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PRICE TWOPENCE

*The pickaxe is already laid to the foundation of the church tower.*—RICHARD JEFFERIES.

## Tennyson's God.

TENNYSON is said to have uttered a striking remark in conversation with the Bishop of Ripon. "It is hard," the poet said, "to believe in God, but it is harder not to believe. I believe in God, not from what I see in Nature, but from what I find in man."

This bears some resemblance to a famous, and most pathetic and beautiful, passage in Newman's *Apologia*. Newman said that his whole being was full of the idea of God, but when he looked abroad in the world to-day, and at the history of past ages, he found very little corroboration of that idea, and the impression made upon him was as though he looked into a mirror and saw no reflection of his face. Were it not for the voice of conscience speaking within him, he avowed that he might be driven to Pantheism, or even to Atheism.

Sir William Hamilton, the eminent Scotch metaphysician, expressed a similar view before Newman, and in language as plain, though less poetical. Hamilton said that the phenomena of Nature, taken by themselves, rather supported the Atheistic than the Theistic philosophy. The same position was taken by the Rev. Dr. Irons, in his extremely able work on *Final Causes*. Practically, too, it is the position of Professor Knight in his *Aspects of Theism*. Evolution has triumphed, and has won a silent victory over the very Churches. When the teleological argument is pursued, as it sometimes is even now by theologians, they take care to avoid the crudities of Paley. They see that the theory of Natural Selection has destroyed the force of that astute Arochdeacon's arguments and illustrations; that he stands convicted of having put the cart before the horse, of placing the effect in the position of the cause; and that design in detail is absolutely disproved by modern biology. They therefore present the teleological argument in a cloud of metaphysics. The wisdom and goodness of God is not demonstrated from imperfect human eyes and ravenous shark's jaws; it is demonstrated by what is called the larger view of the world-process. Evolution has produced progress on this planet, and God is postulated as the presiding genius of the whole movement. This was done by that popular, but shallow and sophistical, book on the *Ascent of Man* by the late Professor Drummond; a book which never satisfied a single unbeliever, although it served, and perhaps still serves, as an excuse to many Christians for retaining the faith of their childhood in the light of science and in the age of Darwin.

Tennyson knew enough of nature, not as a scientist, but as an accurate observer, to settle the old theological doctrine of the strict justice and benevolence of the creator. Long ago, in *In Memoriam*, he simply trusted that "God was love indeed, and Love creation's final law," for he perceived that "Nature, red in tooth and claw, with ravin shrieked against the creed." It is not surprising that he found it "hard to believe in God." The difficulty came from the

suggestions of his intellect. But why did he find it "harder not to believe in God"? No doubt this difficulty came from the suggestions of his emotions. It was terrible to run counter to the ideas of his early training and the very first principle of his inherited faith. Besides, the poet had a strong belief in a future life, though not the future life of the orthodox Christian, with its fantastic heaven and its tragical hell. In a conversation with the Queen, he "spoke with horror (she says) of the unbelievers and philosophers who would make you believe there was no other world, no Immortality." He also said that God would be "far more cruel than any human being" if he did not compensate us for the sorrows and sufferings of this life, and restore us to the society of those we have loved and lost. Evidently, therefore, a God of Love was necessary to Tennyson, by no means as an intellectual demonstration based upon the phenomena of the universe, but as an emotional demonstration based upon the craving for another and a happier existence. Such an existence was longed for, and therefore it was certain; a God of Love would ensure it, and therefore he existed! The logic of it is childish, but the sentiment is pathetic. God becomes the dot to complete the believer's "I." A ruddy drop of heart's-blood, shed in anguish, dilates until it suffuses with a roseate hue the whole heaven of imagination.

Shakespeare was a far greater poet than Tennyson, and a far profounder and more majestic thinker than Tennyson. He understood this pathetic fallacy of the human mind. With the way he had of insinuating the subtlest things where they were sure to be overlooked by the superficial, he pointed out, as he dropped from the celestial heights of that glorious passage on the "tricks of strong imagination," that poor human nature is so constituted that when it "comprehends some joy" it "apprehends some bringer of that joy." So the emotional believer postulates God in order to provide (as he thinks) for the completion of the great sum of his desires.

