

# THE Freethinker

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*The religious life is based upon authority, the intellectual life is based upon personal investigation*

P. G. HAMERTON.

## "Honest Doubt."

TENNYSON started the talk about "honest doubt." He said that there "lived more faith" in it than in "half the creeds." He meant well. But he was mistaken. What is more, he was in a confusion. The whole passage was perhaps the weakest platitude in *In Memoriam*; and platitude so easily runs into sheer ineptitude.

It is assumed, in this unfortunate passage of Tennyson's, that there is some special virtue in "faith" and some special vice in "doubt." But it is perfectly clear, when you come to reflect, that "faith" and "doubt" must both have an object, and that the value of either depends upon what they are related to. If you have faith that the moon is made of green cheese, and I doubt the proposition, the difference is not one of transcendent importance. But if you have faith that a certain man will keep his word, and I doubt his fidelity, and the life or liberty of both of us depends upon his being true to his pledge, our difference is of tremendous importance. If you are right, we both gain; if I am right, we both lose. But the issue does not establish your moral superiority over me, or mine over you; it simply establishes the fact that your judgment was superior to mine, or mine to yours; and judgment is an intellectual process, which a bad man may sometimes perform better than a good one.

It is absurd to speak of "faith" in the abstract. When we are told that a man has faith, we should ask "faith in what?" He may have faith in a God of vengeance, or faith in a God of mercy; he may have faith in "grace" or faith in "good works"; he may have faith in moral rectitude or faith in Papal indulgences; he may have faith in reaching heaven through the sacrificial blood of Jesus Christ, or faith in reaching heaven through the gracious favor of the Virgin Mary; he may have faith in the Holy Trinity or faith in Mumbo Jumbo; he may have faith in holy water, faith in transubstantiation, faith in priestly pardon, faith in extreme unction, and faith in prayers for the abbreviation of purgatory, or he may have faith in simple human virtues, and regard all those other things as superstitious inventions.

You may tell me that a man has faith, I may trust myself in his hands, and I may find that he is a Thug. By an act of faith he murders me. The deity he worships is pleased with human blood, and mine is shed for his gratification. The contents of my pocket may, at the same time, fall into the hands of the assassin; but the agent is entitled to some advantage as well as the principal.

John Huss trusted himself in the hands of the Catholic party, and they burnt him alive, because they had a faith against keeping faith with heretics.

A man may doubt the wisdom of peace, or doubt the wisdom of war. A man may doubt the value of parliamentary government, or doubt the value of autocracy. A man may doubt the sense of free trade, or doubt the sense of protection. A man may doubt anything, or doubt its opposite. And what is the use of counting his doubts as moral or immoral?

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They are nothing of the kind. They are simply opinions, which he forms according to his information and intellectual capacity.

If one man works a sum and gives the right answer, he is not moral, he is accurate. If another man works the sum and gives a wrong answer, he is not immoral, he is inaccurate. And the bad arithmetician may be the better citizen of the two.

Learned and able judges try cases and give judgments, and their judgments are sometimes reversed by other judges. There is a difference of opinion in the two separate hearings. But it would be absurd to infer that the judge in the first instance was wicked, and the judge in the second instance virtuous.

Faith is but an opinion, and doubt is an opinion; and by no possibility can an opinion be moral or immoral. These terms only apply to actions and agents. Opinions may be sound or unsound; in other words, they may be accurate or inaccurate. They cannot be anything else.

This philosophy teaches charity. Although we cannot all see eye to eye with each other, we can dwell together in peace and goodwill. A fellow citizen may differ from me and not deserve locking up; and I may differ from him, without deserving the gallows.

People differ on the most important practical questions, and still regard each other as gentlemen; yet when they differ on speculative questions, as to which they are all very much in the dark, they scowl and hiss and spit at each other, and call each other vile names, and do each other terrible injuries, and sometimes cut off each others' heads, or break each other to pieces, or burn each other to death.

All bigotry is bad, but religious bigotry is the worst of all. It is rare to find a Christian who admits that an "infidel" may be as good a man as himself. The priests and parsons naturally minister to this evil spirit. They treat unbelief as a sin. They represent those who reject their teachings as enemies of God. They speak the word Atheist as if it were the name of a monster. The better sort of them still talk of "honest doubts"—as though there could be dishonest doubts. Whenever they see an opponent they say (or look) "I am holier than thou." And the police reports often show that they are not.

A "great" divine once remarked, in the *Hibbert Journal*, that "Much more doubt is voluntary and culpable than it is the fashion to admit. The mental confusion is due to some moral weakness." What is this but saying, in effect, that only wicked people differ from this pompous and egotistic theologian? It is only the professional exhorters who still presume to talk in that way. They used to hurl around them the lightnings of active persecution; at present they can only wield stage thunderbolts. But they look what they cannot execute. "Sir," they say to the infidel, "consider yourself blasted." And the infidel lifts his hat with an ironical smile.

How absurd it is to speak of doubt as "voluntary." The will has nothing to do with the matter. A man cannot believe as he would; he believes as he must. It is impossible to disbelieve what appears to be true, as it is impossible to believe what appears to be false. Scientific psychology puts an end to dogmatism and guarantees intellectual liberty.

G. W. FOOTE.



## Religious Lying.

THE psychology of the religious mind is an interesting study. It is, perhaps, more interesting to me than many, because I was never, so to speak, inside it. Never having owned any religious beliefs worth bothering about, it has not been an easy task to get at the very religious person's point of view, and to look at the world as he sees it. It has been with me, as a consequence, an objective study, treated with the same detachment of mind that one brings to bear upon the psychology of another species—and perhaps with the same danger of not appreciating the other species' point of view. It is easy enough to understand and appreciate the stories of visions and paroxysms of ecstatic emotion. A little knowledge of the physiology of the nervous system, in both its normal and abnormal states, puts one on safe ground here. It is easy enough to deal with the expression of social and domestic and parental feelings in terms of religion. That is a mere environmental accident. But there are other aspects of religious psychology of a rather more puzzling character.

For example, Spurgeon's Tabernacle has recently taken unto itself a new pastor. This is the Rev. Dr. Dixon—an American importation—and who, to Free-thinkers, will perhaps be remembered as the author of some particularly objectionable slanders concerning Colonel Ingersoll. Dr. Dixon is fond of telling stories as a part of his own experience. The stories would be as good—or as bad—without this added feature, but this is a way that Dr. Dixon has, in common with many other preachers. Now, when Dr. Dixon was a young man and studying for the ministry, he prayed that the Lord would allow him to baptise one hundred people before he entered college. Usually, it is a mistake to put a time-limit to prayers, and preachers are well on their guard against this danger. Dr. Dixon, however, has more faith in the Lord—or, perhaps, the Lord is more attentive to Dixon. At any rate, the day before entering college, the number had reached ninety-four. The number was close, but the time was running short. But on that day five people presented themselves for baptism. "Praise the Lord," said Dixon, that is near enough, and I will consider the account closed. But the Lord had his eye on the level century, and as the baptismal party was going into the water, a young man said, "My wife is going in, and I want to go with her." And in he went, Sunday clothes and all. Rather than disappoint Dixon, the Lord ruined the poor devil's best suit, and Dr. Dixon says nothing about compensation. Dr. Dixon had, he says, "put God to the test," and God had responded. It was a case of ruin the clothes or lose Dixon.

One breathes a sigh of relief. Suppose Dr. Dixon had been more exorbitant in his demands? Suppose he had asked for the conversion of all the Free-thinkers in the United States as the price of his services? To God their conversion would have been as easy as getting a hundred baptised by a given date. And had Dr. Dixon demanded their scalps as the price of his adhesion, there is not the slightest doubt they would have been forthcoming. Had Dr. Dixon been more exacting there would probably not have been a single Freethinker left in America to continue the anti-Christian struggle. Any estimate of Dr. Dixon's story should not lose sight of its author's modesty—or, shall we say forbearance?

Now Dr. Dixon's story is only one of a very large class. Pulpit literature is full of them. Religious papers—particularly of the poorer class—for where all are poor there are still degrees of poverty—swarms with stories of a similar kind. There is no street-corner preacher, no matter how young and no matter how poorly equipped, that has not a store ready to hand. Each one of them is ready with a number of stories detailing his dealings with the Lord, or the Lord's dealings with him. Each one will tell you of the cases he has met of people, miserable, forsaken, drunken, poverty-stricken, and

who have become shining lights through their intercession. Instead of the Catholic doctrine of the Intercession of the Saints, we have the Protestant doctrine of the intercession of the street-corner preacher or of the evangelistic Bible-banger.

Now there is, of course, a simple and easy reply to all these stories. It is simple to say they are nearly all lies; and so they are, from one point of view. They are mostly lies inasmuch as they are not true; but they are not lies in the sense that they are all consciously invented by people who appreciate the fact of their being lies. Were it otherwise, there would be no psychological puzzle connected with the phenomenon. Many of the stories are told with an air of truth, and I am quite prepared to believe that the tellers often believe they are true. I have myself been faced by a man in a public meeting who told the audience what I said to him, and what he said to me, *while I was in the Salvation Army*; and a study of the man's bearing convinced me that by some means or the other he actually believed that he was telling the truth. The average mind is not built for elaborate and constructive lying. It would be a stronger, and even a better, mind if it were. It is more a carelessness of the truth that is the case, added to an intense power of self-deception, which in turn rests upon an ill-trained intellect and a badly-balanced emotional nature.

Consider the actual facts of the situation. When a young man starts his career as a preacher he is reminded that appropriate anecdotes will form an attractive feature of his preaching. He also finds compiled for his use volumes of anecdotes on every conceivable topic from which he may borrow. Further, he is urged to keep his eye open for "experiences," and to bring them before his audiences. When he listens to older hands at the game he hears them relating the stock experiences, and observes their influence on listeners. To leave these anecdotes out of his own sermons is to fall behind others in popular effectiveness. To be without "experiences" of his own is to proclaim himself ill-favored or neglected by God. The result is that he is driven to dip into the anecdotal lucky-bag and to appropriate as his own the spiritual conquests he finds retailed. And his hearers are most obligingly uncritical. It never seems to dawn upon them that these stories have a most suspicious similarity, or that the preacher's imagination is chiefly responsible for their existence.

One sees the same thing in the stories of conversion. Anyone—not a Christian—who has listened to individuals retelling what Christ has done for them, must be struck with the monotony of the tales and the obvious desire of the convert to make his past as black as may be. He gloats upon how bad he was, and appears genuinely sorry that he was not worse. The only offences he doesn't confess are those for which he would be legally liable—that is, if he has not been already imprisoned. If he has been, and the offence has been legally expiated, this is an added feather in his cap, and the other converts who can only confess to such trifles as getting drunk, or ill-treating his family, look at him with pathetic envy, and wonder why they were not providentially endowed with the same degree of rascality. Age makes little difference. Mere children may be heard dwelling upon the wickedness of their hearts, and the depravity of their lives, before they accepted Jesus. They are treading in the footsteps of the faithful, and imitating, as young people will, the example of their elders.

