

THE Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

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PRICE TWOPENCE

The heavens declare the glory of Kepler, Galileo, and Newton.—AUGUSTE COMTE.

The Liberty of the Press.

THE quarrel between the *English Review* and the *Spectator* seems rather a storm in a teapot—except so far as it is a bit of mutual advertising. The former publishes an article dealing with *morals*—a topic which drives the average Britisher mad, or brings out half the madness latent in his peculiar composition, the other half being evoked by *religion*. The latter, being written and read by average Britishers, starts raving, and suggests that such discussions should be stopped by the police. Not a week passes but some organ of the average Britisher suggests that the *Freethinker* ought to be suppressed. That we do not go round asking more or less eminent persons to sign a solemn document to the effect that we ought to be allowed to live. We will take care of that ourselves. The *English Review*, however, treats such matters more seriously. It gets a number of literary gentlemen, from Thomas Hardy (a great name, to which we bow) down to mere nobodies, to sign a solemn document in favor of the freedom of the press. Well, there is no harm in that; only it is somewhat superfluous. The freedom of the press is an axiom with educated and thinking people. We do not see that it is specially endangered by anything in the *Spectator*. When it really is endangered most of the gentlemen who signed that round robin will be as mute as fishes and as invisible as the all-surrounding air. It takes more than a pen and ink and a piece of paper to do even a little bit of fighting for liberty. Some heroes are very loud when there is no danger in sight; they display the most irrefragable valor. But when the trumpets blow, and the rifles crack, and the guns roar, and the glint of cold steel is in the air, they find a hundred good reasons for going home. They are the only sons of widowed mothers, or they say like the man in the comic song "My wife won't let me." We have been in many battles for freedom ourselves, and we know the sort of people to expect to find in it, and the sort of people to expect to find out of it.

The literary gentlemen—and the one lady, Mrs. Patrick Campbell—who sign this round-robin probably left the drafting of it entirely to the editor of the *English Review*; otherwise we should have to tell them all that they have not the slightest idea of how the freedom of the press was won. They state, or are made to state, that some of them were shocked by the article which caused all the rumpus, just as others are shocked by some of the opinions expressed in the *Spectator*. Now this is a tactical blunder to begin with. It is philistinism to talk about being "shocked" by opinions of any kind. The mere use of such a foolish and inappropriate word gives the enemies of freedom an immense advantage. They say that the opinions they seek to put down by force—for law is force, and nothing else—are admitted to be "shocking"—they pass on rapidly from "shocking" to "indecent" and "obscene" (to say nothing of "blasphemous") until the judge (for certain) and the jury (most probably) are in the requisite con-

dition of offended virtue to provide the verdict of "guilty," and the sentence of suitable severity; and the poor pioneer of debate is soon trying to draw breath in his diminutive cubicle in Black Maria, on his way to the months or years of entertainment provided for him in one of His Majesty's hotels.

Besides, the question of who is, and who is not, shocked by the opinions which are attacked at first by volunteer and afterwards by professional friends of "public morality," does not logically arise. To introduce it, or allow it to be introduced, is to confuse the real issue,—which is not whether an opinion is true or false, sound or unsound, but whether the man who holds it has a right to be heard. If you help him to defend his right to be heard, let it be without needless and injurious reservations. *You* are not on trial; *he* is. What is attacked is what has to be defended—that, and nothing more; and that is simply the right of free speech,—unless he uses language which has nothing to do with the right of free speech—in which case he should be prosecuted for his language without any reference whatever to his opinions.

But these observations are, after all, subsidiary. What we have to show is that this round robin in favor of freedom expresses a false and ridiculous view of how freedom has been won—and how it will always have to be defended. Admitting that the article-writer's opinions may be shocking, to some people, the protest continues:—

"But its suppression can be justified only on arguments which would equally justify the suppression of every organ of advanced or reactionary thought in Europe, and could easily be pushed for party or sectarian purposes to the destruction of the liberty of the Press. Under these circumstances, without in any way committing ourselves as to the merits of the two journals, or the validity of the views with which they are identified, we feel bound to protest against the attempt of the *Spectator* to annul the compact of intolerance upon which the maintenance of the highest literature and the best journalism depends for its very existence."

The first of these two sentences is not original; it is, indeed, a commonplace; it is a variant of the social axiom that no man can have a greater right to silence his neighbor than his neighbor has to silence him. The second sentence has a certain originality—in falsehood and folly. The protesters treat toleration as a working compromise between the spokesmen of various causes,—something like a practical agreement on certain matters between the front benches in the House of Commons. They speak of the "compact of tolerance"—which is historically on a par with Rousseau's "social contract." That social contract never existed, and that compact of tolerance never existed either. Liberty was not won as the sensible man's line of least resistance amongst rival dogmatisms. It was always won by a minority against a majority; and the minority was always very small at first, and the majority overwhelming. Sometimes the minority comprised but one man. He had a conviction, he insisted on uttering it, he would not be silenced. It is such men only who make the road of freedom that others travel. "What a nice easy road this is!" the latter cry. Yes, but where you find it the nicest and easiest the rock was softened by the blood of heroes.

Milton's *Areopagitica* is splendid; it has passages that cannot be read without a quickened pulse and a throbbing brow; but it was not a defence of a compact, it was a plea for a mental and moral right, which might be overridden but could never be alienated. Mill's *Liberty* is a noble plea for free speech,—and he also defended it on grounds of personal right as well as social utility. Mill knew as little of that "compact" as Milton did. Yet the grandest argument for toleration would be of little avail without its practical application by the born fighters, who stand up serenely and take a thousand swords upon their own. If a warrior of this kind appears, and is not cut off untimely, he breaks down all opposition by his resolute valor, and opens a new road for the feet of free men. It was not the writings of Godwin, Bentham, Byron, Shelley, and Mill that actually secured the freedom of the press in England. They helped by lending inspiration to the soldiers of freedom in the storm and stress of their mighty struggle. But the inspiration would have been lost, like seed falling on stony ground, without the daring minds of the men who offered liberty the tribute of their hearts' blood.

Liberty of the press is not a "compact" of little men, it is a conquest of heroes.

It was chiefly in the names of religion and morality that reaction, with the aid of the public authorities, carried on the war against liberty of the press (and platform) in the nineteenth century. Cobbett and Hunt were prosecuted and imprisoned on political pretences, but the Society for the Suppression of Vice (or the Vice Society, as Cobbett used to call it) attacked advanced men and movements on pretences of "blasphemy" and "obscenity." The blasphemy laws were applied in the most savage manner. Sentences of three years' imprisonment were common. Richard Carlile spent altogether nine years and seven months in English gaols, mainly for publishing the works of Thomas Paine; when he was in prison his brave family took up his task and went to prison one by one after him; his shopmen confronted the same danger and suffered the same fate; and when they were all disposed of volunteers from outside sprang into the breach. Never for a moment was the flag lowered. Brave women helped bold men to keep it flying. More pretentious movements have attracted the attention, and won the praise, of historians who have eyes for the grandiose rather than the essential; but, in point of fact, the flag thus gallantly defended was the real centre of the fight for English freedom in that generation.

Taylor, Hetherington, Watson, Southwell, Pater-son, Holyoake, Matilda Roalfe, and others, carried on the battle after Carlile, and at last the great Charles Bradlaugh appeared upon the scene. His battles and exploits are better known, because they are more recent, and because he fought and defeated the House of Commons itself in the great constitutional struggle which must live as long as English history.

What would the least of these valiant fighters have thought of the *English Review's* complaining loudly that the *Spectator* had charged it with "dumping garbage upon the nation's doorstep"? This sort of compliment is perennial. Every Free-thought editor, every Free-thought orator, every Free-thought leader has dealt in "garbage." The enemies of Free-thought said so—and that settled it. Besides, the word is a beautiful one for the purpose. "Garbage," when it is not visible (and worse) on a dustbin or a dunghill, is an indefinable metaphor, and may mean almost anything. It is just as elastic as the word "indecent," which covers a vast variety of offences, from personal exposure and shocking behavior to females down to blowing your nose too loudly and eating peas with a knife.

We advise the *English Review* to possess its soul a little more in patience. Calling names has always been one of the weapons of orthodoxy. If their object smiles at them they lose their force. Maintain that attitude, and your enemies' insults (to

borrow Guizot's fine phrase) do not rise to the level of your disdain.

We also advise the editor of the *English Review*, and the signatories to his round robin, to make themselves acquainted with the real history of the fight for the freedom of the press in England. They will then perceive that tolerance is no "compact" between "respectable" authors and journalists, that it was won by the unsubduable courage of the "desperate" and "disreputable." They might also perceive that the battle for the liberty of the press is still being carried on every week—in the *Free-thinker*.

G. W. FOOTE.

Atheism and Human Nature.

I AM in despair. For many years—ever since I was a mere youth—I have been convinced that man could get along well enough without religion, and that if he bade a lasting good-bye to all his gods and ghosts and heavens and hells he would not be a penny the worse, but would probably be a great deal better off. I have even labored under the impression that I could detect in as much of human history as I have been able to survey the demoralising influence of religious beliefs, and therefore assumed that without their presence progress would be so much easier and more certain. And now I learn from a correspondent who is, he says, a regular reader of the *Freethinker*, although he "abhors" its teachings, that I am quite in error, and that all my labor is in vain. Religion, I am told, is so characteristic a feature of human nature that we cannot conceive man without it. It is found in the lowest as well as in the highest. Do what we will, we cannot destroy it. Atheism does not, and cannot, meet the demands of human nature—and so on, over six closely-written pages, penned with that air of assurance so characteristic of the humility developed by religious training. Therefore I am in despair; for what is the use of trying to achieve the unachievable, or seeking to destroy the indestructible?

There are only two gleams of light discernible in a darkened sky. An indestructible thing does not require protection. If a society were to be formed to-morrow for the destruction of sunlight, or for the annihilation of the atmosphere, I hardly think the rest of the people would band themselves together to protect these things. They would be content to play the part of amused spectators. Yet this is precisely what religious people do in defence of religion. They issue circulars, raise subscriptions, and band themselves to protect religion—as they openly say—from destruction. It is perfectly true that religion is found among the lowest as well as with the highest, but it is certainly stronger with the lower races of mankind than it is with the higher ones. In the first instance it exists as a practically unquestioned fact; in the latter case as a highly questionable theory. Besides, I fancy that religious people do not really mean that religion is indestructible. What they wish to convey is their belief that the destruction of religion is undesirable. And that is a very different thing. It is no more than the affirmation of the speaker or writer. Life is undesirable without religion. Well, the same thing is said concerning whisky, horse-racing, and a thousand other things that a vast number of people manage to get on very well without.

After all, some of us manage to do without religion. And this "some" is not really an inconsiderable number. In France about six millions of people have officially written themselves down as without religion. And in England as many would subscribe themselves as being also without religion if the average Englishman was not such a moral coward and took so little pride in his opinions. And the proof that those who are without religion are not conspicuous for infirmity of mind or badness of conduct is that the religious man does not know who is

an unbeliever unless he is informed of the fact. In every respect he is like unto his fellow-men—sometimes more so. And this is an aspect of the situation that religious people have never really faced. They are much given to telling the Atheist that his difficulty is to explain the presence of religion in the world—which is really not the case, for we *know* how religion came, and we *know* how it goes. The real problem is for the religious man to explain why there should be so many people without religion, and why they should be so cheerful and so normal in its absence. The religious man is no problem to the Atheist; it is the Atheist who is a standing enigma to the religionist.

