

THE Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

VOL. XXXI.—No. 28

SUNDAY, JULY 9, 1911

PRICE TWOPENCE

When we get into a vicious system, the difficulty of getting out of it is always created; but this difficulty is not to be mistaken for a sign of merit in the system.

—ALBANY FONBLANQUE.

A Carnival of Cant.

THE Coronation ceremonies, with their welter of barbaric symbolism and mediæval trappings, have come and gone. The pantomime season has concluded, and the actors—amateurs in art, but professionals in feeling—have for a time withdrawn from the stage, leaving it to other performers who could play more vital parts were they inclined. The people have been amused with a show, and thousands of articles written and thousands of sermons preached to draw out the importance and significance of the whole of the proceedings. And yet, with most of these sermons and articles there is traceable an uneasy consciousness that this species of pageantry calls for some amount of justification. An apologetic note is observable which takes the form of insisting on the symbolical character of the ceremony in order to decri a too strict attention to its literal aspects. Otherwise, some awkward questions might be raised and some ugly facts brought to light. People might ask why the hereditary principle, so freely condemned in connection with a second chamber, should suddenly assume a sacred character in connection with a king? Or the question might be asked—indeed, was asked, in some of the articles referred to—whether the mediæval religious ceremonies and parade of military strength ought to be held really representative of a modern civilised people?

A *Christian Commonwealth* writer finds "the subordination of the temporal and material to the spiritual and eternal beautifully depicted in the crowning of the King by the Church. A coronation ceremony," he goes on to say, "need not necessarily be a religious ceremony; that it is so at this time of day, when the human reason and the scientific spirit have penetrated every department of human affairs, is an evidence of the persistence of the religious idea and the tenacity of the ecclesiastic." The latter, I grant, it is characteristic of the kind, but that there is any really living religious conviction underlying it is only one more example of the insincerity and cant evoked by such scenes. The King receives his crown from the Archbishop in the name of God. But, suppose, in the name of God, the Archbishop were to decline to crown the King, and, moreover, declare against the coronation. What would happen? I expect a new Archbishop would be appointed, and the old one would be blamed by all for not discovering that the will of God conformed to the pre-arranged program:—

Part of the discovered beauty lies in the exhortation to the King:—

"When you see this Orb thus set under the Cross, remember that the whole world is subject to the Power and Empire of Christ our Redeemer."

Sheer cant! Over two-thirds of the world's population do not even formally acknowledge the "Power and Empire of Christ." And of the remainder in what sense do they make the acknowledgment?

Peace between nations is maintained by treaties, by conventions, in which the power of Christ plays no part whatever, or by mutual respect in which that power is equally non-existent. Our treaties with Freethinking France or Agnostic Japan are as binding—probably more so—than any we have with Holy Russia or pious Spain. And between some of the most pronounced subjects of the "Empire of Christ" what is it that is looked upon as a guarantee of peace—the Gospels or Dreadnoughts? Art and science, commerce, literature, and philosophy, each makes its own laws without the remotest reference to the power and empire of Christ. The "empire of Christ" is an enthusiast's dream of a charlatan's shibboleth. Its use is proof only of the Empire of Cant.

The spirit of humility and human brotherhood is discovered in the following speech of the Archbishop when he puts the sword of State on the King:—

"With this sword do justice, stop the growth of iniquity, protect the holy Church of God, help and defend widows and orphans, restore the things that are gone to decay, maintain the things that are restored, punish and reform what is amiss, and confirm what is in good order; that doing these things you may be glorious in all virtue, and so serve our Lord Jesus Christ in this life, that you may reign for ever with him in the life which is to come."

More cant! The King does not and cannot administer justice, even though he were saddled with the contents of an armory. It is the courts that administer justice, and it is Parliament that makes the laws which the courts administer. He cannot even protect the holy Church of God. If a Disestablishment measure were carried next week the King dare not refuse to formally attach his signature to the document. He can help or injure exactly to the extent that any person placed in a position to exert influence can do. Just as much, and no more. The only sincere expression in the exhortation is the hope that he will "restore the things that are gone to decay." That is, indeed, the prime function of the whole business. Every one of the phases of the ceremony—priestcraft, kingcraft, feudal privilege, and religious idea—are in a process of decay, and there may well be a note of plaintive sincerity in the hope that the King will "restore the things that are gone to decay."

But I am forgetting the subordination of the material to the spiritual. This is exemplified in the parade of soldiers and sailors, in the prominence given to militarism at all our State pageants. It is illustrated in the huge trade done in highly-priced seats to view the show, in the covering up of churches with wooden scaffolding, and the glaring announcements of the prices and advantages of the seats to let. I am also forgetting that all these ceremonies and expressions are symbolical—of what? If the ceremonies and posturings and formulæ were symbolical of anything living or useful one could welcome their existence. But are they? They are symbolical of moribund ideas, of outworn institutions—things that are only honest and useful so long as they are not taken as symbols but as actual facts. Or if they are symbolical of anything it is of the apathy and lack of intelligence of the general public, of people who will submit to any imposition so long as their eyes are dazzled with a show and their ears gladdened with a noise. If they are really symbols,

they are symbols of the insincerity and hypocrisy that disfigures our social life.

Who believes in the things for which the religious portion of the Coronation ceremony stand as symbols? The King receives his crown from the Archbishop in the name of God. Why, it is part of our boast as a "free people" that God has nothing at all to do with it. We do not believe in the divine right of kings. It was not God that recalled Charles II., but the people. It was not God that cleared out the Stuarts and invited William III. to occupy the throne, but the people. It is not God that draws up and decides upon the Civil List, but Parliament. Parliament decides what the King shall do; it decides what payment he shall receive; it even decides what religion he shall hold, for the only Church he can defend is the one that Parliament authorises him to defend. And if the people and Parliament decided to-morrow upon a Republic, God and the King would be powerless to prevent its establishment. And yet we go through the solemn farce of pretending to believe that the King receives his crown from God, *via* the Archbishop of Canterbury, himself a salaried official who must do as Parliament orders him.

The ceremony is symbolical of the supremacy of the Church or of religion in secular life. But, again, who believes in this being the case? The keynote of the better life of the nation to-day is not the supremacy of religion in secular life, but the supremacy of secular considerations over all others. Pietists have a fairly large representation in the House of Commons, yet none of them base their approval of measures upon religious considerations. It is the comfort, the prosperity, the well-being of the people that is avowedly the principal ground upon which measures are supported. It is true that some do carry their piety into the building, but it is kept out of legislative conferences. When they want to pray they are banished to a small room out of everybody's sight and hearing, and small as the room is, it is never overcrowded. For over four centuries one aspect of the European struggle has been that of the exclusion of religion from the secular affairs of the nations. Shall the Church rule the nation or shall the nation rule the Church? This was one of the vital questions in the struggles of the sixteenth century, and it is being settled in the one direction all over the civilised world. It is not even being settled on the lines of the State ruling the Church. That would be complimentary to religion, for it would imply that religion were something of importance. It is rather that religion is being set on one side by the civilised State as something with which it has no interest and no concern. And this is an act of supreme contempt for religious claims. It is a tacit assertion that whether a man believes in religion or not, his value as a citizen remains substantially unaffected. And perhaps the crowning proof of how little life there is in current religion is that large numbers of professedly religious people should accept this state of things as being right and proper. I can appreciate the position of the man who says that religion is of no consequence, and, therefore, it is no concern of the State. I can appreciate also the position of the man who says it is all-important, and, therefore, no State can neglect it without committing suicide. But I fail to see even a glimmer of intelligence about the man who says religion is absolutely essential to a well ordered life, but it is no concern of the State whether you have a religion or go without it.

Yet it is not without significance this alliance of religion with certain social ceremonies and institutions. Privilege and piety belong to the same culture stage of human history. Religion lives on credulity, and cupidity fattens upon both. If the people are to be exploited they must first of all be befooled; and every appeal to the barbaric and slavish instincts in human nature are means to this end. People must be kept from looking at things as they are, or they may arrange them as they ought to be. It is a mistake to assume that the human mind has so many watertight compartments, and that a

man may be irrational in one direction without its affecting his outlook in other directions. The brain functions as a whole, and irrationalism in religion favors irrationalism in social life. This is a truth that those who are interested in gulling the people understand readily enough. What is to be wished is that the people would see it with equal clearness and act upon it with equal promptitude.

C. COHEN.

The Never-Ending Controversy.

CHRISTIANS have never been in agreement as to who and what Jesus of Nazareth was. This was a subject of never-ceasing strife in the early days of the Christian Church. Even in the New Testament itself divergent views find vigorous expression, and unmistakable signs are discernible that the Church would never be the abode of peace and joy. One of Gibbon's longest chapters is a record of the bitter disputes and wranglings which for many centuries rent the Church asunder. He tells us how to the Ebionites Christ was pure man and to the Docetae pure God, and how Cerinthus maintained that he was a person composed of two distinct natures, the divine and the human. As time went on the discord deepened. The representatives of the different schools of theology learned to hate one another in the most perfect fashion and degree. Who has not read of Cyril, Patriarch of Alexandria and murderer of the noble-minded Hypatia? He taught that Christ was not merely God, or merely man, but the two in one, which is only another way of saying that he was a God-man. Nestorius, bishop of Constantinople, held the theory that in Christ the divine and human natures simply co-existed, or that the Son of God took up his abode in the man Jesus. These two men became mortal enemies, and anathemas and counter-anathemas passed between them. Both claimed to be Christ's ambassadors, and both honored their Master by making him the bone of contention everywhere. Nestorius described Cyril as a monster, born and educated to do all the mischief within his power, and Cyril's retort was equally emphatic. At last, it was arranged that a Council should be held at Ephesus to settle the quarrel. Cyril, accompanied by one hundred and fifty-nine bishops and a large retinue of slaves, fully armed, arrived first, and the inhabitants were terrorised by the martial display. Cyril's opponents were openly insulted and their lives threatened, and the whole city was thrown into a state of tumult and confusion. Cyril actually organised the Council and proceeded to business before Nestorius and his followers arrived. It was in vain that Candidian, the emperor's representative, protested against the irregularity and injustice of such an action. Nestorius was tried, found guilty, and sentenced to deposition in his absence. This strange trial was followed by a genuine Maskeing night in the celebrated city of Ephesus. As soon as the Orientals reached the town and were informed of what had happened, they also held a separate Synod, consisting of fifty bishops, and with equal unanimity condemned Cyril as a dangerous heretic, and deposed him from his episcopal and ecclesiastical dignity. It was a ludicrous situation, and the emperor scarcely knew how to deal with it, though in the end he took sides against the Nestorians. But while it is true that Cyril's tenets, with certain modifications, eventually became the Catholic Faith, we cannot forget that the controversy never really ended and was only partially suppressed by force.

Now, these two men of the fifth century may be taken as types of Christian controversialists. Each imagined himself infallible and could show no mercy to opponents. Nestorius was for a long time in high favor at court. It was the emperor himself who appointed him to the See of Constantinople;

and in one of his first sermons in the cathedral he addressed his imperial patron thus:—

"Purge me, O Cæsar, the earth of heretics, and I in return will give thee heaven. Stand by me in putting down the heretics, and I will stand by thee in putting down the Persians."

