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Freethinker

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Open horizons round,
O mounting mind, to scenes unsung,
Wherein shall walk a lusty Time:
Our Earth is young;
Of measure without bound;
Infinite are the heights to climb,
The depths to sound.
—GEORGE MEREDITH.

Adam's Breeches.

BLUSH not, fair reader; nothing is coming to offend your modesty. No doubt you have seen pictures of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, dressed in the primitive costume of simple innocence, or, as Hans Breitmann says, "Mit noddings on." And perhaps you felt the remarks of some thick-skinned friend at your side as rather embarrassing. But our intention is to take the Grand Old Gardener and his wife at a later stage, when they got clothes, and laid the foundation of all the tailors' and milliners' businesses in creation.

For some time, nobody knows how long, whether six hours or sixty years, Adam and Eve never discovered their nakedness. It never occurred to them that more than one skin was necessary. And as the climate was exquisite, and the very roses grew without thorns, they had no need of overcoats or sticking-plaster. But one day they ate an apple, or for all we know a dozen, and they and the world underwent a change. "My dear Adam," said Eve, "you are quite shocking; where are your pyjamas?" And Adam replied, "My dear Eve, where is your dressing-gown?"

Necessity is the mother of invention, and when a woman wants a dress she will get it somehow. There was no linen or woollen, so they had recourse to fig leaves, which were large and substantial. Needles and thread turned up miraculously, and Eve took to them by instinct. She sat down on a grassy mound, and worked away, stitch, stitch, stitch, while Adam looked on with the ox-eyed stupidity of his sex in presence of a lady engaged in this interesting occupation. In half an hour, more or less, she produced two pairs of—well, yes, BREECHES. The Authorised Version calls them aprons, but we may believe it was a double-barrelled arrangement. This at any rate was the opinion of the translators of the famous Breeches Bible, first published in folio in 1599, in which the seventh verse of the third chapter of Genesis reads—"And they sowed fig-tree leaves together, and made themselves *breeches*," from which translation it has been ingeniously argued "that the women had as good a title to the breeches as the men."

There is no dispute as to the color of Adam's breeches. They were *green*. Hence that universal wit and recondite scholar, the author of *Hudibras*, represents the knight's attendant, the worthy Ralpho, as

> "For mystic learning wondrous able,
> In magic Talisman and Cabal
> Whose primitive tradition reaches
> As far as Adam's first green breeches."

Such was the substance and color of Adam's first unmentionables. They were soft and cool, and infinitely preferable to the coarse articles purveyed in English bathing machines. But they were hardly calculated to stand the wear and tear of the life of labor to which Adam was doomed after the Fall, and before Jehovah evicted his tenant he took pity on the poor fellow's limited wardrobe. "Poor devils," he said to himself, "that fig-leaf arrangement won't last them long. It's sure to burst the first time Adam hoes potatoes. I'll start them with something stronger. Perhaps the lass will find out how to rig herself. There's the first pond for a looking-glass, and I guess it won't be long before she gets Adam to hold a skein of wool. But meanwhile I must do something for her dolt of a husband. Yes, he shall have a new pair of breeks."

And Jehovah made them. Not of shoddy, or good woollen, but stout leather. Adam changed his *green* breeches for *brown* ones, and when he got them on he said, "My God, ain't they hot!" Eve declared she would never wear a thing like that. "I don't waddle," she exclaimed, "and I won't look bandy." So a committee of seven archangels was appointed to find a fresh pattern.

Leaving Eve's outfit alone, and confining our attention to Adam's, we may ask a few questions about his second pair of breeches. Let no one object that such questions are frivolous. Did not England ring once with tidings of O'Brien's breeches? And shall it be thought undignified to take an interest in Adam's? Nor let anyone object that such inquiries are blasphemous. They are obviously prompted by a spirit of reverence. What else, indeed, could excite our curiosity about an old pair of breeches that were worn out many centuries before the Flood?

What were the dimensions of Adam's breeches? The Bible does not tell us his altitude, but as he lived nine hundred and thirty years, and perhaps had a fourth of that time to grow in, is it not surprising that the Jews regarded him as excessively tall. His original height was incalculable; when he stood upright his head reached to the seventh heaven; but his appearance alarming the angels, the Lord flattened him down to a thousand cubits. Fifteen hundred feet, therefore, was his height before he shrank away subsequently to his expulsion from Paradise. Consequently his breeches must have been about eight hundred feet long, and the circumference proportionate. Suits might have been carved out of them for a whole regiment of Dutchmen.

What animal did Jehovah kill and flay for such an extensive skin? Even the mammoth would be ridiculously insufficient. We presume, therefore, that a wholesale slaughter of beasts took place, and that Adam's breeches were made of a multitude of skins. These were, of course, of divers colors or shades, and the garment must have borne some resemblance (to compare great things with small) to the well-mended trousers of a poor fisherman, blessed with a careful, industrious wife, who makes one pair last him her lifetime by insinuating fresh patches as the old ones wear away.

Happily the world was not then peopled, or Adam's life would have been unbearable. There were no little boys, about two hundred feet high, to pass exasperating remarks, such as "Who's your tailor?" "Does the missis know you're out?" "Hallo, old Patchwork!"

How long was Jehovah employed? Did he give the breeches out in sections to the angels, and do the connections himself? According to the Bible he made them all alone, but we may well assume an omission in the narrative, and give him assistance in executing such a liberal order.

How did he kill the animals that furnished the skins? Did they die instantaneously at his order, or did he slaughter them with a knife and a poleaxe? How did he dress the skins? Were tan-pits constructed? Were the usual chemicals employed, or did Jehovah's science only extend to the use of bark?

The ingenious reader will be able to ask a number of questions for himself. Our own must be brought to a close. We have only to add that the world is impoverished by the loss of Adam's breeches. Those who have read Dr. Farrar's *Life of St. Paul* will recollect how he sheds rhetoric and tears on the Apostle's old cloak. But what was that battered garment in comparison with the subject of this article? Not only were Adam's leather breeches the first piece of tailor's-work in the world, but they were worn by the father of all of us, and made by God himself. Such an article would be better worth seeing than the coats of kings and emperors. But, alas, it is lost. Yet the voice of Hope whispers it may be found. Who knows? "There are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in your philosophy." Adam's breeches, too dilapidated for use or decency, may have been carefully rolled up and preserved by Seth. Perhaps they were taken into the Ark by Noah. And when the regions of Mesopotamia are thoroughly explored, they will perhaps be found in some deep cave or dry well, carefully wrapped in waterproof, and accurately ticketed. Oh what joy when they fall into the hands of the Christian Evidence Society! Then will the officials dance with glee, even as David danced before the the Ark of God; then will the infidel slink away disgraced and crest-fallen; and then will the Christians cry out to the Huxleys of the world, "Oh ye of little faith, who denied the existence of Adam, come and see his breeches!"

G. W. Foote.

Sir Oliver Lodge and the Christian God.

It is one of the evils incidental to the publication of opinions that in a large number of cases they are placed where they do the least good. For example, week by week myself and others write articles in the *Freethinker* against Christianity. But the people we want to reach most do not read the *Freethinker*—at least, not in any considerable number. When they are reached it is by some friend playing the part of a missionary, or by their casually purchasing a copy. For my own part—and I think this is true for others—I would much rather be writing in the *Christian World* or in the *Church Times*, or some similar publication. In that case I should be reaching the people I want most to get at. But as things are, certain opinions are kept to certain journals; so that, save with those of a very catholic taste, most people only see one side of a case. They know all that can be said for or against certain opinions; they know little or nothing of what can be said on the other side.

What has been said is obviously true of avowed party papers and journals. It is also true of other papers and journals that are not openly established to voice a particular opinion. For instance, it is certain that in none of the newspapers, nor in any of the higher priced magazines, could the opinions that are expressed in the *Freethinker* find a place. However unobjectionable the style in which the article was written, it would be refused entrance. It would be "unsuitable"; by which the editor would mean he would not like his readers to become acquainted with certain opinions on particular subjects. In this way editors are converted into so many watchdogs to prevent the dissemination of certain opinions, instead of acting as so many avenues by which they might reach the public.

Amongst the magazines that started with a loud flourish of trumpets was the *Hibbert Journal*. Its editors stated in its first number that "The differences of opinion existing in regard to matters religious, theological, and philosophical, are recognised by the editors of the *Hibbert Journal* in the spirit in which any natural phenomenon may be regarded." So far, good. Nothing could be more admirable—in expression. But what of the performance? Its nine years of existence has shown that the editors have interpreted the study of religion as a natural phenomenon to mean a general agreement with religious opinions. In its pages writers have discussed which view of a future life, or of God, or of Christianity contained the most truth, but nothing has appeared within its pages challenging the truth of these things. This could not be because opponents of religious belief are scarce or diffident in coming forward. It is simply because they were neither wanted nor welcomed. The review is a happy family of religionists—a family in which there may be tolerated the customary domestic jars, but no outsider is to be permitted to intrude. "We shall," said the editors, "judge of opinions by the seriousness with which they are held, and the fairness and ability with which they are maintained." Fine words; but one will value them more highly when there appears in the *Hibbert Journal* an article challenging the entire groundwork of religious beliefs.

In the current issue of the *Hibbert* the place of honor is given to an article by Sir Oliver Lodge on "The Christian Conception of God," the main thesis being that this may be taken as a simple presentation of a very complex truth, and that its inadequacy as a complete description in nowise detracts from its truth. This thesis would be interesting enough if there were only a general agreement as to the existence of the assumed reality. But there is not; and for that reason the article strikes one as rather pointless. Those who accept the Christian conception of God hardly need to be told that it is only a partial presentation of the truth. Christians by the score have emphasised this much. And those who do not accept the Christian idea of it will naturally find it assuming something as true which they believe to be quite the reverse.

The real importance of Sir Oliver's article—and this is equally true of his other writings on religion—is that being a well-known scientific worker, what he says is taken as the voice of modern science on religious beliefs. The present writer has probably a far greater respect for Sir Oliver's work as a scientist than has most of his religious admirers, and yet I do not hesitate to say that it is solely to his being a scientific teacher that special attention is paid to what he says on religion. It is accepted as the testimony of science to the truth of religion. Sir Oliver himself is plainly under no such misapprehension. In most of his articles, and the present one is no exception, there is displayed the consciousness that he is out of touch with his scientific fellow-workers. He speaks of the "modern superstition about the universe," by which he plainly means current scientific teaching concerning the universe; and in the opening of his article he writes of "Some critics who, calling themselves scientific," have made up their minds of the completeness of our knowledge, and who "are guided by emotion and prejudice; they do not seek knowledge."

It is impossible to say precisely whom Sir Oliver Lodge has in his mind when he writes thus, but I hardly think that anyone with the slightest pretensions to be called scientific can assume that our knowledge of things is complete. What they would probably urge is that Sir Oliver, in his various pleas for Theism, closes his eyes to certain aspects of Theistic belief, and is so far open himself to the charge of being guided by emotion and prejudice rather than knowledge. For instance, I cannot

recall any portion of his writings in which he even faces the fact of the knowledge we possess concerning the origin and development of the idea of God. In a minister of religion this omission is, perhaps, natural; at all events, it is understandable. But that a man trained to scientific methods, and himself a front-rank scientist, should ignore a whole branch of scientific investigation, is certainly surprising.