Sometimes the religionist fancies he has explained this problem when he claims to possess certain "faculties" which in the Atheist are either atrophied or absent or undeveloped. But he forgets the factors that constitute the problem before him. Most Atheists have at one time of their life been religious. They have been where the religious man is; he has not been where they now are. It is not a case with the Atheist of the color-blind man dictating the nature of chromatics to the man of normal vision—as he so kindly assures us is the fact. It is rather the case of the confirmed invalid explaining the nature of health to the strong man. When the Atheist is fronted by the religionist, the latter does not present a puzzling phenomenon, only a saddening one. He glances him over, recognises the symptoms, and is full of pity for his condition. "Poor devil," he says, "so you have got the complaint, too! Well, I know what it is; I have had it myself, and I sincerely hope that one day you will get over it as I have done." And out of sheer kindness he proffers the prescription that he found so beneficial during his own ailment. In some cases the prescription is taken, and followed with beneficial results. In other cases the sufferers meet together and pass notes commiserating those who are free from the disease—like the inmates of a lunatic asylum agreeing that the people outside are all insane.

It will not do for the religionist to retort that when the Atheist got rid of his religion he allowed certain faculties to fall into disuse, and is now reaping the consequences. All the powers a man possesses while he is religious he possesses and exercises while he is an Atheist. Nothing is annihilated, things are merely put to another and a better use. Really there are no religious feelings, there are only feelings that are used for religious ends. There are religious *beliefs*, but there are no more religious feelings than there are geological feelings or astronomical feelings. When people talk about religious love or religious love, they are only talking of human love and fear applied to religious ends. When they speak of the desire for intercourse with God or Jesus, they are illustrating man's desire for intercourse with his fellow-man. In these, and in other cases, the religious man is not demonstrating the possession of something of which the Atheist is deficient. He is only illustrating the possession by both of the same qualities, although differently developed and differently applied.

So when the Atheist has got rid of his religion, he does not find himself saddled with feelings that have nothing on which to expend themselves, nor does he find himself lacking in anything that is possessed by his religious neighbor. It is simply that, instead of his feelings taking a religious turn, they assume a social direction. He sees that man's real life is with his fellow-men, and that the courage, loyalty, love, honesty, and all the other human qualities that priests and theologians have associated with God have their only intelligible relation to man. He, so to speak, discovers himself. For the first time he begins to form an intelligent appreciation of his own nature and the nature of his fellows. And that is one of the reasons why periods of social advancement are always periods of a weakening of religious conviction. One provides the condition for the other.

The question, then, of whether Atheism can or cannot meet the demands of human nature altogether depends upon what we take these demands to be. A religious person contemplating human nature from the standpoint of religion, naturally concludes that it cannot. But lemonade, from the point of view of the whisky-drinker; whisky, from the standpoint of the teetotaler; or religion, from the standpoint of the Atheist, are all equally unsatisfactory. If a man who already believes in a God and a Devil, a heaven and a hell, a soul and a future life, looks to Atheism to satisfy *his* demands, he will be disappointed. He must, if he can, take the world from the Atheist's point of view, and then see how the problem looks. For to the Atheist all these beliefs are artificial—not artificial in the sense of not being natural under the conditions of their development, but in the sense of their not corresponding with any known reality, and in the sense of being kept alive by the operation of interested instruction and perpetuated ignorance. Atheism does not claim to satisfy every demand that a disordered human nature may care to make on it; all it claims is that the Atheistic position shuts out nothing that is truthful, beautiful, or useful, and leaves room for the play of every human quality of any value.

What is it that Atheism does not allow for? It certainly does not deny the reality or value of any of the virtues. One of the main counts against religion is that it in reality prevents their free expression and development. Neither does it detract from the strength or dignity of human endeavor. This charge more properly lies against religion. The Atheist at least stands for the possibility of human action and improvement apart from the countenance of assumed supernatural beings, and for the value of human nature in virtue of its own innate strength. And whether this be a rational or an irrational view, it is certainly giving human nature credit for more real dignity than any religion has yet done. It is one of the curiosities of theological controversy that those whose whole theory is a belittling of human nature, as such, should oppose other theories because they detract from the dignity of man.

What is the matter with my correspondent is that he is obsessed with the vulgar prejudice that all human goodness belongs to religion, and in a peculiar sense to Christianity. Human qualities are neither religious nor anti-religious; they are simply human. Whether they are directed for the maintenance or destruction of religion is a matter of circumstances. Theists often say that one cannot build life upon a mere negation. I believe in God and I do not believe in God are equally barren statements in themselves. The merit or demerit of either lies in the attitude it involves towards life. What the belief in God involves is seen in some of the blackest pages that history records. And while the mere disbelief in Deity may not seem much in itself, it does radically alter one's attitude towards the more important problems of life. Proposals are tested by the likelihood of their ministering to human welfare, and not by their conformity with outworn theories. Life is shorn of its gratuitous mysteries, and the human mind is freed from the cramping influence of creeds of which even their defenders are partly ashamed. And not the least of the beneficial results of the Atheistic position is the confident feeling that the human energy and intelligence which has brought the race from savagery to civilisation may safely be trusted to carry it still further.

C. COHEN.

Facts versus Theories.

THE Rev. Dr. Lyman Abbott is an exceedingly well-known American divine, whose chief distinction is, however, that he became Henry Ward Beecher's successor at Plymouth Church, and also as editor of the *Christian Union*, now known as the *Outlook*. It is no secret that, towards the end of his life, Beecher

was almost a Freethinker, an ardent disciple of Herbert Spencer, and, consequently, a legitimate object of suspicion, hatred, and persecution all over the English speaking world. Dr. Abbott is no longer minister of Plymouth Church; but he still edits Beecher's paper, and stands out conspicuously as a representative, though a somewhat ambiguous one, of what is getting to be known as "Liberal" Christianity. In the *Christian World Pulpit* for July 12, there is a sermon of his on "What We Know in the Realm of Religion," and it may not be uninteresting to examine some of the items of knowledge of which he claims to be in possession. He takes pride in the fact that "temperamentally" he is a Sceptic, or that he has never been able to believe things on authority. At ten years of age, he began to study theology, and continued to do so for about seven years, at the end of which time he found himself "no nearer certitude than at the beginning." Then he gave the process up, and resolved to begin with the things he did know. He learned that all the good people with whom he came into contact were described as being like Christ, and it dawned upon him that the noblest thing in life was to be like Christ. He went to a Presbyterian minister and said, "I do not understand theology, but I want to be like Christ." His reverence ingenuously answered, "I do not understand the theology very well myself. If you want to be a Christlike man, that is all we want of you." Later, under Beecher's influence, he spent some time in studying the life of Christ, and eventually proceeded to consider the Epistles. Now, he adds, "I have been for nearly or quite sixty years the follower of one man, and I might almost say the interpreter of one book."

Very well; but as the outcome of all those mental processes, what is it that Dr. Abbott positively knows in the realm of religion? His answer is woefully disappointing. He says:—

"First of all we know that goodness is better than wickedness, virtue is better than vice, uprightness is better than crookedness; no matter where the virtue may lead, no matter where the crookedness may lead."

But, surely, that knowledge has been the common property of mankind from prehistoric times. Confucius Buddha, and innumerable other great men taught it with unmistakable clearness and inescapable emphasis long before the world ever heard of Christ. That knowledge is the fruit of social experience, and of nothing else; and Christianity has acted only as a check upon its progressive cultivation. By stereotyping morality the Church has sapped its very life. The second thing we know, according to Dr. Abbott, is that Free Will is a reality. With all due deference, we venture to give that statement a flat contradiction. Free Will is not a thing known, but a philosophical theory as to man's exact relationship to his own nature and the world around him. Many thinkers reject Free Will, and advocate either Fatalism or Determinism. The talk about man not being a machine is mere bosh. Of course, man is not a machine in the sense of having been constructed for a special purpose by intelligent hands; but he may be a machine in the sense that he is under the universal law of causation.

Dr. Abbott heaps contempt upon Hume because he "tells us that no man is good enough to deserve more than a supper, and no man bad enough to deserve more than a sound drubbing." What on earth is wrong with that saying? When Miss Ellen Terry visited Sir Henry Irving shortly before he died, she asked him, "Well, and what have you got out of life?" The famous actor replied, "Perhaps an occasional glass of wine and a pipe." Dr. Abbott imagines that Abraham Lincoln deserves something better than a good supper, and the slayer of womanhood something more than a sound drubbing. What the reverend gentleman seems to forget is that Lincoln did only what he felt to be his duty, that the "white slave" trader merely obeys his strongest motive, and that in neither case is anything beyond "a good supper," or "a sound drubbing" within the range of possibility. Reward and punishment are

poor, mean things at best; but what are we going to substitute for them? To say that man is not a machine is to propound a theory, not to state a known fact, about him.

The complete humanity, or sinless perfection, or supremacy of Jesus is another theory framed by theologians. When will the theologians honestly face the fact that of Jesus the man history has preserved no record at all? The actor in the four Gospels is invariably represented as something more than man. All his supposed deeds are miraculous, and all his sayings are absolutely authoritative. Obedience to him is the sole condition of participation in the kingdom of heaven. But be the character depicted human or divine, it is by no means perfect. Jesus said, "Love your enemies," and cursed his own in shuddering terms. He said, "Resist not evil," and asked for swords. If only a man, he was the most objectionably conceited one that ever trod the earth. As a man he was a screaming contradiction in terms, and as a God-man a stupendous failure, and, therefore, a fraud.

Ignoring simple facts, Dr. Abbott indulges in the wildest extravagances. While confessing that he does not know of what substance either God the Father or Jesus Christ is, he declares that Jesus Christ is the realisation of his ideal of Divinity. And here comes the rant of the fanatic:—

"When I have given my imagination wings, when I have read poetry and prophecy and sacred books, and tried to picture to myself the supremest creature my imagination can create, it fades into darkness, as the stars fade before the rising sun, by the side of this real character that lived and loved, and suffered and died."