Tennyson believed in God simply from what he "found in man," including this longing for immortal life—which, after all, is only the psychological side of the physical law of self-preservation. Just as a rich man wants to feel that he will never become poor, so a living man wants to feel that he will never die. But how many of those who desire to live on in another world would be perfectly satisfied to live on in this world if they had the chance? Probably an overwhelming number. They are more filled with the lust of life than with the joy of life. It is a blind, passionate instinct, which is only conquerable by a continuous exercise of the higher reason. Sometimes, indeed, it stands between absolute despair and actual suicide; for, as Byron pointed out, the lust of life is often strongest in those who wish the most to die.

Let us not close these observations, however, without remarking that Tennyson's God was at least a civilised conception. The poet did not believe that the Deity could burn a poor worm for ever. He scorned the doctrine of everlasting punishment. He held it was impossible that God would ever ask us what creed we held. He appears to have thought with Pope that "He can't be wrong whose life is in the right."

G. W. FOOTE.

## Twin Spirits.

THE Rev. Dr. Orchard, who runs a wisdom-while-you-wait column in the *Christian Commonwealth*, was recently asked to give his opinion as to the rightfulness of a Christian being engaged in the drink traffic. Personally, I quite agree with Dr. Orchard when he says, in the course of his reply, that there are worse evils than alcohol and greater sins than drunkenness. The correspondent's query is only noticeable because it illustrates the curiously morbid, one-sided, and ineffective moral notions developed by Christian introspection. Over-indulgence in alcohol is an obvious evil, and the drunkard is an obvious nuisance. No one that I know of defends either—which is, perhaps, the reason why so many of the clergy exhaust themselves in denouncing both. It is so nice to advertise oneself as a rabid social reformer and be quite sure that no one in the congregation is offended. But there are other methods of getting a livelihood that involve baleful consequences beside that of selling drink; and there does not seem any real necessity for denouncing the one who does so as a moral monster, or treating oneself as an incipient criminal, because one happens to be mixed up with the traffic. In social life we are so bound up together that I do not see how we can live at all and be quite sure that we are not profiting from an occupation that tends to injure someone or the other. Personally, I should not care to be in the drink business, nor hang about a public-house in the capacity of a customer. But, then, neither should I care to be a parson, or hang about a church in the capacity of a worshiper.

Dr. Orchard, I am bound to say, deals with this particular correspondent in a generally commendable manner, but he says something in the course of his reply that may serve as a text for yet another homily. "It is my conviction," he says,

"that men turn to drink to find an easy way out of *ennui* and depression; an escape from the uninteresting tameness of their lives and thoughts. It is not without consequence that Paul says: 'Be not drunk with wine, but be filled with the spirit.' The first is a degraded imitation of the second."

Now, unquestionably, this contains truth; but it is not by any means all the truth, nor yet the most important aspect of the truth. There is a deeper biological truth, and a deeper psychological truth, underlying this question of alcoholism, and one which has a not unimportant bearing upon questions of religion. Depression or trouble *may* drive some people to drink, although I am not quite sure how often we mistake the nature of the cause. Certainly *all* people who are depressed or in trouble do not take to drink; and others who are in neither the one condition nor the other do take to drink. And it is a question of how far these states of mind are the occasions for drinking rather than a cause of drinking. The true alcoholic appears to drink because of the mental effects that alcohol produces, and for no other reason. If I may cite my own experience, any form of alcohol is distasteful to me the moment it begins to exert an influence on my mental faculties. But this appears to be the stage towards which the true alcoholic is striving, and the stage in which he desires to remain as long as possible. And between this desire and one's social state there seems the slightest possible connection.

In this connection I think Dr. Archdall Reid may fairly claim to have made good the theory associated with his name. He points out that people to-day vary in their resistance to alcohol as they vary in their resistance to disease. To some its effects are pleasing, and therefore desirable; to others its effects are displeasing, and therefore undesirable. But when alcohol is introduced among a new people the power of resistance to it is very small indeed. It decimates them as does smallpox, or consumption, or even measles. The evils of alcoholism develop in their most acute form, and those who are most susceptible to its influence are killed off, leaving behind them to

perpetuate the race such as evidence some power of resistance. In this way alcohol acts as a true eliminative force, and a cause of evolution in the race. Thus it happens that those peoples who have known the use of alcohol for the longest period are to-day the most sober. The most drunken nations are those who have used alcohol—on any general scale—for the shortest time, and so have not undergone so complete an evolution against its influence.\* If this be accepted as sound, it is obvious that the suggestion that people drink for the reason named by Dr. Orchard does not carry us far in understanding the drink question.

