mr. Foote to speak for a quarter of an hour.

Mr. FOOTE (who was much applauded): Let us get to business, Dr. Warschauer has rightfully enough described me

as an old debater. That is why I was not caught in his patent question trap. An old debater would be perfectly aware that if one man has to follow another man in debate he must, all the time the other man is speaking, not only be listening to what is being said, but making up his reply. (Hear, hear.) You cannot suddenly get on your legs and excogitate a half hour's reply to half an hour's speech. If your mind is not moving around and through all he is talking about while he is speaking you will never be able to reply to him at all. (Hear, hear.) Then, when a man has been half an hour occupied in listening intently and in making up, mentally, of course, his reply, he is to to have, unannounced, suddenly sprung upon him eight questions, I do not care whether they are simple questions or complex questions (hear, hear) I say that, at the end of the speech, they are utterly out of place. I have no coyness in answering questions at the proper place and in the proper time. If Dr. Warschauer would like a Socratic debate I am his man. (Applause.) The discussion shall be nothing but question and answer. (Hear, hear.) We will see then who is coy in answering questions. (Hear, hear.) Dr. Warschauer answers questions at his church after he has been talking, not after he has been debating. I answer questions after every lecture I give. (Hear, hear.) So that my coyness in answering questions is a figment of Dr. Warschauer's brain. I did not give myself away by a mere lapse in memory as to a fact sixteen years old. Dr. Warschauer gives himself away in his argument. I only forgot that there was another Christian who acted in the same inconsiderate way as Dr. Warschauer, and met with the same rational answer. (Applause.) If I had answered the questions on that occasion Dr. Warschauer would have triumphed, because he might have said: "Mr. Foote answered questions then; he does not now; therefore, he is afraid."

It is very nice to say that the universe is the sum total of phenomena. I think that my own expression in my previous speech was a little nearer the truth, namely, that the universe is the matrix of all phenomena. (Hear, hear.) It is not a question merely of phenomena, which are simply changes of substance, it is a question of the substance itself, without which there could be nothing to change. Again, Dr. Warschauer says I used the word "produced." Yes, just as occasionally I say an artist has a soul, "That was played with soul!" "That was sung with soul!" I say as you say, as everybody says, a certain man is a very clever fellow, very able, but he has no soul. What we mean is that he is devoid of the higher emotional qualities (hear, hear) and the reason why we cannot yet have a perfectly Atheistic vocabulary is that the Christians are still the great majority, still in possession of power and are able even to make the dictionaries for themselves. (Applause.)

Will Dr. Warschauer allow me to say that he totally mistook my point in reference to the proportion, as I imagined, of Freethinkers in this room. I did not give the fact as a triumph of Atheism. (Hear, hear.) I know the Christians are in a great majority—professing Christians—(hear, hear) out of doors, but how fond Christians must be of "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good," when the myriads of them in London, of which fact Dr. Warschauer boasts, stay away and let the Atheists fill the room. (Applause.)

Dr. Warschauer says that he did not assert the eternity of matter. He says he did not commit himself to it, and even if it were accepted still there would be nothing particular following. But I fail to see that because this dualism of God and matter, the Creator and the material which he used in his creative acts, being independent of himself, is one of the puzzles of ancient philosophy. Jeremy Bentham, in answering Plato on a certain point, shows the *impasse* to which you come when you once start upon this road. Plato said that God did the best he could for the universe in spite of the intractable nature of matter. Jeremy Bentham said that is an assumption; I am equally entitled to make the opposite assertion that matter is doing the best it can, limited by the malicious nature of God. (Applause.) Matter, if left alone, might be all right. (Laughter and applause.) When I see the part which God, through his agents, has played in this world, when I see how, in the name of religion, the highest qualities of mankind have been aborted—especially their intellect—and when I see that the world has been making more progress in the last century, when the cramping hand of religion has been loosened, than it made for two thousand years before, I begin to think that if the Deity that they talk about would only (if he exist) be persuaded to take a holiday (laughter) we might revolutionise this world while he is taking it. (Applause.)