It is sublimely immaterial to this divine whether or not his idealised character was virgin-born, rose from the dead, made water into wine, or fed five thousands with two loaves and five little fishes, such trivialities being of no account whatever, because he is deeply convinced that if we take all that away, still Jesus "stands the one transcendent figure toward whom the world has been steadily growing, and whom the world has not yet overtaken even in his teachings." A man who gives way to such intemperance of speech cannot be expected to pay facts the compliment even of seriously looking at them. His poetical imagination cannot condescend to trouble itself about such dry, dull things as facts. And yet facts are proverbially stubborn and clamor for a hearing. Let us listen to what a few of them say. Jesus pronounced a benediction upon poverty, saying, "Blessed are ye poor"; and poverty was never so heavy and grinding a curse as it is to-day. There is evermore a crowd of hungry and shivering men and women on the Thames Embankment who are the very opposite of blessed, one of whom, appearing as a witness at the inquest on the body of a comrade who had lost heart and jumped into the river, testified that, being out of work, he had not tasted food for four days. What an eloquent commentary on "Blessed are ye poor." Jesus said, "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth"; and the earth was never more fully held by the strong and bold than it is at this moment. "Christ marches at the head of the procession," exclaims Dr. Abbott. Does he? Which and where is the procession? We are pointed to the Hague Tribunal; but everybody knows that the Hague Tribunal is as impotent as the Irish elk or the woolly rhinoceros of the stone-age. In every country in Europe the Army and the Navy are supreme, and they dominated everything in connection with the recent coronation of King George V. "Jesus' way is triumphing," cries the preacher, and, in amazement, we ask, Where? The only way that is triumphing is the beautiful and natural one of science. It is science which is discovering that what theology calls sin and the State calls crime is in reality but disease in need of medicinal treatment. It is science that is carefully laying the foundation stones of the coming social structure, and it is science that is explaining the true basis of the education that is destined to redeem the world. Christianity concerns itself

almost exclusively about a realm concerning which nothing is known, and speaks of forces which have never yet been in operation, at least on this globe.

The most amusing things in Dr. Abbott's eloquent sermon are its admissions. It admits the truth of evolution, it admits the fallibility of the Bible, it admits the mystery that enshrouds the working out of the alleged beneficent purposes of heaven, it admits the utter worthlessness of speculative theology; and yet, in face of these generous admissions, it affirms that this imperfect Universe is under the direction of a perfect Deity, and that our vile and sinful human nature is the product of an all-good and all-loving Heavenly Father, who is willing to assist his children to render perfect his own damaged work. What sheer cant. Without its vague theology, cleansed from its illogical mysticism, however, Dr. Abbott's ethical teaching would be wholly acceptable to Secularists. Every now and then he seems to forget all about the spiritual world, and to fix his attention upon the rights and duties of this; but all of a sudden there occurs a fresh invasion of theology. He quotes Matthew Arnold's historic utterance, "There is a power not ourselves that makes for righteousness," forgetting that this saying, if true, must be matched with another, namely, "There is a power not ourselves that makes for wickedness," in which case we ourselves are miserable nonentities that make for nothing. Such expressions are, of course, purely theoretical, the fact being that whatever we ourselves do not, directly or indirectly, make for, never comes to pass. Indeed, in giving us permission to call the "power not ourselves that makes for righteousness" "the Spirit of Humanity," he virtually surrenders his theory in favor of our fact, because, surely, "the Spirit of Humanity," however acquired, or evolved, is its own inalienable property.

J. T. LLOYD.

Profession and Practice.

It has been well said that vast numbers of people are prepared to accept a man at his own valuation. And in religious circles the estimation of a man is frequently arrived at by the impression produced by his words. If he can preach eloquently, touchingly, impressively; if he can pray fervently and unctuously—many of those who come in contact with him will, without further evidence, put him down as a worthy, excellent creature, whose utterances have a true "spiritual" ring, and who is worthy of all confidence and imitation.

In one of his books, *Life on the Mississippi*, Mark Twain describes the leader of a gang of highway robbers who could preach the most soul-stirring sermons, the tears running down his cheeks while he made the most impassioned appeals to his hearers. From the pulpit he would go forth to rob and murder lonely travellers—disembowelling them and throwing their remains into a river or lake.

There is all the difference between *saying* and *doing*. Bunyan says, in the *Pilgrim's Progress*, by the mouth of Christian, addressing Faithful: "The soul of religion is the practick part: Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." Now, if we survey Christendom nearly three hundred years after the time of Bunyan, what shall we say? Matthew Arnold, in a passage in *Literature and Dogma*, inveighing against the verbosity of the apologists for religion, exclaimed, quoting Homer: "Words, words, words, which tell either this way or that way!" If the soul of religion be the "practick part," we must conclude from our observation of the state of things to-day that the soul of religion is very sickly—sick unto death.

In an earlier passage of Bunyan's great book, *Christian*, referring in his dialogue with Faithful to

a professing Christian called Talkative, speaks of him thus:—

"Thus say the common people that know him, A Saint abroad and a Devil at home. His poor family find it so; he is such a churl, such a railer at and so unreasonable with his servants, that they neither know how to do for or speak to him. [*Do for is good.*] Men that have any dealings with him say 'tis better to deal with a Turk than with him; far fairer dealing they shall have at their hands. This Talkative (if it be possible) will go beyond them, defraud, beguile, and over-reach them. Besides, he brings up his sons to follow his steps; and if he findeth in any of them a foolish timorousness (for so he calls the first appearance of a tender conscience) he calls them fools and blockheads, and by no means will employ them in much or speak to their commendations before others."

And, in converse with Talkative at a later stage, Faithful observes:—

"A man may cry out against sin of policy; but he cannot abhor it but by virtue of a godly antipathy against it: I have heard many cry out against sin in the pulpit who can yet abide it well enough in the heart, house, and conversation."

Religionists appear to claim—it is an ignorant and arrogant claim—that they are the only people who have "tender consciences," enlightened and discerning consciences, to enable them to judge accurately what is right and what is wrong. Bunyan's teaching was a curious medley of common sense, sound practical ethics, and a superstitious belief in the supernatural. Bunyan was at once a mystic and a teacher of practical good. His emotions had been stirred by the impressions of the supernatural which were so prevalent in his age. Impressionable, nervous, imaginative, and a dreamer, he was obsessed by the solemn and denunciatory words of the Bible read in the midst of fierce and brutal deeds and tragic events. As a well-known writer and a lover of the *Pilgrim's Progress*, Robert Blatchford, has said:—

"It was because of his low truth, his scanty culture, his impressionable and imaginative nature, his life of warfare, persecution, and imprisonment, and because of the dread shadow of the gloomy and fearful Calvinistic faith which fell across his path that his own pilgrimage was one of sins magnified through mists of terror, of self-tortures, despondency, doubts, backslidings, of trials, of perils and frantic wrestlings with the Devil, and his own spirit of valiant endurance and stubborn endeavor, and of final victory and peace in faith."

Facta non verba. A certain man had two sons whom he sent to work in his vineyard. One said, "I go, sir"; but went not. The other said, "I will not"; but afterwards repented and went. Which of these did the will of his father?

Christian people seem to imagine that those wicked infidels can find no truth, no good teaching in the Bible. Without discussing the origin or source of such teaching as that of the two sons sent to work in the vineyard, let it be said that no one is more appreciative of true and wise teaching, wherever it is to be found, than the Atheist. But are modern Christians prepared to throw away what they have always called the great verities of their faith and pin their faith exclusively to the ethical teaching of the New Testament? What of the immaculate conception and birth of Christ, his atoning death, resurrection, and ascension? Is it not strange that the insistence on these "great verities" is so weak to-day, and that Christians parade with so much eloquence the purely ethical teaching of the New Testament? No, it is not strange. Superstition is dying—hard, it may be; but still dying, and the poor Christian is fain to hang on the precepts of the Sermon on the Mount, many of which, be it noted, were taught before the time of Christ.

The fact is, our modern religious systems have become entirely formal, and are now generally regarded as buttresses or bulwarks of great national interests and institutions. Whatever we may hear from the "Free" Churches of desires for change and reform, let us remember that it is "doing" that counts, not "saying." And let us also bear in mind that all the Churches, as they reverence and honor

kings and rulers and national corporations and institutions (for have not they, as they are, been ordained of God?) also fear and worship the God who so ordained these things.

Accordingly, no religious profession or belief held by any person is any guarantee that that person is a good and useful member of society, or that he is doing beneficent service to his fellow-men. A good conscience is not obtained by unfounded belief in persons whom we have never seen, and of whose existence we have no knowledge. There was love in the world before religion. There will be love after it has gone. The religious systems that Christ attacked in his day are strikingly similar to those of the twentieth century. *Laissez faire* is now evidently the doctrine of the mass of Christians.

Men may profess and talk till they are black in the face. They may preach and pray till they are hoarse; but it is only their lives and actions that can determine whether they are living for the good of humanity and thus reveal their character. And the only real impulse, the only genuine motive power to bring about a better state of things is man's love for his fellow-men. That regard *must* prompt service, self-denying service. Practice is what counts, not profession — *facta non verba*. And knowledge of, and obedience to, the laws of nature can teach men wisdom.

SIMPLE SANDY.

Acid Drops.

The *Catholic Herald* calls Haeckel "a monistic tub-thumper." Christian manners! Calling names, however, is all the Catholics can do to Haeckel now. Two hundred years ago they would have murdered him. So the great Monist can afford to smile.

The Head Constable of Liverpool refers in his annual report to mixed marriages between the Chinese of the city and whites. He says:—

"Unfortunately, part of the lure of the Chinaman consists in the notorious fact that he does not get drunk and does not beat his women, which is more than can be said of many a native suitor. Harem life, or being kept in idleness and luxury, is no doubt, more attractive than the life of a squaw, kept as a household drudge, and rewarded with black eyes, while Christian home life, as a contrast and antidote to both these states, is rapidly losing its influence in all grades of life."

We do not know what the Liverpool Head Constable means by "Christian home life"; there is really no such thing. What does appear from his comment is that Christian people might be better for a little of the Chinese home life. Only it would obviously not do to say so plainly.

According to the *L. M. S. Chronicle* (Canton), the people of Canton, China, have cleared out the curse of gambling, despite the fact that half the revenue of the province came from this source. We take the news with all reservation, but, if true, it is an act that no Christian community would emulate. There is not a Christian community in existence that would suppress anything from which it derived half its revenue. Some pious reason would certainly be found for its continuance. If the news is true, the intention of the Chinese is good, at any rate. And one wonders at the impudence of the missionaries who make this display of moral enthusiasm the basis of an appeal for support in order to turn the Cantonese into Christians. And we doubt if there is a Christian being who could detect the humor and the satire in such an appeal.

What Matthew Arnold said of the English middle classes might be said of all English classes: they are inaccessible to ideas. Can anybody imagine an English town doing honor to a French philosopher who lived in it for some time about forty years ago? Yet the town of Avignon, where John Stuart Mill's wife died and was buried, and the place of his own lonely residence until he shared her eternal rest, has just unveiled a monument to his memory. A group of electoral reform Deputies sent a telegram of felicitation to the local authorities. We have not heard that England was represented at all.

Rev. H. F. Tracey, vicar of St. Savior's Dartmouth, says in his Parish Magazine:—

"I have been reading with more or less interest a published debate between Mr. Foote of *Freethinker* fame and Dr. Warschauer on the Christian side. As far as the manner of conducting the debate went my sympathies were rather with the former."

We are not surprised at this. From what we have seen of his Parish Magazine we should think of the Rev. H. F. Tracey as a "decent fellow." Dr. Warschauer, as revealed in the verbatim report of the debate, seems to have made an unfavorable impression upon him; an impression that he might possibly describe in stronger language "under the rose." At any rate, he evidently regards Mr. Foote as the fairer and better-tempered disputant; and he is to be congratulated on having the courage to let his judgment be known. It must be rather trying for a minister of religion to compliment an Atheist at the expense of a brother in the Lord.