Or take, once more, the death-bed story. I do not mean the obviously fabricated story of the unbeliever converted on his death-bed, but the dying person who finds his only consolation in the presence of the preacher and in the comfort of his message. The Bishop of London is fond of telling a meeting how he has just left a death-bed of this description. He does this so frequently that Providence must often kill some poor devil in order to provide the Bishop with a pathetic passage for his speech. Now, death-beds are not uncommon experiences. Everybody



gets there sooner or later, and there is hardly any one who has not stood by the death-bed of a relative or friend. And everyone *knows* that, as a matter of fact, people when dying are not—save in the most exceptional cases—in need of any consolation at all. The usual death is a peaceful death, with brain and body exhausted, with death coming as a restful sleep. And the concern of parent, or of husband, or of wife, is not, so long as they are conscious, for their souls, but for their relatives or friends. Yet these stories are constantly being told, and what is still more remarkable, apparently believed. People know that their own experience, far from supporting these stories, actually gives them the lie, but their experience is obviously powerless against this carefully perpetuated pulpit legend.

These things are not so difficult to understand if we bear in mind a single consideration. The man who grows up in a religious environment is surrounded by an atmosphere in which many things lose their true value and natural proportions. When he enters the pulpit he comes into contact with rules of practice that would in commerce rob him of all credit, and in social life secure ostracism. He may manufacture experiences, answers to prayer, tales of conversion, and the like without censure, because here zeal is another word for exaggeration, and accuracy is the sign of an undeveloped spiritual nature. Certain things are expected of him, and he rises to the occasion. He may commence by telling the story as concerning someone else; in the end he appropriates it—as in the Dixon legend—as his own. He is the victim of his environment, and in the end helps to impose the same evil environment on others. It is not, I repeat, that the men who retail these stories are active liars; they are simply careless of the truth. They are following a profession where the great question is, not what is true, but what is useful, and where carefulness of thought and accuracy of speech are of small moment. Preachers and hearers live in an environment thick with mental falsities and insincerities. And not the least of the evils of religious influence is that illustrated by those who

“Keep on till their own lies deceive 'em.  
And, oft repeating, at length believe 'em.”

C. COHEN.

### Sunday.

THE Lord's Day is dying because it never had life in itself. Sunday lives because the power of an endless life is within it. It is a strange coincidence that the Christians, having abandoned the Jewish Sabbath, eventually identified their Lord's Day with the Sun's Day. As is well known, the days of the week are of astronomical origin. The Jewish Sabbath was Saturn's Day; and its character was determined by its origin. Saturn had the reputation of being a dull, heavy, gloomy, and sinister deity; and we learn that, in consequence, the Semitic priests wore black on his day, and worshiped him in a black sanctuary. No wonder, then, that the Sabbath developed into a peculiarly grim, dark, and repulsive day, in which no kind of work was to be done, and no kind of pleasure enjoyed. As many as thirty-nine kinds of work were formally forbidden. In the Old Testament the Sabbath is represented as a memorial of the completion of the work of creation on the sixth day. Because the Lord was believed to have rested on the seventh day his chosen people were commanded to do the same, on pains of being stoned to death if they did not. But when Christianity became fully differentiated from Judaism, it gradually disowned the Sabbath as an institution of Divine origin. Now, the Sabbath was renounced by the Christians, in the first instance, not because they were eager to substitute for it any other day of their own choosing, but because they disbelieved in holy or sacred days altogether. The Gospel Jesus never enjoins Sabbath observance, and condemns in the strongest terms the

Sabbath law enforced in his day. Does it never strike present day divines as passing strange that their Lord and Master never alludes to the duty of keeping holy any day whatever, nor once even hints that any day should be set apart for worship? Do they never face the fact that for the first three centuries the fathers of the Church saw no need of any sacred seasons? Nothing is more incontestable than that in the early Church all days were ideally alike. Writing to the Galatians, Paul says:—

“Ye observe days, and months, and seasons, and years. I am afraid of you, lest by any means I have bestowed labor upon you in vain” (Gal. iv. 10, 11).

In Colossians (ii. 16, 17) we find the following principle laid down:—

“Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a feast day or a new moon or a Sabbath day, which are a shadow of the things to come, but the body is Christ's.”

Quotations to the same effect might be made from Justin Martyr, Irenæus, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Origen, Victorinus, Eusebius, Cyril of Jerusalem, Epiphanius, Jerome, and many others.

It is worthy of special emphasis, in the present juncture, that for the first three hundred years of its history, the Christian Church taught that all days were alike. Justin Martyr taunted the Jews thus: “You, because you are idle for one day, suppose you are pious.....Our God is not pleased with such observances.” Tertullian describes Christians as people “to whom Sabbaths are strange.” It is true that religious meetings were frequently held, but there was no set day for them. Some churches met on Sunday, some on Wednesday, some on Friday, and some on Saturday; and no sooner were the meetings over than the people resumed their usual occupations. It was not until 321 that any enactments were made regarding Sunday observance. It was Constantine, the first Christian Emperor, who issued the first edict on the subject, and this was simple in the extreme. From time immemorial Sunday had been looked upon, throughout the Pagan world, as the people's weekly holiday; and it was on “the venerable day of the Sun” that Constantine commanded “all judges and all people of the towns to rest, and all the various trades to be suspended.” People living in the country, however, were allowed full liberty “to attend to the cultivation of the fields, lest with the loss of favorable opportunity the commodities offered by heaven be destroyed.” The truth is that the Catholic Church has never been guilty of extreme Sabbatarianism. Indeed, it has always permitted Sunday work, provided the people attended her chief service first. There were no Sabbatarians among the Reformers either. Luther maintained that there was “no necessity for keeping Sunday.” Dr. Hesse states, in his Bampton Lecture, that “Sabbatarianism of every phase was expressly repudiated by the chief Reformers in every country.” Zwingle held that “it is lawful on the Lord's Day, after Divine service, for any man to pursue his labors.” Beza was convinced that “no cessation of work on the Lord's Day is required of Christians.” Even Calvin declared that “Christians should have nothing to do with a superstitious observance of days.” It is related that when John Knox arrived at Geneva on a Sunday he found Calvin and other leaders of the Church playing bowls on the Green, and could see no harm in it. Knox was narrow and bigoted on many points; but he was not a Sabbatarian.

Indeed, Sabbatarianism has never prevailed in the Catholic Church, and it was also foreign to the taste and disposition of the early Protestant Reformers. Strictly speaking, Sabbatarianism is a British product. It was the Puritans who attempted to rob Great Britain of every scrap of religious liberty, and who, especially, laid upon it the intolerable burden of a superstitious Sunday. How they raved against the declaration of James I., which allowed public sports on Sunday after Divine service. They did their utmost to have all the saint days retained in the calendar of Queen Elizabeth abolished. They were



met with the question, if there were no ground in reason or in Scripture for observing saint days, what argument was there for the retention of Sunday in the form advocated by them? They saw the difficulty, and met it by asserting that there was no break between the Jewish Sabbath and Sunday, and, indeed, that Sunday was the Jewish Sabbath held on a different day. Therefore, it was concluded that all the austere Sabbath laws contained in the Old Testament were equally applicable to the Christian Sunday, or, as they put it, to the "Sunday Sabbath." So vigorous and successful were they in this "Sunday Sabbath" propaganda that the irrational and unjust Lord's Day Observance Acts of Charles I. and Charles II. came into force, and resulted in incalculable damage to the moral fibre of the people. Offenders against those disgraceful Acts were put in the stocks for the space of two hours. Indeed, there was in London, in 1661, a Baptist minister who had the courage to speak out, in vehement tones, against such wicked laws; and for his pains he was hanged and quartered, had his heart taken out and burned, his quarters affixed to the gates of the city, and his head stuck on the top of a pole, and set opposite his meeting-house in Whitechapel. The Puritan Sunday was a positive curse. In Scotland and Wales, even more than in England, it pressed like a horrible nightmare upon the heart of the people. In Wales, fifty years ago, a boy of eleven was unmercifully thrashed for the dark crime of laughing on Sunday, just as in Scotland, nearly three centuries ago, Charles I. is said to have been publicly rebuked for the same offence.

It is that disgusting caricature of a Day of Rest that is now so rapidly dying out. It was a step downwards that was taken when the Sun's Day became the Lord's Day; and the bottom of all possible degradation was touched when the Lord's Day was tacked on to the Saturn's Day of the ancient Babylonians and Semites. Now, happily, the trend has set back in the direction of the original Sun's Day, the people's weekly day of healthy recreation. This movement is distinctive of the last quarter of the nineteenth century, and of the opening decades of the twentieth. It is a revolt not merely against the Puritan "Sunday Sabbath," but quite as much against the Christian Sunday itself. The modern man has no use for such an institution even in its mildest form. What he needs is one day in seven set apart for rest and recreation. And the modern man already forms four-fifths of the adult population of this land. Such is the humiliating fact which the leaders of the Churches have at last to face, and the facing it throws them into a perfect delirium of indignation. They hate and despise the "Sunday Sabbath" of the Puritans themselves; but it is the Secular Sunday of the modern man that drives them mad. The truth is that the continued existence of the Christian Church depends upon the retention of the conventional Christian Sunday. She is in perilous straits even now, supported only by one-fifth of the adult population; but she becomes quite desperate at the sight of this miserable minority steadily dwindling away.

Now, where the Christian apologist goes astray is in taking for granted that the modern man is anxious to do away with Sunday. The Rev. T. E. Rath falls into that error in his splendidly written article in the *Baptist Times and Freeman* for July 28, and in consequence he devotes a large portion of it to a defence of Sunday as a day of rest. Three or four of his longest paragraphs, true and beautiful as they are, are utterly wasted, because there is no wish on anybody's part to abolish Sunday; it is the Christian Sunday, the day set apart by law for Divine worship and church and chapel going, that the majority of the people have outgrown; and, in the name of common sense, what right has one fifth of the population to compel the four-fifths to observe its Sunday? What the majority say to the minority is this: "We leave you your Sunday with all the pleasure in the world. You may pray and preach and sing and beg until you are black in the face, so

far as we are concerned. Yes, with the utmost unconcern we leave you your Sunday; *Why won't you let us have ours on the same terms?*" But, alas, the minority in this case seem incapable of acting fairly. They talk glibly about the birthright of liberty; but, in reality, the only liberty they actually believe in is the liberty that would enable them to run this world according to their own ideas, and to compel all who repudiate those ideas to act as if they were in love with them. That is not liberty, but the veriest caricature of liberty—liberty to open the church and close the theatre, to listen to sermons but not to comic songs. That is the kind of liberty Mr. Rath believes in. He does not like Sunday Leagues, cheap excursion trains and steamers, and crowded golf links, and other forms of Sunday pleasure, and so he declares that they "seldom minister to any man's sense of fitness for effective service on Monday morning." But Mr. Rath forgets two essential things, namely, first, that the people themselves are the best judges as to what kind of Sunday observance is most beneficial to them, and, second, that they are not necessarily selfish because they prefer the golf links or the concert-room to church or chapel. Mr. Rath magnifies his own concern too much when he throws mud at the people who differ from him; and is not this, after all, the most demoralising species of selfishness? The only comfort is that four-fifths of the population no longer take Mr. Rath and his brethren seriously, but are becoming more and more convinced that a Secular Sunday need not be any the less noble and elevating, in every essentially human sense, than the Christian Sunday is supposed to be. For our part, we believe that a couple of hours on the golf links would be immeasurably more profitable than half-an-hour listening to the cheap platitudes and useless speculations of the pulpit.