I say Dr. Warschauer is not quite fair to me in saying that I shrink from definitions. Why, I more than defined chance. I went to the length of describing it. I told you exactly what I meant by chance. I denied that chance is a term that can be applied to Nature at all. (Hear, hear.) Chance is a term applied only to man's ignorance in a given condition of things. It is a chance whether Dr. Warschauer or I might or might

not meet with an accident to-night in the streets of London. Nobody knows, and there is not an Insurance Company anywhere that would say, "We will take the risk for nothing." (Laughter.) There is enough danger in it to make it perfectly perceptible and even measurable on the law of averages. That is chance. Dr. Warschauer and I do not know, and the Insurance Companies do not know, or they would not take us on. The law of averages does not mean anything more than this, that over a given area or number of times a certain thing will happen. You cannot say it will happen here or happen there, but you can say it will happen a certain number of times over a given area. Out of six people you cannot say that so many will die in a year; out of a thousand people you can say that so many will die in a month. That does not mean that there is any doubt in Nature about it. That does not mean that if you could look through all the causes you would not be able to know accurately, for as far as you can follow causes you can predict effects. (Applause.) Science is never science until, in addition to reading Nature, it is able to foresee and to shape Nature.

Will Dr. Warschauer allow me to say that in my first speech I was trying to follow him. It will not do to say that he has a difficulty in following me. He may have more difficulty to-morrow night. (Applause.) What I have got to do to-night is to follow him. It is not, of course, for him to say how I ought to follow him. That is my business. I am counsel for my side. I let him act as counsel for his. And the question at the finish is not which champion has won. I should regret if any friend of mine said I had won, as I hope Dr. Warschauer's friends would not be irrational enough to say that he had won. It is not Dr. Warschauer and I that are here to win. We want (at least I do, and I believe he does) the truth to win. (Loud applause.)

The CHAIRMAN: I think I might say the same of the audience; it is not that they want Mr. Foote to win or Dr. Warschauer to win; and they display that, I take it, in their conduct. I ask Dr. Warschauer to add his quarter of an hour.

Dr. WARSCHAUER: Mr. Chairman, Mr. Foote, ladies and gentlemen, I am sorry that so much time should have to be spent on somewhat extraneous matter in this discussion. At the same time I am bound to reply to what Mr. Foote said. I want you to notice once more that Mr. Foote calls the asking of questions a trap. I have known a good deal about controversy in my time, because, although I am considerably my friend's junior, I think that for twenty years I have been a man of peace constantly engaged in fighting. But I have never yet known a controversialist describe the asking of questions as a trap set for him. The questions were simply a summary of my address. Mr. Foote said that during the delivery of my address he, as my opponent, had to make up his reply while I was on my feet. Well, all I can say is that if that was the object Mr. Foote really had at heart he did not achieve it, because he did not give a reply to the address which I had delivered. He did not deal with the issues consecutively as I had presented them not only to the audience, but to him. He said these questions were suddenly sprung upon him. I say that these questions were the substance of my remarks. They were handed up by me in writing so that he might not be able to say that he could not charge his memory with all the matter. Here was the brief summary of all the points that it raises, and the simple fact of the matter is that Mr. Foote has not answered my question. There I am perfectly willing to let the matter rest.

He says that sixteen years ago there was another Christian who used the same inconsiderate method towards him. Well, I really was under the impression that in taking the trouble of typing out an extra copy of the questions and handing them to him I was showing a certain amount of courtesy and consideration towards an opponent. The questions with which I deal on Sunday nights are not even written at all for me. A man gets up anywhere in the congregation. I do not face one individual; I face some hundreds, and any one of them is able to shoot questions at me. No, no, no. I wanted to show this audience that Mr. Foote was the same Mr. Foote that he was sixteen years ago; the same Mr. Foote who did not face questions then, and the same Mr. Foote who does not answer questions now. Oh, yes! you can hiss me down, but you have got to argue me down, and you have not done it yet. (Interruption)

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Dr. WARSCHAUER: Mr. Foote said he followed me. Well, he did in time but not in argument—that is all. I still adhere to my definition of the universe as the sum total of phenomena; if he likes to call it a matrix of phenomena he is welcome to his definition; but I would like to ask what caused that stir in the matrix? I believe there is no stir in the matrix without some causation at work. Now, Mr. Foote is at liberty to work out his image about the matrix when he answers me in a few minute's time. When Mr.