Almost immediately the jealous Bishop turned his attention to the Arians, and resolved to suppress their assemblies. These heretics were brave, and when attacked, preferring death to surrender, they set fire to their meeting-house, and perished in the flames. But the fire spread to adjoining houses, and Nestorius was nicknamed "the incendiary." Next, the Novatians and Quarto Decimans became the objects of his persecuting mania, and these harmless heretics were ruthlessly put to the sword. But even within the Church herself he found dangerous enemies of the truth, and these were as summarily dealt with as outside heretics. Nestorius could brook no manner of contradiction. Once, a foolish monk withstood him to his face, and the poor fellow was severely scourged and banished, while those who expressed sympathy with him were subjected to the lash. But when Nestorius ventured to anathematise those who called Mary the mother of God he courted his own destruction. He soon discovered that the people were dead against him, for the worship of God-mothers had been general among them from time immemorial. On one occasion Dorotheus, Bishop of Marciopolis, cursed from the cathedral pulpit all who still insisted upon calling Mary the mother of God, with the result that his congregation noisily left the building, and a large number, both of clergy and laity, refused to hold any further communion with Nestorius. The tide of heresy was too strong for him, and at last he went down before it. The emperor withdrew his support, the heresy of yesterday once more became the orthodoxy of to-day, and the haughty persecutor became the object of persecution. In an imperial edict, he was ranked with Simon the magician, his opinions and followers were proscribed, his books condemned to the flames, and his person banished. The last sixteen years of his life were spent in miserable exile. As Gibbon well says:—

"Humanity may drop a tear on the fate of Nestorius; yet justice must observe that he suffered the persecution which he had approved and inflicted."

Nestorius fell simply because the emperor deserted him, and the emperor's desertion was dictated by the fact that the majority was on Cyril's side. Cyril returned to Alexandria with all the pomp and glory of a great conqueror. But let us look at this curious character for a moment. He is one of those of whom it is almost impossible to say one good word. He was vile-tempered, unscrupulous, ambitious, arrogant, unmerciful. He, too, regarded himself as infallible, and adopted the policy of uncompromising persecution towards all who differed from him. With what avidity he closed the churches of the Novatians and seized their ecclesiastical effects. With what boundless delight he destroyed the Jewish synagogues, employing an armed force for the purpose. He hated the Jews with perfect hatred, and drove them in thousands from the city, allowing the mob to pillage their houses. With the Christian rabble at his back he was the supreme ruler of the city. Orestes, the Roman prefect, was powerless to resist his unscrupulous and rapacious behavior. Subsequent to his triumph over Nestorius his violence became intolerable. The controversy was not utterly silenced; but, as Gibbon says—

"The general and, as it should seem, the unconstrained voice of the fathers accepted the faith and even the anathemas of Cyril; and the heresy of the two natures was formally condemned in the persons and writings of the most learned Orientals. 'May those who divide Christ be divided by the sword, may they be hewn in pieces, may they be burnt alive!' were the charitable wishes of a Christian synod."

It is true that as a theologian Baur placed Cyril in the first rank, but it is equally true that as a man he occupies the lowest place.

The controversy still went on with all-consuming vehemence. In the sixth century the emperor Justinian shone as an ideal persecutor. The Samaritans were neither Jews nor Christians, but Justinian forced upon them the alternative of baptism or rebellion. Naturally, they rebelled; and in the war that followed about one hundred thousand Roman subjects were slain. Origen, who flourished in the first half of the third century, as is well known, was by no means orthodox on the person of Christ, and he rejected the tenet of endless punishment. In his writings the keen eye of Justinian detected no less than ten serious errors; and although he had been dead some three hundred years and his body had long crumbled into dust, yet the emperor's obsequious clergy devoted him to an endless abode in the flames of hell. Towards the end of his life Justinian himself became a heretic. He declared that the body of Christ was incorruptible, and that during his life he was not subject to ordinary human wants and infirmities. He issued an edict in which that absurd opinion was embodied, and a policy of persecution was about to be pursued towards all who refused to subscribe; but death came in and thwarted his purpose. And now the Bishop of Treves, who could not be punished for his audacity, pronounced the dying emperor a heretic, saying among other things:—

"Unless without delay, you destroy what you have taught, unless you exclaim with a loud voice, I have erred, I have sinned, anathema to Nestorius, anathema to Eutyches, you deliver your soul to the flames in which they will eternally burn."

The controversy about Christ is still in progress. Every Sunday, from a million pulpits, anathemas are poured down, in copious streams, upon the unfortunate head of some heresies or other. At Ilminster the Free Churches held a Coronation service from participation in which the Unitarians were rigidly excluded. The Free Church Council imagines itself theologically infallible, and declines to soil their spotless garments through association with Unitarian heretics. Just now the special subject of controversy is the nature and location of the divinity of Christ. The Rev. Dr. Sanday, of Oxford, has recently propounded a new theory which has greatly startled and perplexed the orthodox camp. Its peculiarity is that it places the seat of the divinity, whatever it is, in what the author calls the subliminal consciousness, or, in other words, in the unconscious portion of consciousness. Dr. Sanday errs, according to the editor of the *British Weekly*, in that he effaces the infinite difference between the consciousness of Jesus and that of ordinary men and women. This is a new aspect of the old metaphysical problem, and the dispute to which it has given rise is only at its commencement. What is absolutely clear to many thoughtful people is that the controversy never ends simply because it is only "much ado about nothing." There is no agreement on the doctrine of the divinity of Christ because nobody knows what divinity is. To assert that Jesus is God is equivalent to admitting that he is an unknown, or purely imaginary, quantity. The very subjects over which theologians wrangle are their own creations, and of necessity they have been created differently by different theologians. Whatever may be thought of Jesus as a man, the God-man is an empty dream, whose only service consists in that it supplies a comfortable living for so many people.

J. T. LLOYD.

Suicide.

AMONG the old Romans there was no horror of suicide. The most robust race of antiquity always regarded it as their privilege to retain the free choice of life or death. It was common for Roman soldiers to slay themselves rather than surrender. During the revolt of the Gauls, when Cæsar was absent in Italy, one of his military stations was attacked by overwhelming numbers. When all hope was gone,

the remnant of the legion "died like Romans on each other's swords," says Mr. Froude, who sees in the act "a signal illustration of the Roman greatness of mind." According to Gibbon, "the civilians have always respected the natural right of a citizen to dispose of his life." A Roman accused of any capital crime might prevent the sentence by committing suicide, which was a certain refuge to the victims of Tiberius and Nero. They could die but once, and in dying by their own hands they secured a decent burial and the transmission of their property to their families. "The powers of this world," remarks Gibbon, "have indeed lost their dominion over him who is resolved on death, and his arm can only be restrained by the religious apprehension of a future state." There was nothing in the popular belief to deter a Roman from meeting instead of awaiting death. "But the precepts of the Gospel or the Church," as Gibbon observes, "have at length imposed a pious servitude on the minds of Christians, and condemn them to expect, without a murmur, the last stroke of disease or the executioner." It was well to say "the Gospel or the Church," for there is no law against suicide in the Bible. When a wish is breathed by Hamlet that "the Almighty had not fixed his canon 'gainst self-slaughter," Shakespeare writes as a Canonist rather than a Christian. It was the Church that branded suicide as a mortal sin. No exception was allowed. Lucretia was declared to be a criminal; a woman was not to take her own life even to escape the vilest dishonor; and this doctrine is still inculcated, although it contravenes every wholesome, unsophisticated instinct of the human heart.

Thus the matter remained until the beginning of the break-up of Christianity at the time of the Renaissance. Hints were scattered that suicide, to avoid dishonor or irretrievable calamity, was far from being a crime. Presently, the great dramatists, especially in England, brought characters upon the stage who slew themselves at the fatal crisis of their careers, going down to death like a sinking sun, in crimson glory.

Perhaps the first treatise on suicide was written by John Donne, a famous divine of the Church of England, a poet, a wit, a scholar, and a man of most astonishing subtlety both of thought and expression. The title of this treatise was *Biathanatos*, with this sub-title—"A Declaration of that Paradox, or Thesis, that Self-Homicide is not so Naturally Sin that it may never be Otherwise." Hallam says the book is insufferably dull, and that suicide is preferable to reading it twice; but Hallam had his limitations, and in this criticism he displayed them. Dr. Jessop, who edited Donne's *Essays in Divinity*, calls the *Biathanatos* "one of the most extraordinary books ever written," and praises its "vast learning and the incomparable subtlety of logic which it displays in every page." For our part, we agree with Dr. Jessop, and, we may add, with De Quincey. Donne's book is extremely rare, and few persons have read it; but we do not envy the man who could read it without feeling that he had gone through a splendid piece of gymnastic.

An essay on Suicide was written by David Hume. It appears to have been circulated amongst his friends, and was only published after his death, with another paper on the Mortality of the Soul. The essay is subtle and ironical, and a Christian would find it extremely awkward to answer. Rousseau has a notable chapter on Suicide, there is a characteristic essay on the subject by De Quincey, and a fine fragment by James Thomson ("B. V."), marked by all his severity of logic and stern sincerity of feeling. He holds up the orthodox Christian with superb contempt:—

"Modern Christians, who try to believe that they believe in an eternal life of beatitude, cleave to this miserable and transitory life with most ignominious and abject intensity; will submit to vile doctor's stuff for years and years to keep them in quasi-life or death-in-life, bedridden and miserable, a nuisance to themselves and all around them, all to keep themselves cut

of heaven! They only resign themselves into the arms of Jesus when all possible means have been exhausted to avoid them."

This is of course a far from exhaustive list of books and essays on Suicide. Recent literature has even produced two important scientific studies on the subject, one by a Frenchman, the other by an Italian. The writings we have mentioned are such as all literary students should be acquainted with, and they are sufficient to prove that, with regard to this particular topic, as with regard to many others, there is nothing new under the sun.

So much for the literature of the subject. Let us now turn to another of its aspects. There is a general impression that scepticism leads to suicide. This impression has been sedulously cultivated by the clergy, but it will not bear investigation. Clericals commit suicide as frequently as laymen; and, although the Catholic parts of Europe show fewer suicides than other parts, the fact may be accounted for by the backward state and the slow life of those places. With an increased strain there will naturally be a greater percentage of breakages.

But if Freethinkers are not specially prone to committing suicide, it is indisputable that a great many persons take their lives under the influence of religious melancholy. The very worst cases of suicidal mania are those of men, and frequently women, who imagine that God hates them, that they have committed the unpardonable sin, that they have sold themselves to the Devil, or that they are too wicked to live. We have seen the faces of such persons, and the look of their eyes is enough to draw tears from a heart of stone; so pathetic is it, so terribly weary, so awfully despairing, or so hungrily imploring rest from the burden of existence. Watching such poor, miserable creatures year after year may be right; but it is at least arguable that it would be a greater kindness to let the curtain drop upon the silent tragedy.