J. T. LLOYD.

### More "Unverified" Quotations.

(Reprinted from the New York "Truthseeker.")

THE *Truthseeker* has shown too much honor to Billy Sunday by noticing his peculiar pulpit ethics. As was pointed out by a correspondent from Ohio, he made his "quotation" from Franklin in the presence of many preachers and some thousands of other people, and, as usual, it went unchallenged. Here are Mr. Sunday's words as quoted in the *Truthseeker* :—

"Tom Paine sent the manuscript of his *Age of Reason* to Ben Franklin, and the printer-diplomat sent it back with the advice, 'Burn it; never unchain that tiger upon the people. If this world is so bad now with the religion of Jesus Christ, what would it be without it?' That comment answers every criticism."

The *Truthseeker's* observation that the *Age of Reason* was not written till after Franklin's death is right to the point, but it is not enough. Franklin did write a letter to Paine advising him not to publish a certain manuscript, but there is no way of knowing what it was. Edmund Clarence Stedman publishes the letter in his *Library of American Literature*; observes that the date of the letter is uncertain, but does not venture a guess as to the manuscript. In the letter Franklin advises Paine not to publish the manuscript because it denied the intervention of a special Providence in answer to special prayer. It must be remembered that Paine first came to America because of Franklin's invitation, and no doubt he considered Franklin as his best friend and safest adviser. I quote from the letter that readers may compare Franklin's words with Sunday's garbled "quotation":—

"You yourself may find it easy to live a virtuous life, without the assistance afforded by religion; you have a clear perception of the advantages of virtue, and the disadvantages of vice, and possessing a strength of resolution sufficient to enable you to resist common temptation. But think how great a portion of mankind consists of weak and ignorant men and women,



and of inexperienced, inconsiderate youth of both sexes, who have need of the motives of religion to restrain them from vice, to support their virtue, and retain them in the practice of it till it becomes habitual, which is the great point for its security.....I would advise you, therefore, not to attempt unchaining the tiger, but to burn this piece before it is seen by any other person, whereby you will save yourself a great deal of mortification by the enemies it may raise against you, and perhaps a good deal of regret and repentance. If men are so wicked with religion, what would they be if without it?"

Where does the "religion of Jesus Christ" come in? Will Mr. Sunday tell his next audience, upon the authority of Franklin, that it is the "weak and ignorant men and women" that need religion? "Never unchain that tiger" meaning Paine's manuscript) "upon the people," says Sunday. The tiger that Franklin had in mind was the religious mob; the tiger that crucified Christ, that burnt Bruno, that shot Ferrer, and that is to-day devouring the substance of the poor all over Christendom. Did not the tiger pursue Paine to his grave? Did it even stop there? Has it, even yet, given over the pursuit? Franklin wrote this letter in real solicitude for the welfare of his friend, foreseeing that a hundred years later, savage little theological cubs would still growl at the mere mention of his name. That Franklin, in his day, knew little preachers of the Sunday kind is shown in his letter to Whitefield, June 6, 1753:—

"He professed, that he came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance; which implied his modest opinion that there were some in his time so good that they need not hear even him for improvement; but nowadays we have scarce a little parson that does not think it the duty of every man within his reach to sit under his petty ministrations; and that whoever omits them offends God."

Billy Sunday has been exposed before. When he was in Danville, Ill., D. W. Sanders, a citizen of Covington, Ind., deposited \$10 in a bank, published an open letter to Sunday (paying advertising rates, \$15, to the paper), and offered him the money if he would prove some of his statements. Sunday did not claim the money. Why should he? So long as Christian people will pay him \$2,000 per week for telling lies, truth may remain "at the bottom of the well." His story concerning "Ben Hur" does not need to be true, and carries with it all the elements and proofs of falsehood:—

"[They say] that Lew Wallace was an Infidel, and Ingersoll asked him to write a book that would show the life of Jesus to great disadvantage. Wallace agreed to do it, but before writing his Infidel book, read, for the first time, the New Testament and became a convert, joined the Church, and wrote the book to prove Christ's divinity."

In the first place, Ingersoll never wanted to show the life of Christ "to great disadvantage," and in the second place, had he so wished, he needed no assistance from Wallace, Wallace was born in 1827. *Ben Hur* was published in 1880. Wallace was fifty years old, or more, when he wrote the book, and had been for years engaged in literary work. Does anyone believe that, at that age and engaged in that work, he "read for the first time the New Testament"? *A Fair God* (by Wallace) was written many years before *Ben Hur*, and deals with the religion and customs of one country, just as *Ben Hur* deals with the religion and customs of another. *Ben Hur* is a work of fiction, and its merit rests on its fidelity to Roman life and customs. Christ is dealt with in that work just as the "Holy Grail" has been dealt with by Tennyson, Lowell, and others, and does not even commit Wallace to a belief in Christ. Sunday is giving the Christian public just what it wants. He is doing in a vulgar, spectacular way, just what all Christendom is doing in some way. The *Youth's Companion* quotes Henry Drummond as saying that, if anyone will show him ten square miles in any non-Christian country, where property, human life, or the honor and virtue of woman is respected, he will renounce his Christianity.

Practically, it makes no difference whether Drummond used the words or not. Without being responsible for the truth, the *Youth's Companion* has libelled the entire human race, and lied to a million young and defenceless readers. Christian bias is fatal to truth. Let anyone read the article on St. Paul in the *Britannica*. Then let him read on the same subject in the *American Supplement*. Why should there be two articles on the same subject in a work of reference? A few words from the American author (Rev. Matthew B. Riddle, D.D.) will show:—

"The full sketch of the Apostle Paul's life in the *Encyclopædia Britannica* suggests many doubts in regard to the trustworthiness of the New Testament records. But of all ancient historical books there is not one that has been so thoroughly tested as the Acts of the Apostles."

There is no place sacred, nor safe, from the polemic intrusion of the clergy, and any student investigating any subject touching in the remotest way the Christian faith must first know the Christian bias of his authors, and keep it ever in mind if he desires to reach the truth. A recent session of the Episcopal Diocese of Ohio repudiated Kings Henry VIII. and Edward VI. as the founders of the Anglican Church, and condemned all school histories that so teach. Why? By a hocus-pocus play with words they hope to antedate those kings by some hundreds of years, and give that Church a respectable origin. Christian writers, and especially Christian compilers, have filled the world with books whose mission is to bury or discredit the truth concerning Christianity and the Christian Church. A dozen idle preachers can go into some large public library, and in ten days "compile" a book on most any subject that may safely "go into any Christian home." Thousands of histories, biographies, cyclopædias, etc., have been produced in this way. This has been going on for hundreds of years. No wonder there are "some doubts in regard to the trustworthiness of the New Testament records"! Hallam says that many rare and ancient manuscripts were erased during the Middle Ages, and the parchment used for worthless Church records. Yet we are told that the Church has preserved the ancient learning and literature. Be easy with Billy Sunday. His sins are little ones. He is writing in the sand, and just a little time will remove the bad taste that he leaves in every cultured mouth.

A. J. MCARTHUR, M.D.

[We once saw a facsimile of the letter alleged to have been written by Franklin to Paine. It is without date, address, or signature, and therefore bears no external evidence as to when or where it was written, to whom it was written, or who wrote it. Many years ago the "quotation" attributed to Henry Drummond by the *Youth's Companion* was credited to James Russell Lowell and went about as his offspring until he repudiated it. The substitution of another author may give the libel a new and perpetual lease of life.—*Edron, Truthseeker.*]

## National Secular Society.

REPORT OF MONTHLY EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD ON JULY 27.

The President, Mr. G. W. Foote, in the chair. There were also present:—Messrs. Barry, Bowman, Cohen, Cowell, Davies, Dawson, Davidson, Heaford, Lloyd, Nichols, Roger, Rosetti, Samuels, Thurlow, Quinton, and Wood.

New members were admitted from the Parent Society and the West Stanley Branch.

Mr. Cohen reported on behalf of the sub-committee appointed to deal with the Liverpool resolution, remitted from the Conference.

After discussion, it was resolved to invite the co-operation of unattached Freethinkers in the various provincial towns, as well as those belonging to the N. S. S., to supply the addresses of persons likely to be interested in the proposed scheme.

The Secretary was instructed to arrange for a Social at Anderton's Hotel early in October.

E. M. VANCE, General Secretary.



## Acid Drops.

It appears that the Catholic Church is a partner with the Monarchists in a conspiracy against the Portuguese Republic. Cardinal Merry del Val is reported as quite openly co-operating, on behalf of the Vatican, with Capt. Conciero, the leader of the Portuguese Monarchists in Spain, who as openly promises that if they succeed in restoring the monarchy in Portugal "all the religious congregations, convents, and monasteries shall be restored, and the supremacy of the Catholic Church shall be made secure." This is in face of the approaching recognition of the Republic by the laggard Powers, including Great Britain. No wonder that the Portuguese Government has addressed a warning letter to the Bishops. If they insist on playing the political game of treason they will have to suffer the consequences of losing it. It is childish to expect that they can participate in an active conspiracy against the Government and plead immunity from punishment as priests in case of failure. They will have to face the music like other people. We read that "the Bishops are awaiting instructions from the Pope"—and *his* instructions are pretty sure to be foolish.

Rev. Dr. Clifford is back from America. He is as sensible and prudent as ever. He assures an interviewer that Canada is going to take the lead away from the United States. This announcement is sure to increase the goodwill between those two nations. Dr. Clifford is a grand diplomatist—if he isn't grand at anything else.

Nature follows her own course in thunderstorms. She strikes a church with lightning as readily as a public-house; rather more so, as the church is generally more exposed. During the severe thunderstorm which broke over London on Saturday afternoon (July 29) many outdoor meetings must have been stopped by the deluge, but we only hear of one that suffered in other ways, and that was a religious assembly. The following report appeared in Monday's *Daily News*:-

"While the annual church fête connected with the Church of St. Mellitus, Hanwell, was taking place at Drayton Green a storm broke over the ground. There was a rush for shelter to a covered platform, which immediately became crowded, and many took shelter beneath it. The structure was quite inadequate to bear the strain, and collapsed. Several people were injured. The most serious cases were: Mr. Burkenshaw, of Rosebank-road, Hanwell, who received internal injuries owing to a piano falling upon him, and was removed to Ealing Cottage Hospital; an elderly lady named Ferrers, of 37 Church-road, Hanwell, together with her daughter, Mrs. Bass, who sustained injuries to the back; and Mr. Wintle, 14 Balfour-road, Hanwell. The last three were able to proceed home after medical treatment."