Mr. Tracey gives his opinion of the value of debates in general:—

"I suppose there are minds which are influenced by such debates, though I am strongly of opinion that debate between Christian and Agnostic is like arguing on parallel lines which start from different standpoints and never meet. A Christian life will always be the best argument for Christianity; the difficulty is, in its best form, its exceeding rarity, and I feel horribly uncomfortable as I pen this sentence, being such a poor advertisement for the cause I represent. It is quite necessary for Christian men and women to have a reason for the faith that is in them: it is not at all necessary, or possible, that those reasons should be always so academic and scholarly that they will convince the sceptic. Quite ordinarily the best Christians are in humble life who have little or no scholarship at all, and who are saints without being in the least aware of it. The reasons for their faith would be laughed at in debate: but they are founded on a Rock for all that. It is useless arguing about it, from the Christian point of view, for 'No man can say that Jesus is Lord, but in the Holy Spirit' (1 Cor. xii. 3, R.V.). In other words, the truths of Christianity are 'spiritually discerned' (1 Cor. ii. 14). The Agnostic will say this is 'hedging.' Very well, let him say so. From his point of view it is. If you are not prepared to be thought a fool by the sceptic you have no business to be a Christian at all. It is not always that Truth is revealed to the 'wise and prudent.' The 'babes' sometimes get a look in."

There is *some* truth in this, of course, both in statement and in opinion, but we think it is far less than the reverend gentleman imagines. His estimate is largely built upon a misquotation of his own Scriptures. Christians are not told by Paul, or whoever wrote it, that they should always be ready to give a reason for the "faith" that is in them—but for the "hope" that is in them; the said "hope" being founded upon the "faith." The hope was the resurrection to immortality; the faith was the belief that Jesus rose from the dead as "the first-fruits of them that slept." But the belief that Jesus rose from the dead was not an intuition. Paul never treated it as that. He based it upon what he regards as *evidence*; very poor evidence to impartial logic, but good evidence to the mind of Paul and that of those he addressed in the famous chapter on the resurrection in the first epistle to the Corinthians. Paul argued on what to him were facts. In the same way, if any belief is rational at all, it must be susceptible to discussion; and while it is true, as Mr. Tracey says, that ordinary Christians cannot be expected to be subtle defenders of the Christian creed, there is no reason why they should not listen to debates between competent attack and competent defence.

Sir Oliver Lodge employs vehement terms in condemnation of complicated hypotheses which go "beyond knowledge into speculation." He wastes no love upon orthodox theology, because of its grievous departure from simplicity; there is too much speculation in it for him. And yet, in his article on "The Christian Idea of God," in the current number of the *Hibbert Journal*, he treats several unverified hypotheses as if they were established facts. The mere existence of the Christian God is only a hypothesis, the truth of which multitudes deny; but Sir Oliver speaks of it as if it were an object of direct knowledge. Then he affirms that "we are the white corpuscles of the cosmos, and do serve and form part of an immanent Deity." This "immanent Deity," he further asserts, "is continually striving and working and planning, so as to bring this creation of his through its preparatory labor and pain, and lead it on to an existence higher and better than we have ever known." Now, if creation "forms part of an immanent Deity," it follows that the Deity "is continually striving and working and planning" with the object of improving himself, and of leading himself on to a higher and better existence. We hope the Deity will see and duly appreciate the implied compliment.

It is well known that Incarnation is a conjecture which thousands of thoughtful people reject; yet Sir Oliver Lodge declares that "Incarnation is a fact." "We are not matter," he adds, "yet we utilise it." Now, this is an unverified and unverifiable assumption, and it serves no purpose whatever. Ostensibly it is resorted to in order to account for mind; but it doesn't account for mind at all: it leaves mind as great a mystery as ever, and greatly complicates the problem. So far as we know, the destruction of brain involves the destruction of mind. Any other inference goes "beyond knowledge into speculation."

Here is another notable specimen of Sir Oliver's speculative dogmatism, of which no orthodox divine needs to be ashamed:—

"Yes, truly, Christ was a planetary manifestation of Deity, a revelation to the human race, the highest and simplest it has yet had; a revelation in the only form accessible to man, a revelation in the full-bodied form of humanity."

That is dogmatism in its very worst form, unsupported by a single argument, unjustified by a single fact. On the assumption that we all "do serve and form part of an immanent Deity," such an interpretation of the life of Jesus is ineffably absurd, and would be a veritable insult to "an immanent Deity." As a theologian, Sir Oliver is certainly not improving.

What a beautiful and brotherly thing is Christianity! It brings people together who might otherwise remain separate. Thus—the other day, before a Liverpool magistrate, William Hilton was charged with assaulting Henry Evans. Evans's offence was that he wore a green muffler while walking down Netherfield-road. From this William Hilton concluded that Evans must be a Catholic, and being himself a sturdy Protestant, straightway knocked the wearer of the green muffler unconscious. As it happened, Evans was really a Protestant, and an unsympathetic magistrate sent Hilton to gaol for two months, remarking that "It's impossible to think one lives in a civilised place." The lawyer for Evans said that a man cannot walk down the Netherfield-road quarter if he is known to be a Roman Catholic. And yet there are some people who doubt the civilising influence of Christian teaching!

Some people are always asking why, if there is a God, he does not do something for man? Man does a deal for God; why is there not some obvious return from the other side? To these questioners "J. B.," of the *Christian World*, replies: "Why should man be cured by miracle of his diseases? Let him learn to cure himself. That will give him not only health, but the laws of health—so much larger a possession." This is offering a common fallacy as a reply to a pertinent and hitherto unanswered question. Man, as an individual, does not learn to cure himself of any but the simplest ailments. Man in the collective sense may, although he has not yet done so. Take an illustration. A man develops cancer or contracts consumption. He lives through some years of torture, and dies. How has he learned to cure himself? Ah, says "J. B.," man learns in this way to cure himself. Yes, but what man? Not the man who is stricken. It is man collectively, the race, that learns. But, again, what of the individual? What has his suffering and death taught him? Obviously, nothing. God created the disease. He suffers and dies, and other people who are not plagued learn something from his suffering and death. Therefore—the conclusion is inevitable—God tortures and kills individuals that the race may learn certain lessons in the art of protecting themselves against the machinations of Deity. It is as though the father of a family of six children placed one of them on the fire in order to teach the others to avoid getting burned. He would then be trying to be perfect even as our Father in Heaven is perfect.

In the course of his usual monthly lecture, Dr. R. F. Horton raised the question whether progress is made in religion as well as in other directions. As is to be expected, he answers the question mainly in the affirmative, his main reasons being, apparently, that we are getting more humane, and there is developing a larger consciousness of social duties and responsibilities. This is a favorite card now for religionists to play, and it all turns upon the use made of the word "religion." Of course, if religion means merely a development of social ideals, then we may admit we are still very religious. But is this what is meant by religion? Let us suppose a man is full of what is called "social righteousness." Let us imagine that as regards the State his conduct is impeccable; that he is honest, sober, industrious. Would that make him a religious man? Would he be accepted in Dr. Horton's own church as a religious man? Would they

not demand from him some faith in some sort of a God and in some sort of a future life? Everyone knows they would. Even Dr. Horton himself would; for as he has publicly confessed that a man who does not believe in a future life ought to be shut out of human society, he is hardly likely to admit him to membership in his own church.

The conclusion is, therefore, a simple one. A person is religious only when he holds certain beliefs concerning a God and a future life, or, as Tylor put it, religion is essentially a belief in supernatural beings. And this definition answers Dr. Horton's question, which is the main reason why religion is so seldom honestly defined by religionists. For the history of the belief in the supernatural is a history of decay, not of development. From the time of the primitive savage to our own the religious record is a record of defeat, of modification, and of ultimate rejection. It claimed, and actually did, at one time, cover practically the whole of man's professed conception of the world. But every acquisition of knowledge showed him how false and useless the religious theory was. Its complete expulsion from physical science is a story familiar to all. It is lingering in social life only because sociology is a science that is still in its infancy, and the general ignorance gives religion the chance of an extra half-hour of existence. But even here the end is approaching. Hence the attempt to translate religion into terms of social life. As though a religion that identified itself with a scheme of social well-being, and took the latter as the equal of the former, was not a practical confession of the truth of the Atheistic position!

According to Mr. R. J. Campbell, each of us has only one self, and in no case does the body constitute this self. The real man never does wrong, never makes a mistake, is never weak and silly. He says, "Your body is not you. Your body may want one thing, and you—the real you—another; you must not let the body win." Of course, this is by no means original. Plato and Paul and the whole orthodox Church teach it; but it is no less false, for all that. While there are in every man higher and lower tendencies and desires, it must be borne in mind that all acts, be they noble or base, are the acts of the whole man, and that there is no real self, concealing itself anywhere, that can honestly disown them. Whatever evil dispositions anyone may have, they undoubtedly belong to his real self, of which he may get rid, perhaps, by cultivating the healthier ones resident within him.

Mr. Campbell is as disrespectful to the body as Plato or Paul ever was; and he depreciates the body in order to glorify the true self which, according to him, is identical with the soul or spirit that simply inhabits and acts through the body. In Birmingham, the other day, the reverend gentleman saw "a cripple who, for the last twenty-two years, has lain in one position on his breast, never wholly free from pain. He has the body of a child, but the face of an intellectual giant, and the soul of a saint. The incongruity between the outward shell and the mighty spirit within it is unmistakable to anyone." The allusion to "the face of an intellectual giant" gives the whole case away. There is another cripple, not far from Birmingham, who for nearly as long has not been able to move at all, nearly the whole of his body being paralysed through an accident. He, too, is intellectually brilliant, and has learned to write and paint with his teeth. The secret of the whole matter is that the brain is uninjured, and that mental processes are not affected by the size or condition of the rest of the body. Mr. Campbell's cripple is described as a saint, ours is proud to be known as an out-and-out Secularist.

Belfast Protestants have been at it again—perhaps to celebrate the King's recent visit in their own way. They had a six hours' innings, during which Catholic shops and houses were wrecked, and many police were more or less injured. This sort of thing seems to be the principal blessing of religion in that part of the world.

There is one conspicuous result of the Coronation tomfoolery already. The Archbishop's blessing has done a wonderful lot of good. The War Office won't be bossed by Lord Kitchener, who cares no more for royal or aristocratic incapacity than he does for any other sort, and prefers efficiency wherever he finds it. So our greatest soldier is not to do the one work that everybody knows he should be doing, and the Government has obliged the "classes" by sending him out to Egypt—to watch the overflow of the Nile. Gods, what a country! "The greatest Christian nation on earth."

Mrs. Besant signs a public advertisement of the "Order of the Star in the East." She is evidently "almost persuaded" to be a Christian again. This is how she winds up:—

"When the Supreme Teacher came to found Christianity, the public mind was unprepared for His coming; only the Wise noted the shining of the Star in the East. The opposition stirred up was so strong, the recognition was confined to so few, that He was able to give the world the blessing of His physical presence only for three brief years. Perchance if our band grows large enough in every country to prepare men's hearts for His appearing, and to give Him effective welcome when He comes, the Lord of Love may remain with us for a period less brief, and do a work less restricted than that which was possible 2,000 years ago. Some, at least, of the shafts that would otherwise be aimed at Him may fall on our willing breasts, and some of the opposition may exhaust itself on us, who gladly offer ourselves as His servants."