But the main causes of suicide are, of course, neither religious nor irreligious. Brain disease, chronic melancholia, deranged livers, inveterate dyspepsia, are among the physical causes. Then there are mental causes, such as disappointed love, painful bereavement, domestic misery, and financial trouble. There are also moral causes, such as morbid egotism, self-contempt, and general *malaise*, following a life of drunkenness or debauchery.

Pessimism is sometimes included among the mental or moral causes of suicide, but that is an absurdity. How many Pessimists have committed self-slaughter? Leopardi, Schopenhauer, and James Thomson all died natural deaths. Let a man think as he may that this is the worst of all possible worlds, or that on the whole it would have been better if the human race had never existed; what inducement is this to individual suicide? One man's exit makes no difference to the mass of human misery. On the other hand, a Pessimist may believe himself able to make life, if not happier, yet more tolerable for those around him. And then, there is the lust of life, which is independent of our intellectual conclusions; a potent instinct generated within us by countless millenniums of evolution. Besides, it is something to watch the great drama of life, with its perpetual novelties and surprises. To act a great part in it is absorbing, and merely to play the part of a spectator is a fascination.

Many delicate problems would arise—if we pursued this branch of the subject. But there is no necessity to do so. No one advocates suicide, and if it had advocates they would hardly make converts without killing themselves to prove their sincerity, which would put an end to their propaganda. Mr. William Archer, however, has gone to the length of suggesting that public provision should be made for the convenience of persons who want to make a decent and comfortable exit from life; but his lethal chambers are not likely to be established in the immediate future. Men will shrink from death while they shrink from the means of death, and when a man has conquered that aversion he can

generally find a way to die, without troubling the public authorities for their assistance.

There is no need to encourage suicide, nor use in doing so. Suicides will happen under certain conditions of body, mind, or character, which will almost always be abnormal. Still, we think there is food for mirth in some cases in which the jury return a verdict of "temporary insanity." Occasionally, indeed, a more truthful verdict would be "temporary sanity." Suicide is sometimes the only sensible action in a man's career. When a creature like Piggott, for instance, closes his sordid life by blowing his brains out, we feel that he has done a wise and just action in ridding the world of his presence.

Finally, we may consider the question of whether suicide should be punished. It *cannot* be justified if successful. We can only punish the attempt. Now if punishment is intended to deter from "crime," it is useless and therefore wrong, to punish in this case. Persons on the point of committing suicide are beyond the reach of any motive that the law can apply to them. You cannot threaten a man with worse than death, and the suicide is inflicting that upon himself. It would be well, therefore, to sweep away the foolish barbarities of our law upon this subject.

G. W. FOOTE.

The Evolution of Psychological Matter.

AMONG recently published works dealing with the development of mental structures, Mr. Macnamara's *Evolution and Function of Living Purposive Matter* holds a high place. This work widens and deepens the investigations recorded by Romanes and others concerning mental evolution in the animal world. Commencing with the elementary cell, Macnamara succeeds in showing that the adaptive processes which unicellular organisms manifest find their fullest explanation in the theory that the most primitive forms of living matter are capable of retaining memorial impressions of their past experiences, which are utilised in the struggle for life.

The observations and experiments conducted by Jennings and Binet lend strong support to this view. The microscopic creatures these painstaking investigators have so carefully studied act as though they profited by their experiences; they learn to avoid adverse conditions, and seek surroundings which are conducive to the well-being of their kind. The beneficial movements which enable single-celled organisms to secure sustenance while avoiding injurious influences are, at the outset, physico-chemical in their nature. And little change is discernible in the sponges which constitute the earliest order of multicellular animals. But while the adaptive activities of single-celled organisms are successive only, the functioning powers of the sponges may be performed simultaneously. In this modification we find the genesis of the great law of the physiological division of labor which rendered possible the subsequent evolution of the highest and most specialised forms of life.

Ascending from the sponges in order of evolutionary succession are the hydroid polyps and jelly-fishes. These curious animals consist of two sets of cell layers. The outer layer, or ectoderm, holds converse with the external world; the inner layer is largely concerned with the processes of metabolism and reproduction. Primitive nerve and muscle centres take their rise on the external sensitive surfaces of these organisms, which in the higher Medusæ reach the stage of simple sensory organs.

The next higher order is that of the Echinoderms, which includes the star-fishes, with their five radiating arms. The star-fish nervous system is mainly composed of a central nerve-ring, which always retains the evidences of its epithelial origin. The sense organs are poorly developed, and, like the elementary nervous structure, are derived from the outer layer of sensitive cells. But these star-fishes

possess acute organs of vision in the pigment-cells or eye-spots of their tentacles. Their movements indicate powers of discrimination; they profit by experience, and foreshadow the more involved purposive phenomena which the next higher order of invertebrates display.

Among Crustacea, the common crayfish furnishes abundant evidence of increased purposive power. Its locomotive activities materially widen its range of experience. The crayfish carefully explores every nook and cranny of its water-dwelling when seeking its prey, or watches patiently at the mouth of the burrow in the river bank for any passing edible organism. Its compound eyes are splendidly adapted for seeing the insects and snails upon which it lives. The unerring manner in which the crayfish seizes his victims proves a power to appreciate their distance from his body. Numerous experiments demonstrate that this crustacean remembers his previous experiences. All such actions are grouped by Mr. Macnamara under the term "instinctive." He contends that they are hereditary, and he compares them with automatic actions such as incubation in fowls, the building instincts of beavers, or the swimming powers of untaught ducklings.

In the insect world, the most highly evolved products of purposive living matter attain their invertebrate consummation. The principal nerve systems of insects consists of the brain and a chain of nervous ganglia which is extended along the ventral side of the body. The insect receives impressions through its sense organs and reacts through its motor organs upon environing stimuli. Its brain is made up of the optic ganglia associated with two other masses of nervous matter. In the brain of the sea mouse, one of the aquatic worms, traces of what are termed fungiform bodies are to be seen; in the crayfish these bodies are more fully developed, but they reach their maximum in the brain of the insect. The size of these fungiform bodies seems related to the amount of insect intelligence. For example, in the social Hymenoptera they vary in development among the various members of the same insect society. They are proportionately larger in the brain of the intelligent and industrious worker-bee than in that of the dull and indolent queen or drone.

Regarded as a class, insects possess organs of vision, smell, touch, taste, and the muscular sense, but very few have the sense of hearing. The impressions conveyed through the medium of the sensory organs to the receptive brain cells are, through the instrumentality of nerve fibres, connected with one another. The system thus constructed constitutes the material basis of memory. Insects, in the opinion of Macnamara, are in this manner enabled to employ their memorial and purposive instincts for the purpose of manifesting their instinctive and emotional activities. But notwithstanding the complexity of some insect social structures, he maintains that the activities of insects remain substantially instinctive. The term "instincts" is defined as follows: "A chain of acts which have become formed through means of continual repetition of the same actions following on the same stimuli, so as to become finally fixed into the physiological organisation, the object of these movements being in the main directed to the preservation and reproduction of the species."

We will now survey the backbone series through which man traces his ascent. From the earliest cartilaginous fishes up to the human race the vertebrate brain is in part formed by four masses of nervous matter collectively known as the basal ganglia, so arranged that these constitute the central receiving station for the messages carried through the auditory, visual, and tactile senses. The energy which governs the purposive movements of these animals arises in these ganglia.

It is important to remember that the three lower vertebrate classes have failed to evolve a "neopallium," or that part of the brain in which psychical or intellectual processes are elaborated. They display instinctive and emotional phenomena

so long as their basal ganglia perform their normal functions, but all these movements cease when the basal ganglia are removed. Experiments have repeatedly proved that lower vertebrate activities depend absolutely upon the presence of the basal ganglia. Their activities cannot result from psychical processes owing to the absence of "consciousness matter," which is confined to the cerebral cortex or neopallium. This last is indispensable to the production of the higher mentality. The lives led by these animals hardly demand the possession of intellectual power; their hereditary instincts meet their requirements in the battle of life.

Evolving from, and rising superior to the reptilia, the brains of birds are strikingly uniform in structure, and mark a pronounced development in the basal ganglia. Although, when stimulated, certain areas of the bird's brain excite definite groups of muscles, the stimulation of the larger part of the cortex produces no visible change in the head or trunk. And it is in those special areas of the cortex which lie between the sensory and the motor centres that psychical processes are generated. Nevertheless, the avian cortex is so imperfectly developed that the mental powers remain rudimentary.

The cortex, or covering of the cerebral hemispheres, first assumes survival value in the mammals. In each succeeding geological period, the increasing struggle for existence has caused mammalian organisms either to adapt themselves to a habitat of greater security, or evolve brain centres of associative memory to aid them in devising means to hold their own against enemies and competitors. The hippopotamus survives despite its backward brain, but its habitat is eminently secure, and it has also evolved its wonderfully thick hide.

With domesticated dogs and other carnivorous quadrupeds, the organ of mind assumes much larger dimensions in proportion to the size of the body than in birds and inferior mammals. And this advance in brain development is almost exclusively due to the growth of the cerebral hemispheres. The surfaces of the cerebral hemispheres in birds and lower mammals are almost smooth, but in the carnivora certain fairly constant furrows are present. These depressions are due to the infolding of the cerebral cortex, which permits a large amount of its substance to be enclosed within the unyielding walls of the cranium.

The foregoing considerations lead to the conclusion that throughout the ascending orders of life mental power has grown from more to more. It remains to briefly consider those intellectual processes which attain their maximum in man's power to think and express his thoughts through the medium of spoken or written language. No unprejudiced man at this time of day will dispute the kinship of man and ape with the remainder of the animal world. The main factor in the mental evolution of animals has been the increasing complexity of the central nervous system, and this complexity has been necessitated by the enviroing influences operating through the sensory channels. The highest faculties enjoyed by the choicest examples of the most civilised races of men exist in a rudimentary condition in the lowest savages and the higher apes.

It is demonstrable that the stimuli received through the tactile and other sense organs materially modify those areas of the cerebral cortex which receive and retain these impressions. But the human brain contains much more nervous matter than is necessary to discharge these activities. The larger extent and the more complicated structures of the human brain raises it above that of any other animal. This abundance of brain matter is utilised for the purpose of associating the sensori-memorial images elaborated by the sensory centres; it also serves to transform them into the mental changes which pass to the motor areas of the cerebrum to become realised in intellectual manifestations.

Without the intervention of any quite imaginary and wholly unnecessary supernatural guidance, the

known sequences of purely natural phenomena are in themselves sufficient to account for the mental evolution of the paragon of animals.

T. F. PALMER.

Acid Drops.