There is at hand ample evidence that—no matter about questions of detail, upon which there is room for endless difference—there is ample evidence that the idea of God develops gradually from man's misunderstanding of objective and subjective phenomena. It is not the perception of a reality, inadequately expressed; it is a sheer delusion, resting upon no better basis than the belief in the evil eye, in witchcraft, or a number of similar superstitions man has outgrown. The theory that primitive man saw a truth dimly, and that civilised man sees it more clearly, is one that will not stand the slightest critical examination. For we really know the *facts* upon which the belief in God was based. We—all of us, Theist and Atheist alike—know that these facts are susceptible of a totally different explanation, and that they give not the slightest support to a theory of supernaturalism. We reject utterly the premises from which the primitive mind deduced the existence of gods; we retain—with a lack of logic not common with primitive man—conclusions based upon admittedly false premises.

Will Sir Oliver Lodge ever address himself to the following simple, but searching, questions? Suppose early races of men had the knowledge of natural forces, and of the workings of the nervous system that we possess, would they in that case have concluded that certain extra personal intelligences dominated nature? If primitive races had not come to that conclusion, would later races have done so? Is the modern belief in Deity more than a refinement of the primitive belief, modified in such a manner as to avoid obvious criticism? Does modern knowledge provide the basis for the modern belief in Deity, or is it pressed to provide a number of excuses—chiefly of a negative character—for its retention?

I venture to say that, until these questions are faced by Sir Oliver Lodge, or by other apologists, he, and they, may succeed in giving a little comfort and assurance to some who feel their faith slipping from them, but they will do nothing to secure conviction in other quarters.

The scientific hopelessness—I use the expression advisedly—of Sir Oliver's method may be illustrated by the following: "Historical records," he says, "tell us of a Divine incarnation. We may consider it freely on historical grounds. We are not debarred from contemplating such a thing by anything that science has to say to the contrary. Science does not speak directly on the subject. If the historical evidence is good we may credit it."

The critics against whom Sir Oliver Lodge protests might fairly retort on this passage that here is a clear case where emotion and prejudice have obscured the view of the scientific worker. Certainly we *may* consider the Incarnation on historical grounds, but this is precisely what Sir Oliver never seems to do. His plan is to consider whether there is anything objectionable in the idea—*in the light of an already accepted notion of Deity*. And that is clearly allowing an existing prejudice to determine what shall be accepted as true. Now we have records of incarnations, and these records deserve consideration. They tell us not only of one incarnation, but of many; and not only of gods incarnate as men, but as men who become incarnate as gods. There is a constant interchange. Our records tell us of the process by which men become gods, records that receive verification from the actual practice of many contemporary peoples. Gods who become men only represent the other side of the process by which men become gods. Early thought is averse to sharp definitions, and the thinking which peoples the world with living agencies, which explains disease as due to the occupation of the body by a hostile spirit, finds nothing incongruous in the idea of incarnation. It is, indeed, a portion of its philosophising. And it is as a champion of this primitive thinking that Sir Oliver Lodge figures to those who really consider the Christian doctrine of Incarnation freely and on historical grounds.

C. COHEN.

(To be continued.)

"The Last Word of Evolution."

IF we judge the Rev. R. J. Campbell by his public utterances from the City Temple pulpit we cannot pronounce him a bright and shining embodiment of the grace of Christian humility. He invariably puts on the airs of a superior person who never fails to talk down to his fellow beings. This would be fully justifiable if he were really an ambassador from an eternal and omnipotent Christ, and delivered messages entrusted to him by his sovereign Lord. He confesses that in his audiences there are nearly always some persons who cannot swallow his peculiar teaching. Preaching on Thursday, July 27, he said:—

> "There may be more than one such person listening to me now. *If so, I want you to know that you are not listening merely to man's wisdom, but to something higher.*" (The italics are our own.)

We wonder if the Sceptics present were duly impressed and subdued when they heard that extraordinary claim. It is as if the preacher said: "I may be but a mere man, but I declare that the words I speak unto you are not merely man's words, but something higher." We know at least of one hearer who afterwards expressed himself in Browning's vigorous terms:—

> "'Twas too provoking!
> My gorge rose at the nonsense and stuff of it."

Now, a verbatim report of the sermon, towards the end of which Mr. Campbell so forgot himself as to make that strange pronouncement, appears in the *Christian Commonwealth* for August 2, and we can test its truth in the light of the argument therein presented.

The thesis submitted is that the source of all good in the Universe is Divine. Mr. Campbell labors under the vain delusion that "what is evolved in Nature must first have been involved." Here are his own words:—

> "When people speak of the theory of evolution as being enough to account for all the order, beauty, life, form, and intelligence in creation, without the necessity of postulating any personal or super-personal Creator behind it, they are simply begging the whole question. Evolution accounts for nothing. It only tells us how certain things have come to be what they are, but it does not tell us why. How could the evolutionary process result in the production of a Shakespeare or a Gladstone if the qualities which appeared in these two great men were not already latent in the whole vast scheme of things in which they respectively played their little part? What was not in could not come out."

To be candid, we are bound to affirm that it is Mr. Campbell who begs the whole question by postulating a supernatural mystery to account for a natural one. Simply because he cannot explain the appearance of intelligence in the Cosmos he postulates an intelligent Being who dropped the seed of it into the heart of matter before the evolutionary process ever began. Fancy such a germ remaining absolutely quiescent in Nature's womb for countless millions of years, and then at the magic touch of some supernatural wand, awaking and beginning to throw out a long series of beings of very slowly evolving intelligence, which series at last culminated in the human race, in which the evolution of intelligence has been almost as slow! Merely to state such a case for an intelligent Creator is to refute it. While the theory of evolution fits the facts of Nature, so far as we know them, better than any other theory ever heard of, it leaves the facts themselves as mysterious as before. The scientist recog-

nises the inexplicableness of Nature's processes, but works away, experimenting here, merely observing there, and thus gradually enlarges the sphere of the known; but he is unaware of anything "at the back" of Nature rendering her processes possible. Mr. Campbell, however, with no more knowledge than the scientist, boldly asserts that "if what is at the back of Creation were not at least equal to Shakespeare, we should have had no Shakespeare." So phenomenally great was Gladstone that the reverend gentleman comes to the conclusion that we could not have had him had there not been a "Gladstone soul, a Gladstone fact or potency, if you like, wrapped up somewhere in the Cosmos from the beginning of time."

So far, at any rate, the preacher has not reached the standard even of "man's wisdom," to say nothing of anything higher. He does not understand the nature of evolution as explained by the most reliable scientists. His argument is that "we should never have heard of pity, or heroism, or kindness, or fidelity, if there had not been a nature capable of feeling these things behind the nature that has produced them." How on earth does he know that the Nature that has produced them was not of herself capable of producing them? Or what right has he to assume that the hypothetical nature behind Nature is the more capable of the two? The statement that Mr. Campbell is ignorant of the real significance of evolution is amply proved by the following extract:—

> "You may think this a doubtful form of argument, but wait a bit, I have not done with it yet; there is more to follow. I say that Christ is the last word of evolution, just because it was the first; if it had not been the Alpha it could not be the Omega."

We challenge anybody to tell us just exactly what that sentence means, or how it fits in with the context. Does the reverend gentleman imagine that Jesus was the beginning and the end of evolution? If he does, then he is talking sheer nonsense, because Jesus is the most debatable figure in all history. Even theologians are at sixes and sevens as to who or what he was; and at present they are fiercely disputing as to whether or not he ever actually lived. It is therefore the height of absurdity to base any argument for or against any position on either Jesus or the Christ. To say that "he is the explanation of everything" is to be guilty of multiplying words without knowledge, because the Gospel Jesus is in no sense unique. As God-man he belongs to a large class, all members of which are essentially alike; while stripped of his divinity he possesses nothing by which he can be radically distinguished from other men. In either capacity he can be fully accounted for without doing any violence to the mechanical theory of evolution.

Mr. Campbell begs the whole question in another way. He seems to think that he makes a grand score when he says that "what was not in could not come out," or that "what is evolved in Nature must first have been involved." This so-called argument was employed with tremendous effect by Joseph Cook in his Boston Monday Lectureship thirty-six years ago; but it is an argument with a fallacy at its very core. The evolutionary process is in no sense creative. The sum total of matter never varies from eternity to eternity. The antithetical term to evolution is not involution but dissolution, evolution signifying nothing but change of form and condition. Life and intelligence are not things, but conditions; not entities, but transformation processes. Time was when matter was not living, time came when certain matter exposed to certain conditions became alive, and time comes when every living form becomes dead again. As Herbert Spencer says, the cycle of Nature is "from the imperceptible into the perceptible, and again from the perceptible into the imperceptible"; and it follows that "every change suffered by every sensible existence is a change in one or other of these two opposite directions." At first, then, if we may use such a phrase metaphorically, Nature was not a carefully packed parcel of innumerable seeds, but the matrix of all possible phenomena, and this she continues to be to this day. In every case, evolution is "an integration of matter and concomitant dissipation of motion," and is inevitably followed by dissolution, which is "an absorption of motion and concomitant disintegration of matter."

Mr. Campbell's next point is the weakest and silliest in the whole sermon. Whether there be "a personal or super-personal Creator behind" Nature or not, there is in the Universe a strange mixture of good and evil, benevolence and cruelty, love and hate; and this fact is absolutely inexplicable if there be a nature behind Nature which is all goodness, benevolence, and love. The fact is that good and evil have been pretty evenly balanced at all times; and whatever improvement in the conditions of life may have taken place is due to the natural evolution of social life, and not to any interference on the part of a God of love. But listen to Mr. Campbell:—

> "Behind all that is menacing, all that seems divisive, all that is but rudely forceful and goes to its mark regardless of the suffering it causes on the way, is a benevolence that cannot be lessened or changed, for it belongs to what is boundless and inexhaustible."

Could any utterance be more egregiously foolish? And yet there is a worse one to follow:—

> "Cruelty and selfishness are smallness; God is greatness, and therefore goodness; stern though his methods may be they must be inspired by love; it could not be otherwise, seeing that he is All."

Such pious sentimentalism is positively nauseating. The God of love is all; and yet the forest resounds with the pitiable cries of the tortured and reeks with the blood of the slain; our cities are disfigured by squalid slums and sweated poor and starving paupers, side by side with gorgeous palaces, excessive riches, and degrading luxuries; crimes and vices abound everywhere; the peace of the world is preserved only by enormous armies and navies, always ready at a moment's notice to plunge headlong into war; and in every country the reins of government are in the hands of the strong and self-assertive. With these awful facts staring him in the face Mr. Campbell coolly exclaims, "Good is enthroned everywhere." Of the truth of this, he assures us, "the mere presence of good anywhere" is an irrefutable evidence. With equal reason it could be said that the mere presence of evil anywhere is the evidence that evil is enthroned everywhere.