"Providence" afforded that Church meeting no more protection than it would have extended to a meeting in a thieves' kitchen.

The poet was right. God *does* move in a mysterious way his wonders to perform. By an American cutting we see that the lightning which struck a Fort Wayne (Ind.) church on June 4 during divine service, silenced the organ, put out the electric lights, and stunned many of the congregation.

No less than 93deg. was registered in London during the heat wave. Six months of such weather would turn the respectable citizens of "the metropolis of civilisation" into *Lazzaroni*. So much does man, as an intellectual and moral being, depend upon material conditions.

You see a man of God dressed in the usual black in this sultry weather, and wearing the usual white choker—which on such occasions fully deserves its name. The reverend gentleman strives to maintain a pious composure, but if you listened to him *sub rosa* you would find him sweating and swearing like other citizens. We are all creatures of circumstances.

Disastrous heath fires broke out under the heat wave. Over a thousand acres of woodland were burnt out in the pine forests on the Fox Hills, in spite of the efforts of troops called out from Aldershot and the vicinity. This wanton destruction of useful property must be credited to the celestial party known as "Providence." There really ought to be some means of bringing him, her, or it to book. The most destructive madman, if let loose on the district, could not work such havoc.

Over a hundred persons were killed by the heat wave in one day in Germany. A verdict of murder or manslaughter

ought to be returned against the personage responsible for this mischief.

Between 2,000 and 3,000 acres of the great forest at Fontainebleau have been destroyed by fires caused by the torrid heat. "He doeth all things well."

Hindu priests at Bombay took their rain-god, Shringi Rishi, down to the seashore, and offered the old chap coconuts and other delicacies, but they did not induce him to send down the necessary fluid from his celestial sprinkler. English rain-doctors are not so ready at exposing their inefficiency. They have learnt a thing or two in the last hundred years, as the Hindu members of the profession will learn in the next hundred years.

Mr. R. J. Campbell is a little *more* omniscient than the majority of the members of the Black Brigade. He always speaks as one to whom the secrets of the universe have been revealed. He is quite sure that our earthly life is a "quest for God," and the reason he assigns for its being such is very curious and amusing. Before we descended to this grim and shadowy region, we knew God intimately and enjoyed blissful communion with him; but during our passage from the spiritual to the material realm, or in the process of taking up our abode in these vile bodies, we lost both the knowledge and the communion. Now, according to the City Temple oracle, God imprisoned us in these "too muddy vestures of decay" that he might become lost to us, and that, thus handicapped, we might go through the discipline of finding him again. What an unthinkable, impossible course for a perfect Being to pursue! What Mr. Campbell offers his hearers as "good tidings of great joy," and urges them to accept as a veritable fact and the supreme inspiration of their lives, is but the wildest and most irresponsible speculation. His reading of the riddle of the universe is metaphysical moonshine, in support of which he cannot adduce a single fact.

More than that; all the known facts of life show the utter absurdity of the whole thing. Not long ago, Mr. Campbell denounced Jehovah in most unparliamentary terms; but we are obliged to call his own deity a moral monster, a heartless fiend, an almighty humbug, an infinite trifler, devoid of all conscience. If Mr. Campbell would only think rationally for five minutes, he would see how cruelly he is fooling the people who listen to him.

Dr. Orchard's gospel must serve as a delightful soothing syrup for intellectual cowards and moral wrecks. His message is that in the end happiness shall be the lot of all, no matter what their earthly life may have been. "We have freedom to go any way we choose," he says; "but it is the will of God that all ways, however tortuous, perverse, and long, shall lead only to one end." How very comforting to all evil-doers! Rogues, robbers, sweaters of the poor, swindlers, murderers, as well as the good and true—all alike shall have one end. Dr. Orchard is not orthodox, but in effect his gospel does not differ from the old evangelical one, whose appeal is this, "I care not what you may have been and done hitherto; but I assure you that the moment you believe in Christ you shall become, in God's sight, as pure and holy as the angels before the throne." And yet we are told that Christianity contains the highest and noblest morality the world has ever seen.

The Rev. J. E. Rattenbury said the other day that "if a Christian man was a pessimist he was also an ignoramus"; but it would be much truer to say that "if a Christian man is an optimist he is also an ignoramus." No one fairly familiar with the history of the Church can possibly be an optimist, for it is a history that brings the blush of shame into the cheek. If Mr. Rattenbury is an optimist as to the future of Christianity he is either profoundly ignorant, or fatally lacking in sincerity. As a Divine institution the Church has been a colossal failure, while even as a purely human organisation it has nothing of which to boast. Can Mr. Rattenbury honestly call that statement in question?

Some preachers seem to go out of their way to avoid the truth. There is, for instance, the well-known story of Jowett's visit to a Positivist meeting, and his remark that he found there three persons and no God. The Rev. C. R. Brown, preaching at Whitefield's, told this story of a friend of his who was staying at a London hotel. The last was doubtless intended as a finishing touch to make the story sound true of his friend. And there really was no need for it—except a preacher's incurable habit of speaking accurately. The story has more point related of Jowett



than of Mr. Brown's unnamed and unknown and non-existent friend.

A Bill is before the House of Commons Committee which seeks to empower the authorities at the Isle of Man to increase the charge from 3d. to 1s. for every passenger landed on Sunday. The pietists of the Isle of Man do not like Sunday trading, but if they are to have their conscience outraged they desire their pockets consoled. And after all, as sharing in Sunday trading may involve punishment hereafter, presumably extra risk and greater profit is a rule that obtains here as elsewhere. Somehow one is reminded of Ruskin's dictum that if engineers could build a tunnel to hell, Christians would put their money in it, and would shut up the churches for fear of lowering the dividend.

Mrs. Archibald Little, who has travelled extensively in China, told the Universal Races Congress the other day that the Chinese looked upon all violence as lowering and degrading, but the Western races were teaching them to admire soldiers and armies. This is well known to all who know anything about the matter, but it is good to have the truth pressed home to those whose mouths are full of hypocritical nonsense concerning the peace-producing qualities of the Christian religion.

The Universal Races Congress may be taken as a laudable endeavor to bring about a better understanding between people of different races and nations, and so far we wish it every success. From the meagre reports that have appeared in the press there seems an almost overdose of pure sentiment about the proceedings, but that, perhaps, is to be expected. Naturally, too, the religious press has been anxious to exploit the gathering in the interests of Christianity. Much has been written about its being an expression of the Christian conscience, etc., etc., and the fact that the Congress was suggested by Freethinkers, has been largely engineered by Freethinkers, and a good proportion of Freethinkers take part in its proceedings, being conveniently ignored. We are too much accustomed to this game to be greatly surprised at its being played on the present occasion.

One thing we would remind Christian readers of is that the most practical, and the most successful, attempt in the history of the world to give realisation to the idea of the brotherhood of man and the unity of the race was that made by the Pagan Roman Empire. Whatever its faults and drawbacks may have been, the fact remains that it was the best attempt that has ever been made. The second century of this era saw a better practical expression of the unity of the human race—black, white, and brown—than has been the case since, or than is likely to be the case for a long time to come. The appearance of Christianity as a world-power not only divided men by theological differences; it revived and strengthened all the national and racial differences from which so much evil has come. The Roman Empire naturally had but little of the national antipathies that disgrace modern Europe, still less had it the racial problems that exist in the South-East of Europe or in America. It mouthed less than Christianity about the brotherhood of man, but it did more to make it a reality. Christianity trampled on the fact, and consoled itself in a welter of meaningless and stupefying sentimentality. And if the pietists succeed in establishing themselves in the Universal Races Congress they will exert the same baleful influences there that they have exerted elsewhere.

Some curious passages occur in Sir H. H. Johnston's article on the Universal Races Congress in the August *Contemporary Review*. The famous traveller seems to have got some strange maggots into his head lately. He appears to regard the Christianity of Christ (whatever that is) as the cure for the world's woes. Listen to this:—

"Of all other faiths and rules of conduct that have ever been placed before the world, from Greek philosophy and Egyptian theology to the Babism or Baháism and Prometheanism of to-day, it may be said that what there is of true and practical good is to be found in the simplest exposition of Christ's teaching, and what is foreign to that is not worth listening to."

Sir H. Johnston actually suggests that *this* Christianity—the most indefinite ever offered—should be made "the State religion of every country." He even tries to tickle Japan into the pious combination. "Japan," he says, "would take a tremendous step forward in the comity of nations if to-morrow she declared her State religion to be undogmatic Christianity." He innocently imagines that by calling themselves Christians nations would soon be living in peace and friendship with each other. "What animosities and conflicts would cease," he exclaims, "if all the world were

nominally and basally Christian!"—like England and Germany perhaps! Christian nations don't quarrel with each other, don't keep up huge armies and navies, and never, never fight and slay each other. Of course not. Who ever heard of such a thing? Sir H. H. Johnston has got hold of a splendid specific.

Dr. Robertson Nicoll is naturally optimistic about the power of Christianity. As Heine said about God forgiving sins, that is his trade. Christianity, he says, does not die because sceptical novelists find an audience. "Christianity buried Julian, it buried Renan.....The living assailants of Christian morality are not of Byron's stature, and the Christian morality buried Byron." This statement is both incomplete and inexact. It is incomplete because the full statement would run: "Christian morality lied about Julian, it lied about Byron, and it lied about most of the people who have been bold enough to attack it. It buried them beneath mountains of slander, and trusted to the stupidity of mankind for security." And it is inexact because, in the truest sense of the word, Christianity has been weakened by the attacks that Julian and Renan and Byron made upon its pretensions. The Christianity of Julian's day is as dead as the dodo. Its absurdities and neurotic extravagances are to-day believed in by none. And the Christianity of later days has been compelled to admit the justice of much that was said against it. Byron knew a Christianity that sent best part of the human race to hell for doubting its teachings. He would have to hunt amongst prominent preachers to-day to find more than a mere handful who believed in hell for anyone. He would find the doctrines that were unquestioned in his day discarded in our own. And from the purely intellectual point he might, were he now alive, reasonably question whether the emasculated, compromising, applause-hunting thing that calls itself Christianity is now worth the trouble of kicking.