Unitarianism seems to be doing tolerably well financially, but not otherwise. There is quite a pessimistic note in the Annual Report of the Executive Committee of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association, dated June 8, 1911:—

"The interest in Unitarianism is certainly more widespread at the present day than at any previous period of its history. And yet it must be confessed that attendance at the religious services in Unitarian and Free Christian churches in the British Isles is probably suffering from the blight of indifference to quite as large an extent as in 'orthodox' churches. Exceptional circumstances and specially endowed men apart, the services at the majority of our churches are sparsely and irregularly attended. With noteworthy exceptions, the sons and daughters of the older Unitarian families do not show the interest which their fathers and mothers displayed. Some of the working-class congregations in Lancashire and elsewhere retain their vitality, and several of the new movements, consisting chiefly of converts from 'orthodoxy,' are animated by a vigorous life; but the greater number of our congregations, like those of other denominations, move slowly amid sluggish waters."

Every form of Christianity is doomed to extinction in the not too distant future, except Catholicism, with which Free-thought will wage the final war for light and liberty.

The King's address to "My People" is a simple document for this time of day. He speaks of "the beautiful and impressive service in the Abbey," when the Archbishop of Canterbury daubed him with holy oil in the name of the Lord. It passes our comprehension how such tomfoolery can appear "beautiful and impressive" to anyone. Perhaps allowance must be made for the fact that the King had such a deep personal interest in the ceremony. His Majesty mentions God, of course, and speaks of himself and his people as being "under Divine guidance." He does not explain, however, how this leaves room for the "frosk faith and confidence" with which the "affectionate demonstrations" of his people have filled him. One would think that the "divine guidance" was sufficient in itself for all emergencies.

Westminster Abbey was kept open for commercial purposes after the Coronation. Thousands of people (Christians, of course) paid from one shilling to ten shillings for viewing the fittings erected inside the "sacred edifice" for the "august ceremony." The seats outside St. Paul's were kept up for a week after the Coronation for further use at the Thanksgiving. Christopher Wron's language, if he could see the defacement and desecration of his masterpiece, may be imagined.

During the Coronation in Westminster Abbey one of the Prayer Book applications was used. God was asked to "endue the lords of the Council and all the Nobility with grace, wisdom, and understanding." This blessing has been asked for them for more than three hundred years, and they want it as badly as ever. Such is the efficacy of prayer.

It seems likely that the Nobility will want all the grace, wisdom, and understanding that God can give them when they have to meet Mr. Asquith with the royal prerogative behind him. Their day is over and they haven't grace, wisdom, and understanding enough to recognise it. Power they have lost, but they still have the cash, and that is a powerful consolation—even to the most sensitive Christians.

The Rev. J. H. Jowett is a follower of the meek and lowly Jesus. He is, therefore, himself meek and lowly—in a Pickwickian sense. In the course of an article on the Coronation, this gentleman dissents from the notion that the might of the British Empire is represented by the Army and Navy. And he modestly adds, "The real strength of the Empire rests in the truth represented by the pulpit. Cock-a-doodle-do! For when Mr. Jowett says *the pulpit*, he doubtless means *my pulpit*. And when he says *my pulpit*, he doubtless means *me*. So, once more, cock-a-doodle-do! Hats off to J. H. Jowett, representative of the real strength of the Empire. "For he himself has said it," etc.

Mrs. C. W. Earle's *Memoirs and Memories* contains the following reference to Sir Henry Taylor, a poet now neglected:—

"It is curious that a man so well known to his own generation should have faded so completely from public memory. I remember being struck, thirty years ago, by hearing that in a class at Marlborough the master asked who wrote *Philip van Artevelde*, and not a single boy could answer except my son. We three girls all adored him, much as daughters love their father. At that awkward age in a girl's life, between fourteen and seventeen, he was specially kind to me; he used to read Shakespeare with me and explain it, and years afterwards, when tempted to write letters to a man I loved, without my mother's leave, it came back to me that Iago's first power to poison the mind of Othello against Desdemona was the fact that he was able to say 'She did deceive her father marrying you.' I think the recollection of this strengthened me more to act straightforwardly than the gentle teaching of Christ, which dwells rather more on forgiveness to the sinner than help to the tempted."

The last sentence is worthy of careful reflection.

Canon Henson makes a distinction between faith and theology, and declares that men are saved by the former and not by the latter; but, surely, the Canon is not blind to the fact that the faith he speaks of implies theology, and theology of a particular kind too, for the majority of Christians decline to be religiously associated with Unitarians. The latter are rigidly excluded from the Free Church Council. Now, if Unitarians are not Christians they are not saved, which is equivalent to saying that saving faith implies orthodox theology. This is very funny, but entirely true.

Furthermore, Canon Henson must know that salvation by faith is an obvious absurdity. There can be no such thing. In the first place, the human race is not lost. It is immature, imperfect, full of disharmonies; but it is slowly growing and developing and improving by means of forces inherent in itself. In the second place, neither individual nor social improvement takes place except as the result of individual or social effort. Reforms have seldom originated in, and been carried through by, the Church. Nine times out of ten the Church opposes real reforms until she realises that continued opposition will injure her own interests. Then she unscrupulously nobbles them and boldly affirms that apart from her, reforms are of no value. In those sections of the Church of which this is true you hear very little about salvation by faith. Taking a comprehensive view of history it is undeniable that faith has done much more harm than good.

We cut the following from last week's *Athenæum*. It occurs in a review of *An Irish Beauty of the Regency*—a volume compiled by Mrs. Warronne Blake from the Unpublished Journals of the Hon. Mrs. Calvert (1789—1882):—

"Lord Cochrane complains sadly at not having been seconded properly [by Lord Gambier, whom he brought to a court martial] in his attack on the French [in the roads of Aix]. The French captain, whom he had taken prisoner, expressed a great wish to go on board his [burning] ship, the *Vassoire*, to save his papers and charts. Lord C. represented to him the great danger of doing this, as the ship might blow up at any moment. He seemed so anxious about the matter, however, that Lord C., willing to gratify him, ordered his boat to be lowered, and got into it with him. He called out, 'Well, my lads, who will volunteer to go with us?' and four or five sailors did so. When they got near the ship, owing to the heat, which was very great, one of her guns went off, killing the French captain on the spot. At the same time a little dog, terrified at the noise, jumped through one of the portholes into the sea. 'Damn it, Captain!' exclaimed the sailors, 'though it is a French dog, we will try and save its life.' And in spite of the imminent danger they rowed up and saved the dog. He proved to be a beautiful little creature [a pug], and Lord C. brought him to London."

We call that a beautiful story. Those gallant Jack Tars are superb. How splendidly they give the lie to the doctrine of original sin!

We like to see people grateful for favors received, and so were pleased to note in the *Catholic Times*, among the list of "acknowledgments," thanks returned to St. Anthony of Padua for "help in temporal need" by "A Client." "E. H." also thanks St. Anthony and the Blessed Virgin for "temporal favors received," and "A Lover of the Sacred Heart" thanks Our Lady and St. Anthony for similar benefits. This is as it should be, although we are rather puzzled why the acknowledgments should be made in the *Catholic Times*. Is St. Anthony a subscriber to that journal, we wonder?

A writer in the *Methodist Times*, discussing the question of how to keep people in the Churches, points out, rightly

enough, that the secret lies in capturing the children. And he ingeniously remarks that teachers "ought not to wait for the ripening of the intellect before we teach religious habits." Well, if they do wait so long, they will have waited too long. Religious beliefs and religious habits are not the fruits of a ripened intellect. The chance for both is before the intellect is strong enough to assert its independence. Of course, if religion stood in any vital relationship to current life and thought the case would be different. Then religious teachers could patiently and confidently wait for daily experience to enforce religious principles. So the thing is to go for the children. They are ignorant and helpless, and on such material the Churches have always relied for support. And by the time the children are at an age when they might realise the nature of the trick that has been played on them, the habits and ideas of many are fixed. And be that many large or small, whatever it is, it is all profit.

Mrs. Crawford Fraser, author of the *Diplomatist's Wife*, sees better days dawning for religion. She says: "I have lived to see false science, false philosophy, false ethics discredited. Truth has at last drawn her sword, and seems in a fair way to rout her enemies." We have often read much the same sort of thing from religionists, and it is usually based on nothing worth bothering about, and leads to nowhere in particular. The science, philosophy, and ethics that have been discredited are such as were used in the service of religion, not that which was used against it. We could, indeed, repeat Mrs. Fraser's language—with, however, a different application.

The *Guardian* thinks "there is no argument, however specious, in favor of Materialism which cannot be demolished by sound Christian Evidence." Well, we do not say this is impossible; we wait until we see the sound Christian Evidence that is put forward as competent to the task. Up to the present we have come across little evidence but plenty of sound. Perhaps some genius will arise who will succeed in welding together the two.

Mr. Friedländer's new volume on the *Jewish Sources of the Sermon on the Mount* shows that Jewish scholars, even in England, are not going to take Christian insolence lying down. His argument is not new, for it has been dealt with in learned books on the Continent, but a perfectly open presentation of it is a novelty in this country. Mr. Friedländer shows that all the much-praised passages of the Sermon on the Mount are borrowed from the Old Testament, from Philo, and other Jewish literature. Nor does he hesitate to speak out boldly about the historicity of Jesus:—

"That it is impossible to extract from the Gospels sufficient incontestable evidence for a biography of the Gospel hero. Probably, 1,900 years ago, a teacher and a claimant of the Messiahship, named Jesus, the son of Joseph and Mary, lived in Galilee. His apocalyptic dreams and his eschatological discourses induced his followers to recognise his Messianic claims, and this led to a conflict with the ruling authorities. The death of Jesus did not destroy the movement he had set on foot. His followers awaited his Parousia, and meanwhile they remained within the camp of Pharisaic Judaism. This state continued until the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 c.e. In the early years of the second century the Gospels were written and Christianity arose as a new religion. Paul, and not Jesus, was the creator of the New Testament theology. The Gospels were not written by eye-witnesses of the events they narrate. The Evangelists wrote in Greek, which was not the language used by Jesus. The Gospels were not written in the land where the events described occurred."

Christianity is dying of the disease that all religions die of—being found out. It can only live in a world ignorant of its origins, its claims, and its history. And it won't be saved by the mummy of the Coronation.

Rev. A. J. Waldron is giving the fruits of his wisdom to readers of the *Sunday Companion*. The first of the articles is concerned with open-air preaching, and on this he poses as an authority. He is strong on the necessity of outdoor speaking as a means of checking unbelief, but the really important question connected therewith remains unanswered. This is, How many unbelievers has Mr. Waldron succeeded in bringing back into the fold? We should like to hear of authenticated cases, and it would give the world some measure of Mr. Waldron's ability as an infidel slayer. It is easy enough to get an audience of religious people and persuade them of the weakness of the case against Christianity. That has been done by far abler and better men than Mr. Waldron. And none of them check the disintegration of religion. On the contrary, they tend to hasten the process. Mr. Waldron warns his brother clergymen that they must face the fact that "the anti-Christian and Socialist orators are much better trained than most of our Christian propa-

gandists." Well, that is not much of a compliment to either anti-Christian or Socialist speakers, but it is the truth. And even Mr. Waldron has to drop into the truth occasionally.

At a meeting of the National Society the other day, Canon Grensted referred to Mr. F. J. Gould, who had written a book of Moral Lessons "when he absolutely disbelieved in Christianity." We can assure Canon Grensted that Mr. Gould is still in that deplorable condition—that is, unless he has undergone conversion during his stay in America.