The last word of evolution has not been spoken yet. The one thing that is incontrovertible is that the intelligence, goodness, and love said to lie behind Nature exist only in the theological brain, and are utterly out of place in any rational theory of evolution. Claiming to give his hearers something higher than "man's wisdom," he has actually imparted to them something lower than sound sense. To say that God is all is to sweep away the Christian Gospel and to characterise preaching as so much wasted energy. No wonder Christianity has been the most tremendous failure in the world's history. Why fight against God? We had better leave him out of the account altogether, and concentrate all our faculties upon the task of crushing hatred and cruelty by enthroning benevolence and love in our own hearts and lives.

J. T. LLOYD.

Religious Susceptibility.

THE original step in the upward march of the "primordial protoplasmic globule" is supposed to have been the formation of an outer integument to protect it from the deleterious influences of an unfriendly environment. But many people are now becoming emotionally so "thin-skinned" as to suggest the beginning of a degenerative process in the course of which our poor "feelings" may in time become as unprotected and naked as the original speck of protoplasmic jelly from which they were evolved.

This tenderness of the emotional epidermis seems to be most common among the religious. Indeed, so great is the hyper-sensitiveness of the religious mind, and so strongly does modern opinion condemn any tendency towards "hurting the feelings" of these pious folk, that one would almost fancy the mental anguish thus caused to be far greater than the physical tortures of the thumbscrew and the rack which these same pious folk's spiritual ancestors in past ages did not scruple to inflict on those who differed from them. It may be of interest, therefore, to inquire the cause of this religious susceptibility, and to ascertain the proper limits within which the tender susceptibilities of the pious may legitimately demand respect.

The cause is probably to be found in the general decay of supernaturalism. When faith is dying and religious observances are falling into disuse those who still cling to the old notions resent all the more strongly any open disregard of their beliefs, and defend their cherished though fading superstitions with a more jealous care. Those light rapier thrusts of sarcasm or ridicule which a robust and flourishing faith could afford to ignore evoke peevish squeals of irritation from a religion grown sensitive and tender from the castigations it has received during its long conflict with Reason. In the same way does a person worsted in all the main points of an argument defend the minor points all the more tenaciously, and perhaps with a growing acerbity which resents angrily any approach to levity of treatment.

To the Freethinker, of course, this question of the amount of deference which should be paid to religious susceptibilities differs in no respect from other ethical questions, and has to be decided on purely rational principles. Though admitting that there is a certain sphere within which individual feelings ought to be respected, he sees no reason to differentiate between religious feelings and any other class of feelings. And he defines the limit of this sphere on the same principle that determines the limits of all other private and personal rights—namely, the due adjustment of the claims of the individual as opposed to the claims of the community. The happiness of the community is best secured by securing to each individual complete liberty in all matters which concern himself alone, and this applies to religious beliefs and the sentiments evoked by them equally with all other human affairs. Men have a perfect right to hold private opinions of any kind, and to entertain any beliefs they choose, however mistaken, false, or absurd they may be, and if a criticism of those beliefs gives pain to the believers no one has a right to force such criticism upon them. And this immunity from criticism is justly extended to all private and social intercourse. I have no more right, when paying a visit to a religious neighbor, to criticise or combat his religious beliefs than I have to criticise the arrangement of his furniture or his taste in pictures.

But the moment one passes outside the limits of this private sphere the conditions are completely altered. The matter then becomes one of public concern, and as such comes within the scope of the freest public discussion; for the attainment of truth is essential to the well-being of society, and the only method of attaining truth is by free discussion and free criticism, undeterred by any sentimental considerations which may stand in the way. In this arena of public discussion every opinion and every belief must be prepared to pass the supreme test of reason before it can claim any respect, and if, failing to do so, it be still held, its holders should not complain if the vials of ridicule be poured upon it. If, for instance, a man chooses to hold the belief that the earth is flat, and if an attack on that belief would cause him mental anguish, I leave him to his delusion. If he proceeds to propagate the belief I have a right to reason with him and with those whom he tries to convince; and if, after the falsity of the belief has been clearly demonstrated, he continues to hold it and to urge it on others, I have a right to laugh at him and at all who believe his teaching.

But it may be argued that religious beliefs differ from mere intellectual convictions in that they are always associated with sentiments of reverence for things regarded as sacred and with the highest emotions and the deepest feelings of the human heart. To pass rude criticisms or pour ridicule on such beliefs would cause a moral injury and a degree of pain which would not result from a like treatment of beliefs on secular subjects or scientific questions, however strongly they might be held.

To this we reply (with the late Professor Clifford) that people *have no right to believe without reasonable evidence*, and no right to regard the objects of their irrational and anti-rational beliefs with those feelings of veneration which ought to be reserved for the great moral principles of humanity. Truth, justice, duty, honor—these demand all the veneration we are capable of, and these are what we should hold truly sacred; whereas the feelings we are asked to respect are of the very essence of superstition, for superstition may be defined as a feeling of reverence associated with beliefs which cannot be rationally justified.

And it is just these beliefs that appear, by reason of the sentiments attaching to them, to be the least amenable to rational treatment. The "feelings" encrusted around the belief form a sort of protective envelope impervious to all attacks of reason, and it is often only by administering a rude shock to the "feelings" that the belief itself can be influenced. Thus, a person who believed in palmistry or astrology or the flatness of the earth would probably be more easily reasoned out of these beliefs than one who believed in the six days' creation or the Eden snake story or the deluge myth, because these latter beliefs are associated with feelings of reverence towards the "inspired word of God," and where these feelings happened to be very strong all the reasoning in the world might be powerless to destroy the belief.

This naturally brings us to the question of "blasphemy." Strictly speaking, the idea of blasphemy belongs to an order of ideas which has long since passed away, for it means an insult offered to the Supreme Being himself quite distinct from any offence against those who worship him, and this idea has a real validity only when the existence of the Supreme Being is completely assured. In the Middle Ages this was the case. On the presumably rare occasions when blasphemy might then have been committed, the blasphemer was in all probability himself a firm believer in God's existence, and his offence was, therefore, a real one; but to accuse a modern Atheist of blasphemy is quite illogical, for it is impossible to insult any being in whose existence one does not believe. It is, of course, true that words which convey to a believer the idea of disrespect to his God may cause that believer pain, but this is merely a case of religious susceptibility on the part of the believer himself, and falls under the general considerations already given. One has no more and no less right to ridicule a man's deity than one has to ridicule his hat. In private life both are sacred, but, just as a man taking his walks abroad in a grotesque style of head-gear must be prepared to hear comments not unmixed with levity directed towards that article of attire, so religious persons parading before unbelievers that grotesque anthropomorphic delusion they call a God can scarcely expect to have it treated with very profound respect. In short, if people will persist in holding ridiculous beliefs, they must expect to have them ridiculed.

It may be worth while, in conclusion, to point out the singular fact that the charge of "hurting the feelings" of believers is only brought against unbelievers, and not by one sect of believers against another. Religious controversies between opposing sects have been carried on with a degree of acrimony and rancor unattained in any other controversies —except, perhaps, those of Irish politics—and the controversialists have shown themselves eminently capable of giving and receiving the hardest blows, and of wielding the sharpest weapons of sarcasm

and irony against the religious beliefs of their opponents. It is only when Freethinkers use similar weapons against believers that the tenderness of the religious cuticle becomes so evident.

A. E. MADDOCK.

Infidels.

THE word "infidel" has just the same history as the word "miscreant." It first came into use during the Crusades. An infidel was simply a person outside the Christian faith, and a miscreant was simply a misbeliever. The Saracens were infidels and miscreants, because they followed Mohammed instead of Christ; and both terms were employed originally without any special opprobrium. But religious bigotry is always hateful, and he who differs from "*the* faith" is soon regarded with detestation. Both terms, therefore, took a secondary significance. "Infidel" came to connote moral perversity, and even a certain devilishness; while "miscreant" passed through stage after stage of degradation, until at last it meant an abandoned villain, lost to all sense of honor and humanity.

Naturally the Jews at home suffered in the same way as the Mohammedans abroad. Shakespeare was true to the average spirit of Christianity in making Gratiano exclaim to Shylock in the Doge's court at Venice, "Now infidel, I have thee on the hip." The phrase "an infidel Jew" was in common usage; indeed, it was pretty frequently used a good deal less than a century ago.

"Miscreant" has degenerated so far that it positively cannot be employed even against Freethinkers. To call a man a miscreant is simply to call him a thorough-paced scoundrel. It is actionable at law, and therefore dangerous. But "infidel" still preserves its ambiguity. You can call a man an infidel, hoping that people will understand you to mean that he is wicked; and if you are taken to task, you can always say you only meant that he is an unbeliever.

Christian bigots know the mischief of this odious word. That is why they use it. They also employ the general term "infidelity"—under which they class Atheism, Agnosticism, Secularism, Freethought, and sometimes even Unitarianism; in fact, everything that does not conform to their own orthodox standard of belief.

Now, the unbeliever is not an infidel, and unbelief is not infidelity. It would be more plausible, though perhaps not more polite, to accuse Freethinkers of rashness, singularity, or self-conceit; but to accuse them of infidelity is to fly in the face of the plainest facts. "Infidelity" means *unfaithfulness*, and the Freethinker, of all men, is most faithful to conviction. He thinks he has found Truth, and he speaks out in her behalf, and stands by her against the world's frown. He often runs a terrible risk. He dares the anger of fools and the malice of bigots. He faces the prospect of social ruin. In former days he confronted imprisonment and death.

What a curious thing it is! A man thinks for himself, speaks out his thoughts, braves any danger rather than play the hypocrite; and the one crime of which he is then accused is "infidelity." And most of those who so accuse him never thought for themselves, and never made the smallest sacrifice for Truth in the whole course of their lives.

It may be said that I have given a certain countenance to the word "infidel" in the title of one of my own works. But *Infidel Death-Beds* is an ironical title. I took a phrase commonly employed by Christians, and showed that the stories they told under that heading were pious inventions. But I never called myself an "infidel." I have always repudiated the term as a wanton insult.

Personally, I am not fond of nicknames. I think that men and women of every persuasion should choose their own label, and that other persons should respect it. If I call myself a Secularist, that is the designation which others should apply to me. A Christian minister, many years ago, called me a Bradlaughite, and when I disclaimed that name, he insisted that he was right, because I believed in Charles Bradlaugh. "Well," I said, "you believe in Christ. Suppose I call you a Christite." And, of course, he was indignant. He knew he had a right to fix his own label, but he foolishly thought he had also a right to fix mine.

Curiously enough, it seems that the term Christian was originally a nickname. It appears to have been first applied by the Pagans to the followers of Jesus Christ, who afterwards bore it as though it were their own invention. In the same way the term Nihilist was first applied to the "forward" party in Russia by their enemies. They were thus accused, in one sweeping word, of believing in nothing and wanting to destroy everything. Afterwards they accepted the word as a sort of ticket which had got fastened upon them, and which they could not remove.