The annual report of the Commissioners in Lunacy for the current year is interesting reading, and we are glad to note its detection of a common fallacy as to the increase of lunacy in the community. Because the number of insane has increased of recent years, hasty observers have jumped to the conclusion that the stress of modern life has driven people insane, and the race is drifting towards a universal lunatic asylum. Such a conclusion fails to note the destruction of eliminative agencies by the progress of civilisation, as well as the greater stringency in securing the insane. Better medical knowledge keeps alive many who would have died without issue, and even such a mania as witchcraft must have, a couple of centuries ago, eliminated a large number of insane persons. The Commissioners are, therefore, on sound lines in remarking that "the increase in the number of the insane recorded year by year is no proof of an actual growth of insanity in the community."

But, in another part of the report, the truth of the matter is incidentally disclosed. The report states that out of every 100 cases admitted there remains under care at the end of one year only 47, at the end of two years 36, at the end of three years 27, of seven years 21, of twelve years 15. That is, the authorities dismiss at the end of seven years 79 per cent., or at the end of three years 73 per cent. of the people who have once been certified insane. They are discharged as cured. But "cured" in this connection is a questionable term. The insane diathesis remains; and the ugly fact is that, whereas ignorance in former times was unable to "cure" and so helped to limit the insane stock, knowledge to-day helps to perpetuate the stock by dismissing patients as cured, who may, and do, become the parents of a fresh generation. There does not seem any great need to look further for a reason as to the increase in the number of patients in our institutions.

We are glad to see that Mr. Edward Clodd is allowed to begin a recent review in the *Daily Chronicle* with the statement that "the Gifford Lecturship, in the hands of special pleaders, threatens to fall to the level of the Bampton and the Bridgewater." Mr. Clodd might have added, if he had cared to, and if the editor would have stood it, that this fact is another proof of the absolute lack of honor amongst Christians in regard to their own and other people's religions. Lord Gifford stipulated in his will that religion, under his Lectureship, should be treated scientifically, that the lecturer's own religious opinions should count for nothing, and that Atheists as well as Theists might be invited to deliver the annual courses of lectures. But no "unbeliever" has yet been appointed. The Christian trustees have held the Lectureship at the service of Christianity. Lord Gifford was a tolerant thinker, his will proves it, but it also proves that he did not recognise the great rarity of toleration even



amongst "believers." He placed too much trust in his trustees.

The Epworth League is an organisation connected with the Methodist Church in the United States. It runs a matrimonial bureau, with the object of bringing young men and women together, so that they get acquainted with each other, fall in love with each other, and marry each other. A glance at English seaside places in the summer shows that there such a matrimonial bureau is less needed amongst the Christian young people over here.

According to an article in the *Daily Chronicle* by the Rev. J. H. Harris, of Lagos, the question of polygamy is a burning one amongst the native Christians in Africa. The Churches established by the European missionaries insist on an African convert's getting rid of all his wives but one. What becomes of them does not seem to trouble the missionaries very much. The converts themselves, however, look at the matter differently, and those who want to keep their wives have formed an African Church of their own. Mr. Harris calls this lowering the religious standard to personal desires. But he frankly admits that the polygamous native Christian may answer such criticism by pointing to another phenomenon.

"He will tell us that it is more honest to live his life than the fraudulent lives of professing Christians, white and black, whose hypocritical attitude, particularly on sex questions, is the by-word of the West Coast of Africa. I fear there is too much truth in this retort. White men, at least, must hold their peace, and there lies the danger!"

The black man prefers to be an honest polygamist; the white man prefers to be a monogamist and a whoremonger,—and this he calls a higher state of religious life.

It is amusing to come across puffs of the Rev. A. J. Waldron in newspapers and magazines. They are all what is called "inspired," and evidently supplied from the same source. Everything about him is lauded—even his big mouth, which is duly noticed in the August number of the *Young Man*. The writer of this article is a terrible gusher. He calls Mr. Waldron "the virile Vicar of Brixton." *Virile!* Angels and ministers of grace defend us! Does the writer know what the word really means? If he doesn't, he should consult a good etymological dictionary at once. If he does, it is a problem how he obtained his information—and for which sex this advertisement is intended.

Mr. Waldron's achievements amongst the "infidels" are made much of, but in general terms. One would like to see any convert he had made from Freethought to Christianity. One would do.

There has been talk of late years—it is in this *Young Man* article—of Mr. Waldron's having worked for Freethought at Plymouth before he started working for Christianity. This report must, of course, have emanated from the reverend gentleman himself. We do not believe that there is a word of truth in it. There are special reasons why we ought to have heard of him as a Freethought worker at Plymouth if he ever stood in that capacity. We never *did* hear of him. We rather fancy the Rev. W. T. Lee could give the report a flat contradiction if he chose to speak out. He knows more about Mr. Waldron's doings at Plymouth than most men.

The "inspired" puffs of Mr. Waldron are always silent on one subject. They never mention his connection with the Nonconformists prior to his seeing a better chance in the Church of England. Mr. Waldron appears to possess a helpful memory as well as a helpful imagination.

*Phases of the Work of the Salvation Army* is a large well-got-up pamphlet with a good portrait of "General" Booth. The "Foreword" contains a flattering paragraph on the "General" from the pen of that great philosopher, Mr. Rider Haggard, and there is similar praise later on from the pen of that profound thinker, Mr. Harold Begbie. At the bottom of the first page we find the following sweet paragraph:—

"We ascribe all the glory to God for the work which has been and is being accomplished, and we ask our friends to give the work a continuance of that financial assistance and practical support which it so greatly needs at this time."

We give God the glory, but we must ask you for the cash—and, by God, we want it badly.

The work of the Salvation Army is praised up to the skies in this publication. But every statement has to be taken on trust, and some statements are obviously ridiculous. We are

told, for instance, that "there are 3,000,000 hereditary criminals in India"—amongst whom, of course, the Salvation Army is working very successfully. But what is the value of such figures? How on earth can it be known how many "hereditary criminals" there are in any country? Nothing strikes us more, in reading Salvation Army reports, than the extraordinary looseness of its arithmetic.

Not only Lord Hugh Cecil, but the right honorable F. E. Smith, who joined the monkey lord in that vulgar insult to Mr. Asquith, is a great friend of the Christian religion, especially of the rowdy variety of it that so often taxes the resources of the police at Liverpool. Freethinkers could easily give these "Christian gentlemen" a lesson in good manners.

### Ingersoll Slab in Glen Oak.

PARK BOARD ALLOWS ERECTION OF MONUMENT.

*Memorial Association Addresses Communication to Members and Request is Allowed—Dedication is Set for October.*

GLEN OAK PARK is to provide a location for the statue of Colonel Robert G. Ingersoll. A position in the beautiful circle at the Perry-avenue entrance to the park was granted to the Triebel tablet Wednesday night at the regular meeting of the Peoria Pleasure Driveway and Park District Commissioners. Committees have been appointed both by the Park Board and by the Ingersoll Monument Association. They will confer this week, and work on the base for the statue will begin as soon as they determine the definite spot where it is to be erected.

Action in allowing the Monument Association to place the bronze figure in Glen Oak came following the presentation of a communication read by President Peter Casey. The document recited that present plans provide for the dedication of the memorial in October of the present year. Hundreds of prominent persons from all parts of the country—admirers of Peoria's most widely known citizen—will come to the city to attend the ceremonies connected with the dedication.

President Casey relinquished the President's chair while he read the communication, and then moved that the request of the Ingersoll Monument Association be granted. Trustee Newman seconded the motion in a little speech extolling the virtues of the dead orator, and Trustees Techt, Thomas, and McElwee spoke favorably to the motion. Trustee Thomas suggested that Peoria's parks become the repositories for future statues of great men, as are the parks in other cities, and declared that no better start could be made than by granting a site to the Ingersoll monument. Upon being put to a vote, the motion to place the statue in the park was unanimously adopted.

President Casey is to act with the Glen Oak Committee and representatives from the Monument Association in arranging the details for the placement. The Committees expect to act at once, and the construction of the base will begin within a few weeks.—*Peoria Journal* (June 22).

There are who, rapt to heights of tranced trust,  
These tokens claim to feel and see,  
Read radiant hints of times to be—  
Of heart to heart returning after dust.

Such scope is granted not my powers indign.....  
I have lain in dead men's beds, have walked  
The tombs of those with whom I'd talked,  
Called many a gone and goodly one to shape a sign,

And panted for repose. But none replies;  
No warnings loom, nor whisperings  
To open out my limitings,  
And Nescience mutely muses: When a man falls he lies.  
*Thomas Hardy, "A Sign-Seeker."*

We must admit that, although high intellect would lead us inevitably to high and pure morality, and to most scrupulously beautiful conduct in everything, towards men, towards women, towards even the lower and lowest animals, still it does not lead us to that belief in the otherwise unbelievable, or to that detailed *cultus* which is meant by religion in the universally accepted sense. It is disingenuous to take a word popularly respected and attribute to it another sense. Such a course is not strictly honest, and therefore not purely intellectual; for the foundation of the intellectual life is honesty.—*P. G. Hamerton.*



## Mr. Foote's Engagements.

(Lectures suspended till September.)

## To Correspondents.

**PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1911.**—Previously acknowledged £279 3s. 9d. Received since:—J. G. Finlay, £1.

**THE VANCE TESTIMONIAL FUND.**—Previously acknowledged, £100 16s. Received since:—Birmingham Friend, 10s. 6d.; L. S., 5s.; A. Cayford, 1s.; F. Eschini (S. Africa), 5s.; W. H. Deakin, £2 2s.; David Watt, 5s.; J. G. Finlay, £1; Dovre, £2 2s.

L. S. thinks that "Miss Vance's services to the Freethought movement deserve as full a recognition as Secularists individually and collectively can give."

W. H. DEAKIN.—You are *not* late considering you send from Bombay. A good many haven't sent yet—from England. Your good wishes shall be conveyed to Miss Vance. Thanks for the "chestnuts," which shall be duly roasted.

DAVID WATT hopes the Vance Testimonial Fund will reach "a good round sum."

J. KING.—Much obliged. It takes editors, sub-editors, and readers to circumvent the diabolical ingenuity of composers. We once wrote of a gallant Freethinker that in the presence of danger he "never blenched"—and they set it up *bleached*. We were just in time to save the awful thing from publication.

J. G. FINLAY (S. Africa).—Yes, we *are* having "bright sunny days" now in the old country; indeed, we are beating the record; and Miss Vance is deriving her share of profit from the unusual weather. She will be glad to have your "congratulations on her recovery."

DOVRE.—We note the great respect you have for Miss Vance, and that you consider her "an ornament to our cause."

H. DAWSON.—We agree that the subject of the Blasphemy Laws should be ventilated more frequently on our platforms.

W. S. CLOGG.—We have been very busy in many ways. Will read and return shortly. The matter did not seem to be urgent.

S. BETTS.—We cannot publish weekly reports of Branch meetings in "Sugar Plums," but are always ready to call attention to anything special. Glad to hear Mr. Whitehead's lectures are so good and attractive at Huddersfield.

JESSIE GARRETT.—Glad to receive the good news from the pen of a lady. Please don't quarrel with the word. "Woman" is too much a physiological expression; and, for our part, we were never able to understand why a working man's wife couldn't be a lady as well as the Queen.