From this point of view, too, there is a curious analogy between the alcoholic and a certain type of religionist—the type that revels in a "good time" at an evangelistic or revivalistic gathering. The one does, indeed, get "drunk with wine," while the other gets "filled with the spirit." This latter type looks back upon its last "experience meeting" with much the same feelings that a drunkard looks back upon his last "spree," and forward to the next gathering in the same way that a drunkard anticipates his next "burst." In both cases there is the recollection and the anticipation of a mental and emotional debauch. Both cases imply a curiously emotional and unstable character, and in both cases this is most in evidence during the same life period. Dr. Starbuck's investigations, for example, showed that practically all cases of real religious conversion occurred before the subject reached twenty-five years of age. And, on the other side, ninety per cent. of the confirmed drinkers in the country began to drink within the same period. Much the same thing holds true of epilepsy and insanity. Once a person gets safely beyond his first quarter of a century, he is tolerably safe. An immunity is developed, the tastes and tendencies of the organism become disciplined and restrained, even some physical or chemical change may occur. In any case, the fact remains.

Dr. Orchard says that getting drunk with wine is only a degraded imitation of getting filled with the Spirit. By this is meant, I presume, that one may get from religion the feeling of exaltation that some people seem to derive from drink. And with this statement I do not know that I have any serious quarrel. It appears to be one that is very likely true—or, at least, to contain a truth. If we do indeed take, instead of the true alcoholic, the man who seizes drink because he believes it will lift him above certain troubles, or relieve him from a feeling of depression, we may say that drink and religion are two forces in his environment, either of which will serve his purpose, while which he takes will depend upon sheer accident. He may find the excitement he is seeking in the emotionalism of a religious meeting, or he may find it at the public-house bar. And while the company of the religious meeting is sufficiently attractive, and the fare sufficiently titillating, the man will be kept from drink. So soon as either lose its force, we have the familiar phenomenon of "backsliding." A constant stimulant is needed, or is at least looked for, and it will be found in one of several directions.

This seems to me the psychology of the situation, and it does not need any elaborate spiritualistic theory to explain it. I am not, be it noted, dealing with the case of what I consider the true alcoholic; that I regard as coming under quite different considerations, and it has yet to be shown that religion is capable of dealing with *him*. But it may be granted that so far as a religious gathering supplies a form of mental intoxication, it may satisfy a type. Whether, from a social point of view, it is better for the man who is merely seeking to be "lifted out of himself" for awhile to turn to religion than to drink, is very often a debatable question. It is true his mind is not confused with drink, but it is with religion; and one may distort his views of social life as much as the other. Socially, the main evil of this

\* This same argument seems to hold good with regard to opium. Curiously enough, too, Dr. Nansen notes the injurious effects of tea on the nervous systems of the Esquimaux.

class of drinker is negative. It prevents them doing their duty as citizens. But the evil of getting "filled with the Spirit" is both negative and positive. It not only prevents a man acting in the proper manner towards others, as is seen by his treatment of those of contrary opinion to his own, as well as by over-absorption in religious ideas, but it impels an active and mischievous interference in social affairs. One need only mention here the history of Sabbatarian legislation, with its demoralising influence, or the consequences of a prurient Puritanism, which, by dwelling so constantly upon unclean things, has succeeded in fixing attention upon them, making clean things unclean, and so eventually debauching the mind more effectually than was ever done by the most ardent pornographer.

A careless reader of the above may draw the conclusion that I have managed to provide a very useful function for religion—that of supplying a needed stimulant in place of drink. A careful reader will, however, draw a different conclusion. For, although for brevity's sake I have referred to religion, it is obvious that the active influence is that of religious people. And I have never seen reason for denying that those who are inclined to seek distraction in drink—a form of social imitation—may be restrained by the advice and the society of a number of men and women who will provide distraction of another kind. This, as a matter of fact, occurs quite apart from religion. It can be seen operating in all directions. Political or social acquaintanceship will do it as effectively as religious acquaintanceship. And when a number of religious men and women get hold of a likely case, advise him, company him, teach him to respect their opinion of him, and provide him with the interest and excitement of religious meetings, it would be strange indeed if the normal consequences of human association did not ensue. Only I quite fail to see what this has to do with religion, as such.