I believe in the most drastic criticism of religion. I believe even in the employment of ridicule against falsehood. But I do not believe in the employment of a word merely to give pain or to show contempt. It is in this spirit that I appeal to the Christians who are not irrecoverably sunk in bigotry. They should cease calling us "infidels," and cease calling our opinions "infidelity." They should do this as a mere matter of common sense. I am not asking them for charity, but for justice. And even the baser sort of Christians may be warned that all of us are human, and that insult may lead to reprisals. In that case a very galling list of nicknames might easily be drawn up against *them*.

G. W. FOOTE.

By teaching that Christ was speedily to overturn all existing rule and govern the world justly himself, it [the primitive Gospel] *annihilated zeal for earthly improvement*. Who could care for improving the laws or the tribunals, or for any enterprise needing time to achieve a still longer time to bear fruit, if he expected Messiah in a few years to make all things new? Even slavery is with Paul indifferent; marriage is also unimportant, because the fashion of this world passeth away. Patriotism is superseded, because *the Christian citizenship is in heaven;* therefore, "to mind earthly things" is a shame. On this side all apostolic morality is weak.—*F. W. Newman.*

There is talk of a twin Sabbath, or of two Sabbaths during the week. It is contended that both Saturday and Sunday might be given up to "rest and recreation, physical and spiritual." Instead of having another Sabbath, we propose that the one we now have fastened upon us be abolished. The majority of people do not respect it, and a large proportion of men and women work on Sunday. What is called "the sacred observances of the Sabbath" is a farce. The great demand is not to enslave man to a day, but to free him from it.

We must constantly press the point and never lose sight of it, that, though every Christian were as pure as the star, as high as the sky, as true as the orbit of the sun, and though every unbeliever were as black as night, as foul as deadly vapors, as low as mud, it would not be evidence that the God of the Bible existed anywhere in the universe, that an ass ever spoke the language of man, that Jesus ever walked upon the earth, or that the Holy Ghost was a gentleman.

Men and women are called upon to-day to decide which is best for them to live by—truth or falsehood—and on this decision hangs the fate of Christianity. Every intelligent person must know that there was never a Garden of Eden, never a talking serpent, no fall of man, no flood, no Moses, no Jacob's ladder, no Balaam's ass, no Holy Ghost, no Virgin Mary, no Son of God, no crucification of Jesus, and no resurrection. Knowing this, men and women must be honest and reject these superstitions, or dishonest and profess to believe them.—*L. K. Washburn.*

Do not inquire if a man be a heretic, if he be a Quaker, a Jew, or a heathen; but if he be a virtuous man, if he love liberty and truth, if he wish the happiness and peace of human kind.—*Shelley.*

Acid Drops.

"And the greatest of these is charity." And the dear Christians are full of it. Our readers will recollect that Professor Haeckel suffered a bad accident some two months ago, falling from a chair in his study in reaching for a book on a high shelf. Amongst other condoling letters he received the following, which is a gem of the first water :—

"Berlin, May 22, 1911.

Much Esteemed Professor,—The mills of the gods grind slowly, but exceedingly fine, so says an old proverb. At last, at last, the eternal and just God whose irrepressible indulgence and patience towards you is simply adorable, has revealed himself to you. It was God's, yes, the living God's own hand which inflicted this penalty upon you in your old age. With unconcealed joy and satisfaction we positive Christians have heard that you have been condemned to what we hope will be a permanent disability. May you on your couch of pain become conscious of the fact that God does not permit himself to be scoffed at, and may you perhaps still gain the experience that it is better to be a believer in God than one who denies him and is a dissident from his church. Shortly after you had renounced the church the living God has thrown you down from the position of arrogance you presumed to occupy. Perhaps the God of the Apes will now help you! Certainly you look more like an ape than a man.

I hope that the living God may still give you many proofs of his omnipotence in the shape of pains and sickness, that you may writhe in agony and may never become quite healed.

In the name of many positive Christians who rejoice in this just punishment inflicted by God.

Professor Dr. v. B."

We should imagine it was rather "the God of the Apes" who played Haeckel that bad practical joke.

Robert Hugh Benson has "given the world" (that is the correct phrase, isn't it?) a new novel, *The Dawn of All*. We haven't read it, but we have seen enough of it from a *Times* review. It pictures a Catholic paradise on earth after the failure of the Atheist system which gave place once more to the good old faith. And the good old faith appears to have learnt nothing during its wandering in the wilderness. Under her power every infringement of the moral law is a capital offence. In other words, she governs by murder, as she always did. A young priest is handed over to the secular arm for a purely technical heresy, and duly butchered. Nor does he resent his assassination; he dies upholding the right of Society to protect itself—and the right of the Church to assist it in doing so. Mr. Benson is to be thanked for showing us that his own Mother Church is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. It is an unintended warning.

How they love one another! Thorpe Church, near Chertsey, is divided into hostile camps over the "ritualism" of the Vicar, and one result of the quarrel is an "act of sacrilege." The church was entered by "malignants," the altar was stripped of candles, candlesticks, cross, and vases of flowers. The crucifix from the vestry and the purgatorial board were also removed. The whole collection was left in the churchyard; which was, perhaps, a broad hint that it ought to be buried.

Dean Gregory is dead. He kept himself out of heaven for nearly a century. He much preferred this miserable vale of tears. His last illness was aggravated by his fellow-clergymen. They took to praying for him—and he was dead in forty-eight hours. Why didn't they give the old gentleman another chance?

Dr. Paget, Bishop of Oxford, died the same day as Dean Gregory. Perhaps they entered Paradise arm-in-arm. Dr. Paget left Cuddesdon Palace and £5,000 a year behind him. How much besides will be revealed by the probate. "Blessed be ye poor!" "Woe unto you rich!" What a rollicking farce it is! And what solemn faces are worn at the performance! Let us pray.

We have no desire to make fun of the report of a clergyman's wife being burnt to death, but it seems to us that if there was any truth in her husband's teaching she ought to have been rather more under the care of "Providence." Mrs. Rose Barker, wife of the Rev. Herbert Barker, Curate at East Ham, was cooking when her clothes caught on fire. The poor lady ran on to the lawn, a mass of flames, and clutched the maid, who was thus rendered powerless to help.

One would think that "Providence" would turn a fatherly eye upon "mission children" out for a holiday. No such thing, however. Fifteen such children were admitted to Newcastle Infirmary the other night suffering from poison due to eating berries on a day's outing. The "One Above" kept there.

Next to General Booth and Mr. Bernard Shaw, the Rev. F. B. Meyer is the best self-advertiser in the United Kingdom. Whenever he goes on a journey he sends glowing accounts of his doings to the newspapers. We read of the eager throngs that hang upon his lips, and of the mighty conquests he makes for Christ. With the Rev. Charles Brown and Gipsy Smith, he is now touring in South Wales in a fine motor-car; and "all along the route," he writes, "the people are looking out for us and waving their welcomes, whilst the crowds at the meetings are overwhelming. We are addressing thousands of men, who crowd around us." We have read the same extravagant language from his pen many a time before. The wonder is that in the countries thus visited and addressed by this globe-trotting man of God there are still any unconverted people left. In South Wales, we know, in spite of many such visits, religion has been steadily on the wane for some years. But, according to these self-praising men of God, Christ is carrying all before him wherever they go.

The pulpit persists in saying, "Man is essentially religious"; and yet the pulpit exists for the sole purpose of bringing people to religion, and then of preventing them from drifting away from it. Now, the curious thing is, that in spite of the alleged fact that "man is essentially religious," and in spite of strenuous efforts of a million pulpits and their adjuncts to make and keep people religious, religion is dying throughout Christendom. In our own land, according to Dr. Ballard, four-fifths of the adult population are outside the Churches and their services. This state of things proves beyond a doubt that religion is foreign to man's nature, and is thrown off by him as soon as he becomes free.

Who is Mrs. Archibald Mackirdy? She seems a very dogmatic lady. She contributes an article to the Educational Supplement of *Pearson's Magazine* on "The Value of the Bible," in which facts and arguments are scarce and personal dicta abound. "Better *any* religion," she says, "so that it is clean and fervent, than no religion at all. Hell holds no more miserable souls than the faithless." The last statement is what may be called "pretty Fanny's way." Surely the lady might wait until she is able to speak of hell from a reasonably lengthy experience before declaring who are the most miserable of its inhabitants. As to the first statement, we beg to observe that "*any* religion" is inconsistent with the "so that" which follows. It may be ladylike, but it is certainly illogical, to make a general statement and then limit it with extravagant qualifications. "Fervent" religion is common enough, but "clean" is quite another matter. Why, the Bible itself is about the dirtiest book in general circulation.

A North London clergyman, engaged in Christian Evidence work, recently said that all Atheists he had met were jolly and happy. Mrs. Mackirdy appears to have met a different variety of the species. "I have seen the power of religion," she says, "and the utter wretchedness of unbelief." No doubt the lady fancies she is speaking the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. But she is really, without knowing it, speaking the exact opposite of the truth. Those who *expect* to find Atheists *wretched* will be very apt to find them so; just as, if you were told that a perfectly sane man was *mad*, you would find evidences of insanity in his most harmless speech and gestures. We know Atheists a great deal better than this lady does, and with regard to the "wretchedness of unbelief" (meaning *unbelievers*, of course) we must tell her that she is—well, mistaken. And may we remind the lady that "Ingersol" was not the name of a great American "infidel."

The Wesleyan Church House is not finished; in fact, the roof is not yet on; but a branch of the London City and Midland Bank has been snugly housed for some months. God and Mammon seem to get on very well there. Mammon, indeed, has got a good start before God opens his doors.

We see that Mr. A. D. Howell Smith has been debating the subject of Atheism with the Rev. A. J. Waldron on Clapham Common, and we should have been pleased to announce the meeting if we had only been supplied with information. There is an account of the debate in the *Clapham Observer*, written by a Christian friend of Mr. Waldron's—Mr. George Marsh. This gentleman doesn't seem to have the slightest idea that a debate is anything but

a personal encounter. He admits that Mr. Smith is "a cultured and polished gentleman"—who would therefore be a *rara avis* indeed if he were on the Christian instead of the Freethought platform; but he says that his opponent was a better debater, and that Mr. Waldron "won easily"—as if it were a glove-fight between Johnson and Jeffries. How the poor Truth got on in the debate is quite an unimportant matter.

Mr. George Marsh might at least try to be accurate. He speaks of Mr. Howell Smith as talking about "blind chance." We are quite sure that Mr. Smith never talked about anything of the kind; except, perhaps, by way of correcting his clerical opponent.

Rev. J. M. Thompson is answered. He is the author of a little book, *Miracles of the New Testament*, which has caused a flutter in Church of England circles. It questions the Resurrection and other tall stories as actual history. Dr. Talbot, Bishop of Winchester, being of opinion that Mr. Thompson should be suppressed as far as possible, has taken a short cut to that desideratum. Instead of replying to the heretic, the Bishop has personally cancelled his licence to officiate as a clergyman.

Just a few words without trenching on Mr. Lloyd's excellent article in this week's *Freethinker*. Rev. R. J. Campbell says that "Christ is the last word in evolution"—and Mr. Campbell seems to be the last word in Christ. So there you are, don't you know?

Mr. Campbell declares that Christ is "the explanation of everything." He even explains Mr. Campbell—and the reverend gentleman *is* a bit mixed sometimes.