Foote spoke about producing, about something being produced, we are now to understand that he was only employing a form of speech, a convenient phraseology, which he could not better because the Atheists had not had the making of dictionaries, and it may be a long, long time, or it may be a short time, before an Atheist does produce a dictionary. May I be there to see that dictionary in which such words as "produce" and such words as "purpose" are carefully omitted. Mr. Foote, on the question of producing, was exactly in the same box as the great Professor Haeckel when he says that the much talked of purpose in Nature has no existence, only to reintroduce the notion of purpose by a back door, after making some pretence of ejecting it by the front door. Now I come to another point which Mr. Foote raised, and which it is very germane for me to remark upon. He said, "How fond must the millions of Christians be of proving all things," considering they have stayed away to-night, enabling the Freethinkers, the Secularists, the Atheists, to occupy the major portion of this hall. Now, you see, I have had nothing to do in booming this debate. This debate has been boomed and advertised and written about in the *Freethinker*, with a fairly plain hint that the presence of Atheists was particularly desired. There are only a certain number of seats in this hall, and if you have been so fortunate as to obtain the major number, well, it has been your good fortune. It may, however, be the case, that a great many Christians do not think it worth while to assist at a debate. (Interruption.) Let me give you a piece of advice: never interrupt a sentence by laughter until it has been finished, because it may give you such a nasty knock. (Interruptions.)

The CHAIRMAN: Gentlemen, I think Mr. Foote can conduct his own case without considerable assistance from you. (Hear, hear.)

Dr. WARSCHAUER: It is quite possible that a great many Christians do not think it worth while to attend a debate on such a subject as Theism *v.* Atheism, because they are sufficiently and rationally convinced of the truth of Theism. I say that may be the case.

I was, if Mr. Foote will allow me to say so, a little amused at his bringing up such a back number as Jeremy Bentham; we have advanced a little since Jeremy Bentham's argument that matter might be doing the best it can; it is not merely antiquated philosophy—it is anti-philosophy. How can matter being doing the best it can? How can the unconscious be doing its best? How can ducks swim? It is a pity, you know, that a certain form of Freethought seems to thrive on interruption and interjections—it is a pity. I will give you a more modern scientist than Jeremy Bentham who, by the way, was hardly a scientist—I will give you a scientific authority. The late Dr. Romanes, at a time when he had not become a Theist at all, stated that the very conception of causality involves the idea of finality as existing somewhere. Now, I do not think that finality exists in matter itself, because dead matter and unconscious matter could not produce life, sentiency, intelligence, and the rest of these phenomena. Nothing is evolved that has not first been involved. I am surprised at the way in which Mr. Foote contends that, in the name of religion, the highest qualities in man, especially intellect, had been fettered. Am I to understand that Mr. Foote really seriously propounds the astounding proposition that all the greatest intellects have been Atheistical? He would be hard put to it to prove any such thing. If the largest number of the greatest intellects had not been Atheists at all, but very much the reverse, I say that even that phenomenon takes a certain amount of explanation. (Hear, hear.) My opponent says that he has done more than define chance—he has described it. Surely Mr. Foote, as an experienced debater, knows the difference between a definition and a description. A description may be very very loose, or it may be very lucid. A description is never more than a definition; it is merely something else. He said science is never science until it is able to foresee and shape nature. Now what does that mean exactly? Science, of course, starts with a supposition it can never prove, but a supposition which is verified every time it is put to the test; namely, that Nature is steadfast; that there is such a thing as cosmic integrity; and to that extent science does foresee not what is going to happen, but what is likely to happen. You can never prove that the sun will rise in the east to-morrow morning—as a matter of fact the sun does not rise, strictly scientifically speaking. You cannot prove it will be so; you cannot say it must be so; it always has been so, and we believe that the future will be like the past—that is all. As for shaping nature—well, I put it to Mr. Foote and to you that science at present is only doing it in a very very slight degree—that a small upheaval of Nature is able to counteract all the contrivances of the human intellect and of human science.