True, it is associated with religion. That is admitted, but one wonders for how long an essentially social phenomenon will continue to be counted as peculiarly a consequence of religious belief. The fact of human association is, of course, patent to all; its significance is not so generally recognised. And if one wished to frame an indictment against religious belief in the fewest words, it could not be better done than in pointing to the way in which religious beliefs have prevented the emergence of a full self-consciousness of the reality and nature of social relations. Had religion not obscured this important aspect of life, the world by now might have realised the true nature of the social forces. It would have seen that the modifiability of human character is a social task, and the worst of all foundations for the work is that of a belief in a set of doctrines that owe their origin to the unenlightened brain of the savage, and their development to the most deplorable period of European history.

C. COHEN.

### The Church and the Age.

By the Church we understand the institution, the members of which call themselves, and are generally known, as Christians. To us it is wholly immaterial whether this institution be Catholic or Protestant, Anglican or Nonconformist. Whilst in Catholic manuals Protestant worship is described as sinful, and whilst the majority of Protestants regard Catholic worship as almost hopelessly corrupt, non-Christians are convinced that all forms of worship are a delusion and a snare, and that all Christian disputes represent so much misused and wasted time and energy; and the purpose of this article is to show that this conviction is being increasingly justified in the twentieth century. Our contention is that all the Churches are rapidly losing touch with the life of the age. This is reluctantly admitted by men whose fame in their own communions is

firmly established. The Rev. Principal Adeney, who is now contributing a series of articles on the subject to the *British Congregationalist*, pertinently asks, "How many people are there among us who actually prize the privilege of Church membership, as undoubtedly it was prized at Jerusalem and Antioch, at Thessalonica and Corinth, in the days of the Apostles?" "The worst feature of the case," Dr. Adeney confesses, "is the Church's loss of faith in itself." That is to say, the spirit of the age has crept into the Church to such an extent as to blight its sense of its own spirituality. The spiritual world, for which the Church is said to stand, is fading away out of the mind of men, and, naturally, the organisation that formerly stood for it is no longer needed; its survival would be an anachronism. The Principal does not seem to realise that the decline of interest in religion is a symptom of progress, that the vanishing of the spiritual world means the triumph of reason over fancy, and that in proportion as people lose their belief in an immortal soul they concentrate attention upon the body and its needs.

Etymologically, the word "church" means the building in which Christians habitually meet for worship, and is probably of Celtic origin, though closely akin in form and sound to the Greek, *kuriakōn*. In the Celtic dialects it signifies a circle, and it is well known that the sanctuaries of German and Celtic nations were always circular. *Kuriakōn*, however, denotes the house of a master or lord. But the Greek term of which our English "church" is usually a translation, is not *kuriakōn*, but *ekklesia*, and every student is aware that *ekklesia* was the name of the assembly of the whole body of citizens in a free Greek State. Thus we learn that originally the Church was exclusively a secular and political organisation. It is also admitted that the religious character of the Church is not of Christian origin. The late Dr. Hatch discovered that there were guilds and clubs in the Greek cities, established by the devotees of various cults who met for common meals, which developed into the notorious *love-feasts* of the early Christians. "All this," Dr. Adeney acknowledges, "was a model for the Church, ready at hand. We might say that in these respects the Church idea was in the air, that the Apostles followed the fashion of their age." Here we have a Christian scholar cheerfully ignoring the Divine origin of the Church, and familiarly referring to the Apostles as merely following the fashion in its institution. They modelled it, not on a special revelation from the Lord Jesus, but on establishments already in existence round about them.

Naturally Principal Adeney did not intend to ignore the Christian origin of the Church, for he goes on to speak of Jesus as the real founder of it. He treats as genuine the references to the Church ascribed to him in the Gospels. Another Christian scholar, M. Alfred Loisy, in a brilliant article in the current *Hibbert Journal*, is more critically consistent, and ventures to characterise the Christian religion thus:—

"Less than thirty years after the death of Christ a religion had issued from the Gospel [of Jesus, which was not a religion]; and this religion was not a split from Judaism, it was not a heresy or schism which would have broken Judaism up; it was an independent religion, and one which was even to detach itself from Judaism before the first generation of believers had disappeared. This birth of a new cult, which came into being in the full daylight of history, continues to be for us a problem in many respects unsolved. It was not due to the will nor to the direct action of Christ."