Mrs. Besant was one of the speakers at the Universal Races Congress. Writing on the subject in the New Theology weekly, she reports the following incident:—

> "A lady was applauding something I said, and a second lady remonstrated: 'Don't applaud; she is not a Christian.' *First Lady:* 'She stands for justice, whether Christian or not, and I will applaud anyone who stands for justice.' *Second Lady:* 'No, no; never mind what she stands for; she is not a Christian.'"

How the superstitionists love one another

Mrs. Archibald Little told the Races Congress that no country is so democratic as China. The meanest coolie can raise himself to the highest position. Moreover (she said) the meanest coolie has the manners of a gentleman. Here in England we don't even teach manners in our schools, yet we talk of civilising the East. Really it was the East that taught *us* civilisation, and the only return we make is to teach the East militarism. We are delighted, for our part, to hear these truths uttered publicly in "the most Christian country in the world."

"Confiteor Deo" by Roy Jackson was rather a bold piece of satire to find in the *Westminster Gazette* (Aug. 3). A lot of destitute poor devils huddle in the Mission, to escape the bitter cold outside, and get a bed and something to eat. One of them sings of the Mission people:—

> "They sang of God an' angels,
> An' Heaven's eternal joy,
> An' things I stopped believin'
> When I was but a boy."

But when they called out "Sinners, won't you come?" the singer went in spite of the shame in his heart:—

> "For I was cold and hungry;
> They gave me grub an' bed,
> After I kneeled there with them
> An' long, long prayers was said."

He put up with all the religious blarney for the sake of warmth and food; so he asks Jesus to "forgive the lie he lied."

The Christian epidermis seems impenetrable to common sense. Witness the following extract from the *Daily Mirror*:—

> "£36,000 IN RESPONSE TO PRAYER.
>
> INCOME OF BRISTOL INSTITUTION FOR WHICH DIVINE APPEALS ONLY ARE MADE.
>
> An income of £36,000, attributed solely to the efficacy of prayer, is announced in the annual report, just issued, of the Müller's Bristol Orphanage and Scriptural Knowledge Institution.
>
> The report adds that no appeal on behalf of the institution is ever made except by prayer to God."

We have criticised this ridiculous answer to prayer before. George Müller got a better advertisement by *not* advertising than he would have got *by* advertising. Instead of getting merely the advertisement he could pay for, he was advertised gratuitously all over the kingdom as the man who never advertised. The *Daily Mirror*, being in the trade, ought to see this. But apparently it doesn't—unless this paragraph is paid for at the top advertisement rate, which is quite conceivable.

We are glad to see the *Christian World*, which is the most sensible of the religious weeklies, speaking out at last on this Müller's Orphanage business. "Too much, of course," our contemporary says, "may be made of this 'dependence upon prayer,' which is the just boast of the Orphanage. The mere fact of its success on these lines has caused the institution to be unofficially 'advertised' in the Press and elsewhere to a greater extent than many similar good causes." Exactly. Non-advertising in some cases is the best advertisement. We have been saying this for some thirty years.

Someone has sent us the following cutting:—

> "Clarendon, Jamaica, has produced a great monstrosity. On Friday, the 26th inst. [June], a mare belonging to one William Preen, dropped a well-developed colt, but with this peculiar deformity about it, its face is a *facsimile* to that of a man with a deformed nose; it has one eye, and that in the centre of the face; legs extremely long, and the hoofs like those of a young calf, but not cloven, and it moans like a human being suffering pain. A number of people went to the spot to have a look at this prodigy."—*Colon Starlet*

This remarkable biological mixture, if the story be not a *canard*, should find its way to a museum, and should be the subject of theological discourses by the Rev. Dr. Warschauer. It is strong evidence of the wisdom and goodness of God.

Richard George Nowell Allen, who committed suicide at Rhyl, had suffered for eight years from religious mania. He worried himself very much over the Bible. He was under the impression that the Bible taught that he was not to work,—which is a very convenient theory. He also expected to become King of England. Atheism might have dome him some good, but he may not have met with that remedy.

A verdict of suicide while temporarily insane was returned by an Aldershot jury at an inquest on John Browning, who cut his throat while in a bathchair in which he was being wheeled from the Farnham Infirmary to visit friends. In the hospital he said he would rather die than go back to the Infirmary, and he had made his peace with the Heavenly Father. How those Atheists (as Talmage and Torrey declare) will go on destroying themselves.

Father Vaughan has been reminding a Catholic audience at Eastbourne that "God Almighty once spoke through a jackass." *Once!* Well, well!

Dr. Clifford is incorrigible. He evidently thinks that the Veto of the House of Lords is to be abolished in order to set up a new education system in which Nonconformist religion will be established and maintained by the State in elementary schools. We believe the reverend gentleman is mistaken.

The poor old Pope seems to have got his ticket for heaven. He won't start the journey until he is fetched out of doors and driven to the station, but his frequent indispositions suggest that this may happen almost at any time. When it does happen the world will witness the splendid high comedy of electing another Pope. The priest elected to that high office is generally one unknown to fame previously. Candidates who have parties of their own are rarely able to get the necessary majority—for, having friends, they are sure to have enemies too. In the end the holy conclave usually falls back upon the line of least resistance, and elects a candidate who displeases the fewest of the voters. Immediately he is elected Pope, however, he becomes a wonderfully great man all at once; and traditions of his career, from childhood to his occupancy of the Papal chair, begin to swarm like flies on a hot summer day.

The play in progress was *Faust*.

The actor taking the part of Mephistopheles was rather bulky round the waist.

When it came to the part for him to descend to the "lower regions" he got on the trap-door and descended—that is, as far as his "lower chest"—where he stuck fast, the opening not being large enough for him. He wriggled and twisted in his efforts to get down, when a voice from the "gods," in an audible whisper, was heard:

"Be God, the place is full."

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

October 1, 8, 15, Queen's Hall, London; 22, Birmingham Town Hall; 29, Liverpool.

November 5, Leicester; 12, Manchester.

To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1911.—Previously acknowledged £280 3s. 9d. Received since:—P. Q., £1.

THE VANCE TESTIMONIAL FUND. — Previously acknowledged, £107 6s. 6d. Received since:—Horace W. Parsons, £2 2s.; Mrs. Parsons, 5s.; K. C., 10s. 6d.; R. W., 2s.; T. M. M., 2s.; J. E. T., 5s.; Robert Stirton and Friends (Dundee), £1 13s.; C. Jortan, 2s.; Nobody, 2s.; Blackburn Branch, 5s.; Mrs. A. Lee, 1s.

W. BURNS.—Better have asked the author for it. We suppose the reference is to 1 Timothy ii. 13-14.

HELENA GUNNING.—See "Acid Drops." Thanks. Glad to hear the *Freethinker* is "the salt" of your existence. How different the world might be if children's brains were no longer addled by superstition!

J. H. O. (Johannesburg).—Sorry we missed you in London. Better luck next time.

W. T. BURTON.—Berkeley's works complete are only obtainable in the expensive edition edited by Prof. Fraser. The two-volume edition, edited by Wright and published by Tegg, some fifty years ago, is sometimes met with second-hand. The "Principles of Human Knowledge" is in Routledge's shilling library.

DEVONSHIRE.—Charles Bradlaugh's biography, written by his daughter and Mr. J. M. Robertson, is included in Fisher Unwin's half-crown library.

T. M. M.—You are very near the mark. There is nothing "free" in the world in the sense of being outside the law of causation. A man's will is "free" when it is not frustrated by an outside will. The whole trouble and fallacy lies in a loose use of "free," which means nothing unless it is defined in relation to the matter in hand. There is "free will" and there is "a free ticket"—and the two "frees" might as well be different words altogether for any meaning they have in common. More than half the tricks in theology and metaphysics are performed in that way.

A. D. HOWELL SMITH.—Thanks for cuttings. We were only away from home a fortnight, and work, minimised as far as possible, went on all the time; but the change and partial rest, combined with the glorious weather (we had fourteen days' continuous sunshine), were decidedly beneficial. A certain volume of yours has not exactly been neglected, but it awaits a notice, and will receive it shortly. Your letter in the *Clapham Observer* is capital; pointed, pungent, and well-bred.

K. C.—Quite right. All subscriptions to Funds "run" through the *Freethinker*, unless expressly announced otherwise, should be sent direct to us, and made payable to us.

ROBERT STIRTON.—Please accept our best thanks for your handsome collection for the Vance Testimonial Fund. We wish someone could do the same in every town where the *Freethinker* has readers.

P. Q., subscribing to the President's Honorarium Fund, says: "I sincerely hope that your life and health may long be spared to fight the demon Superstition. I also hope the *Freethinker* is able, at least, to pay its own expenses, for it is the only paper I look anxiously forward to every week, and I would not be without it if its cost were three times what it is at present." We shall have something to say about the paper and finances generally before very long.

NOBODY (Canada) says he does not know any of the N. S. S. officers, but Miss Vance once wrote him a letter which he was pleased with, and he sends best wishes for her speedy recovery.

JOSEPH BATES.—Remittance and application passed on to secretary. Thanks for reports of your case. Owing to bank holiday we only received them on Tuesday. Glad the local "saints" rallied round you so well, and that you found such a good witness in Mrs. Blackburn, the authoress.

C. BRIDGER.—See paragraph. Thanks.

J. KING.—We don't agree with you with regard to the first case. Expression is a higher law than formal syntax. "This was the most unkindest cut of all" is technically wrong, but Shakespeare knew what he was doing.

C. KHAN.—We fear we can hardly deal with such a private matter.

E. H. ANDREWS.—Glad you think "Acid Drops" *delicious*. See paragraph. Thanks.

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.

A new course of Sunday evening lectures, under the auspices of the Secular Society, Ltd., has been arranged for October, November, and December at Queen's Hall. Mr. Foote starts the course with three lectures, and will be followed by Mr. Cohen and Mr. Lloyd. Mrs. Bradlaugh-Bonner has accepted an early date in December.

It is probable that a course of Sunday evening lectures, also under the auspices of the Secular Society, Ltd., will take place at the Stratford Town Hall in November; and another course at the Shoreditch Town Hall in January.

The Annual "Bradlaugh Dinner," in commemoration of the birth (and career) of the great Charles Bradlaugh will be held at the Holborn Restaurant on Wednesday evening, September 27, under the auspices of the Bradlaugh Fellowship. Mr. G. W. Foote has accepted a unanimous invitation to preside.

Mr. Lloyd delivers the afternoon and evening addresses at the Failsworth Secular Sunday-Schools' annual services today (Aug. 13). His subjects are "The Way to be Happy" and "The Moral Ideal." Tea will be provided at a small charge for friends from a distance. We hope there will be fine gatherings.

We have been looking through the local press reports of Mr. Joseph Bates's case at Colne, and we gather that his real offence was attracting large meetings. Other lectures had been delivered at the same spot, but they did not obstruct; which can only mean, unless it is downright hypocrisy, that they were not big enough to cause any inconvenience. The police witnesses kept on referring to Mr. Bates's doctrines. One of them was horrified at his "running down General Booth." The worthy constable evidently regarded that as terribly near blasphemy. And the clerk of the court was far from being impartial. Mr. Bates is to be congratulated on his successful defence.