Christ was coming again in Paul's time—and he didn't come. He is coming again in Mrs. Besant's time—and he won't come. It is a billion to one he won't.

Some people in the *Guardian* have been grumbling concerning the lack of ventilation in churches. "A. O. W." writes in defence, pointing out that churches are not worse ventilated than other places, and adds that good air space is certain because churches are not often filled in these days. We fancy that is the kind of defence not many preachers will thank "A. O. W." for.

Rev. Dr. Ballard told the Wesleyan Methodist Conference at Cardiff that "Unbelief was becoming more influential and more aggressive." Mrs. Hugh Price Hughes, however, assured the Conference that "Much of the Unbelief of which they heard so much was very shallow." But perhaps the lady is not the best judge on that point. It is an old trick of emotional Christians to get rid of a difficulty by practically denying its existence. One might add that the late Rev. Hugh Price Hughes was as "shallow" as they make them. No unbeliever could possibly beat him in that direction.

After the jeremiad was over its object was disclosed by the proposal to raise a thanksgiving fund of not less than 250,000 guineas. When the Churches want money they bewail the progress of Unbelief; when they want to boast of their conquests they swear that Unbelief has almost ceased to exist.

Rev. Forbes Phillips, the Vicar of Gorleston, published a book about twelve months ago, in which he expressed disbelief in the Resurrection. This was the signal for our old friend Mr. J. W. de Caux to write a long letter on that subject to a local newspaper, which was afraid to insert it. But the question is now on the carpet again. A book on "Miracles" by the Rev. J. M. Thompson, Fellow and Dean of Divinity, Magdalen College, Oxford, has caused quite a rumpus in East Anglia, and twelve Church clergymen have signed a round robin to the Bishop of Norwich (all of them belonging to his diocese), calling his attention to the heretical teaching of this book. The Bishop replies that he values freedom of speech, but he agrees with the protestors that men ought not to take the Church's money to preach against the Church's doctrines. A long leading article on the subject has also appeared in the *Eastern Daily News*, expressing just the same view. But we don't believe anything will be done. There is talk about "clear action"—and talk is all that is likely to happen. It is a very difficult matter to get rid of objectionable clergymen in the Church of England, unless they have committed moral offences which bring them under the Clergy Discipline Act. We think both the Rev. Forbes Phillips and the Rev. J. M. Thompson are pretty safe, and might insure their jobs for a very moderate premium.

"In the opinion of the leading members of the Church of England, the marriage service is coarse and offensive. It says frankly and downrightly that marriage was ordained for the 'procreation' of children. It appears that such ideas are never mentioned in the polite society in which archdeacons and canons move, and accordingly the Lower House of Convocation has recommended that the service should be 'bowdlerised' so as to bring it into line with the kind of literature approved for the most prudish of schools for young ladies. Why do these mealy-mouthed parsons stop at the Prayer Book? The Bible itself is far more plain-spoken. If they are logical they should inaugurate a movement to have it boycotted at the libraries."—*Reynolds' Newspaper*.

The wail of the clergy sounds on all sides. It was especially loud at the recent annual conference of the

United Methodist Church, held in Manchester. The President, the Rev. George Packer, of Leeds, uttered the following jeremiad:—

"Churches had slipped into real, if undesigned, competition, but were satisfied with the vague idea that a more superficial unity was all that could be attained. The unhappy result was that in a given neighborhood, cramped with almost unbearable financial conditions, they just managed to keep alive, but failed altogether in their great task of presenting the Evangel. The outsider was repelled by conflicting claims, he had no case put before him to examine or to understand, and was repelled by doubtful devices of money-raising to which some churches in sore straits had been reduced.

Discussing the support given to missions generally, the president said that the position was anything but satisfactory. This was the year following the World Conference in Edinburgh, and, so far from finding an outburst of generosity as its direct result, they beheld in all the leading missionary societies such reduced means as created embarrassment. One of these societies—the largest and hitherto the most heroic of all—had actually commenced retrenchment.

The whole world fronted the Church, and in its appalling destitution made an appeal that ought to be irresistible. Decline of support was not disappointing merely: it was heart-breaking."

Sad! Very sad! to Christians, but welcome news to Freethinkers. It is good to them to see the greatest lie and fraud in the world meeting its nemesis.

The Wesleyan Methodist Conference had to face certain hard facts, which were put by Sir Robert W. Perks in this way:—

"During the year 20,000 persons had 'ceased to meet' and 10,000 could not be traced, having dropped out through removals. In eighteen years 540,000 people had been in and gone out of membership, and there were 200,000 children in their Sunday-schools over 15 years of age outside membership."

Something had to be done to stop the leakage, and at the same time to get more water into the reservoir. What was that something to be? This question was answered in a resolution submitted by the Rev. W. T. Davison:—

"All persons are welcomed into membership in the Wesleyan Methodist Church who sincerely desire to be saved from their sins through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and who seek to have fellowship with Christ and his followers in this particular command."

This is broadening the basis to include more people. And it may succeed. But how can it succeed except at the expense of other Churches?

This resolution was opposed by some speakers, but it had the honor (as the newspapers say on such occasions) of being supported by that very superior person, Mr. Runciman. This is the gentleman who introduced the last of the Liberal Government's three Education Bills. He gave himself lofty airs; he was fated to settle this great question "on his own." But forty-eight hours after his moment of greatest exaltation he had to knuckle under, and his Bill went the way of Birrell's and McKenna's. Mr. Runciman has crowded a little less lustily since, but he is still a very superior person. He will be that to the end of the chapter. But he will never carry, or help to carry, a Bill constituting Non-conformity the State religion of England in the elementary schools.

Rev. A. J. Waldron's jocularities are not very robust, but they get published in the newspapers, probably on the principle that a small joke from a parson, like a small joke from a judge, is worthy of all honor. According to the *Evening Times* of July 14, Mr. Waldron has been referring to his professional neckwear as a "dog collar"—and we will not venture to dispute the propriety of the description. The reverend gentleman says he always leaves it off when he goes for a holiday. Well, we can understand the convenience of that. Yet the analogy is not a happy one. Parsons have a special outfit; doctors and lawyers have none.

Reverend gentlemen, like the Vicar of Brixton, can talk bravely about hell, now that the place is disestablished. "If I believed in a God who sends people to everlasting punishment," Mr. Waldron says, "by heavens, I would never smile again." Nonsense! People who believed in hell used to smile all right. The fire was not for them, but for other folk. Spurgeon preached hell hot, without sugar; and he was always laughing and joking.

Mr. Waldron states that a wealthy member of his congregation couldn't stand his theology any longer, and took himself and his cash elsewhere. It meant a loss of £20 a year to Mr. Waldron. How sad! But did Jesus and the Twelve have as much as £20 a year between them?

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

(Lectures suspended for the present.)

To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1911.—Previously acknowledged £270 16s. 3d. Received since:—John Scott, £1; R. Copeland, 2s. 6d.

Correction: "E. D. Side, 10s." which was in the July 2 list of acknowledgments was there by mistake. It should have been "R. H. Side, 10s." in the Vance Testimonial Fund, where it appears this week. Mr. Cohen expressly desires us to state that the mistake was *his*; though it doesn't seem to us to matter very much for mistakes *will* happen—and the wonder is that they happen so seldom in a paper produced as the *Freethinker* is.

THE VANCE TESTIMONIAL FUND.—Previously acknowledged, £82 10s. 6d. Received since:—R. H. Side, 10s.; Mary Hoe, 5s.; Henry Spence, £1; Frederic W. Walsh, 3s.; John Scott, 10s.; *Birmingham Branch* (per J. Partridge): R. Taylor, 5s.; C. J. Whitwell, 2s. 6d.; H. Smallwood, 2s. 6d.; "Harry," 10s.; J. H. Ridgway, 2s. 6d.; P. R., 2s. 6d.; J. P., 5s.; H. Ketteringham, 2s. 6d.; E. J. Hughes, 1s.; S. Hill, 1s.; A. Clarke, 5s.; G. Gee, 2s. 6d.; L. Underwood, 2s.; W. H. Wood, 2s.—total £2 6s.; W. Bailey, £2 10s.; Tom Roberts, 2s. 6d.; J. Carruthers, 2s. 6d.; W. W. R., £2 2s.; R. Copeland, 2s. 6d.; Mr. and Mrs. James Neate, 5s.

W. NOTHER.—We don't understand what "according to Josephus" has to do with your question. Wars of religion were unknown to antiquity, because all religions were national, and flourished or fell with the nations they belonged to. It is Monotheism that gives rise to the proselytising and persecuting spirit. The ancient world couldn't have conceived such wars, for instance, as those between the Cross and the Crescent.

HENRY SPENCE is "extremely sorry to hear the bad news about Miss Vance," but hopes that "rest and a good holiday may restore her to do a lot more work for the cause."

A. F. T.—The verse is not quite good enough. You will probably do better with more practice.

JOHN SCOTT writes: "If only some of our wealthy Freethinkers would support the movement like the Tories and Liberals do theirs, what a fine fight you could put up for the cause of freedom and common sense."

E. RAGGETT.—Shop manager has instructions to look them out and forward.

J. PARTRIDGE.—There was talk of applying for a Sunday in October, but we heard nothing subsequently. We note that the Birmingham Branch subscribers "hope Miss Vance will gain much benefit from the rest and change she is having."

JUNE A GIRL.—May prove handy.

H. T. HILL.—Shall be sent as desired.

SYDNEY R. TAYLOR.—Is the case ended yet? We can hardly make the comment while the case is *sub judice*. Will keep your letter. Thanks.

W. BAILEY, sending cheque to Testimonial Fund, "hopes Miss Vance may soon be restored to her usual good health."

LESLIE ANDERTON, Secular Sunday-school, Pole-lane, Failsforth. —We have not Mr. Bates's present address. If he sees this, he will probably forward it to you.

J. CARRUTHERS.—We will see it has attention as soon as the N. S. S. office is open again.

D. HEWITT.—We have directed the missing number to be posted to you. Subscriptions passed over to publishing department.

R. COPELAND.—*Flowers of Freethought* is still obtainable.

JAMES NEATE.—Pleased to hear that Mr. Burke, who took Miss Kough's place at Victoria Park on Sunday, lectured to "very appreciative audiences," and that you think other Branches should secure his services. You may be sure that the Testimonial will not lead to Miss Vance's being "pushed on one side."

R. H. GRANT.—Tuesday is too late for paragraphs. We are tired of saying so. Yet we wish the Edmonton Branch all success in its hard fight.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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.

At the risk of being considered egotistic, and with a full sense of responsibility for what we are saying, we beg to record our opinion that a far more important event than the Coronation took place recently. We refer to the thirtieth anniversary of the birthday of the *Freethinker*. This paper is vastly more important than its enemies allow, or perhaps imagine; the mental and moral history of the age cannot be written without reference to it, and its long row of volumes will be of great value to the future historian.