According to this French divine Jesus not only never dreamed of such an institution as the Church, but never even thought of founding a new religion. "The sole matter at stake was always the triumph of Israel and its God." Firmly believing in the historicity of Jesus as the supreme preacher of the Gospel the fulfilment of which "would have been the final establishment of the Jewish religion in the kingdom of God," M. Loisy does not hesitate to affirm that the religion which bears his name did not exist in any form whatever till after his death.

Both the Church and Christianity originated in a later age than the one in which Jesus is supposed to have lived. Surely this is the most remarkable view ever propounded in a theological magazine, because it is essentially identical with the view held by the Secularists. As the Church has always existed for the purpose of preserving and propagating the Christian religion, it is a perfectly relevant question, How did such a religion come into being? We have seen how the idea of a Church was borrowed from Paganism, how the love-feasts were an adaptation of the common meals partaken of in Greek guilds and clubs, and we shall not be surprised to find that the Christian cult itself was constructed out of several prior cults. M. Loisy assures us that this was certainly the case. He states that at the beginning of our era the Western world contained several religions of the East which endeavored to charm mankind by assuming the form of mysteries. Each of these cults promised salvation to the initiates, which salvation was made possible through the death and resurrection of a God or a God-man; and there resulted the closest union and communion between the God and his worshipers. Demeter, Osiris, and Attis were deities who shared their joys and sorrows with their votaries. The rites of Mithraic initiation involved seven degrees, though they are not known to us in detail; but "part of the object of initiation was to unite the devotee to the God, to assimilate him to the Sun and to Mithra, and to prepare him a place in heaven near to these." M. Loisy adds the following important statement:—

"Mithra also had his baptism; and Tertullian, following Justin Martyr, informs us that he had in like manner his 'oblation of bread,' a sacred banquet, the representation of which is seen on monuments, the prefigurement, no doubt, of the heavenly banquet, since it corresponds in the mythical legend to that which Mithra took with Helios before ascending to the sky."

These religions had lost their national character, and they were addressed to all without distinction, and their one object was to achieve the happiness of man.

Now, M. Loisy's contention is that the Gospel of Jesus, which concerned itself solely with the salvation of Israel, "became a myth of universal salvation," in which Jesus, instead of being the King of Israel, became the King of the elect throughout the world. Take the following bold statement:—

"He was a Savior-God, after the manner of an Osiris, an Attis, a Mithra. Like them, he belonged by his origin to the celestial world; like them, he had made his appearance on the earth; like them, he had accomplished a work of universal redemption, efficacious and typical: like Adonis, Osiris, and Attis, he had died a violent death, and like them he had returned to life; like them, he had prefigured in his lot that of the human beings who should take part in his worship, and commemorate his mystic enterprise; like them, he had pre-determined, prepared, and assured the salvation of those who became partners in his passion..... And the Christian myth was no more a fact of history than were the Pagan myths; the Heavenly Man of Paul was no more a real person than Attis; the idea of universal Salvation by the death of Christ was no more consistent in itself than that of salvation procured by the death of Osiris. These are analogous conceptions, dreams of one family, built on the same theme with similar imagery."

That the above statement is true has been proved beyond the possibility of a doubt from the dateable Hermetic Writings, of which Dr. Flinders Petrie furnishes such a full account in his *Personal Religion in Egypt before Christianity*. In the *Kore Kosmou* alone, the earliest of those interesting writings, clearly belonging to 510 B.C., we find the doctrines of the Fall, the Trinity, and Salvation by "the Divine Efflux, Osiris and Isis." Then come other documents, such as the *Sermon of Isis to Horus*, the *Definitions of Asklepius to King Ammon*, and the *Perfect Sermon*, the latest of which must be thrown back as far as 840 B.C. There is also a fascinating series of undated writings; but Dr. Petrie assures us that "the Hermetic books as a whole seem to hang together, and to belong to one general period,

500—200 B.C." In these documents we can trace the gradual evolution of nearly all the great, fundamental Christian dogmas which Paul declared to have come to him in a special revelation from heaven. The truth is that practically all the ideas now held as essential in Christianity "were already a part of the general religious thought and phraseology of serious persons in the first century," when Christianity is alleged to have been founded by Jesus Christ. The Christian myth-makers borrowed and assimilated them from the Pagan cults, and then deposited them in the Church, itself borrowed and assimilated, and now gloried in as an institution that owed its origin to the Son of God incarnate.