Concord, the monthly organ of the International Arbitration and Peace Society, is an interesting publication. The August number has the usual "International Notes" by Mr. W. Heaford. This is one of the brightest features of *Concord*. Mr. Heaford is holidaying at present. For fifteen years he has taken his annual holiday on the Continent, but the heat this year has "frightened him from foreign parts and distant travels," so he is giving his own country (which is worth it) a turn, and is wandering round the coast of Kent and Sussex, beginning at Herne Bay and ending at Hastings. Hastings, by the way, is the place where Mr. A. B. Moss is holidaying.

Mr. Cohen is also holidaying at present. He has gone farther afield, but in old England still. We hope he will have "a good time" *all* the time, and come back ten years younger; though some will say that if this can be done our young colleague might, by a brief succession of holidays, reach the point of being "born again"—a process that he might not welcome with a Christian spirit.

The Wood Green *Sentinel* has allowed Mr. E. Burke to start a discussion in its columns on "Hell." Mr. Burke's letter is bright and well-written. We are glad to see the editorial announcement following it: "We expect a variety of views on the subject and will impartially print them all." The heading of this discussion, by the way, contains a slight inaccuracy. "The Place of Cheap Paving" is clearly wrong. Hell is not paved; it is bottomless. It is the *road* to hell that was said to be paved with good intentions.

The Battle of the Spirits.

THE spirit of God, I have been told, is the pervading presence in all things—the wonderful presence that solves all the mysteries of nature, and whispers to us with sweet voice what lies in and beyond the vast, dim immensities of space, the purple obscurities of the twilight, the softening influences of moonshine, and all the beauties of field, foliage, and flower. It shines on the wind-swept mountain top, in the leaves of the oak, in the eyes of a dog, in a baby's little pink finger nails; in everything it shines as light in each drop of water in a placid sun-lit pool. The beauty of it is inexpressible. It has power to change bad instantaneously to good. It encircles and envelops the whole universe; and even the atoms of the common clay-clod that crumbles beneath my foot possess it. Its might is immeasurable; its glory above all imagery; its purity beyond the uttermost limits of thought; and its simplicity unresolvable into human conception.

But to man only is given the joy of it. In him the spirit of God realises its infinite time-task. For him alone was the delight of its presence made dear. During æons of unmarked time the spirit of God had flooded the universe with consciousless energy. Silently and solitarily it had peacefully performed its ingenerate work. Unmurmuring and uncomplaining, breathing the breath of movement into all things, yet retaining, serenely and wholly, all consciousness, it reigned by day and by night, by year and by century. No dispeace disturbed its complacency; no marvel stayed its task; no horror affrighted; no beauty blinded its all-seeing eyes. Continuously it thought its own thought. Reciprocated love it knew not, nor joy, nor happiness, nor praise, nor reward; till at last, wearied by loneliness, outworn by unhonored labor, tired by unthwarted supremacy, the spirit of God, desiring love and friendship and praise, came in its concentrated essence to the animal-man, breathed upon him, and awoke within him a wondering soul. The spirit of man was born; his birthright, thought.

Delight in the new sense of companionship cleared the clouds of dreariness from the mind of the spirit of God. Here, at last, was there refreshing homage from which it would extract invigorating power, and in which it would find some recompense, some worship, some praise, some gratitude for its long and laborious toils. In the new-born spirit of man would be found some relief from the burden of solitude. In him would be found a sympathetic confidant; with him would it confer; and to him would it reveal all the intricate workings of the whole universe. The spirit of God diffused happiness as it pondered over the future pleasure that would spring into beauty from its association with the spirit of man. Joy was achieved by sharing thought-life. No longer did the spirit of God retain all consciousness. Solitary grandeur of thought it no longer possessed. As the moon reigns not alone in the purple heavens, and must partake of a portion only of our admiration, the rest roving the stars, and deepening in the darkness between them, so had the spirit of God yielded some of its powers to the spirit of man; neither reigned alone; companionship had meant self-surrender. Nor was it solely that the spirit of God had relinquished some of its own powers; it had also given to its companion-spirit potentialities that were afterwards to develop into antagonism and enmity. But its gladness shut from its sight the happenings that lay in the womb of the far future; and the spirit of God rejoiced in the thanksgiving arising from the spirit of man, and blessed him with many blessings, thinking not of the time to come.

For long was the relationship between them one of fear and love and praise on the one side, and continued dominancy on the other. Yet there were times when the spirit of man temporarily flashed forth his strength, defiantly proclaiming against the friendship that robbed him of his freedom, and forced him to his knees in a mockery of companionship. And there were times of foreboding in which the spirit of God caught glimpses of an emancipation that changed delight of worship to ignominy of contempt, fraught with return to the renounced negation of solitude. The spirit of God was heavy; for spasms of restlessness were recurrent, gathering potency and force with every renewal, resulting, in time, to hidden hatred and concealed warfare. The love that linked the spirits in the dim, dewy times of praise and peace gradually diminished and weakened. The companionship that bound them together in the gloaming of thought resistlessly fled before the trials of unsleeping trouble. Not enough was it for the spirit of man that he should obediently dethrone his thoughts of freedom; nor enough was it for the spirit of God that it should relinquish all its control, and retire into the coldness of shadow from which it had come, leaving the spirit of man to rule supremely in its place, and offer up no praise to the giver of life and of thought. Not enough was it for the spirit of God that it should yield the homage for which it had yearned, and for which it lived.

So it was, quietly and secretly, but gaining greater strength as new thoughts were rapidly drawn from the heart of thought, that the spirit of man rose up to do brave battle with the spirit of God, recognising it, not as a friend and companion, but as an enemy that held him to the past and stayed his progress to the future.

No battle, in its intensity and duration, ever surpassed this between the spirit of man and the spirit of God. The conflicting forces of nature, as we know them, are mute and impotent beside this seemingly interminable conflict of spirit with spirit. The bitterest human antagonism of war is base, ignoble, inglorious, and pales into insignificance, in its scope and issues, before this warfare. The wild animal's ungovernable fury when protecting its helpless young, its determination to fight to the death for their safety, are trifling and superficial in character compared with this long, slow, tedious fight for freedom. For it is easy to face an opponent who is seen, and whose movements can be watched and prepared for; but the foe of the spirit of man was invisible, incomprehensible, and omnipresent. He fought against something vague, indeterminate, illusory; something mysterious and elusive; something strange and awe-inspiring; something that had ensheathed his ankles in gyves that it might keep him to itself. As the future opened up before the longing eyes of the spirit of man, and stretched out welcoming arms to receive him, the gyves became heavier and heavier, the fight keener and keener, the hope of freedom stronger and stronger. Indefatigably the spirit of man strove to release himself, taxing the whole powers arrayed against him. The odds were tremendous and overpowering; for the God spirit had requisitioned the hosts of its worshipers, the weak spirits of man, to its safeguarding. Yet never was there truce; nor did the strong spirits of man quail in the onslaught; nor were they afraid.

Unreckoned time retreated to the past swiftly, like moments of anguish, or agony, or turmoil, and still the spirits battled, often secretly, often openly, but never was there any sign of capitulation. The beauties of the morning passed beyond the control of the God spirit, as the beauties of humanity passed beyond the control of the enslaved and weakling spirits of man. The sun still rose and tinged the fleecy clouds with ochre and silver and vermilion. Rivers still reflected its rays, and gloried in sparkling splendor. Trees still stole the shadows, entangling them in their branches, that birds and beasts might rest and sleep in the cool of their pleasant shade. Birds still sang merrily, and the rain-drops still refreshed leaf and shade. It was as if the spirit of God had forsaken them and forgotten them; as if the delights of worship and the strenuous toil of unceasing battle had forced it to concentrate all its power upon the spirits of man; and it could not undo the work already done. Nature unheed-

ingly performed its many duties, uninfluenced by the battle of the spirits; for the man-spirit had, by his unquenchable desire for freedom, set everything free from the yoke of the spirit of God. Emancipation was won, but not for himself. All other things were unbound from the bonds of the God spirit; man still struggled to unloose his.

Reverence for nature as the great manifestation of the God spirit-presence had dwindled away and died; and was replaced by cold calm scrutiny and keenest investigation, into which entered no cognisance of the mysterious, and upon which rested no awe. The spirit of man, strong, indestructible, vigorous, and ever, although slowly, developing to greater forces, looked now upon nature as something to be conquered, not as something to be venerated. As he gradually gained control over natural agencies, as he laboriously sought for and wonderfully obtained or found the keys to their many massive doors, just as surely was there curtailment of the powers attributed to the spirit of God. Every seeming mystery solved restricted the possibility of that presence. Every key found detracted its scope. Every truth stated reduced its capability; and all gave to the spirit of man new and sharper weapons with which to fight.

So it was that the strong spirit of man, gaining fortitude and freedom by increasing conquests over the once inimical, because ununderstood, shadowy recesses where the God spirit dwelt, rose above his bondage. The time came when he felt something evaporate in his mind. He gazed inward to the deeps of his heart and saw the fuel burning brightly beneath the crucible of thought. He looked upwards, and the mists of his mind were rapidly disappearing in the glowing sunrays of reason. He knew he was free; that the battle was finished in victory for him. Mysteries were evanishing in the light, like smoke clouds in the wind, taking the God-spirit up with them into the freeholds of folly. He looked to his feet; they, too, were released from the gyves that once so impeded his movements. And he, wondering at first in his perplexity, and searching the reaches of his mind, asked himself, "The spirit of God—what was it?"

A black ominous cloud, separating itself from a gloomy agglomeration on the south, was moving menacingly towards the sun, as if propelled by some threatening and intelligent power. The dew-wet violets, encased in green, at his feet, seemed alive with light and beauty, as if designed by some creative mind especially to appeal to him. Birds flitted around him, and filled his ears to overflowing with delicate music, both birds and music seemingly devised by some unseen potentiality for his particular enjoyment and delight, or to awaken within him a sense of an all-loving giver of gladness. He turned to the firs and pines, pouring their perfume into his nostrils, and making the air sweet with fragrance, and saw how they tapered beautifully to the heights of morning, as if to force his eyes to look reverently there. He sent his voice to the hills, and they flung it back disdainfully. He looked into the quiet water of the river and saw himself immediately photographed. And a sad smile broke from the lips of the strong spirit of man as he thought of the long imaginative slavedom against which he had directed his greatest powers unwearyedly, and over which he had, at length, prevailed.