A meeting of that self-appointed body with the ambitious name of the Education Settlement Committee was held on Saturday, July 1, at the Bible House, Queen Victoria-street. This was a very appropriate meeting-place, for the one real object of the Committee is to keep the Bible in the nation's schools. The Committee indeed simply represents—though not in an official way—the section of English religionists who may be called strict Protestants, having for their faith and war-cry "The Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible." The Bible, indeed, is their fetish, and they want to make it the national fetish in the elementary schools. And this—in spite of Catholics, High Churchmen, Jews, and all sorts of Freethinkers—they have the face to call "a settlement" of the education difficulty. No cheek in the world is like the cheek of religionists.

Truth has the following comments, in the course of an article on the finances of the Protestant Truth Society, under the title, "The Protestantism that Pays." It says:—

"Of the £14,981 received in the year, £4,139, it was stated, was allocated to the Training College for Wycliffe Preachers at Finchley. The college is the private residence of Mr. and Mrs. Kensit and family, and, until a short time ago, the staff consisted of Mr. Kensit's brother-in-law, who combined the duties of the College Secretary, tutor, and examiner, for which he had himself graduated in a drapery establishment. The non-collegiate staff consist of three maid-servants and a gardener. Three rooms are set apart for the use of the students—a bedroom, a dining-room, and a small lecture-hall. The course of study lasts for three months, and as a rule three preachers are in training at the same time. Each of them pays 10s. a week to Mrs. Kensit for his board, and it would seem, therefore, that the allocation of £4,000 to the College ought to leave it with 'a fair working balance' for a good many years to come. Subscribers to the crusade will naturally be curious both as to the expenditure of the £4,000 allocated and the results achieved by such expenditure.....Unless I am misinformed, there are at present only two of the Wycliffe Preachers trained at the College engaged among Mr. Kensit's band of crusaders, and this would hardly seem to be an adequate return for keeping up an expensive establishment nor sufficient excuse for the allocation of £4,000 for the maintenance."

The two evangelists, Thomas Toft and Amy Clarke Robson, already mentioned in our columns as having been arrested for stealing rings, spoons, and jewellery at Wakefield, were tried at the Leeds quarter-sessions and sentenced to three and six months' imprisonment respectively, both with hard labor. The male evangelist tried to throw all the blame upon his female companion. He said that he only held the property, which she passed over to him, for the good of the mission, without any knowledge of its having been stolen. He was unable to persuade the judge and jury to believe him. There is no moral to the story—except that Christians will credit anybody who comes in the name of the Lord.

We do not recollect any accident at any of the Newcastle-on-Tyne N. S. S. Branch Meetings on the Town Moor. The religious people had one quite recently. They were having a Temperance Festival, for which a temporary platform had been erected. This structure collapsed in the middle of the Chairman's opening speech. Prayer was no use against inadequate strength or bad workmanship. When the human victims were extricated it was found that the Rev. W. E. J. Seabrooke had a broken arm and the Rev. J. Jack an injured knee. "Providence" did nothing for them.

"Mr. G. W. E. Russell in one of his books has a story of an Oxford graduate who determined to enter the Nonconformist ministry, and, quite unnecessarily, published a manifesto setting forth his reasons and intentions. In his enumeration of the various methods by which he was going to mark his aloofness from the sacerdotalism of the Established Church he wrote: "I shall wear no clothes to distinguish me from my fellow-Christians." Need I say that all the picture-shops of the University promptly displayed a fancy portrait of the newly-fledged minister clad in what Artemus Ward called "the scandalous style of the Greek

slave," and bearing the unkind inscription—"The Rev. X. Y. Z. distinguishing himself from his fellow-Christians?""
—*Daily Chronicle*.

"If there is a Providence in things," says the Bishop of Birmingham, "if there is a Divine Providence in history, there is a Divine Providence in this. There is a purpose for our England." Why, certainly. If there is a Providence anywhere it is in England as well as elsewhere. And no Englishman worthy of his salt can doubt that when we grab large tracts of the earth's surface, when we claim commercial supremacy and the supremacy of the seas, we are doing exactly what Providence meant us to do. And when England built up its commercial greatness on the beauties of the factory system which sent children of seven years of age working twelve and fourteen hours daily under unhealthy conditions, or on our coal measures which provided opportunities for half-naked women dragging trucks of coal below ground, when we are left with drink-sodden millions of a submerged population, all these things, my Lord Bishop, are proof of Divine Providence, if there is a Divine Providence anywhere. Moreover, what else but a supernatural power could elevate men like Bishop Gore to positions of eminence in a nation. It hardly looks as though men in their normal senses would do it.

There has been much said lately, chiefly in missionary quarters, concerning the evil effects of drinking in Nigeria. A special correspondent of the *Times* reports in the issue of that paper for June, that he has been quite unable to discover the evil effects that were so apparent to other people. Archdeacon Melville-Jones, of the Church Missionary Society, had said that the people were becoming more drunken, and various disgraceful scenes were becoming common. On the other hand, resident officials and others said that not only was drunkenness not increasing, but it was on the decrease, the native being generally a sober character. But that where drunkenness existed "it was not among the pagans, but among the educated Christian natives," and, adds the correspondent, "I found this opinion very prevalent among experienced officials I consulted."

An "Illuminating Engineer" writes in one of the daily papers that very few churches are lit up in a satisfactory manner. We are of the same opinion, and have often said as much. But as they will not utilise our aid in illuminating them from within, we are compelled to go on doing so from without. And yet the clergy are not grateful.

HIS ORTHODOXY ENDANGERED.

The Rev. Ulysses G. B. Pierce, chaplain of the United States Senate and President Taft's pastor at a Washington Unitarian church, told a group of senators a few days ago a letter he had received the previous morning from a strong Methodist friend of his. The letter read:—

"Dear Doctor,—Yesterday morning, while on the way to services in my own church, I was overtaken by the heavy rain we had. As I did not have an umbrella with me and was near your church, I went in, and for the first time listened to one of your sermons on the tenets of the Unitarian faith. Next Sunday I am going to carry an umbrella."

FINAL.

A well-known divine was delivering a eulogy over a fireman killed at his post. Waxing poetic, the preacher said, "The soldier hath fought his last fight, the sailor hath gone on his last voyage, the fireman hath gone to his last fire!"

A GIRL'S ESSAY ON THE FIRE OF LONDON.

The fire of London, although looked on at first as a calamity, really did a great deal of good. It purified the city from the dregs of the plague, and burnt down eighty-nine churches.—*From the "Macnamara" Collection.*

WONDERS OF LIFE.

A well-known divine was preaching one Sunday morning on the subject of "The Great and Small Things of Creation."

To illustrate his thought that nothing was either too vast or too tiny to be of interest to God, he proceeded in these words:—

"The Creator of this immense universe created also the most infinitesimal atom in it. The Architect of these vast mountains fashioned also the tiniest thread of gold running through them. The God who made me made a daisy."

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

(Lectures suspended for the present.)

To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1911.—Previously acknowledged £255 8s. 9d. Received since:—A. C. Rosetti, 2s. 6d.; S. Valentine Caunter, £1 1s.; S. Leeson, £1; E. D. Side, 10s.; H. A. Blomfield (Melbourne), £1 1s.; H. M. Ridgway, £1.

THE VANCE TESTIMONIAL FUND.—Previously acknowledged, £39 5s. Received since:—A. D. McLaren, £1; J. and H. Thomson, 5s.; A. D. Corrick, 5s.; A. Harden, £1; H. Walsh, 5s.; Robert Avis, £1; A. C. Rosetti, 2s. 6d.; Sydney A. Gimson, £2 2s.; A. Powell, 10s.; H. Thurlow, 3s.; S. Valentine Caunter, £1 1s.; S. H. Munns, £1 1s.; F. Woods, £1; Silex, 10s.; An Admirer (per J. T. Lloyd), 10s.; R. E., 5s.; Dr. Martin, 10s.; A Few Swansea Friends (per T. J. S.), 10s.; The Board of Directors of the Secular Society, Ltd. (in special recognition of past services), £20; John J., 2s. 6d.; Mr. and Mrs. H. T. C., £1 1s.; H. Silverstein, 5s.; S. Leeson, 10s.; S. Clowes, 3s. 6d.; E. D. Side, 10s.; T. J. Thurlow, 4s.; J. G. Dobson, 2s. 6d.; H. M. Ridgway, £1.

G. D.—With every respect for our contemporary *Justice* we cannot take all its statements about what is happening in Japan as gospel; and a case of interference with free speech in 1892 is rather antediluvian. In all the cases referred to, you will observe, there is attack or reflection upon the Government and the Mikado; and you might ask yourself whether it is strange that the Government and the Mikado should fight tooth and nail for self-preservation. Don't we see the same phenomenon in Europe? Look at Russia! One look there is enough. Look at Germany. There is free speech in the land of Frederick the Great and Goethe, but men are imprisoned for the slightest criticism of the Emperor. Even in France, where free speech abounds, men are imprisoned for crusading against the Army, on which modern governments ultimately rest, in a way that the government of the great Roman Emperors never did. And was not the persecution of Bradlaugh in England to a large extent dictated by political motives? We have never said anything such as you suggest about Japan. Your memory is at fault. We have praised the Japanese character in certain respects, but that does not include unreserved praise of the Japanese Government. We have rejoiced over Secular Education in Japan, and over the wide spread of Secularism amongst the educated classes; but that does not include rejoicing over the exaggerated nationalism of the adoration of the Mikado. One should discriminate. Good things may exist in a country without bringing it near the millennium. And do not imagine that we are offended at your letter. We have no inclination to be Pope or Mikado. Your right to think is the same as ours.

CWEIFELINFACH.—We cannot answer such letters by post. The verses have no particular merit. Why should you expect them to have as "a first effort"? But you needn't be downhearted. Even great poets have started with poor, and sometimes shocking, verses.

A. HARDEN, subscribing, sincerely hopes Miss Vance will regain health.

A. D. CORRICK.—We note your hope that the Vance Testimonial Fund will reach a substantial figure.

MAC.—You ask what the *Freethinker* is printed for, and you answer the question yourself by saying it is a business dodge to get money—although we carry on the paper at a loss, besides not receiving a penny for all our own work upon it. You wind up by saying "Don't get cross and insult me." We don't.

R. H. ROSETTI.—More barriers of time and space stand in the way of accepting your kind offer of help at the N. S. S. office during Miss Vance's absence.

R. E.—Pleased to read the nice things you say of Miss Vance. And why should we be vexed with you for offering us advice for our benefit? We have always taken plenty of bodily exercise, including walking, and always eaten plenty of fruit, including apples. Ours is one of the most trying tasks, taxing various faculties and energies; and our work is so personal that we cannot very well escape it altogether, even when on holiday. We have never had a month's clear rest, and never expect to until we take a much longer one—which we don't think is likely to be yet awhile.