Now, to the question, why Christianity survived and all the cults from which it borrowed perished? the answer is exceedingly simple. Christianity survived in consequence of its connection with the Church, and the Church survived because of its adoption by the State as a special department. In short, the Church saved Christianity, and Constantine the Great saved the Church. At no period can it be said of Christianity that it saved the Church. At last a mortal enemy of both has stepped in and is already laying the axe to their roots, and they are both visibly tottering to their doom. That enemy is knowledge, which, as it grows and spreads, is discovering and laying bare the actual facts concerning the origin and history of the Church and its deposit. We have no idea what M. Loisy's present position in relation to the Church is; but we do know that his *Hibbert* article will do much to open people's eyes to the utterly irrational character of all Christian claims. The Church is unacceptable to the present age because it is becoming more and more clear to the man in the street that it enshrines a superstition which ought to have shared the fate of the Pagan cults from which it got its very being. Knowledge is the only true savior of the world. Give it fair play and it shall win the day.

J. T. LLOYD.

### Mr. Gladstone and Genesis.

"And when some chieftain, famous in political warfare, adventures into the region of letters or of science, in full confidence that the methods which have brought fame and honor in his own province will answer there, he is apt to forget that he will be judged by these people, on whom rhetorical artifices have long ceased to take effect, and to whom mere dexterity in putting together cleverly ambiguous phrases, and even the great art of offensive misrepresentation, are unspeakably wearisome. And if that weariness finds its expression in sarcasm, the offender really has no right to cry out. Assuredly ridicule is no test of truth, but it is the righteous meed of some kinds of error."—PROFESSOR HUXLEY, *Illustrations of Mr. Gladstone's Controversial Methods*.

"Extinguished theologians lie about the cradle of every science as the strangled snakes beside that of Hercules, and history records that whenever science and orthodoxy have been fairly opposed, the latter has been forced to retire from the lists, bleeding and crushed, if not annihilated. But orthodoxy is the Bourbon of the world of thought. It learns not, neither can it forget; and though at present bewildered and afraid to move, it is willing as ever to insist that the first chapter of Genesis contains the beginning and the end of sound science, and to visit with such petty thunderbolts as its half-paralysed hands can hurl those who refuse to degrade Nature to the level of primitive Judaism."—PROFESSOR HUXLEY, *Lay Sermons* (1874), p. 277.

IN dealing with the works written by great men in support of religion, we must not forget Mr. Gladstone's defence of the Creation Story in Genesis.

Just as the intellectual world, including many dignitaries of the Established Church, had settled down to an acceptance of the fact—gross as a mountain to anyone with even a surface acquaintance with modern science—that the first chapters of Genesis were mere fables of primitive ignorance, than they were astonished by the amazing spectacle of Mr. Gladstone publicly reproving—in the *Nineteenth Century*—a learned French Protestant writer, Dr. Réville, for speaking of the tradition in Genesis as no more than "a venerable fragment, well deserving attention, of the great genesis of mankind."

Mr. Gladstone, in his most authoritative and pompous manner, undertook to enlighten Dr. Réville as

to the historical and scientific value of this Hebrew legend, and declared that the order of creation as given in Genesis was in agreement with that affirmed by natural science in our time—"may be taken as a demonstrated conclusion and established fact."

This attempt to pour the new wine of science into the old Hebrew bottles aroused the indignation of Professor Huxley, who determined to settle the question once for all, and at the same time to administer a much needed chastisement on the old parliamentary hand. And he did.

It was a case of bows and arrows against magazine rifles, or one of the old wooden battleships matched with a Dreadnought. Mr. Gladstone cited Cuvier, Sir John Herschell, and Dr. Whewell in support of his case; but, as Huxley remarked, Cuvier was the only relevant authority, and he had been dead fifty years; and since then "not only a new world, but new worlds, of ancient life have been discovered." And he observed:—

"If Mr. Gladstone's latest information on these matters is derived from the famous discourse prefixed to the *Ossimens Fossiles*, I can understand the position he has taken up; if he has ever opened a respectable modern manual of palæontology or geology, I cannot. For the facts which demolish his whole argument are of the commonest notoriety.\*"