H. T. HILL.—Mr. Lloyd is not an ex-Baptist but an ex-Presbyterian minister. Enclosures too late for this week.

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.

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

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

## Sugar Plums.

We may be busy again before long under the Blasphemy Laws, which do "a day's march nearer home" every time they are invoked by the authorities. Mr. Joseph A. Bates writes to us: "While lecturing for the Nelson N.S.S. Branch at Colne on Friday night [July 28] I was arrested by a Catholic police inspector on the novel charge of being a *public nuisance*. My subject was 'The Philosophy of Death.' Trial at Colne to-morrow (Monday) morning at 11. Details

later." That policeman ought to be in the House of Lords. There may be an opportunity for him shortly.

Just as we are going to press we hear from Mr. Bates that the bigots were defeated at Colne Police-court. There were two charges—"causing obstruction" and "being a public nuisance." After an hour and a half's hearing the first case was dismissed. The second was withdrawn. Clearly a triumph for Freethought—of which more in our next issue.

We have to record another victory at Mountain Ash. The local Secularists have for a long time been fighting to get the *Freethinker* placed upon the library tables in the Workmen's Institute, and at length they have succeeded. A special meeting of the committee was called to reconsider the question. Mr. George Garrett, seconded by Mr. Richard Jones, moved that the *Freethinker* should be admitted. Thirty-six voted for this resolution—and only four for the direct negative. A brilliant victory indeed! One of the defeated "four" was asked to state his objections to the paper; he replied that "it was not a debating society."

The Edmonton police, apparently under the impulsion of a most insignificant and ridiculous Christian, are worrying and threatening the N. S. S. Branch at its public meetings. Their action, however, only increases the Branch's popularity, and if they are foolish enough to attempt to revive the Blasphemy Laws they will soon find their hands full of trouble. What the large audience round the Branch platform thought of the Blasphemy Laws last Sunday was shown by its resolution condemning them as "a relic of barbarism." This was carried on the motion of Mr. Dawson seconded by Mr. Hecht.

A correspondent who subscribes to the Vance Testimonial Fund as "Birmingham Friend" writes us a long letter, the following extracts from which will interest our readers:—

"I have very little experience of the N. S. S., being quite a recent addition to its members, but I feel most unbounded pleasure in doing what I can to help crush the superstitions of religion. I have 'had some' for forty years or more, and I know one side of the subject most intimately. I am simply amazed on looking back at having lived in such a mental fog all those years. But I was taught from a child that to have any contact whatever with an Atheist was like touching pitch. Oh the mental tortures I passed through! My childhood was nothing but fear and terror.....When I began to see through the fraud in later years, especially through reading Grant Allen's *Evolution of the Idea of God*, I simply felt like another creature; and when the good old *Freethinker* was sent to me by a friend—well, then my emancipation was complete. The last remaining links of superstition were snapped by its glowing articles."

This correspondent encloses some cuttings from the *Birmingham Daily Post*, chiefly appearing in the controversy in that journal on "The Clergy and the Creeds," including an excellent one from his own pen.

## THE NEW DOXOLOGY.

Praise God from whom all cyclones blow;  
Praise him when rivers overflow.  
Praise him who whirls down house and steeple,  
Who sinks the ship and drowns the people.  
Praise God for dreadful Johnstown flood,  
For scenes of famine, plague, and blood,  
Praise him who men by thousands drowned,  
But saved an image safe and sound.  
Praise God when tidal waves do come,  
Overwhelming staunch ships nearing home.  
Praise him when fell tornadoes sweep  
Their swift destruction o'er the deep.  
Praise God for poor Dakota's drought,  
For fires and floods in west and south.  
Praise him who sends the killing frost,  
And Louisville's dread holocaust;  
Praise God for the flood of Eighty-four,  
And the earthquake on the Pacific shore.  
Praise God for sorrow, pain, and woe,  
For railroad wrecks, for storm and snow,  
For parsons who, with bock and bell,  
Demand your cash or threaten hell.  
Praise God for war, for strife and pain,  
For earthquake shocks, for tyrants' reign.  
Praise him for rack and stake.....and then  
Let all men cry aloud, Amen.



## The Meaning and Limits of Mendel's Law—II.

(Concluded from p. 493.)

MANY examples of Mendelian inheritance have been manifested in the animal kingdom. The presence or absence of horns in cattle and sheep may be controlled by judicious pairing. "Pacing" in American trotting horses is amenable to Mendel's law. It is, of course, admitted that horses may be trained to adopt either the pacing or the trotting habit, but the Mendelians contend that the distinction between artificial and natural trotters and pacers is quite conspicuous. One very curious Mendelian instance is afforded by Japanese mice, a proportion of which display the strange waltzing habit. The "waltzers" move their heads in a fantastic manner when they emerge from darkness into light. They sometimes spin with amazing rapidity, darting after their tails until they seem thoroughly overcome with fatigue. Darbishire and Von Guita performed a series of breeding experiments on these rodents. Their results indicate that in the first studied generation the normal type is dominant, as none of the mice were waltzers. But in the second generation the waltzers reappeared. Darbishire thus obtained 458 ordinary mice to 97 waltzers, where, had Mendel's law been complete, 139 waltzers would have been generated. This deficiency, thinks Professor Bateson, "may perhaps indicate a complication, but more probably it is due to the greater delicacy of the abnormal mice, which was so great that all attempts to breed them together were unsuccessful. Davenport and Hurst's researches on heredity in birds are also very interesting, but are too involved for more than a passing reference.

So far as deduction is at present justified, the remarkable results already reached by the rapidly increasing group of Mendel's disciples point to the conclusion that hereditary phenomena in hybrids are more or less alike in both kingdoms. The transmission of characters of multitudinous kinds, embracing chemical constitution, color, form, height, and sundry structural features, is conformable to Mendelian treatment. And all these phenomena have been discovered during the course of some ten short years.

We will now review the application of Mendel's law to our noble selves. Although various human malformations and diseases behave as dominants, clear evidence of Mendelian influences over man's normal characteristics is not yet available. The Mendelians themselves do not claim to have definitely established more than one unequivocal instance, that concerning the color of the human eye, and all this so far amounts to is that the dark pigment on the exterior surface of the iris acts as a dominant to the absence of this pigment, which acts as a recessive character. Grey or blue eye colors in the parents—and lightness of eye-color is traced to the absence of pigment—are transmitted exclusively to the children. The parents, who possess dark pigmented eyes, are either pure or impure dominants. That is to say, the pure dominant parents—both male and female—procreate children with dark eyes exclusively; the impure dominants, on the other hand, generate offspring in fairly exact Mendelian proportions.

Observed results, however, are not quite decisive. The somewhat perplexing nature of these is thought to be explained by the circumstance that though real brown or black eyes are all dominants, and blue or grey eyes are usually recessives, many eyes which pass for light-colored really contain some quantity of pigment, while many eyes ordinarily considered dark do not possess it. The differences existing between the non-pigmented dark iris and the non-pigmented light iris are traced to structural variations in the iris itself. The chief investigations into this problem have been conducted by Hurst and Davenport. Hurst's observations were made in a small Leicester-

shire village. He carefully compared the eyes of the children with those of the parents, and arrived at the general conclusions stated above. Whether these results will be confirmed when more exact methods are employed is for future biologists to decide.

Inquiries concerning the problem of hair-color have also been conducted. The unlooked-for appearance of red-haired children in dark-haired families has frequently caused astonishment. A phenomenon of this nature is attributed to the power of recessiveness by the Mendelians. But we are destitute of definite data. As a matter of fact, the European races are so hopelessly mixed that many years' patient investigations are required to elucidate this quaint problem.

So far as we are able to discover, no single authenticated instance is on record of any fact pointing to Mendelism in the progeny of the crosses between Europeans and the various Negro races. The children of these unions always appear as an intermediate breed, never segregating to the original Caucasian or Negro types from which they are derived. Even so able and enthusiastic a Mendelian as Bateson, after surmising from traveller's stories that segregation sometimes supervenes in the offspring of crosses between Europeans and the natives of India, is compelled to reluctantly acknowledge, that provisionally at least, the mulatto must be admitted as a genuine exception to Mendel's law.

The first observed instance of Mendelism in man was described by Farabee. The malformation termed brachydactyly, which takes the form of shortened fingers and toes, furnished the instance in question. All the malformed members of a certain family exhibited brachydactyly in fingers and toes alike. The abnormality was transmitted by the affected members of the family alone; the offspring of the unaffected did not in any single instance reproduce it. The malformation acted as a pure recessive. The children of the affected parents, however, manifested the abnormality in practically equal numbers. The brachydactylous parents all mated with normal partners, and the nearly equal numbers of normal and malformed offspring therefore falls into line with Mendel's law.

Drinkwater has recently presented a clearly detailed account of the same peculiarity in an English family. The malformation descended through seven generations. Drinkwater's examples all support Mendel's interpretation. The normal children of the abnormal parents never reverted to the malformed type, but the malformed members who mated with normal spouses gave birth on an average to an equal number of affected and unaffected offspring.

Nettleship has amassed an extensive collection of data dealing with cataract. No definite pronouncement is at present possible, but the general trend of the evidence favors Nettleship's conclusion that several forms of this disease are subject to Mendel's law. Congenital stationary night blindness in man has been most elaborately studied by this investigator. Cunier laid the foundations for these researches in 1838, and Nettleship has erected on this basis "the most extensive pedigree that has as yet been compiled for any disease in man."\* The genealogy in question relates to no fewer than 2,116 persons. Night blindness consists in an inability to see in a dim light. The malady descends through the affected, and no exception to this rule is recorded throughout the ten generations that have passed since the birth of the earliest affected member of the group. But the ratios obtained of affected and unaffected subjects in this great group point to a wide departure from Mendelian segregation. Nettleship is of opinion that the number of sufferers has been understated, as many were anxious to hide their infirmity. But, as Bateson justly urges, this cannot explain the wide discrepancy, since error introduced through this cause would lead to the production

\* Bateson, p. 221.



of diseased persons from supposed normals of which there is no recorded instance. Still, it seems probable that persons who died or disappeared before their condition was determined were included with the genuine normals of earlier generations.