BERT MAKIN.—The four numbers have been sent you. Pleased to hear you got acquainted with the *Freethinker* through the kindness of Mr. Fletcher, who gives away copies at open-air meetings at Hulme. You will probably have an opportunity of hearing a lecture at Manchester in the autumn.

A. POWELL.—Glad to have your "cordial greetings," also your "hope to supplement" your subscription to the Vance Testimonial Fund. The bigger that Fund grows the better we shall be pleased.

A. B. MOSS.—Miss Vance will get "a good rest free from trouble and worry." Her friends, Miss Kough and Miss Stanley, have been able to get her away to the East Coast, where she ought to stay for at least a month.

SIDNEY A. GIMSON "hopes the amount realised will be a large one" for Miss Vance. This is a practical hope, for it travelled up with a cheque.

T. J. S.—We hope the Swansea friends' good wishes for Miss Vance will be realised.

H. T. HILL.—Thanks for list. Copies shall be sent to all of them. Your parson friend, or acquaintance, naturally prefers you calling yourself an Agnostic. It doesn't sound so desperately hostile to his faith. But when he says that an Atheist declares there is no God he is talking out of ignorance—or something worse. Ask him if he knows of any Atheist who agrees with him on that point? If he doesn't, ask him how he imagines he has a right to define other men's principles for them. You ask us what we think is the difference between Atheism and Agnosticism. We answer Nothing. We have called an Agnostic an Atheist with a tall hat on—and there is more than a little in the joke.

J. PARTRIDGE.—We did not know you had succeeded in getting the Birmingham Town Hall for us on October 22. We shall keep the engagement, but the late knowledge causes us inconvenience by breaking the course of lectures we had projected for Queen's Hall.

A. D. McLAREN.—It arrived all right. Slight delay of acknowledgment (see last week's *Freethinker*) was due to the foreign practice of letter and money order coming in separate envelopes by separate posts. We owe you a letter, and will discharge the debt shortly.

T. G. THOMAS.—We have to trust to the goodwill of our friends in pushing the circulation of the *Freethinker* by getting us new readers and subscribers.

H. T. C.—Miss Vance will value your and your wife's good wishes.

H. SILVERSTEIN is "glad of an opportunity of marking, in a small way, his sense of the ability and devotion displayed by Miss Vance in the interests of our movement."

H. BOULTER says he has done well by his *Freethinker* advertisement, and wonders why tradesmen in the movement do not advertise more.

PETER MILLER.—Shall be sent as desired. Thanks for good wishes.

A. STORER.—Metchnikoff's *Nature of Man* is published by Mr. Heinemann at 12s. 6d., but there is a cheaper edition at 6s. or 7s. 6d. Winwood Reade's *Martyrdom of Man* is published by Kegan Paul & Co.

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

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

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

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

Sugar Plums.

Mr. Foote is interspersing work with holiday, or holiday with work, at a Kentish seaside place, which boasts some of the finest air and loveliest skies in England. He will be away a fortnight. During his absence the *Freethinker* will be seen through the press by Mr. Cohen, who will also, of course, be contributing more largely than usual to the paragraph department.

Miss Kough, who has done so much for Miss Vance during her late illness, having gone with her to Yarmouth, the President considers that the best thing is to declare the N. S. S. office "closed" during July. Letters on very urgent matters will be attended to as far as possible, but calls at the office will be a waste of time. Ringing the telephone bell will also be useless.

The Board of Directors of the Secular Society, Ltd., in view of the Testimonial Fund being raised for Miss Vance, who has for many years been the Society's secretary, has voted her the sum of £20 "in special recognition of past services." The Executive of the National Secular Society will vote its subscription later on. We venture to express a hope that all members and friends of the N. S. S. throughout the country, who intend to subscribe to the Fund, will do so at their very earliest convenience. We are aware that this is not the best time of the year for such efforts, but the present is the psychological moment for this one, and postponement is impossible.

"In the course of my tour in the United States on behalf of the Moral Instruction League," writes Mr. F. J. Gould, "I have visited Philadelphia. Entering Independence Hall (where the Declaration was signed in July 1776), I was pleased to observe a wreath suspended on the marble bust of Thomas Paine. The wreath had been placed there on the day preceding my visit, that is, Commemoration-day, May 30, when the memory of those soldiers who fell during

the Civil War was honored. The authorities of Girard College kindly allowed me on May 31 to give to a class of boys in the institution an ethical lesson on a non-theological basis, in the presence of the teachers; and I found the boys bright and responsive. I had but a brief time in which to inspect the place, and so I can only record a hasty impression of the central building built in the style of the Parthenon at Athens; the immense dining-room; the detached school-rooms and boarding-houses standing amid pleasant green lawns; the statue of the founder, representing a short, sturdy, benevolent-looking man; and the chamber in which his eighteenth century furniture is preserved, including busts of Voltaire and Rousseau. Fifteen hundred boys (whites only) are educated in this institution, their ages ranging from six to sixteen or thereabouts; and I am told that lads from Stephen Girard's college are frequently found in good social and business positions all over the United States. Whatever may have been the original scheme or practice, it would appear that the college is now conducted under Christian auspices of an undenominational character, the religious exercises including prayer, Bible-lessons, and hymns such as 'Stand up for Jesus,' etc. But I was informed that the exclusion of clergymen is still maintained." Girard meant, of course, that religion should be excluded, but he was not clever enough for the lawyers—or divines.

Mr. George Bernard Shaw's views on the Jewish question, with special regard to the persecution of Henri Bernstein, the dramatist, at Paris, have appeared in the *Public Ledger* and the *New York Times* lately. We make the following extract:—

"I could never understand what they call the Jewish question. I think the Jewish question everywhere is due to the Jew's business ability and honesty. If a Jew makes a bargain with you he means to keep it and means you to keep it, too. The Englishman will sign away everything when he needs money, but he does not mean to keep his promise when he makes the bargain. Of course there is no special antipathy against the Jew in England, but whatever there is simply comes from the Jews' straightforward business integrity, which infuriates the thick-headed Englishmen. I think that Shakespeare sized up the situation to a nicety in *The Merchant of Venice*. Shylock made a bargain with Antonio, kept it, and meant Antonio to keep it. Antonio, who is really a sentimental Englishman, was ready to sign away everything in order to get the money from the Jew, without the slightest intention of ever returning it. Then when the Jew wanted Antonio to fulfil his end of the contract the mob jeered and mocked him. This, I believe, is true everywhere. The Jew is intelligent, industrious, and hard-working, and when he makes a bargain he knows exactly what he is doing. Of course, the Jews have changed a great deal. The modern Jews are fond only of music. They are almost as stupid as Englishmen."

"The massacre of the Jews in Russia," Mr. Shaw adds, "were managed exactly as the massacres of the Armenians in Turkey. The Sultan gave the order in Turkey, and the Tsar gave the order in Russia." Mr. Shaw might also have added—but we will do it for him—that behind both orders was the hateful spirit of religious bigotry leading them efficacy.

We see that Mr. Shaw had a few words to say about his "God" while dealing with the Jewish question:—

"I say that Life Force is God. But the Englishman objects to this. He says Life Force is a foreigner, while God is an Englishman. That is where we disagree."

Mr. Shaw had better give it up. Now Gods will never catch on at this time of day. God-making belongs to the days of man's infancy. Still, we are glad that "G. B. S." doesn't become solemn over the matter.

We are glad to see a long and slashing letter from Mr. W. Davidson in the columns of the *Wood Green Sentinel*. Those Christians who have been supporting the exclusion of the *Freethinker* from the local Public Library have not hesitated to work up the testimony of the infamous Walton Powell to prove the immoral nature of Secular publications. A term of imprisonment removed that gentleman from the scene of his evangelistic labors, but he is evidently not without worthy successors. Even the editor of the *Sentinel* hopes that "more responsible leaders" of Christianity will write in the future, and not young men who show more zeal than discretion. We suggest to the editor that he has an easy method at hand in dealing with this class of contributors.

The West Ham Branch is arranging an Excursion to Loughton on Sunday, July 16. The fare is 9d. return from Stratford (main) G.E.R. Train leaves at 11.3 a.m. Others at intervals. Tea will be provided for those desiring to form a party. Freethinkers heartily invited to join.

Pulling Down an Idol: Louis Pasteur.

Translated from "*La Société Nouvelle*" (Mons) by Aristide Pratelle, and revised for the "*Freethinker*."

AMIDST that chaotic hurry-scurry which has been produced in modern times by the departure of the ancient gods, there are yet idols which remain undisturbed, so-called "scientific" dogmas which are very tenacious of life—outliving fetishes which are constantly opposed to the improvement of positive science. Among these old-fashioned scarecrows that mystical hands have cunningly held up to the highest stems of the tree of Science, there is one whose influence has been especially mischievous: it is the world-famous Louis Pasteur who is in question.

In our times, nobody is officially allowed to study the origins of life. It may seem that Pasteur has solved the problem, concluding that some miraculous supernatural genesis has taken place, and denying to Nature the power to bring forth organisms with the help only of its own intrinsic energy.

It was in the year 1863, in a lecture given by him in Paris, that the celebrated bacteriologist sided visibly against spontaneous genesis. In a declamatory, magniloquent style, contrasting singularly with the ordinary tone of his works, Pasteur told how he had questioned the sterilised drop of water, asking it to repeat for him the primordial genesis. And the drop of water, he said, had been struck dumb!

Unfortunately for the biogenist school, the words to which we allude contain three sophisms which deprive them of the least scientific value.

1. Before concluding spontaneous generation to be a chimera, Pasteur should have demonstrated that it never occurs among the numerous combinations which Nature offers us,—combinations whose number is infinite, and whose total knowledge is unattainable. Having met with a red-haired woman in Paris, suppose Pasteur concluded on the spot that all the women in Paris were also red-haired women!

2. In order to prove that spontaneous genesis does not exist, Pasteur should have established that a combination containing all the chemical elements which compose living plasm, in the thermic, luminous, electric, dynamic conditions favorable to the growth of organised substance, is powerless to produce the smallest mass of sarcode. In the above-mentioned words of Pasteur, the previous existence of a certain matter which is prone to ferment is not even alluded to. In it, Pasteur only thinks of a drop of water; of a sterilised drop of water! He expects from a compound of oxygen and hydrogen those synthetic phenomena which lead to the constitution of an intrinsically different compound made of nitrogen, carbon, sulphur, silicium, and so on. Indeed, is it possible to imagine a more clumsy, dishonest sophism than that?

3. Pasteur says that his sterilised drop of water contained all the nutriment necessary to feed the infinitely small beings, and that it was only deprived of their germs. Giving no proof at all of this, Pasteur takes for granted the very point—the demonstration of which would have been of the greatest importance; that is to say, the fact that sterilised water—water nearly totally deprived of its gases and salts—is chemically equivalent to non-sterilised water, and only differs from this latter because germs are absent from it. Quite the contrary. Leduc has shown that chemically pure water is *poisonous*. In the same way, the experiences made by René Quinton have proven that sea-water, the best and most efficacious reconstituent in its normal state, becomes, when sterilised, sufficiently poisonous to kill a dog weighing twenty pounds, at the dose of only 700 French grammes.