Mr. Frederic W. Walsh, the *Freethinker* who bears such unusual trouble with so much fortitude, in a long (but far from too long) letter to us recently, mentions "the very kind reference" to him in the N.S.S. Annual Report. "It seemed to give me," he says, "a definite place in the N.S.S., and gave me much pleasure. Such kindness coming from those I most value is indeed a great happiness, and I gladly once again thank you and the Executive for the honor I shall treasure as long as life lasts." Mr. Walsh contributes a subscription out of what must be the scantiest of means to the Vance Testimonial Fund. "Every Freethinker," he says, "should feel it a bounden duty to help at a time when he can give so great a pleasure to Miss Vance and bring home to her more vividly the admiration and respect in which she is held by the Freethought party. If a person can only afford a shilling, it is worth while sending it. The Testimonial *must* be a success—and we want the help of all."

Dr. Frazer is progressing with the new edition of *The Golden Bough*. The latest volume—it is to be in six—is entitled *Taboo and the Perils of the Soul*. We have not had time to go through it yet, but we are happy to reproduce a powerful passage quoted in the course of a review of the book in last week's *Athenæum*:—

"That the ethical like the legal code of a people stands in need of constant revision will hardly be disputed by any attentive and dispassionate observer. The old view that the principles of right and wrong are immutable and eternal is no longer tenable. The moral world is as little exempt as the physical world from the law of ceaseless change, of perpetual flux. Contemplate the diversities, the inconsistencies, the contradictions of the ethical ideas and the ethical practice, not merely of different peoples in different countries, but of the same people in the same country in different ages, then say whether the foundations of morality are eternally fixed and unchanging. If they seem so to us, as they have probably seemed to men in all ages who did not extend their views beyond the narrow limits of their time and country, it is in all likelihood merely because the rate of change is commonly so slow that it is imperceptible at any moment, and can only be detected by a comparison of accurate observations extending over long periods of time. Such a comparison, could we make it, would probably convince us that if we speak of the moral law as immutable and eternal, it can only be in the relative or figurative sense in which we apply the same words to the outlines of the great mountains, by comparison with the short-lived generations of men. The mountains, too, are passing away, though we do not see it; nothing is stable and abiding under or above the sun. We can as little arrest the process of moral evolution as we can stay the sweep of the tides or the courses of the stars."

This is extremely well expressed, but there is nothing new in it to Freethinkers. The novelty lies in its appearance in a classical treatise by an eminent Professor of Sociology in the University of a reactionary city.

Here is another quotation from Dr. Frazer's new volume—which might always be taken as a short sermon on "The Moving Finger writes" in Omar Khayyam:—

"This comfortable doctrine teaches us that in order to blot out the effects of our misdeeds we have only to acknowledge and confess them with a lowly and penitent heart, whereupon a merciful God will graciously pardon our sin and absolve us and ours from its consequences. It might indeed be well for the world if we could thus easily undo the past, if we could recall the words that have been spoken amiss, if we could arrest the long train that follows, like a flight of avenging Furies, on every evil action. But this we cannot do. Our words and acts, good and bad, have their natural, their inevitable consequences. God may pardon sin, but Nature cannot."

No wonder that the *Athenæum*, which is becoming quite intolerably stodgy, falls foul of Dr. Frazer on account of this passage, and says it would be better for "Naturalism to walk a little more humbly." Christians positively boast of their humility, but in practice they always expect it to be displayed by their opponents rather than by themselves. The *Athenæum* displays its own humility by informing Dr. Frazer that these are things he does not understand, and that "life (for instance) is evolving, not from 'God' towards 'nature,' but from 'nature' towards 'God.'" Dr. Frazer has only got to be dumb now. The *Athenæum* has spoken. The question is settled.

Dr. Warschauer's Questions for Atheists.

[This article is set in *bourgeois* type, not because of any inferiority, but because we are short of *long primer* type, having so many articles locked up in it at the present, awaiting their opportunity of insertion. Mr. Ball confers an unmerited honor on Dr. Warschauer by answering his Eight Questions—which we refused to receive in the debate; but since he has taken the trouble our readers may as well have the benefit of the result.—EDITOR.]

THAT I have taken the trouble to answer these Questions must not be taken as any tribute to their intrinsic merit. They spring from a type of mind that snatches at superficialities and takes words as its current coins instead of treating them as merely counters, as Hobbes would have us do. Nevertheless, as this kind of counterfeit coin is issued and accepted rather freely, I have thought fit to examine some of these spurious coins, in order to help in the work of detecting them and nailing them to the counter.

Questions 1 and 2 run thus:—

"Does Mr. Foote accept the axiom that every phenomenon must have a cause adequate to produce it? If so, does he admit that the universe must have a cause? Or if not, why not?"

Dr. Warschauer here assumes that the universe is a phenomenon. But the universe is *not* a phenomenon* or appearance. It is rather the noumenon, or substance, or thing-in-itself, that underlies and produces (and thereby in a sense includes) the phenomena or appearances arising from the properties or powers of the material universe. Like "Christian Evidence" orators in general, Dr. Warschauer appears to be incapable of stating his own case correctly. And, like the aforesaid orators, he expects his opponents to accept his own errors and assumptions as the basis of argument. Why cannot he say, in simple English, "Everything has a cause, and therefore the universe must have a cause"? Why resort to the misuse of a long Greek word dragged in to impart an air of philosophic dignity to his questions at the expense of converting the intended argument into a piece of childish stupidity, since its premises contain no common term? His attempted argument, clearly stated in all its naked irrelevance, runs thus: Because every phenomenon or appearance has a cause, therefore a noumenon or reality (the universe) must have a cause: an obviously defective syllogism of which a school-boy should be ashamed, and for perpetrating which he would have been soundly whipped in the olden times, unless indeed the piety of the lame conclusion excused the otherwise inexcusable offence. And this is a sample of the kind of logic in which Dr. Warschauer is proud to be proficient, and which he deems so unanswerable. Let us, however, be charitable, and deal with his case independently of the grosser defects imported into it by so incompetent an advocate.

The cause of the phenomenon or phenomena presented by the universe is, I should say, the noumenon or reality underlying the phenomena, that is, the universe itself. The universe is a practically infinite number of things displaying innumerable properties and activities. There is no logical necessity to assume that all this complex array of things and energies proceeds from one single cause. The idea that some person or mind by some magic word or thought brought all this complex universe into existence belongs to a pre-scientific stage of mental development which ought to have been left behind in the nursery. To those still in the anthropomorphic nursery the alleged argument appears cogent and convincing, but to those who have emerged from that nursery its force and bearing are exceedingly doubtful, if not entirely irrelevant. Science, the organised and tested knowledge of mankind, knows nothing of a beginning or ending. The scientific doctrines of the Indestructibility of Matter and the Conservation of Energy are no more reconcilable with the popular idea of Creation than with the equally popular idea of a final destruction of all things.

Where is the alleged necessity of a beginning of the universe? Why "must" there have been a beginning? All we know is that the universe of to-day arises from the universe of yesterday, and this from a series of yesterdays to which no end is perceptible except to the imagination of the type of mind which feels unsatisfied unless its Story of the Universe is provided with a commencement and denouement, as with other stories and with various phases of existence to which we are personally accustomed. All we are entitled to do by logic or knowledge is to go back and back through the past without coming to any such stop or limit as would be contrary to all our experience and would conflict with scientific doctrines deduced from experience.

* In this and in some other cases I almost necessarily have to repeat remarks or arguments already advanced by Mr. Foote. But, on the whole, I trust my observations will be found to be supplementary to his, and not mere repetitions.

Those who imagine that they can imagine a time when nothing existed achieve a feat beyond the reach of the type of mind to which Freethinkers approximate. How can a sane mind really imagine a beginning of time previous to which there was no time, or a beginning of space before which there was no space, or a beginning of the mathematical and mechanical and other laws to which the affairs of the universe are subject? And as to the creation of matter and energy, it is certainly far easier and far more in accordance with the teachings of Science to suppose that energy and matter (or the elements of matter) have been eternal, or else to adopt an Agnostic position on the point.

There is a strange lack of logic, or, rather, defiance of logic, in the Theistic argument that because everything has a cause therefore there must have been something without a cause. Because nothing exists without a cause adequate to produce it, we are asked to conclude that God exists without a cause adequate to produce him. How can we say that because everything *must* have a cause therefore there *must* have been something which had no cause, or because nothing can exist without a cause therefore God existed without a cause? To my mind the logical conclusion should be that if everything has a cause then God must have had a cause, and this a preceding cause, and so on *ad infinitum*. Otherwise, we are assuming, without any reason, that the unknown is entirely different from the known—the very reverse of analogy. Why "must" there have been a flagrant contradiction to the lessons of experience?

If, moreover, as Theists contend, something (namely God) has existed from all eternity, why is it impossible that something else (namely matter) should have existed from all eternity? And we have the advantage, in holding the latter view, that we do know that matter has existed for an enormous period of time, while we do not know that the Theists' God has ever existed at all.

Question 3:—

"Does Mr. Foote agree that whatever is intelligible bears witness to a cause that is intelligent?"

Let us see. The facts of (say) the multiplication table (which we may take as a simple type of mathematical truths in general) are intelligible. Do they therefore bear witness to a cause that is intelligent? Might two twos have been five or fifty or nothing at all if an intelligent Creator had not ordained that they should make four? Creator or no Creator, is it conceivable that mathematical truths would have been non-existent, or that mathematical results would have been a mere chaotic jumble destitute of law and order if there had been no special Creator or Arranger of such matters? How then can intelligibility prove an intelligent cause?

Similar remarks apply to the mechanical laws such as the laws of motion. We cannot conceive that a bullet would shoot round corners *ad lib.* if a Creator had failed to enact a law whereby bodies in motion should tend to move in a straight line.

"Intelligible," according to the dictionary, means "capable of being understood or comprehended." Many natural phenomena can be understood or comprehended. Thus the rounding of pebbles by the action of the sea-waves is perfectly intelligible. Would Dr. Warschauer claim that pebbles and sea-waves were intelligent agents? And if his God were intelligible, would it follow that God must have been made by some intelligent agent?

Dr. Warschauer confuses the special and direct intelligibility of human language with the intelligibility of quite another kind, and often more poetically, of inanimate nature, as if there were a true logical analogy between the two. Because we understand a telegram in one sense and a cyclone in another we are asked to conclude that the telegram and the cyclone are alike produced by an intelligent agency. Can we read a cyclone, or an Alpine glacier, or a limestone cavern, in anything like the sense that we can a book or a newspaper, where there is intelligence in the producers as well as in the reader or interpreter? And where is the logical link between the two kinds of intelligibility? Because intelligence on the part of man enables him to understand natural phenomena, why must there also be intelligence behind the natural phenomena? Surely if we understand the phenomena of icebergs and volcanoes it does not follow that arctic frosts and subterranean fires are intelligent agents sending us messages in the forms of frozen or molten matter, as the case may be.

If we take living organisms as examples of intelligibility, does Dr. Warschauer expect us to ignore the great fact that Darwin has shown that the alleged examples of apparent design in living creatures are due to Evolution by Natural Selection? Biological Science thus shows that the unintelligent forces of Nature have produced what Dr. Warschauer would call "intelligible" results which he would attribute to design by a personal Creator. Why then should he expect us to accept the clap-trap assumption of his disproven axiom

that "whatever is intelligible bears witness to a cause that is intelligent"?