Now, I have only one point left to which to advert for a moment. Mr. Foote said that it would be desirable that

God should take a holiday, and that we might so revolutionise things in his absence, or while he was asleep or otherwise occupied, as to produce a great deal of improvement. Mr. Foote reminds me for all the world of that legendary King of Castile, who gives it as his royal opinion that it was a great pity that he had not been present at the creation, because he could have given so much good advice to the Almighty. Now, of course, assuming, as Mr. Foote in that part of his argument did, that there is a Deity, I put it to him, and I put it to you, with all due deference, that the intelligence of such a being, the intelligence of a being who has contrived this marvellous universe, may be superior to that of Mr. Foote and his various friends in this hall or anywhere else. It is just possible that God, if there be a God, knows better than either Mr. Foote or all the rest of his creatures put together. I do not forget the ugly parts of the world—I do not forget the evil in the world; but, if Mr. Foote will allow me to remind him, I did not use a single word in the whole course of my opening speech on what might be called the character of God. I did not deal with the problem of evil pure and simple. (Applause.) If Mr. Foote wishes to raise the problem of evil to-morrow night I have no doubt he will do so. It will give me all the pleasure in the world to attend to his wants then, but to-night that was not my business. I confined myself to the barest statement of the truth of Theism because there was only time for that in an address of half-an-hour's duration. Mr. Foote said that to-morrow night I might find it harder to follow him than he has found it to follow me this evening. That may be so or it may not.

Mr. Foote: On a point of order; I should not like to be misrepresented, and I should not like to be misunderstood, and I am quite sure Dr. Warschauer does not wish to misunderstand me. What I said was, that Dr. Warschauer complained that he had difficulty in following me. Well, I said it was my business to follow him to-night, but if he found difficulty in following me to-night he might find greater difficulty in following me to-morrow night.

Dr. WARSCHAUER: I accept my friend's correction, but when I showed that he had misquoted me I did not rise to a point of order. I did not think it necessary. Well, Mr. Foote said that I might find it even more difficult to follow him to-morrow night than I had found it to-night. That may be so or it may not be so. In a book which some of you do not read there is something about "him that putteth on his armor not boasting himself as he putteth it off." But I will translate that for you from the sacred into the secular parlance, namely, "Prophecy is the most gratuitous form of error."

The CHAIRMAN: I have had placed in my hand a note from Miss Vance, secretary of the National Secular Society, asking me to ask any possible members of the audience who have not given up their tickets to do so as they pass out. All tickets may not have been collected in the crush; the point of that is that the tickets that you have not given up to-night will be available to-morrow night, and you might, of course, have thrown them into your waste paper basket and the domestic might come to-morrow night, not knowing that. I now ask Mr. Foote to speak for a quarter of an hour.

Mr. Foote (who was received with applause) said: I hope Dr. Warschauer will not take some of these little jokes too seriously. I have got a reputation somehow amongst Christians for being a dreadful fellow, but I do not think, after all, when they come and associate with me even in the remote way of a debate, they find me quite equal to my reputation. Now, will Dr. Warschauer allow me to say, too, that he must not presume on a Freethinker's ignorance of the Bible. (Applause.) I might, of course, say, as an old debater—it is my friend's description—I might say with another writer in the New Testament—not in the Old—"All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient." Dr. Warschauer at least should not have thought the Bible was an unknown book to Freethinkers in my presence. (Hear, hear.) I am not boasting, because it was his own friends that did it. I knew a good deal about the Bible before the year 1883. They gave me the whole of that year in solitude, and for three months I had no book but the Bible (laughter) to read. It is all very well to say this is extraneous matter. It is a reply to extraneous matter. Dr. Warschauer, in his last speech, said the Bible was a book that we Freethinkers did not read. (Interruption.) I am answering it. He said a book that you people do not read. (A voice: "May not read.")

The CHAIRMAN: Dr. Warschauer, if I remember correctly, did not say that you did not read the book, but he said a book which possibly some of you may not know much about.

Mr. Foote: That is a very sublime explanation. Dr. Warschauer might recollect that other people know something of literature as well as he, and when he says that an Atheist has not yet written a dictionary, he forgets that the

greatest of all French dictionaries, written by one man, off his own hand, was by the Atheist and Positivist, Littré. (Applause.) A disciple of great Auguste Comte, who proposed to reorganise society without God and without King by the systematic cultus of humanity.