That celebrated experiment made by Pasteur, in itself, must have been very poorly conducted. Dr. Charlton Bastian sterilises tartrate solutions much more carefully than Pasteur did. After all kinds of germs have been duly destroyed in them, he

obtains by free growth various micro-organisms, bacteria, and torulæ.

It should be said that very likely Pasteur did not deceive himself very much as to the real nature of his negative experiments. In 1848 and twelve years after, in 1860, he had ascertained in the *Annales de Physique et Chimie* that yeast and milk-ferment "always appear spontaneously whenever the conditions are favorable."

Thus, the same author exhibits two contradictory intellects; one of them is shown by him up to 1860, the other appears after that date. Such a curious change does not strengthen his position as a scientific man, already so precarious in the present day, since the French "Académie des Sciences," denying to Dr. Leduc the permission to raise a discussion upon the question of spontaneous geneses, has saved that dogmatic authority from the revelations which might follow a free examination of his work.

Previously to his philosophical treachery, Pasteur had done laboratory work in a garret, with no fire to warm himself, and was refused a modest annual grant of 1,200 shillings by the President of the French Board of Education (1857). Had Pasteur died before he became the official adversary of spontaneous genesis and the devoted friend of the clerical and backward people, he would have died miserable and forgotten.

But it happened that, just in the nick of time, Pasteur affirmed that "he did not want to die in the same way as a vibrione." His endeavor to support mysticism was duly and plentifully rewarded. A vibrione does not become a senator. It does not gather a fortune in a few years. It does not die an academician, a university director, a scientific leader, a professor at the Sorbonne! It does not die in the possession of a passport in due form for a world which vibriones inhabit no longer. The Pope, that Prince of Charlatans, sent his blessing by mail to that man whose youth had been so laborious and straightforward. And the old scientist did not realise the importance of such supreme solidarity between obscurantism and his work. Instead of being horrified by this, he felt himself deeply touched and tears fell from his eyes on the pontifical letter!

In the course of the nineteenth century, being deprived of tortures and stakes, to secure its domination, Popery wanted at all cost to reign over minds with renewed rigor and intolerance. It wanted a scientific man who would be willing to become a party to its doings. It found such a man in Louis Pasteur. He was extolled to the skies. He was wrongly and systematically credited with priority in a large number of discoveries. Even his mistakes became dogmas. And the import of his creations was shamelessly falsified.

Firstly, Pasteur is not the genuine author and purveyor of the Pansperm theory, which pretends that every micro-organism is the outcome of a former germ. The priority of this questionable theory should be attributed to Béchamp. And this is true for several of the so-called discoveries which have been unduly attributed to the "great benefactor of mankind." The scientist who discovered Bacteria was Leuwenhœck. A long time before the jurassian naturalist, F. V. Raspail, had explained the parasitic origin of virulent diseases and separated the pathogenous microbes from the symbiotic microbes. The notions of poisonousness and "specificity" are said to have been introduced in Science in 1880 by Pasteur. Unfortunately for him, they had already been established in 1878 and 1879 by Tiegel, Zahn, Toussaint, and Chauveau. If the septic vibrione, the Staphylococcus, the Streptococcus, the Pneumococcus, were discovered by Pasteur, the original studies on purulent nephritis, pyæmia, abscesses and putrid anthrax were made by Klebs, Rindfleisch, Waldeyer, and Davaine. In the same way, Pasteur has no claim to priority as to the mechanism of the fermentation processes, the chemical formula of which had been given by Lavoisier nearly a hundred years before, and the biological agent of which had been described by

Cagniard-Latour: microscopic globules swarming among the scum of fermenting wine.

It is true to say that Pasteur has been the first discoverer of the fact that the process of fermentation was closely related to the special structure and to the "vital force" of the ferment-cells. Alas! Such new point of view was quite erroneous. Through drastic experiments, Büchner demonstrated that the "enzyme," the nitriferous compound which is found in the ferment, calls forth fermentation when isolated from the ferment-globules. A few years ago, Bredig showed experimentally that the metals in the colloid state produce genuine fermentations. More recently, Legati produced the fermentation of wine with the help of iron salts!

At least some will say that Pasteur discovered the anti-rabic serum and the vaccination against rabies. At first sight, Vulpian's statistics seem to confirm the Pastorian pretension that rabidness is the most easily curable of all infectious diseases. But these statistics rest upon no real foundation. In order to establish them, these so-called scientists brazenly treated persons which had been bitten by non-rabid dogs, or persons whose clothes only had been bitten; even persons who had not been touched by a single dog, rabid or non-rabid. About 16 per cent. of the bitten persons are liable to die. Such proportion does not agree with statistics giving a yearly number of 460 deaths occurring in France among rabid-stricken persons previously to the establishment of the Pastorian treatment! "Such exaggerations are dangerous," says Professor Bouchard about this in his book on infectious diseases.

F. V. and X. Raspail have written that twenty-six persons died yearly of rabies (1886). Pasteur himself soon recognised that the anti-rabic inoculation, made only one day after the person had been bitten, did not prevent death in the least. He proclaimed that he was about to modify his system and resort to the intensive method. Whilst nothing at all came from his first method, the second method hastened the end of the patient by inoculating him with a new disease—the paralytic rabies of the rabbit. And, whilst a new chorus of dithyrambic praises was heard, whilst the sound of the big drum became louder than ever, Rouiller, Leteng, Rovéillac, Née, Amédée Gérard, Goriot, and others were sacrificed by submitting themselves to a grossly empiric experiment made upon the human body without any previous trial. Professor Peter, having raised his voice, the Medical Academy became alarmed with these defeats. Then Pasteur confined himself to anodyne inoculations—to the benefit of the patients.

Is not the renown of this naturalist one of the most astonishing examples of those legends with which certain personalities have been surrounded by the official and clerical world?

Some historians admit that, in order to become falsified, idealised, and subjects of controversy, persons and events should present a certain minimum of remoteness. Here we find a legend, quite erroneous from start to finish, attaching itself contemporaneously to the life of a scientist, and continuing to outlive him. The Church, that unparalleled creator of dupes and fallacies, did not even wait till time had elapsed to magnify Pasteur to the size of a giant. Yet as a naturalist, this famous chemist is only a clay-footed giant. The lightest breeze of Reason and Freethought will shake the idol into dust, and the feet of posterity will tread upon it, and press it to the ground for ever.

ALBERT AND ALEXANDER MARY.*

Fond Mother: Charlie, do you know God's other name?
Charlie: Yes, mamma; we learnt it to-day. Harold be thy name.

* Authors of *Evolution et Transformisme* (four volumes) published by the Librairie Médicale et Scientifique, Paris.

The Apocalypse.—XV.

(Continued from p. 429.)

THE next matter that calls for notice is the view which the writer of the "Revelation" held respecting eternal punishment. This will best be gathered from the following statements of that writer:—

THE BOTTOMLESS PIT.

Rev. ix 1, 2.—There was given to an angel "the key of the bottomless pit," from which, when opened, "there went up a smoke out of the pit as the smoke of a great furnace," and "out of the smoke came forth locusts upon the earth."

Rev. xx. 1—3.—An angel bearing "the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain.....laid hold on the dragon the old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan," and having bound him "cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut it, and sealed it over him" there to remain for a thousand years.

THE LAKE OF FIRE.

Rev. xix. 20.—"And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet.....they twain were cast alive in the lake that burneth with brimstone."

Rev. xx. 10.—"And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where are also the beast and the false prophet; and they shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever."

Rev. xx. 15.—"And if any was not found written in the book of life, he was cast into the lake of fire."

Rev. xxi. 8.—"But for the fearful, and unbelieving, and abominable, and murderers, and fornicators, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, their part shall be in the lake that burneth with brimstone."

From the foregoing passages it is quite clear that the Apocalyptist believed there were two places of punishment prepared for the wicked or ungodly: the first, "the bottomless pit," an underground prison, where offenders were confined for a certain period; the second, "the lake of fire," where the inmates suffered tortures "for ever and ever." The Devil, we are told, was cast bound into the bottomless pit, where he remained for a thousand years. After being released he incited the nations to war against the saints, and, as a punishment he was "cast into the lake of fire," there to be "tormented day and night for ever and ever."

The question which now arises is: Where did the Apocalyptist get these ideas? Search through the Old Testament from Genesis to Malachi, and no such places of torment as the "Bottomless pit" and the "Lake of fire and brimstone" can be discovered. The reason for this silence is obvious: the ideas in the Apocalypse relating to eternal punishment did not arise (or take form) until after the Canon of the Old Testament had been finally closed—a fact which is conclusive as to the imaginary character of those ideas. What, for instance, are we to think of a god who had caused a "lake of fire" to be prepared as the abode of nine-tenths of the immortal beings he had created, and who never once breathed a word of its existence to any of the priests or prophets of his chosen people, with whom he had held intercourse during fifty generations, but who after seventeen centuries of silence suddenly made known to the fifty-first generation the terrible fate which awaited most of them (and all Gentile nations) throughout all future generations? This argument applies, of course, to all the New Testament teaching on this subject; but I do not propose to pursue it further here.

There is, however, one of the ancient Jewish "holy books" which contains the same crude ideas of eternal punishment as those found in the "Revelation." This is the book of Enoch, which, as we know, the writer of the Apocalypse was well acquainted with. In this "holy book"—which is generally assigned to about 50 B.C.—there are what may be regarded as the equivalents of the "bottom-

less pit" and the "lake of fire." The first of these can, I think, be identified in the following:—

Enoch xxi. 5, 6.—"From thence I passed on to another place, where I beheld a great fire blazing, in the midst of which there was a division. Columns of fire struggled together to the end of the *abyss*, and deep was their descent; but neither its measurement nor magnitude was I able to discover.....Uriel, one of the holy angels who was with me, said.....This is the prison of the angels, and here they are kept for ever."

Within the "bottomless pit" of the Apocalypse (which the R.V. calls "the abyss") we must assume fire, for we are told smoke issued from it "as the smoke of a great furnace." The following passages in Enoch give the source of the Apocalyptist's "lake of fire and brimstone":—

Enoch liii.—"I beheld a deep valley burning with fire.....To this valley they brought monarchs and the mighty. And there my eyes beheld fetters of iron which they were making.....These, the angel replied, are prepared for the host of Azazel, that they may be delivered over and adjudged to the lowest condemnation.....Michael and Gabriel, Raphael and Phanuel shall be strengthened in that day, and shall cast them into the furnace of blazing fire."

Enoch lxvi. 5—7.—"I beheld that valley in which there was great perturbation from the fluid mass of fire.....in that place there arose a strong smell of sulphur, which became mixed with the waters.....Through that valley also rivers of fire were flowing, to which those angels shall be condemned who seduced the inhabitants of the earth."

Enoch cv. 22, 23.—"The angel said, There, into that place which thou beholdest, shall be thrust the spirits of sinners and blasphemers; of those who shall do evil, and who shall pervert all which God has spoken by the mouth of the prophets.....They shall cry out and lament, and in the bottomless fire shall they burn."