And if intelligibility proves intelligence in its cause, would not the terrible cruelty in Nature equally prove the existence of a terribly cruel Cause? "If not, why not?" And do not the many imperfections and blunders in Nature (rudimentary organs for instance) prove an imperfect God? And when you proceed to deduce your God by analogy from the facts of Nature, is your deity both intelligent and stupid? Is he absurdly imperfect while at the same time he is assumed to be perfect in all his ways? Is he absolutely just and often frightfully unjust? Is he an infinitely kind and good Being who displays the cold indifference of an iceberg, and too often the callous brutality of a fiend who delights in tormenting and slaughtering untold millions of the living creatures he has made or evolved to work his will upon? Is he after all a mere bundle of contradictions and impossibilities? And what is the value of Theistic deductions or analogies or guesswork which lead to such irreconcilable conclusions?

Question 4:—

"If so, does he (Mr. Foote) admit that the universe being intelligible proclaims its cause to be intelligent? Or if not, why not?"

Sufficient answer to this none too intelligible play upon the words "intelligible" and "intelligent" has already been given. It seems to me, moreover, that we may well ask, *Is the universe "intelligible," and in what sense is it "intelligible"?* Some poets and philosophers fall into lamentations over this "unintelligible" world. Does their grief over the unintelligibility of the world prove it had an intelligible or unintelligible cause? And "if not, why not?" For there is really very much that is dreadfully unintelligible or inexplicable to thoughtful and tender-hearted believers in a benevolent and all-wise and all-powerful deity. There is much that is only intelligible to those who recognise the fact of natural Evolution by the blind uncontrolled non-moral forces of Nature.

Above all, Theists must remember, as I have already urged, that if an intelligible universe proclaims an intelligent cause, with still more force and directness do the wholesale atrocities of "Nature red in tooth and claw with ravin" proclaim the systematic cruelty of a Creator, if there be one. If Theistic analogies were valid, the sufferings of living beings from carnivora, from famines and droughts, from diseases, from external and internal parasites, and from innumerable other evils, would prove the existence of a Creator from whom we should shrink with horror. "The only excuse for God is that he does not exist."

Questions 5 and 6:—

"Does Mr. Foote agree that in all phenomena controlled by human agency regularity and uniformity are evidences of design and intention? If so, does he admit that the universe, being full of uniformity and regularity, demands for its explanation a purposive, causative agency? Or if not, why not?"

That the regularity and uniformity of Nature's laws and operations can only proceed from a purposive causative agency is mere assumption. The implied analogy between Nature's methods and man's is a point which has to be proved, and not merely assumed. The absolute and inexorable regularity of Nature is of a mechanical, unreasoning, and intrinsically unintelligent character. The many faulty arrangements or imperfect adaptations, the many blunders, the wasteful or mischievous or atrocious methods of Nature, are quite in accordance with the rule of unintelligent laws and forces, and are not in accord with the hypothesis of the creation and regulation of all things by an almighty and infinitely benevolent Deity.

The fact that the laws of Nature are regular and uniform, that is, that they are unbroken, is best explained by the supposition that no supernatural power interferes with them. It seems strange that a Deity's non-interference with Nature's uniformity should be regarded as a proof of his existence. If Jehovah stopped the sun and moon in answer to Joshua's request, the miracle would be sufficient to prove the reality of such a Being, but to suppose that his never stopping the sun and moon will assist us in proving his existence is not particularly convincing to Freethinkers.

Dr. Warschauer presents his case very badly, and his logic is vitiated by serious flaws. Close examination will show that he employs the terms "regularity and uniformity" in different senses in the two parts of his argument. For if he meant regular conformity to natural law in the cases both of man and the universe, he would stultify himself, because this philosophic kind of "regularity and uniformity" is universal and unbroken in dead and living things alike, and is therefore no necessary sign of intention or design. In the case of man he must mean merely regular repetitions in the ordinary every-day sense. In this ordinary sense the phenomena of both the animate and inanimate portions of the universe abound in irregularities and confusion side by side

with regularities and order, while of course in the philosophic sense there is no possibility of any irregularity or disorder (*i.e.*, no breach of uniform natural law) in any department of the universe. As Dr. Warschauer when speaking elsewhere of the universe uses the terms in question in their proper philosophic sense, we are not at liberty to suppose that he here only means to advance the glaringly untrue assertion that the universe is "full of regularity and uniformity" in some ordinary or non-philosophic sense—a supposition, however, which might seem to be supported by the use of plurals in the *Christian Commonwealth* report, which makes Dr. Warschauer speak of the universe as being full of regularities and uniformities. After all I must confess that on the whole it seems probable that Dr. Warschauer's mind is so muddled and so unable to distinguish essentials apart from words that he confuses the two senses and uses them both at once rolled into one whenever it suits his purpose.

Admitting Dr. Warschauer's apparently plausible but really futile premise that "in all phenomena controlled by human agency regularity and uniformity are evidences of design and intention," I would point out to him that this is only so because man designs and intends such regularity or uniformity. Where man intends and designs irregularity and non-uniformity of result (as in throwing dice, dealing cards, the phenomena of the roulette table, and in mechanism of complex adaptability) the irregularity is equally a mark of design or intention. So that Dr. Warschauer could just as truly say that in phenomena controlled by man irregularity is an evidence of design; in which case, the innumerable irregularities in the universe (such as the irregularities of English weather, or of Alpine peaks, earthquakes, etc.) would equally serve to prove the existence of his great Designer.

Regularity and uniformity, in fact, are *not* specially characteristic of human agency, but rather the contrary. It is in the non-living world that regularity and uniformity are most noticeable. In proportion to the development of intelligence in the higher animals their actions become variable or irregular, either from individual caprice or to meet varying conditions to which the animal is subjected through its own caprices or by other circumstances. Some signs of a similar capriciousness, and, above all, a quickly varying adaptability to circumstances, would be far better evidence of personal agency on the part of his supreme Ruler and Sustainer of the universe than an inflexible uniformity which leaves things to settle themselves. Prompt adaptability is the most characteristic mark of human agency, and this we do not find in the universe as a whole, but only in the living portion of it.

I may as well point out clearly and distinctly the defective nature of Dr. Warschauer's fallacious argument that "in all phenomena controlled by human agency regularity and uniformity are evidences of design and intention." When we speak of phenomena "controlled" by man, we necessarily mean that man obtains the results he desires and intends. If a boiler bursts or a locomotive runs away we consider that man has *lost* his control. "Controlled" results are simply *designed* results. So that Dr. Warschauer's argument, analysed and condensed, merely amounts to this: *Designed* regularities are designed; therefore the unbroken order of the universe (including "regularities" and irregularities) is designed. A conclusion which does not follow, except in the logic of Christian Evidence controversialists who find themselves under the pitiable necessity of resorting to illegitimate methods of reasoning as their only means of presenting some sort of a case for their Theistic contentions.

Questions 7 and 8:—

"Does Mr. Foote agree that human personality is constituted by the attributes of consciousness, intelligence, and purposive will? If so, would not the same attributes constitute personality in the Cause of the universe, which is in effect the contention of Theism? Or if not, why not?"

Questions 7 and 8 are merely extensions of the previous questions, and are similarly futile. If "consciousness, intelligence, and purposive will" were proved to be the characteristics of the alleged Cause of the universe, we should readily admit the personality of the said creative Cause. But no more proof of the alleged "consciousness," etc., is offered than of the Cause itself. The case rests upon mere analogies, and the all-important proof that such anthropomorphic analogies hold good in a new and unknown sphere of reasoning is entirely lacking. If, moreover, such analogies hold good they prove too much, for they involve the Theist in a mutually self-destructive set of conclusions. To the logical type of mind this affords clear and definite proof that such analogies are not trustworthy.

The God which Dr. Warschauer would obtain by his analogies falls altogether short of the theologian's requirements. If Dr. Warschauer's deity exists, he must be limited in power, or in goodness, or in intelligence, or in all these points combined. This morally and mentally imperfect

God is not by any means the omnipotent, omniscient, all-wise, all-good, all-just God of the Theists' creeds. At its best it is, by its proven limitations and imperfections, a denial and a disproof of the statements of the Churches concerning their Almighty Deity.

Dr. Warschauer's argument, at its best, is simply Paley's watch argument in a generalised form. It is a kind of anthropomorphism stripped of its cruder elements. The universe is, by analogy, assumed to be the work of an artificer, just as a watch is the product of human hands and brains. Primitive anthropomorphism, indeed, assumed that this artificer worked by hands as man does, and that he walked and talked like a human being; but this grosser form of anthropomorphism has been abandoned by most Theists as misleading. They still continued to assume, however, that the universe was the work of a Being like man, as far as higher attributes are concerned, but not like man in his lower or physical attributes—a sort of dematerialised and highly magnified person who saw without eyes, worked without hands, talked without a tongue, thought without brains, felt human feelings without passions or organs, and so forth. They still urged, as Paley did, that all the contents of the universe must have been designed and manufactured by the personal skill and unerring wisdom of a superhuman artificer. Science, however, has stepped in since Paley's time and has shown that this application of the principle of analogy is as erroneous as the primitive analogy which regarded the life-giving sun as a powerful and beneficent god and the pale moon as a goddess. Take the horse. Science shows that this alleged product of divine skill was evolved by advancing stages from a five-toed animal no larger than a fox, and this, again, in common with the mammals in general from still lower organisms originating in a primitive fish, which again evolved from still lower forms which are not so readily traceable. We now know that the higher animals are not specially contrived and created as specimens of the perfect skill of a divine artificer, as Paley so confidently argued, but are the more or less imperfect product of Natural Selection or the Survival of the Fittest. In any case, Natural Selection has done the greater part of the work of "creation," and not God, as we used to be told. Why, then, are we now to assume that the discredited and partly abandoned principle of anthropomorphic analogy is still applicable and of binding force in obscure regions where the light of science has not yet penetrated and perhaps will never be able to penetrate? So far as we can test it, anthropomorphic analogy breaks down in its finer forms as it did in its grosser forms, and yet we are still asked to rely upon an alleged analogy with human intelligence, human will, and human consciousness as a trustworthy guide in unexplored and perhaps unexplorable regions of speculation, although the fallaciousness of such guidance is shown by the conflicting conclusions to which it leads us.

The most that is left for the Theist to claim is that his artificer-God started an inexorable and often cruel system of natural forces, thus originating a self-developing piece of machinery which, by means revolting to a humane heart, would evolve the present wonderful, but still morally and physically imperfect, state of things—a system of nature in which incessant bloodshed by carnivora, horrible deaths from famine and disease, and innumerable other forms of suffering and evil, still play such conspicuous parts. Even if proved to exist, a being who foresaw and planned, or even permitted, the formation of a universe reeking with blood and injustice, would not deserve to be worshiped and propitiated by moral beings. He cannot throw the moral responsibility upon the machinery of massacre and torture which he set in motion and then left to its own blind and uncontrolled action. And, as I have said, the proof of the existence of such an abdicated or retired Creator or First Cause as this, would be the negation and disproof of the existence of the all-wise, all-powerful, all-benevolent, all-just Creator and Governor of the Universe assumed by Christian Theists.