Although Mendelian inquiries have in numerous cases been crowned with signal success, they have also disclosed many irregularities of a very striking nature. When the dominant characters are so complete that no outward appearance in any way suggests the presence in the germ-cells of the recessive characters they afterwards display, no obstacle is presented to analysis. But the mystery reaches the point of exasperation in those all too numerous cases in which the dominant quality is present without displaying any character through which its presence can be detected. These dominant organisms, being indistinguishable from recessives, analysis is rendered difficult or impossible. This abominable phenomenon presents itself in fowls, animals which, for various reasons, easily lend themselves to experimental work on a large scale. In experimental breeding, the extra toe of the domesticated fowl has usually displayed dominance. Such five-toed breeds as Houdans or Dorkings, when mated with ordinary four-toed breeds usually hatch out chickens with five toes. The fifth toe, however, is usually smaller than in the ordinary five-toed breeds. The next hybrid generation gives rise to the customary Mendelian ratio, averaging three fowls provided with the fifth toe in different degrees of development, to one of the normal four-toed type. But, unfortunately, when fowls of the four-toed varieties are crossed with the five-toed breeds, they occasionally hatch out many four-toed chicks, some of which display the rudiments of the extra digit. Differences are to be seen even in the feet of the same fowls, all imaginable variations having been recorded. Under experiment, some of the erratic birds have proved to be heterozygotes—hybrids which combine the characters of two dissimilar parents. But, taken in their entirety, these results are too anomalous for adjustment to Mendelian requirements. And this must likewise be said of the other numerous whimsicalities presented by plant and animal hybrids.

When contemplating the future possibilities of Mendelian inheritance, one important reservation is indispensable. No scientifically satisfactory evidence has been advanced that Mendelism exercises any way beyond the realms of hybridisation. The remarkable results already obtained through the applications of the Mendelian principle amply serve to remove them from the reproachful term of "mere dabbling in mongrelism." Mendelian results are not only of permanent value in themselves; they also serve to widen the biological horizon for all future inquirers. As previously pointed out, they unmistakably demonstrate that hereditary transmission is absolutely dependent upon physical forces and conditions. This in itself is of supreme scientific and philosophical importance. When all is said and done, our permanently beneficent social activities always require those clear concepts which can only take their rise from an understanding of the realities of the world in which our lives are led.

Mendel's law, then, is based upon a recognition of unit sex cell characters, as the necessary foundations of the structures and properties presented by living matter. The physical nature of these units awaits future discovery, and this is most likely to be made by organic chemistry. But a determination of the special sex-cell division, which presides over the process which segregates the dominant from the recessive units, will, in all reasonable probability, clarify many of the outstanding puzzles of the problem. Many ascertained cytological facts indicate that the particular cell division which halves the chromosome elements determines the constitution of the resulting animal or plant.

In conclusion, Mendelism overcomes one of the alleged difficulties of Natural Selection. The objection was sometimes urged, that even when a favorable

organic variation appeared, its prospects of survival were small owing to the breeding of the varying individuals with others which did not possess the variation in question. But now that we know that characters depend upon factors that segregate in definite numerical proportions, all objections founded on the supposed swamping of new characters through interbreeding are silenced. The factors which determine variations are permanent by virtue of their own properties, and they are in no way weakened through interbreeding.

The Mendelian leader, Professor Bateson, justly states:—

"There is nothing in Mendelian discovery which runs counter to the cardinal doctrine that species have arisen "by means of Natural Selection, or the preservation of favored races in the struggle for life," to use the definition of that doctrine inscribed on the title of the Origin. By the arbitrament of Natural Selection all must succeed or fail."\*

We may safely regard Mendelism as a supplementary instrument which will materially aid us in adding to our conquests of great Nature's carefully guarded secrets.

T. F. PALMER.

## Tales of Our Times.

BY A CYNIC.

I.

A TRAVELLER, passing through a country which he had never visited before, was much struck by its evident prosperity. The fields were golden with the harvest, the vineyards heavy with the ripening grape. Luscious grass grew in the meadows, and fat kine lowed in the deep pastures. In the cities the throb of busy life was heard. The factories teemed with workers, and the richly stored marts resounded with the hum of prosperous trade.

But over all this busy life lay a universal shadow of grief, for every inhabitant of the land wore a look of settled gloom and mourning garments were seen everywhere. In all the cities the principal buildings were draped in black, and every flag flew at half-mast.

The traveller inquired the cause of all this mourning, and was informed by one of the inhabitants that it was due to the death of the King.

"Ah, I see," said the traveller; "and when is the funeral to take place?"

"Funeral!" returned the inhabitant, "you seem to be very imperfectly acquainted with the news of the day. The funeral took place a long while ago. It is nearly three years since His Majesty died."

"Three years! And all this mourning going on still! Why, the interval is long enough to enable most nations of quite robust loyalty to forget a dead King. And this prolonged grief seems to be a rather poor compliment to your new King—or is it a Queen?"

"You seem very ignorant of our affairs," said the inhabitant. "We are mourning not so much for the death of the King—though we feel his loss greatly—as for the unfortunate political situation in which we are placed, and which prevents the accession of his successor. Is it possible that you have not heard of our Great Dilemma?"

"Not a word," said the traveller. "Please tell me all about it."

"Three years ago," said the inhabitant, "this nation sustained the most terrible calamity that has befallen any country throughout the whole history of the world. His Majesty the King and His Holiness the Supreme Patriarch of the Established (and only) Church in this realm were being driven in two motor cars which came into violent collision, and both the King and the Patriarch were instantly killed."

"Very sad," said the traveller, gravely. "But I seem to have some idea that greater national calamities have occasionally been recorded in history."

"Be careful what you say," replied the inhabitant sternly. "We tolerate no disrespect towards the Monarchy or the Church. What makes the event so disastrous to us is the fact that, according to our Constitution (which dates from time immemorial, and which no power on earth can alter) no King may reign in this land unless he is crowned and anointed by the Supreme Patriarch, and no Supreme Patriarch can be inducted into his holy office except under the royal authority. The sudden and simultaneous deaths

\* Mendel's Principles, p. 289.



of both the King and the Patriarch have rendered the appointment of both their successors constitutionally impossible, and hence arises our Great Dilemma."

"It certainly does seem a bit of a poser," said the traveller, "but I think that the best thing to do with a knot which cannot be untied is to cut it. There appears to be a very simple way out of your difficulty."

"What is that?" asked the inhabitant eagerly.

"Why not do without either King or Patriarch?" suggested the traveller.

"What!" exclaimed the inhabitant, turning pale with horror and alarm. "Are you mad?"

"Not at all," said the traveller. "You seem to have done without them very nicely for three years, and your country appears to be enjoying the most abounding prosperity notwithstanding their loss. Now, my advice is, that you should get out of mourning straight away, pull down all this black drapery, hoist your flags to their mast-heads, and go on as though nothing had happened."

"Help! Police!" shouted the inhabitant. "Loyal subjects," he called to the passers-by in the street, "as you love your country, do not let this man escape. He must be arrested at once, for he is either a dangerous lunatic or a criminal revolutionary."

The traveller was arrested accordingly, and in due time was haled before the supreme judicial tribunal, where he was found guilty of the three separate offences of sedition, high treason, and lese-majesty. Had he been a citizen of the country it would have gone ill with him, but in consideration of the fact that he was an alien, he was only sentenced to immediate expulsion from the land—whence he carried away with him some very definite opinions regarding that interesting phenomenon, human stupidity.

## II.

A man with some propensity towards Christian Science happened to get a severe attack of neuralgia, and was persuaded by some friends who firmly believed in that interesting cult to call in a Christian Science healer. After a preliminary prayer, the healer said to the patient, who was walking distractedly about the room with his head wrapped in flannel, "All you have to do, my friend, is to exercise faith, for the exercise of faith gives mind complete control over matter. There need be no such thing as pain, for pain originates in the material sphere, and when mind acquires complete control over matter, pain can be entirely excluded from consciousness. Do you follow me?"

"I'm trying to," said the patient as a frightful twinge passed up one side of his face and seemed to flood half his brain with agony.

"So, by the exercise of faith, you can easily overcome this pain from which you appear to think you are suffering," continued the healer. "You should repeat to yourself many times, 'I have no pain. Pain is imaginary. Neuralgia is a delusion. I have no pain, no pain, no pain.' This exercise of faith, perseveringly pursued for several hours a day, will infallibly bring you relief. I will call again and pray with you to-morrow."

The sufferer followed this advice for two days, but as the neuralgia continued as bad as ever, he sent for a doctor who lived in the next street.

"You have been giving yourself a deal of unnecessary suffering," said the doctor with a smile when the patient mentioned the Christian Science treatment. "I will give you a little morphia to-night, and here's a prescription which, I think, will put you right in a day or two. Keep your head well wrapped up and avoid draughts."

By the time the Christian Science healer paid his next call the patient was free from neuralgia, and the healer, on his departure, took occasion to mention that his fee was five guineas.

"What for?" asked the late patient. "Do you really claim that you cured my neuralgia?"

"I claim that you would have been cured if you had pursued the Christian Science treatment long enough," said the healer.

"But a fee, my dear sir, is such a material thing. Five golden sovereigns and as many silver shillings, or even a cheque for that amount, seem to me to lie distinctly in the material sphere; and as your mind has, no doubt, acquired complete control over matter, surely the payment of a fee—being a mere transference of material objects from one material pocket to another—is a thing of no consequence in the sphere of consciousness. You follow me, of course?"

"This is foolish trifling, sir," said the Christian Scientist, in a tone of annoyance.

"So, by the exercise of faith, you can easily overcome this sensation of lightness in your pocket from which you appear to think you are suffering," continued the recent victim of Christian Science. "You should repeat to yourselves many times, 'I have my fee. This feeling of emptiness in my pocket is a delusion. My fee has been paid—paid—paid.'"

This exercise of faith pursued steadily for several hours a day will infallibly bring you relief, and the addition of a few prayers may accelerate the desired result."

But these playful remarks threw the Christian Scientist into a state of such unchristian excitement that his late victim paid him the five guineas—which, after all, seemed to the victim not too high a price to pay for that complete emancipation from every shred of belief in Christian Science which he now experienced. And when his friends next referred to the subject he told them frankly that though faith in Christian Science might suit some people, for his part, and where neuralgia was concerned, his faith in ammonium chloride was far more real.

## III.

In the great abyss which separates heaven and hell, and about midway between those two places, lies the Lake of Human Souls. At the bottom of this lake spreads the psychic plasma whence all human souls are drawn by the will of God, and over its placid bosom broods the thin mist of human consciousness which the embryo souls breathe as soon as they rise above the surface. On the shores of the lake twelve millions of angels are constantly engaged receiving the embryo souls as they rise, and handing them on to an equal number of the angels of predestination. It is the business of these to stamp each soul with the words "eternal happiness" or "eternal torment" before speeding them on their journey to the earth to occupy the bodies of the children of men who are being born there. When a human being dies the angel Azrael, who calls for the soul, reads the words stamped thereon, and conveys it to heaven or to hell accordingly.

This simple arrangement had worked beautifully for unnumbered ages, till, unfortunately, during an unusual press of business, one of the Angels of Predestination inadvertently omitted to stamp one of the souls that passed through his hands. When this human being died, and Azrael called for the soul, he, of course, failed to find on it the usual hall-mark of the Predestination Office, and was extremely puzzled over the matter. However, he took the soul to heaven, and when it was refused an entrance there, he took it across to hell, only to find that it was equally ineligible for admittance to that abode—the angels on duty at the main gates of both places informing him that it was against all rules and precedents to admit a soul without the mark of predestination stamped on it.