The book of Enoch was written too late to find a place amongst the sacred writings in the Jewish Canon; but it was in use, all the same, among Jews and Christians of the first and second centuries, by whom it was regarded as an inspired prophetic work written by the Enoch named in Gen. v. 21—24, and, of course, true in every statement. The references in Enoch to "the host of Azazel" and to "those angels who seduced the inhabitants of the earth" take us back to the story in Genesis of the "sons of God" taking to themselves wives from "the daughters of men" (vi. 1—4). These "sons of God" are described in Enoch as angels who came upon the earth and chose wives from the women then living, begetting sons that became mighty men, etc. The leaders of this band of angels are given as Samyaza and Azazel, who with their followers were confined in the prison in the abyss until the day of Judgment, then to be bound in fetters and cast into the valley of liquid fire. This story is thus referred to by the apostle Jude:—

"And angels which kept not their own principality, but left their proper habitation, the Lord hath kept in everlasting bonds under darkness unto the judgment of the great day."

The story in Enoch is also referred to as a veritable fact in 2 Peter ii. 4. We have, therefore, two New Testament writers who firmly believed the silly statements in that book, and who took their ideas from it. Jude has also quoted a short passage from that work of fiction, and says that the author was "Enoch the seventh from Adam" (Jude 14, 15).

Furthermore, there can be no doubt that the "Hell" named in the Gospels was also derived from the book of Enoch. Many Christian apologists, however, now deny that such a place of torment can be found in those books; but this is pure perversion. To take examples from one Gospel only, what is the meaning of the following statements?—

Matt. x. 28.—"But rather fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in Gehenna."

Matt. xiii. 49, 50.—"The angels shall separate the wicked from the righteous, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Matt. xxiii. 33.—"Ye serpents, ye offspring of vipers, how shall ye escape the judgment of Gehenna?"

Matt. xxv. 41.—“Depart from me, ye cursed, into the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels.”

In the last example particular notice should be taken of the words italicised. The “eternal fire” of the Gospel was one which had been “prepared for the devil and his angels.” In no other book save that of Enoch do we find a lake of fire specially created for the punishment of fallen angels: the Gospel-writer, like Jude and Peter, undoubtedly took his ideas of eternal torment from this work of the imagination. The name “Gehenna” (translated “hell” in the Gospels) was derived from Gihon and Hinnom, two valleys just outside Jerusalem, where in Old Testament times children were offered in sacrifice (i.e., were burnt alive) to the gods of Canaan, and where in later times fires were constantly kept burning to destroy the refuse carted there from the holy city. Christian advocates now contend that the references in the Gospels are to the latter fire—a most cruel death certainly, but not to *eternal* torments. This is perfect nonsense. What, for instance, is the teaching of the parable of the Rich man and Lazarus? There it is stated that “the rich man died and was buried. And in *Hell* he lifted up his eyes, being in torments,” etc. (Luke xvi. 23). Here the word rendered “Hell” is *Hades*, the supposed abode of departed spirits; but the term employed is of no consequence: the soul or spirit of the “rich man” was, after death, in a place of torment, and, as he said, was “in anguish in this flame.”

To return to “the Gehenna of fire,” the simple explanation is, that in the book of Enoch no name is given to the valley of fire therein described; and such being the case, the appellation “Gehenna” naturally suggested itself as the most appropriate. Hence, the name Gehenna employed by the primitive Christians referred, not to the historical valley of Hinnom, but to the imaginary lake of fire described in Enoch, a fire constructed primarily for the punishment of “Azazel and his host,” or, as the Gospel-writer renders it, “prepared for the devil and his angels.”

Moreover, the binding and punishment of Satan in the “Revelation” was suggested by the following passage in Enoch:—

Enoch x. 15, 16.—“To Michael the archangel the Lord said, Go and announce his crime to Samyaza and to the other angels who are with him.....Bind them for seventy generations underneath the earth, even to the day of Judgment.....Then shall they be taken away into the lowest depths of the fire in torments; and there shall they be shut for ever.”

Samyaza and Azazel of Enoch represent the Satan of the Apocalypse, and the “seventy generations” in the underground prison of Enoch become “a thousand years” in the bottomless pit of the “Revelation.” Apart from these alterations made by the Apocalypticist, there can be no doubt whatever that the last mentioned writer took his ideas of eternal torment from the book of Enoch. ABRACADABRA.

(To be concluded.)

VAGARIES.

From a Michigan paper: “She was left a widow through the death of her husband.”

Personal in society column of an Iowa journal: “Mrs. Coulter, being confined to her bed, will not be at home this Thursday as usual.”

An Omaha paper remarks: “From evidence which they have gathered, the police believe the murder was the work of local talent.”

An English society journal reports that “The bride was charmingly though becomingly dressed.”

An Atlanta paper informs us that “Mrs. Henn has laid a cement sidewalk on Savannah-avenue.”

From the *Evanston News*: “The engagement of Miss Margaret Roesing, daughter of Mr. B. Roesing of this city, has been announced to Arthur Croxton.” Wonder how Arthur took it.

National Secular Society.

REPORT OF MONTHLY EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD ON JUNE 29.

The President, Mr. G. W. Foote, occupied the chair. There were also present:—Messrs. J. Barry, E. Bowman, C. Cohen, H. Cowell, Heaford, Miss Kough, J. T. Lloyd, A. B. Moss, J. Neat, Dr. R. T. Nichols, C. G. Quinton, E. Samuels, Miss Stanley, F. Schaller, T. J. Thurlow, F. Wood, W. Davidson, H. Dawson, J. Lazarnick, R. H. Rosetti, W. Bradford.

The minutes of the last meeting were read and confirmed. The monthly cash statement was presented and adopted.

The following officers were re-elected:—General Secretary: Miss E. M. Vance; Benevolent Fund Committee: Messrs. Leat, Samuels, Roger, and Wood; Monthly Auditors: Messrs. Leat and Samuels.

New members were received from the Parent Society and the Edmonton and Islington Branches.

The chief business of this meeting was the discussion of matters remitted from the Conference Agenda to the Executive:—

1. Resolution *re* Scholarships.—A sub-committee, consisting of Messrs. Dawson, Quinton, and Lloyd, was appointed to deal with this.
2. Resolution *re* Courses of Study in Freethought.
3. Resolution *re* Organising Unattached Freethinkers.—A sub-committee, consisting of Messrs. Cohen, Heaford, and Rosetti, was appointed to report on this.

The President reported on the progress of the Vance Testimonial, the responsibility of which he had undertaken on behalf of the Executive.

E. M. VANCE, *General Secretary.*

THE HUMAN SOUL.

The *physiological* argument shows that the human soul is not an independent, immaterial substance, but, like the soul of all the higher animals, merely a collective title for the sum-total of man's cerebral functions; and these are just as much determined by physical and chemical processes as any of the other vital functions, and just as amenable to the law of substance. The *histological* argument is based on the extremely microscopic structure of the brain; it shows us the true “elementary organs of the soul” in the ganglionic cells. The *experimental* argument proves that the various functions of the soul are bound up with certain special parts of the brain, and cannot be exercised unless these are in a normal condition; if the areas are destroyed, their function is extinguished; and this is especially applicable to the “organs of thought,” the four central instruments of mental activity. The *pathological* argument is the complement of the physiological; when certain parts of the brain (the centres of speech, sight, hearing, etc.) are destroyed by sickness, their activity (speech, vision, hearing, etc.) disappears; in this way nature itself makes the decisive physiological experiments. The *ontogenetic* arguments puts forward the facts of the development of the soul in the individual; we see how the child-soul gradually unfolds its various powers; the youth presents them in full bloom, the mature man shows their ripe fruit; in old-age we see the gradual decay of the psychical powers, corresponding to the senile degeneration of the brain. The *phylogenetic* argument derives its strength from palæontology, and the comparative anatomy and physiology of the brain; co-operating with and completing each other, these sciences prove to the hilt that the human brain (and, consequently, its function—the soul) has been evolved step by step from that of the mammal, and, still further back, from that of the lower vertebrate.—*Haeckel, “Riddle of the Universe.”*

Unfortunately, the Christian reformation, in its frantic extravagance seeking to glorify *purity* at the cost of everything else, thirsting to extirpate the bloodiness, the insolence and tyranny of corrupt Polytheism, sadly neglected the grand old heathen virtues of courage in war, energy, discipline, civic patriotism, and all the great gifts of a Pericles, an Epaminondas, of Scipio, Julius, Trajan, and M. Aurelius. Men like these, with all their faults, were far truer saints, far nearer to the Religion of Humanity than the wretched monks of Mount Athos or the Apennines, who lived a life of useless self-torture and babbled about Virginitv and Poverty as the highest manifestations of human virtue.—*Frederic Harrison.*

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 and 6.15, C. Cohen, Lectures.

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): Arthur B. Moss, 3.15, "Darwin Against Moses"; 6, "The Religion of the Future."

EDMONTON BRANCH N. S. S. (The Green): 7, W. J. Ramsey, "Where Angels Dwell."

FINSBURY PARK: 11.30, E. Burke, "Reason and Superstition."

ISLINGTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Highbury Corner): 12 noon, Ivan Paperno and Walter Bradford Newington Green: 7.30, Ivan Paperno, a Lecture. Highbury Corner: Wednesday, at 8, Ivan Paperno, a Lecture.

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (Ridley-road): 11.30, J. Marshall, "Christ's."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Parliament Hill): 3.30, E. Burke, "Reason and Superstition."

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

WOOD GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Jolly Butchers Hill, opposite Public Library): 7, Mr. Davidson, "The Church and Slavery."

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

RHONDDA BRANCH N. S. S. (Gwalia Restaurant, Tonypanyd): 3, S. Holman, "Is the Bible True?"

OUTDOOR.

BURNLEY (Market Square): Joseph A. E. Bates, Thursday, July 6, at 8, "From Moneron to Mammal"; Friday, at 8, Man in the Making."

HUDDERSFIELD BRANCH N. S. S. (Market Cross): 8.45, Geo. T. Whitehead, "Clerical Lament." Saturday, at 8, Geo. T. Whitehead, "Christ and Cantuar."

PRESTON (Town Hall Square): Joseph A. E. Bates—Sunday, at 7, "Kingcraft—Past and Present" (with some reference to the Coronation Comedy); Monday, at 8, "Some Chapters from Christian History"; Tuesday, at 8, "Ethical and Economic Objections to the Salvation Army." Three Lectures on Evolution:—Wednesday, at 8, I.—"The Birth of Worlds"; Thursday, at 8, II.—"Origin and Development of Life-Forms" Friday, at 8, III.—"Lamur to Man."

LAINDON, ESSEX (opposite Luff's Hairdressing Saloon): Saturday, July 8, at 7, R. H. Rosetti, "Hell."

BUSINESS CARDS.

Short advertisements are inserted under this heading at the rate of 2s. per half inch and 3s. 6d. per inch. No advertisement under this heading can be less than 2s. or extend beyond one inch. Special terms for several continuous insertions.

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Secretary—MISS E. M. VANCE.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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