Dr. Warschauer illustrated my point by an explanation. He used the expression "The sun will rise to-morrow," and then he had to tell you, of course, it did not rise. But does he explain that every time he uses the expression? No! The expression is due to the ignorance and imagination of bygone men. They left the expression in the mind of a scientific thinker, and he uses it because they did. I use the word "produce" because the Christian forerunners of Dr. Warschauer imposed it upon human language. (Applause and interruption.) We will take the explanation afterwards. [Addressed to the Rev. Mr. Wallace on the platform.] Oh, there is no need to lose temper. I am all right.

I was very glad to find that I am the same Mr. Foote I was sixteen years ago (Hear, hear, and applause), and, as in the point at issue, as I was rational then, I am glad to see I have not degenerated since. Dr. Warschauer is immensely in love with his questions. His questions appear to him, it seems to me, more important than his Deity. Now, I will say on that matter once for all—as far as I am concerned, if the topic is referred to again—that I will answer questions at the proper time and in the proper place. If Dr. Warschauer likes I will hold a Socratic debate—all questions and answers—and then he shall revel in them. I beg to say, as I am not to introduce any new matter in the last speech, that I can only just in one sentence answer the statement that what is evolved must be involved. Both are in the ultimate analysis mere tricks of speech. Evolution, while it is a very handy word, begs the whole question at issue between the Theist and the Atheist. When you say what was evolved must have been involved, you are making a philosophical argument something like the use of a telescope. Of course, what was evolved from the telescope was involved; the slides were put in before they could be pulled out; but there is nothing like that in our knowledge of Nature. Things go from simple to complex; things move what we call forward, because we are "a forward lot." But I should like to take the case, say, of a shark. A sailor falls overboard, and the shark gets a dinner, and I should think the shark, if he could give his opinion of it, would say that things were beginning to evolve in the right direction. (Laughter.)

Dr. Warschauer insists again upon the point that Nature is steadfast. That is the common starting point of both. That what we call Nature always goes in the same way is the principle of natural causation. That is what science means by causation, and natural law does not mean law in the jurisprudist or the theological sense of the word, it simply means the method by which things happen, or, if you like, by which Nature works. People talk about obeying the laws of Nature. Nonsense! You have got no choice. You cannot disobey a law of Nature. How are you going to do it? If you are at the top of a 50 ft. ladder, whether you fall off or jump off, it has the same result. There is no disobedience to the law of Nature in it. The law of Nature cannot be broken; the law of Nature in that case is gravitation. That is the law of Nature; and I repeat it makes no difference whether you fall off or jump off. The law of Nature operates, and you are broken at the bottom, whatever your intention was, or whether it was merely your carelessness.

I beg to repudiate the loose use of the term "a law of Nature." And, as many have pointed out, including Mill and George Henry Lewes, it is a very unfortunate choice of language; but again that is an instance in which the theologians, who were in possession of the field, imposed the vocabulary upon those who were partially free from theological thralldom.

Now I come to Dr. Warschauer's statement that the greatest of intellects have been Theists. Now let us discriminate. Dr. Warschauer is a Theist; Professor Knight is a Theist; yet the very argument that Dr. Warschauer produces here to-night in favor of a God, Professor Knight says is a perfect fallacy. (A Voice: He does not.)

Mr. FOOTE: He does.

THE CHAIRMAN: Order, please!

Mr. FOOTE: I say that Professor Knight in his *Aspects of Theism* contends that the design argument is vicious, invalid, and that only the intuitional argument can possibly lead us to God. The man who says he did not has not read the book. (Hear, hear.) Dr. Warschauer is a Theist; Dr. Warschauer's divine argument is repudiated by at least half the theologians. A great metaphysician and logician like Sir William Hamilton has left his view on record that the phenomena of Nature taken by themselves rather negate than affirm the existence of God. (Hear, hear.)