He thought, also, of the crowded cities and of the innumerable peaceful villages, with their millions of God-spirit worshipers, still kneeling in homage to a phantasmic idea; and he knew how few companion spirits amongst men he had. Not yet was the battle finished. Far into the future the clash of ideas sounded, till it quietened on the horizons of time. The fight must become fiercer; for the multitudes of God-spirit devotees had forgotten humanity in their passions of prayers, and the sun went down daily on divine thanksgiving and on human agony and travail and debasement. The strong spirit of man knew his companion spirits must struggle and toil still; but as they had grown strong and noble and good in the battle of the past, so would they grow stronger, nobler, and better in the battle of the future. For was not theirs a harvest of hope, human hope, in which their tired eyes could find rest and relief on human truthfulness, independence, purity, grandeur, realised justice, love, all built upon the solid basis of reason, and all enjoyed by all men? Sorrow had visited the strong-man spirits, and had covered them with her wings. But her eyes were radiant with the flame of the fulness of human life, and her lips were lit with the reflected light that streams backwards from the unborn years, and her black wings shone with a lustre that illumined weary hearts and brightened inert minds, weary with work. Self-sacrifice is written across the broad brows of the strong indomitable spirits of man—a self-sacrifice that is the glory of their power, and the great inheritance of the men to come. Their courage will never dim, nor their "spirit" fail and grow weak; for truth never betrays, and hope shines through their darkest sorrows. They fight for future freedom, for truth, for humanity. They give their minds and lives to man; and they shall succeed, for the spirit of man has what the spirit of God never had—Reason.

ROBERT MORELAND.

The Wonders of the Living Cell.

THE proposition that all living things, from an alga to an oak, and from a moneron to a man, are composed of cells, is a biological truism. Nevertheless, the marvels presented by these structural units are of a most wonderful nature. An investigation of cellular structure opens up a vast field for scientific inquiry, while a study of their modes of multiplication has revealed a world of microscopic wonders previously undreamed of. One of the most fascinating results of histological research is the demonstration of a general uniformity of developmental processes which governs the growth of plant and animal cells. The same complex phenomena may be witnessed in the development of a tumor, the pollen cells of a plant, the evolving ovum of an ape or human child, or the liver of a cat. Every part of our bodily structure, be it bone, skin, hair, muscle, nails, or nerves, is alike composed of variously modified cells.

For very excellent reasons, naturalists usually select some simple single-celled organism for the purpose of picturing the cellular units which make up the bodies of multicellular organisms. Presenting, as it does, so many advantages to the student, the amœba is a very favorite example of single-celled life. It is to be found in nearly all our ponds or streams; in mud, and sometimes in damp earth. Most of the amœbæ are invisible to the unaided eye, but a few of them are just visible to naked sight as minute specks of protoplasm. Before the microscope had reached its present stage of perfection, the amœba was regarded as a structureless cell. But, with improved methods of microscopic research, its structures were determined. It is now known to consist of three distinct parts—a circular spot darker and more granular in texture than its general protoplasmic mass, the jelly-like protoplasm itself, and an even more transparent globular portion, which slowly increases and then decreases in size. This last body is termed the "contractile vacuole," because, when it has attained its fullest dimensions, which may reach a quarter or a fifth of the entire diameter of the amœba, it then steadily contracts until it becomes invisible, and afterwards slowly re-expands until it attains its maximum growth once more. The shape of the amœba is subject to considerable variation. It is occasionally globular and quite motionless, but its most usual appearance is that of a very irregular jelly-like mass, with feelers or false feet (pseudopodia) spreading out in all directions. The amœba flows along the surface of

stone or plant by the movement of these constantly changing processes. This primitive protozoon possesses the power of absorbing the particles of nutritious matter its pseudopodia encounter. These food substances may be seen to slowly dissolve, and finally disappear altogether. The amœba flourishes best in stagnant water, where its food supplies are most abundant, but its size rapidly dwindles when placed in pure water. The dependence of these protozoa upon organic nutrition thus definitely places them well within the borders of the animal kingdom. The contractile vacuole, already mentioned, also fulfils an animal function; it expels the carbonic-acid gas and other waste products of assimilation.

The amœba is the most widely recognised representative of the lowest branch of the animal tree, the single-celled organisms or protozoa. All the higher animals are classed as metazoa, or multicellular animals, because they are built up of a multitude of single cells, which, in all the highest forms, reach so vast a number that though they may be fairly estimated at countless millions, their immense numbers as yet baffle exact computation.

Contrary to popular belief, single-celled organisms are not only extremely numerous; but also present a vast array of diverse forms. They may be arranged in five zoological classes. The rhizopoda comprise the first of these classes, and embrace not merely the innumerable species of amœbæ, but the beautiful foraminifera, whose shells are one of the glories of the microscopic world. The foraminifera are simple amœboid cells, which have evolved the power of constructing shells from tiny lifeless particles, and of elaborating those still more marvellous coverings which appear under the microscope as miniature mimics of the shells of the higher mollusca. The extinct nummulites, which form the great Eocene limestone deposits, were the giants of this unicellular division, the largest equalling a half-crown in size.

The fairy-like radiolaria, studied with such painstaking love by the Darwin of Germany, Ernst Haeckel, are rhizopods which secrete beautiful siliceous skeletons in amazing variety. They are met with in all oceans, in every latitude, and at all depths. Their skeletons form the greater part of the ooze which has been dragged from depths of 2,000 to 3,000 fathoms. Another division, the mastigophora, is equally interesting. Some of these are shaped like sea-weeds or terrestrial flowers, and, in addition to the foregoing protozoa, many other lovely and fantastic forms afford wonder and delight to the student of nature's single-celled marvels.

The sixteenth century was nearing its close when the earliest investigations upon the finer structures of organisms were conducted by Malpighi and Grew, but these were confined to plants. The demonstration of the universality of cellular structure was reserved to nineteenth century science. This generalisation was firmly established by Schleiden and Schwann in 1838 for plants and animals alike.

Down to quite recent years it was assumed that the reproduction of cells was the result of simple division. The cell was generally regarded as a relatively homogeneous protoplasmic speck, which was provided with a nucleus, and usually bounded by a cell-wall. Improved methods of observation and experiment, however, have completely invalidated this view. The cell structures of plants and animals are now recognised as highly complex bodies. The research work of Hertwig, Beneden, Boveri, Wilson, and many other observers has led to the recognition of complicated cell-contents of the most elaborate nature. The external covering of the cell is usually formed by a film or membrane. Within this outer covering the cell contents lie. These comprise a network of very delicate fibres (plasmogen) which surround a more watery substance—the plasm. The plasmogen network is regarded by the majority of authorities as the essential living material. Embedded in the cell is a tiny circular or oval spot termed the nucleus, which is environed by a highly delicate membrane. The nucleus, in its turn, contains a network of delicate plasmogen fibres, which encloses a more fluid plasmic material. The cellular network varies very considerably in its mode of arrangement; it may assume the form of a coiled filament or group of filaments, and these arrange themselves so as to present the appearance of rosettes or stars. In the meshwork of the net of the nucleus, or in the coils of the filament, one or two small specks may be observed. And these specks —the nucleoli—appear in a special manner to preside over the living activities of the cell.

But the most remarkable phenomena are those which precede and accompany the multiplication of cells. The processes now to be described are mostly invisible under the highest powers afforded by the unaided microscope. This is owing to the fact that the delicate constituents of the cell are quite transparent. This obstacle to observation, however, has been completely surmounted by the use of various chemical dyes and re-agents which deeply stain these parts and render them visible as colored bodies.

As already intimated, the cell nucleus consists of a readily stainable network or coil, although its other constituents do not stain so deeply. This understood, the processes of cell division will be easily followed.

In preparing for the divisional or reproductive act the nucleus of the cell loses its enclosing membrane, and its network of plasmogen no longer presents the regular arrangement of its ordinary state. The threads now take on the appearance of an irregular wreath, and as the loops break up their arrangement is altered so that the open ends of the loops are directed outwards, and the closed ends meet at the centre. Subsequent movements of the network loops completely reverse this position; the loops arrange themselves in two separate groups, which lie with their open ends towards one another in the middle. In the meantime, those nuclear elements which do not stain so deeply also arrange themselves in a definite position. They present the appearance of very delicate streaks stretching from the centre of the nucleus in the direction of its poles. At this stage its resemblance to a striated spindle is very striking. In the protoplasmic mass of the cell itself a revolution is at the same time in progress. At the two poles of the cell the granules of the general protoplasm have also grouped themselves into a pair of starlike figures. The network loops of the nucleus now move farther and farther from their original position in the centre of the cell, until they each reach, by travelling in opposite directions, a position at the respective polar extremities of the cell. A double star is thus brought into being, one at each pole of the cell. Almost immediately this stage is reached, the division of the cell itself takes place. The protoplasm constricts at the middle of the cell; the division is complete, and in the place of the one original mother cell two daughter cells have been called into existence.

In the light of the phenomena with which this article deals the subjoined quotation from Herbert Spencer is particularly apposite. "If," wrote that mighty thinker, "If a single cell, under appropriate conditions, becomes a man in the space of a few years, there can surely be no difficulty in understanding how, under appropriate conditions, a cell may in the course of untold millions of years give origin to the human race."

T. F. Palmer.

It looks as though the only sincere Christians have gone insane or committed suicide. Graves and lunatic asylums have been filled by the Christian dogma of hell. Almost every day we read of some person bereft of reason on account of religious faith. The only way to go through life rationally is to have nothing to do with religion. Certainly no one can honestly believe in the horrors of the hereafter, as preached by the Christian pulpit, and retain his reason. They who profess Christianity, but spend their lives in making money, are hypocrites.—*L. K. Washburn.*

Freethought and Vivisection.

[Opinions of several exponents of Freethought who at the same time have cared something for the animal world. Compiled by George Allen White for *Secular Thought*, Toronto.]

"VIVISECTION is the Inquisition—the Hell—of Science. All the cruelty which the human—or rather the inhuman—heart is capable of inflicting is in this word. Below this there is no depth."—R. G. INGERSOLL.

"The practice of Vivisection is so revolting that it is difficult to imagine how any human beings could defend it. .....These professional men regard the victims of their science very much as the Inquisitors of old did the victims of their faith. They have a sort of conventional fanaticism for the elucidation of scientific truth, and although humane like other men in ordinary life, they are ready to act the part of monsters of cruelty to clear up a physiological doubt."—RICHARD COBDEN, Letter of March 2, 1865.

"Against Vivisection especially I feel very strongly. I have never seen really convincing proof that the practice is necessary to the advancement of medical science, while the cruelties to which it is apt to lead are undeniable."—GOLDWIN SMITH, Letter to the London Humanitarian League, 1904. (Dr. Smith was a liberal thinker, though not strictly a Freethinker.)

"I know your work on behalf of the helpless, and would rejoice to be with you, if I could bring my mind to consider that a petition to the Royal Commission on Vivisection would be viewed favorably by the Commissioners, or do service to the cause you are advocating." — GEORGE MEREDITH, Letter to Stephen Coleridge, October 9, 1906.

"Health is not got by poisonings, however carefully graduated. Health is brought about by pure living, pure food, moral self-control, and by becoming the master and not the slave of your appetites and passions. It is a road that leads to death and not to life, when you want to live evilly and be cured of the results of evil living out of the things which are wrung from the tortured bodies of the animal kingdom."—ANNIE BESANT, Lecture (in London) May 16, 1909. (Mrs. Besant was formerly allied with the Freethinkers, but later embraced Theosophy.)

"My name is nothing; it is in the name of the whole human race that you make the appeal. Vivisection is crime. The human race will repudiate these barbarities."—VICTOR HUGO.