W. P. BALL.

AGREES WITH PLATO.

"The author of genius," said William Dean Howells, at a dinner in New York, "expresses the thoughts of his time. He speaks out those things that his generation has all along been thinking—but thinking silently, and, perhaps, a little mistily.

An author of transcendental genius speaks the thought of all time. For example—one summer at Sunapee I loaned a volume of Plato to a lean, shrewd farmer. When the volume was returned, I said:

'Well, how did you like Plato?'

'Fust rate,' the farmer answered. 'I see he's got some of my ideas.'

A Summer Song.

COME let us sing
Of Summer the King,
And the joys of the hills and the sea!
Of the garden nook
And a Shelley book,
And the drowsy hum of the bee;
And the sweeping rain
Down the wild moor lane
And the scurry to sheltering tree,
Or a boat from shore,
The pull of the oar,
And the far-away glint of the quay.

The white of the dawn,
The gold of the corn,
And the blue in the limpid sky;
Or the hayfield fun
In the blazing sun,
And the sound of a lapwing's cry.
Or the newest mode
For the open road—
The car that will bound and fly
O'er the distance
That rushes to meet you
As the leaping miles flash by.

Or the meadow game
With the well-loved name,
And the shimmering green in the sun;
The umpire's call,
The hum of the ball,
And the charm of a stolen run.
Or the sudden click
Of a clever snick,
And the glorious catch (Well done!);
Then the sheer delight
Of the cool gray night
As we talk of the game that is won.

'Tis sweet to sing
Of the dancing Spring,
But Summer is sweeter, I ween.
For women and men
Are happiest then,
And their passion for living is keen;
And heaven seems chaff
When the earth can laugh
And joy splashes over the scene.

There's no need
For the Lord in the mead,
And the sunshine is God of the green!

—THOMAS MOULT.

Correspondence.

RELIGION IN BRAZIL.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER"

SIR,—In his article on the "Future of Freethought in Spain," Mr. W. Moritz Weston writes that in the South American Republics it is "highly perilous and certainly detrimental to venture on the smallest manifestation of Freethought." This is not so in Brazil, the largest and most populous Republic of South America. To prove this I am sending you a humorous journal, *A Careta*, on the front page of which is a caricature of God and St. Peter, which could not be published in England. I am also enclosing another caricature of God, which I cut out of the front page of *O Paiz*, one of the most important newspapers in Brazil.

It is the custom among the masses to let off fireworks on the eve of St. John the Baptist; this year dynamite was the predominant substance, hence the caricature depicting God enraged with the 11,000 virgins for awakening him. The *Careta* artist's conception of God and St. Peter should be of special interest to you and old readers of the *Freethinker*. It is true here, as in Spain, that "the illiteracy of more than half the population is an enormous advantage for the Church of Rome," but the educated classes are absolutely indifferent, in fact, sceptic, in their attitude towards religion. The men allow their women-folk to go to Mass, but not from any religious sentiment. If I were asked to define the feeling that prompts the permission, I should call it a bowing to custom combined with a desire for peace at home.

The girls are educated by French nuns and the boys by sceptics, or, rather the former have a religious, and the latter a secular, education.

The majority of my pupils are students of law or medicine. When I tell them the story of Jonah and the whale, which I am obliged to do through reference to it in our book, they laugh. Then I tell them this story is in the Bible.

On one occasion I overheard the following remark: "This Englishman can tell a good story, but what a pity he backs it up with a lie!"

S. C. C.

MORE CORONATION.

Broomfield Hall, Sunningdale, Berks.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

Sir,—Someone has been good enough to send me your issue of July 9, with its leading article, "A Carnival of Cant," underlined for my benefit.

Whether it is as a Freethinker or a tied-thinker that I am supposed to be interested in this particular article I do not know, but it contains one or two such gross mis-statements that I should be obliged if you will permit me to correct them.

You, or, to be more correct, Mr. Cohen, writes: "Privilege and piety belong to the same culture-stage of human history. Religion feeds upon cupidity, and credulity fattens upon both."

Now this statement, though highly alliterative and epigrammatic, is wholly untrue; and though the Freethinker may think freely, he is not entitled thereby to write loosely.

Exact thinking can never exist without freedom, but without exactitude free thought is a contradiction in terms.

Now, to deal with facts, not phrases, the most pious people I have ever known have had no privileges to underpin their faith; and it is in this latter age of emancipated thought—not in what you term the culture-stage of human history—that the essential ethics and moralities of religion are finding everywhere their fullest and freest expression to-day.

Quod semper, quod ubique, quod ad omnibus is the proud boast of the Catholic Church, and to the unprejudiced mind there cannot be the smallest possible doubt that every increase in freedom of thought leads to an intenser individualisation of the religious life. As a profound believer in the value of religion no less than free-thought, I beg to trample such statements as those I have quoted from your article indignantly under foot(e).

ARNOLD F. HILLS.

[We do not know who sent this correspondent the paper which has so upset him. He seems to us to require more upsetting. He fancies that contradicting another man's opinions is argument, and the puerile joke with which he concludes makes one apprehensive that his case may be hopeless.—EDITOR.]

"The Gospel of Christ"

(Reprinted from the New York "Truthseeker.")

I RECEIVED a letter the other day in which the writer condemned me for saying "such horrible things about Jesus." I did not suppose that my mild criticism of the leading male character in the dramas of the New Testament deserved to be called "horrible." I have given my honest opinion about Jesus, and I am ready to defend such opinion any time and anywhere. Let me say that I have never called Jesus such "horrible" things as my critic has called me.

I wish to notice one thing only in the letter referred to, and that is this closing exclamation of the writer: "The gospel of Christ is the sweetest message the world has ever received and it is the only hope of man."

This gospel is to be found in the teachings of Jesus as reported in the New Testament, we presume, and upon the assumption that Jesus was the Christ.

The only place where the gospel of Jesus is defined by himself is in the sixteenth chapter of the book of Mark. He is reported as saying to his eleven disciples after his resurrection, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature."

"He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned." That is the gospel of Jesus. That is the "sweetest message the world has ever received." That is "the only hope of man."

Now it is remarkable that Jesus did not tell *what one was to believe in order to escape damnation.*

There is not a word about believing in God; in the Bible as the word of God; in heaven, hell, or purgatory; in the Holy Ghost; in his mother; in the cross; in his resurrection or in the atonement, which the Christian Church teaches was made by Jesus for the sins of the world.

If the Bible does not pass a falsehood for truth, Jesus had been in another world for three days. He came back to earth to prove his superiority to death and to emphasise his mission to his disciples. He had every motive for speaking the truth, and none, as we can see, for telling a lie. He had

conquered the cross; he had won the victory over the grave; he had risen triumphant from the dead, and he returned to finish his work on earth. Before he ascended to heaven he declared his gospel of salvation and damnation. While he did not announce what one must believe to be saved, he did make known how the believer might be distinguished from the unbeliever. These are the words which the author of the book of Mark puts into the mouth of Jesus, "These signs shall follow them that believe: In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover."

Is there any body of men and women on the globe which possesses these characteristics mentioned by Jesus as belonging to those who believe? Where are the persons who can cast out devils, who can speak with new tongues, who can take up serpents, who can drink poison and not be harmed by it, and who can cure disease by laying on of hands? Are there any such persons on the earth? Is there *one* person in all the world who comes up to the standard required by Jesus? We know of none.

Is this gospel of Jesus "the sweetest message the world has ever received"? Is it "the only hope of man"?

We should call it the most discouraging gospel that man ever preached, the most heartless message ever delivered on earth.

If I had said that no one believed what was essential to salvation unless such an one could handle rattlesnakes with immunity, drink deadly poisons and not be injured, and could heal the sick by laying on of hands, then I should deserve to be severely condemned. It looks to me as if no one could be saved, according to the gospel of Jesus; that damnation was the universal doom, and that every man, woman, and child was on the road to hell.

The only "gospel of Christ" is the gospel found in Mark. It is this gospel which the Christian Church accepts and preaches the world over. It is the gospel which has murdered millions of human beings and inflicted the cruellest tortures upon humanity. It is the gospel of cruelty and hate and revenge. It is the gospel which damns Freethinkers. It is the gospel which has sent every man and woman who has worked for human freedom to hell. Without this gospel every Christian Church on earth would have to close its doors. Without this gospel the priest could not rob the poor nor frighten the rich. Without this gospel the meanest minds could not damn the noblest.

It is utterly false that Jesus came to save those who were lost. He came to damn those who would not accept his gospel. That has been the interpretation of his mission by the Christian Church, and that is the only verdict which the honest history of Christianity renders.

If this gospel of damnation were "the sweetest message the world has ever received," there would be no flag of freedom in the sky and no liberty for man, woman, and child on the earth.

L. K. WASHBURN.

RELIGION AND TORTURE.

They were wont to tease the truth
Out of loth witness (toying, trifling time)
By torture: 'twas a trick, a vice of the age,
Here, there, and everywhere, what would you have?
Religion used to tell Humanity
She gave him warrant or denied him course.
And since the course was much to his own mind,
Of pinching flesh and pulling bone from bone
To unhusk truth a-hiding in its hulls,
Nor whisper of a warning stopped the way,
He, in their joint behalf, the burly slave,
Bestirred him, mauled and maimed all recusants,
While, prim in place, Religion overlooked;
And so had done till doomsday, never a sign
Nor sound of interference from her mouth,
But that at last the burly slave wiped brow,
Let eye give notice as if soul were there,
Muttered "'Tis a vile trick, foolish more than vile,
"Should have been counted sin; I make it so:
"At any rate no more of it for me—
"Nay, for I break the torture-engine thus!"
Then did Religion start up, stare amain,
Look round for help and see none, smile and say
"What, broken is the rack? Well done of thee!
"Did I forget to abrogate its use?
"Be the mistake in common with us both!
"—One more fault our blind age shall answer for,
"Down in my book denounced though it must be
"Somewhere. Henceforth find truth by milder means!"
Ah, but Religion, did we wait for thee
To ope the book, that serves to sit upon,
And pick such place out, we should wait indeed.

—Robert Browning, "The Ring and the Book."

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): Miss K. B. Kough, 3.15, "Miracles"; 6, "Immortality."

EDMONTON BRANCH N. S. S. (The Green): 7.30, J. Hecht, "Meteorology: Biblical and Scientific."

FINSBURY PARK: 11.30, F. A. Davies, a Lecture.

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, C. Cohen, "Atheism."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Parliament Hill): 3.30, F. A. Davies, a Lecture.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (outside Maryland Point Station, Stratford): 7, R. H. Rosetti, "The Life We Know, or a Post-humous Paradise."

WOOD GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Jolly Butchers Hill, opposite Public Library): 7, A. B. Moss, "His Majesty the Devil."

COUNTRY.

OUTDOOR.

HUDDERSFIELD BRANCH N. S. S. (Market Cross): 8.45, Geo. T. Whitehead, "Bible and Babel." Saturday, at 8, Geo. T. Whitehead, "Atheism and Faith."

LAINDON, ESSEX (opposite Luff's Hairdressing Saloon): Saturday, July 22, at 7, R. H. Rosetti, "The Devil."

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