I have three minutes left. I will devote those three minutes to Dr. Warschauer's rebuke of me for being wiser than God. What did Dr. Warschauer do? He asked you

to look at Nature and see marks of intelligence, and from those marks of intelligence you were to deduce or induce (whichever he likes) the existence of an intelligent, conscious, purposive, and personal Deity. Am I only to look at Nature with a critical eye up to the point that Dr. Warschauer wants me to? It is all very well to say that you do not concern yourself to-night with the character of Deity. I am bound to use the intelligence which Dr. Warschauer appeals to to judge whether Nature reveals to me an intelligence which he says is behind it. Very well, then; if I find marks of non-intelligence, find things done as if blindly, find Nature feeling along as a blind man might along a wall, and suddenly coming to a difficult ending, am I to say there is only wisdom there? Dr. Warschauer says things are designed; well, God has been making eyes—yours, mine, and other people's—for countless generations, and has been making them in the lower animals before he made them in ours; he has been making eyes, according to Dr. Warschauer's theory, for millions of years, and after all that practice of infinite wisdom we have got to have eye hospitals to correct and repair his blunders. (Great applause.)

Dr. WARSCHAUER: You will not desire to leave here to-night without recording your thanks to our friend Mr. Drawbridge for the manner in which he has conducted the Meeting and been in the chair to-night. (Loud applause.)

THE CHAIRMAN: I thank you.

(To be continued.)

## Correspondence.

### "THE LAND O' THE LEAL."

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I am sorry to have to disagree from Mr. Lloyd in the conclusions arrived at by him in his letter of the 16th.

"But facts are chiefs that winna ding,  
An' downa be disputed."

I must, therefore, iterate my statement that in the "Land o' the Leal," the address is by a dying husband to his wife, Jean.

Mr. Lloyd mentions that a Mr. Charles Jordan in reciting, at Greenock, the lyric, said that "it represents a Scottish matron on her death-bed taking a last farewell of her beloved husband." If the lecturer was correctly reported, it is undeniable that he made an inexcusable blunder. Mr. Lloyd takes his stand upon Webster's Dictionary, so I looked it up, but find there that "Jean is the French form of John." This is quite correct, but it has no application to Scotch writing. In illustration, Mr. Lloyd and Webster give us Jean Paul Richter, and I venture to add Jean Jacques (John James) Rousseau, but when he further propounds that "Jean is usually the Christian name of a man," it is evident that the definition must be limited to Frenchmen.

In "The Land o' the Leal," however, we not are dealing with French persons, but with a Scotch husband and wife, and the name of the individual addressed is Jean, which is the Scottish contraction for Johanna, while Jeanne and Jane are, respectively, the French and English contractions. The masculine form of Johanna is Johannes (grace of the Lord) and the French and English contractions of this are, respectively, Jean and John. The Gaelic form of our name John is Ian.†

Can there be any doubt, therefore, that in the line,—

"I'm wearin' awa', Jean,"

the speaker is the dying husband, and that Jean is his wife

Mr. Lloyd will doubtless remember the works of Jean Ingelow, the popular authoress, and also that Burns's wife was Jean Armour. But if his contention that Jean is "usually a man's name" be correct, it stands to reason, from what has been stated above, that it and John are convertible terms, and if so, we should be justified in altering the title of one of Burns's popular songs to "Jean Anderson my jo, Jean." How would that read?

There are a few names, such as Cecil, Evelyn—and among Roman Catholics, Maria—which, being of the epicene class, do not indicate sex, and are, therefore, borne in common by men and women, but Jean is, most emphatically, not one of them.

E. B.

\* "A Dream." Burns.

† *Christian Names, Male and Female.* George Routledge & Sons.

## 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. Saphin, "Christianity a Moral Fraud and Social Failure"; 6.15, W. J. Ramsey, "Nine Months in Holway for Blasphemy."

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): 3.15, Walter Davidson, "Christianity and Slavery."

EDMONTON BRANCH N. S. S. (The Green): 7, James Rowney, "Holy Moses & Co."

FINSBURY PARK: 11.30, A. B. Moss, "Darwin Against Moses."

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

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (Ridley-road): 11.30, W. J. Ramsey, "Mad Saviors."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Parliament Hill): 3.30, Miss K. B. Kough, "Christian Science."

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (outside Maryland Point Station, Stratford): 7, F. A. Davies, "Gloomy Gods."

WOOD GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Jolly Butchers Hill, opposite Public Library): 7, Mr. Allison, "God."

### COUNTRY.

#### INDOOR.

WEST STANLEY BRANCH N. S. S. (Co-operative Ante-Room): Saturday, May 6, at 7, Business Meeting.

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PRESTON (Market Square): 7.15, Joseph A. E. Bates, "God and the Modern Perspective."

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