"If any of these men at present working in laboratories tried difficult, arduous paths of usefulness, they probably would be quite useless. Any fool can be a vivisectionist; many of them are. Therefore I am not going to pretend that the shutting up of the laboratories would be a good thing for them. But there they are not only pursuing their own path, but discrediting other paths, and throwing much odium on the men who are trying to open up other paths. You want to shut up the laboratories, you want to get rid of those men. It is true they may have to give up science. Let them sweep the crossings; they probably would be able to do that."—GEORGE BERNARD SHAW, Address at Caxton Hall, London, June 10, 1909.

"I do not remember ever having written anything directly against Vivisection, but nevertheless I am glad to have an opportunity of expressing my great disapprobation of Vivisection, which I consider cruel and unnecessary."—COUNT LEO TOLSTOY, Letter of Apr. 23, 1909. (Count Tolstoy was for all practical purposes a Freethinker.)

"What is the temperature of a cat's liver; how hot scalding water must be to kill a rabbit; what is the effect of sticking a needle into the heart of a dog—are with these men scientific facts, and necessarily so. Thus all indulgence of wild and wanton curiosity must pass as science legally, whether practised by a little boy or by a pretentious sciolist."—FRANCIS WILLIAM NEWMAN, Essay on Cruelty in *Fraser's Magazine*.

"Let us, then, accept the greater responsibility that attaches to our greater power and opportunities; let us be benefactors rather than tormentors to these inferior beings who are so much at our mercy; and, above all, let us not corrupt our own natures by clothing our cruel pride in the stolen raiment of science and humanity."—G. W. FOOTE, Editor London *Freethinker*, November, 1909.

"Luckily the few data we have already received on the truth of this matter are so entirely convincing that the cowardice of those other gentlemen can no longer tempt us to enthusiasm for the animal-torture they so philanthropically approve; on the contrary, it will make us cease committing our health and life to a doctor who gains his learning thence, for we shall regard him not only as a man insensible to pity, but also as a dunce in his profession."—RICHARD WAGNER, Letter to Ernst von Weber.

"Everything has its day; and this craze for digging into the bowels and brains of animals has come to a climax where it must surely before long prove its own futility and insanity. I use the words deliberately; for when mankind has reached that pass where the fear and terror of outer bodily disease drives it to do things revolting and violating to its own inner life and deeper instincts, it is obvious that it has got to an ugly place, where disaster waits it on either hand and only those go forward whom the gods have blinded."—EDWARD CARPENTER, Address before the Humanitarian League, London, 1904.

"I believe I am not interested to know whether Vivisection produces results that are profitable to the human race or doesn't. To know that the results are profitable to the race would not remove my hostility to it. The pain which it inflicts upon unconsenting animals is the basis of my enmity toward it, and it is to me sufficient justification of the enmity without looking further. It is so distinctly a matter of feeling with me, and is so strong and so deeply rooted in my make and my constitution, that I am sure I could not even see a vivisector vivisected with anything more than a sort of qualified satisfaction."—MARK TWAIN, Letter to *Animals' Guardian*.

"I venture to predict that the time will come when the searching for human health among the infected organs and tortured nerves of our fellow animals will be regarded with the same loathing which we now visit upon the worst barbarities of our ancestors."—ERNEST H. CROSBY, Letter of May 13, 1906, to N.Y. *Tribune*.

"I have for some years come to the conclusion that nothing but total abolition will meet the case of Vivisection. I am quite disgusted at the frequency of the most horrible experiments to determine the most trivial facts recorded in the publications of scientific societies month by month, evidently carried on for the interest of the 'research' and the reputation it gives."—ALFRED RUSSEL WALLACE, Letter to Dr. W. R. Hadwen, Sept., 1905.

"I would rather submit to the worst of deaths, so far as pain goes, than have a single dog or cat tortured on the pretence of sparing me a twinge or two."—ROBERT BROWNING, Letter to Miss F. P. Cobbe, Dec. 28, 1874.

"Many vivisectors are not medical men at all, and it has not yet become a proverb that physiologists are humane..... We are bound to see that the sacred name of science is not used as a shelter for unworthy practices."—SIR LESLIE STEPHEN, "The Effects of Vivisection," *Cornhill Magazine*, April, 1876.

"The day may come when the rest of the animal creation may acquire those rights which never could have been withholden from them but by the hand of tyranny. The question is not, 'Can they reason,' nor 'Can they talk,' but 'Can they suffer'?"—JEREMY BENTHAM, *Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*.

"But this I know, whate'er of natural rights
Be mine, are yours no less by native dower.
If none entitled is to bind ME down,
And rend, and mar, and rack, and break, and flay me,
None hath a title so to ravage YOU,
Saving such title as defames alike
Him that bestows and him that uses it."

—WILLIAM WATSON.

FORGIVE AND FORGET.

A man had for years employed a steady German workman. One day Jake came to him and asked to be excused from work the next day.

"Certainly, Jake," beamed the employer. "What are you going to do?"

"Vall," said Jake slowly, "I tink I must go by mein wife's funeral. She dies yesterday."

After a lapse of a few weeks Jake again approached his boss for a day off.

"All right, Jake, but what are you going to do this time?"

"Aber," said Jake, "I go to make me, mit mein fraulein, a wedding."

"What! So soon? Why, it's only been three weeks since you buried your wife."

"Ach!" replied Jake, "I don't hold spite long."

A persistent book hawker in endeavoring to sell an illustrated Bible to a householder, who, losing his temper, said:

"No! Take your dam'd book away."

To which the indignant book hawker replied:

"'Dam'd book!' Why, what the h—l do you mean? This is the best b ——y Bible that ever was published!"

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, W. J. Ramsey, a Lecture; 6.15, Mr. Allison, a Lecture.

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): E. Burke, 3.15, "Reason and Superstition"; 6, "The Case for Secular Education."

EDMONTON BRANCH N. S. S. (The Green): 7.30, W. J. Ramsey, "Now the birth of Jesus," etc.

FINSBURY PARK: 11.30, Miss K. Kough, 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, a Lecture.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Parliament Hill): 3.30, Miss K. Kough, a Lecture.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (outside Maryland Point Station, Stratford): 7, E. C. Saphin, "Christian Truths Untrue."

WOOD GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Jolly Butchers Hill, opposite Public Library): 7, F. A. Davies, "The World, the Flesh, and the Devil."

COUNTRY.

OUTDOOR.

HUDDERSFIELD BRANCH N. S. S. (Market Cross): 8.45, Geo. T. Whitehead, "Parasitic Life." Saturday, at 8, Geo. T. Whitehead, "Judas."

THE SECULAR SOCIETY
(LIMITED)

Company Limited by Guarantee.

Registered Office—2 NEWCASTLE STREET, LONDON. E.C.

Chairman of Board of Directors—MR. G. W. FOOTE.

Secretary—MISS E. M. VANCE.

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

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

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

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

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

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.

Being a duly registered body, the Secular Society, Limited, can receive donations and bequests with absolute security. Those who are in a position to do so are invited to make donations, or to insert a bequest in the Society's favor in their wills. On this point there need not be the slightest apprehension. It is quite impossible to set aside such bequests. The executors have no option but to pay them over in the ordinary course of administration. No objection of any kind has been raised in connection with any of the wills by which the Society has already been benefited.

The Society's solicitors are Messrs. Harper and Battcock, 23 Rood-lane, Fenchurch-street, London, E.C.

A Form of Bequest.—The following is a sufficient form of bequest for insertion in the wills of testators:—"I give and "bequeath to the Secular Society, Limited, the sum of £—— "free from Legacy Duty, and I direct that a receipt signed by "two members of the Board of the said Society and the Secretary "thereof shall be a good discharge to my Executors for the "said Legacy."

Friends of the Society who have remembered it in their wills, or who intend to do so, should formally notify the Secretary of the fact, or send a private intimation to the Chairman, who will (if desired) treat it as strictly confidential. This is not necessary, but it is advisable, as wills sometimes get lost or mislaid, and their contents have to be established by competent testimony.

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY.

President: G. W. FOOTE.

Secretary: MISS E M. VANCE, 2 Newcastle-st., London, E.C.

Principles and Objects.

SECULARISM teaches that conduct should be based on reason and knowledge. It knows nothing of divine guidance or interference; it excludes supernatural hopes and fears; it regards happiness as man's proper aim, and utility as his moral guide.

Secularism affirms that Progress is only possible through Liberty, which is at once a right and a duty; and therefore seeks to remove every barrier to the fullest equal freedom of thought, action, and speech.

Secularism declares that theology is condemned by reason as superstitious, and by experience as mischievous, and assails it as the historic enemy of Progress.

Secularism accordingly seeks to dispel superstition; to spread education; to disestablish religion; to rationalise morality; to promote peace; to dignify labor; to extend material well-being; and to realise the self-government of the people.

Membership.

Any person is eligible as a member on signing the following declaration:—

"I desire to join the National Secular Society, and I pledge myself, if admitted as a member, to co-operate in promoting its objects."

Name.....

Address.....

Occupation.....

Dated this.....*day of*.....*190*.....

This Declaration should be transmitted to the Secretary with a subscription.

P.S.—Beyond a minimum of Two Shillings per year, every member is left to fix his own subscription according to his means and interest in the cause.

Immediate Practical Objects.

The Legitimation of Bequests to Secular or other Freethought Societies, for the maintenance and propagation of heterodox opinions on matters of religion, on the same conditions as apply to Christian or Theistic churches or organisations.

The Abolition of the Blasphemy Laws, in order that Religion may be canvassed as freely as other subjects, without fear of fine or imprisonment.

The Disestablishment and Disendowment of the State Churches in England, Scotland, and Wales.

The Abolition of all Religious Teaching and Bible Reading in Schools, or other educational establishments supported by the State.

The Opening of all endowed educational institutions to the children and youth of all classes alike.

The Abrogation of all laws interfering with the free use of Sunday for the purpose of culture and recreation; and the Sunday opening of State and Municipal Museums, Libraries, and Art Galleries.

A Reform of the Marriage Laws, especially to secure equal justice for husband and wife, and a reasonable liberty and facility of divorce.

The Equalisation of the legal status of men and women, so that all rights may be independent of sexual distinctions.

The Protection of children from all forms of violence, and from the greed of those who would make a profit out of their premature labor.

The Abolition of all hereditary distinctions and privileges, fostering a spirit antagonistic to justice and human brotherhood.

The Improvement by all just and wise means of the conditions of daily life for the masses of the people, especially in towns and cities, where insanitary and incommodious dwellings, and the want of open spaces, cause physical weakness and disease, and the deterioration of family life.

The Promotion of the right and duty of Labor to organise itself for its moral and economical advancement, and of its claim to legal protection in such combinations.

The Substitution of the idea of Reform for that of Punishment in the treatment of criminals, so that gaols may no longer be places of brutalisation, or even of mere detention, but places of physical, intellectual, and moral elevation for those who are afflicted with anti-social tendencies.

An Extension of the moral law to animals, so as to secure them humane treatment and legal protection against cruelty.

The Promotion of Peace between nations, and the substitution of Arbitration for War in the settlement of international disputes.

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