There was nothing for it but to report the matter to the Most High, and Azrael accordingly did so without delay. This report caused a great commotion in heaven. There was much excitement and blowing of trumpets as all heaven's angels and every blessed soul in the celestial regions were summoned to appear before the throne of God. The Predestination Office was closed for a while as all the Angels of Predestination had to attend, and even the torments of hell were suspended for a short interval to give the damned an opportunity of listening to the proceedings without distraction.

When all had assembled before his throne, God said, "Stand forth, thou Angel of Predestination who hast failed in thy duty."

Now, the careless angel who had omitted to stamp the soul was as ignorant of his omission as an overworked clerk at St. Martin's-le-Grand would have been of a similar act of neglect during a heavy rush of work. However, with an omniscient judge such little difficulties of identification are easily overcome. The unfortunate angel felt himself irresistibly drawn towards the foot of the throne, where he knelt in abject penitence, covering his bowed head with his wings.

"The soul which thou hast in thy carelessness neglected to mark with the sign of Predestination can enter neither heaven nor hell," went on the Deity. "It will have to return to the Lake of Souls and be re-absorbed into the psychic plasma."

A sigh of relief seemed to rise from all the souls in heaven, and across the abyss was wafted from the souls in hell a murmur which had in it almost a note of joy.

"But as for thee, thou guilty angel, whose carelessness hath frustrated for this one human soul my eternal purpose, what shall be done with thee?"

At this there arose with one accord a cry from all the souls in heaven, "Oh, just and merciful God, punish him not. Reward him, rather, with a seat at thy right hand, and make him chief of all thy angels."

And across the abyss from hell there came another cry which seemed full of the concentrated longing of all its tormented souls, swelling up in one agonised note of pain, "Oh, eternal and dreadful God, punish him not, for he is the most blessed of all thy angels. By unconsciously frustrating thy eternal purpose for this one human soul he hath pointed the way toward the justification of thy universe; for it were better that all souls should return to the cool waters of the



physic lake, and there sink back into oblivion, than that one soul should suffer eternally in these tormenting flames."

But the Almighty frowned, and said, "How shall the creature comprehend the ways of the Creator, and how shall finite reason measure the designs of infinite omniscience? Depart from my presence, thou guilty one, and in punishment for thy offence thou wilt assume some menial office at the gates of hell. Angels of the Physic Lake, receive the human soul back into your charge and commit it to the bosom of the waters. Angels of Predestination, resume your tasks, and take heed that there be no further interruption of my eternal purpose."

Thereupon the heavenly conclave broke up with loud hosannas, the Predestination Office was soon in full swing again, and no time was lost in restarting the torments of hell.

### Missionaries in China.

SIR HIRAM MAXIM has done a great deal of good by drawing attention to the missionary question in China, and for those who are still unconverted to his views I strongly recommend a new book entitled *Gleanings from Fifty Years in China*, by the late Archibald Little (Sampson, Low & Co.; 1910). His chapter on Missionaries in China is a strong indictment of missionary work, and shows how hopeless it is to try to convert the Chinese, as a nation, to Christianity. He says (p. 294):—

"Owing to the law of extra-territoriality the Roman Catholic Church to this day are adding field to field and house to house at a rate that will, ere very long, make them owners of the lands of the all too numerous thriftless families in China..... The heavy indemnities enforced as compensation for the numerous riots, caused by their deserved unpopularity, have been cleverly expended in the purchase of landed estates, and thus each local disturbance directly benefits the Church. That this state of things is gall and bitterness to the native officials can be easily understood."

I never saw such a flaunting of the wealth of the missions as at a certain town in Chihli Province. Inside the city walls were vacant pieces of land where houses had once stood. Many of the houses were made of mud, and the whole town had a poverty-stricken appearance; but, in the midst of these surroundings, I met two rosy-checked, fat priests riding on sleek Australian horses, which gave the impression that they at least lived on the fat of the land and had a well-stocked wine cellar. Going a little further, I saw a huge stone building towering high above the surrounding squalor and misery—it was the Roman Catholic Cathedral, built from the proceeds of the indemnity forced from the Chinese Emperor for the Boxer troubles. These huge cathedrals have apparently been erected in those districts where the Boxers killed most missionaries.

Besides accumulating in China enormous sources of revenue, the Roman Catholic Church uses its influence in favor of their converts; and the result is, that the material benefits and assistance received are, in many cases, sufficient inducement to entice Chinese to become Christians. They also very often interfere in local disputes on behalf of their converts, and a certain lawyer (not in Shanghai) gave me several instances where the Chinese had appealed to him and he had only been able to force the priest to cease using his influence by threatening to make it an international question by reporting the case to the Ambassador at Peking.

Mr. A. H. Smith, a prominent missionary, in his book, *The Uplift of China*, says (p. 230):—

"The course of the Roman Catholics in China is morally certain to provoke reprisals whenever the Government and the people feel strong enough to deal with them."

But that this is not confined to Roman Catholics is shown by an instance given by Archibald Little (p. 321):—

"I have myself seen in a large inland city a Protestant missionary celebrate the conversion of a Chinese family by forming a holocaust of his converts ancestral tablets, including the family tree..... But for the presence of British gunboats patrolling the river, the mob would have destroyed the 'Gospel Hall' there and then, and not have left one brick upon another."

The law of extra-territoriality is the safeguard which enables this foreign religion to force its way in China. Buddhism and Mohammedanism took root in China without the application of force. The missionaries of those religions arrived as mendicants and teachers, and were not supported by subscriptions from abroad, and as they had no consuls or gunboats to fish them out of their disputes or troubles, they consequently went about their work in a quieter and more effective manner. Christianity adopted a different style; the result, I suppose, of the centuries of religious strife in Europe, and also because they were supported by the armed force in the background.

In 1877, there were only 473 Protestant missionaries in China; but in 1890, these had increased to 1,296; and in 1907, to 3,445. The Roman Catholic missionaries probably increased in similar proportion. Now, when we remember how this big hoard of foreigners, during these thirty years, descended on a quiet tolerant race—accustomed to the quiet Buddhistic style of propaganda—and commenced their propaganda with "arrogant invective against the so called heathen" (p. 320), being independent of the Chinese through getting all their money from abroad, and supported by an armed force in cases of serious opposition, and demanding heavy indemnities from the Emperor in many cases, then who can wonder that the Chinese hatred of foreigners increased until it exploded in the Boxer trouble of 1900? Therefore, is it not only natural that it is common for the Chinese to describe Christianity as a "fierce" religion? It is quite true that during the same period, owing to the wretched statesmanship of Li Hung Chaog, China had got involved in political conflicts which resulted in her continuous defeat and loss.

As the Roman Catholic Church adopt such an insidious propaganda which is bound to lead to trouble and disturbances in the future, it seems to me that perhaps the only way to make them treat the Chinese with more consideration in the future, would be to withdraw the law of extra-territoriality when the next missionary trouble arises.

During the last thirty years there has been a tremendous revolution in Chinese thought, owing to the conflicts with European civilisation and force, and there is now on every hand a great hunger for Western learning. After the Russo-Japanese War many thousands of Chinese students went to Japan for education, and imbibed a little of the Western spirit; but now the tide has turned, and they proceed to America or Europe in order to get the new light at its source. But still the vast bulk of the four hundred millions cannot do so, and must obtain it from books, newspapers, etc., published in China. The missionaries (apart from the circulation of their their thirteen million Bibles and innumerable tracts) have met the demand with a tremendous stream of Christian literature. I have often looked through their various catalogues to discover some grain among the chaff, and now give a list of books already translated into Chinese, which I admit shows a certain broad-mindedness on the part of some Protestant missionaries:—

*Evolution*, Ed. Clodd; *Ethics*, T. Huxley; *Liberty*, J. S. Mill; *The Spirit of Law*, Montesquieu; *Tolstoy's Tales*; *The Wonderful Century*, A. R. Wallace; *History of the English People*, J. R. Green; *History of Commerce in Europe*, H. de Gibbins; *Looking Backward*, Bellamy; *Capital*, Karl Marx; *Wealth of Nations*, Adam Smith.

The British Crown has not so far, I think, prosecuted anybody for publishing any of these, but perhaps that will follow later on. But these are like a drop in a bucket, and more are required. Owing to the fact that Confucius and Mencius declined to countenance superstitions or belief in the supernatural, the Chinese are more prepared than any other Eastern nation to accept the principles of Rationalism. The Chinese are well acquainted through their enormous literature with the importance of Tao Li or Reason, and Giles states:—

"The philosopher and commentator, Chu Hsi (A.D. 1130-1200), whose interpretations of the Confucian Canon are the only ones now officially recognised, has done more than any one since Confucius himself to disseminate a rigid Materialism among his fellow-countrymen" (p. 61).

Not only has the ground been prepared for Rationalism for thousands of years, but the people have the hunger for our seeds of thought. Then why do we Rationalists hang back? The Chinese demand bread, and they are offered, not stones but—quack medicines. Necessity drives modern commercial Christianity into peculiar places.

J. A. J.

### Correspondence.

#### LORD KITCHENER IN EGYPT.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I notice a paragraph in your issue of July 30, stating that Lord Kitchener's appointment will not be regarded with favor by the Church. Will you please make it clear that you are alluding to the British Church, and not to the Egyptian Christians, as these latter, known as the "Copts," are only too pleased to think that at last they will have their claim to be treated on the same level as the Egyptian Moslems regarded with that justice for which Lord Kitchener is famous. The appointment of this great and just man to rule over them gives them some hope that those dark days are over, and that under his sway a man will be judged by his capability, not by what religion he belongs to.

KYRIAKOS MIKHAIL, *Representative of the Coptic Press.*



## 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, Mr. Davidson, Lectures.

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): F. A. Davies, 3.15, "Atheism"; 6, "Secularism."

EDMONTON BRANCH N. S. S. (The Green): 7.30, W. Davidson, a Lecture.

FINSBURY PARK: 11.30, W. J. Ramsey, 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, Mr. Schaller, "Christianity a Degrading Superstition."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Parliament Hill): 3.30, W. J. Ramsey a Lecture; 6.30, Mrs. Boyce, a Lecture.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (outside Maryland Point Station, Stratford): 7, J. Rowney, "Let Us Pray."

WOOD GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Jolly Butchers Hill, opposite Public Library): 7, Mr. Burke, "The Case for Secular Education."

### COUNTRY.

#### OUTDOOR.

HUDDERSFIELD BRANCH N. S. S. (Market Cross): 8.45, Geo. T. Whitehead, "Bible Ignorance and Bigotry." Saturday, at 8, Geo. T. Whitehead, "Science and Theology."

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Secretary—MISS E. M. VANCE.

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

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

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

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

The Society's affairs are managed by an elected Board of Directors, consisting of not less than five and not more than twelve members, one-third of whom retire (by ballot) each year,

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

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