Huxley demonstrated the incompatibility of the account given in Genesis with the facts as given by science. He satirises Mr. Gladstone's authoritative exposition of the meaning of Genesis by saying: "I desire to cast no shadow of doubt upon, but on the contrary marvel at, the exactness of Mr. Gladstone's information as to the considerations which 'affected the method of the Mosaic writer.'" With regard to Gladstone's futile wrestling with the fact that Genesis declares that reptiles were created after birds, Huxley observes, "in the atmosphere of science it really is of no avail whatever to shut one's eyes to fact, or to try to bury them out of sight under a tumulus of rhetoric" (p. 169). And again, replying to Gladstone's revised version of Genesis, with which he returned to the fray, Huxley remarked:—

"I must honestly confess that notwithstanding long and painful strivings after clear insight, I am still uncertain whether Gladstone's 'Defence' means that the great 'plea for revelation from God' is to be left to perish in the dialectic desert; or whether it is to be withdrawn under the protection of such skirmishers as are available for covering retreat" (p. 167).

And as to the various interpretations placed upon the meaning of Genesis, Huxley observes that if he supposed the account to be inspired, as Mr. Gladstone did, he could not imagine the Supreme Being "unable to frame a form of words which should accurately, or, at least, not inaccurately, express His own meaning."

"It is sometimes said that, had the statements contained in the first chapter of Genesis been scientifically true, they would have been unintelligible to ignorant people; but how is the matter mended if, being scientifically untrue, they must needs be rejected by instructed people?" (p. 182).

We have met pious people who have claimed that Gladstone demolished Huxley. They evidently had never read either side of the dispute. For Mr. Gladstone, in solemnly reproving Dr. Réville, declared that it was not a question here "of a lofty poem, or a skilfully constructed narrative," but a question of natural science, which, he affirmed, demonstrated the truth of the Creation Story. But, in his reply to Huxley's trenchant attack, this position is given up, and he pathetically complains: "He [Huxley] holds the writer responsible for scientific precision. I look for nothing of the kind. .... He thinks it is a lecture. I think it is a sermon"; but, of course—as Huxley pointed out—it was not he who ascribed scientific precision to the writer of Genesis, but Mr. Gladstone himself, and Huxley remarks that Mr. Gladstone appears to consider that the difference between a lecture and a

sermon is "that the former, so far as it deals with matters of fact, may be taken seriously, as meaning exactly what it says, while a sermon may not"; and, further, "Mr. Gladstone's definition of a sermon permits me to suspect that he may not see much difference between that form of discourse and what I call a myth."

When John Morley came to write the life of Gladstone, he found the controversy with Huxley so hopeless that he ignored it altogether; to tell the truth about it would have been too humiliating to his hero, so he left it severely alone.

Even a popular work like *Chamber's Encyclopædia*, in the article "Creation," by that evangelically pious professor, Henry Drummond, dealing with this subject, says:—

"An attempt by Mr. Gladstone, so recently as 1885, elicited a reply from Mr. Huxley, who, in the name of modern science, not only repudiated the immediate theory, but made it obvious that no reconstruction along that line was ever likely to square with acknowledged facts of science."

As Mr. Benn truly observes, in his *History of English Rationalism in the Nineteenth Century*:—

"Not merely in good temper, not merely in powers of sarcasm, not merely in literary skill, but also in erudition and logic, he [Huxley] proved himself Gladstone's master, and inflicted such punishment on the old parliamentary hand as in the course of a long and varied experience had never befallen him from either side of the House of Commons" (vol. ii., p. 455).

The next time Mr. Gladstone ventured upon a defence of the Bible he contributed it to the pages of *Good Words*, where he was safe from attack, the articles being afterwards published under the title of *The Impregnable Rock of Holy Scriptures*, in which he displays all the verbosity and dexterous juggling with words which brought him fame in his parliamentary career.

W. MANN.

#### RETRIBUTION.

An angle worm was crawling forth to view the morning fair,  
A sparrow spied the lowly worm—and ate it then and there;  
But hardly had the sparrow gulped the wriggling morsel down—  
When the bird was in the stomach of a weasel sleek and brown;  
And barely had the weasel time to make a meal and run,  
When a hawk swooped down upon it—and the weasel's life was done.  
And thus it went: A prowling wolf, obeying hunger's call,  
Pounced nimbly on the sated hawk—and ate it, bones and all;  
And scarcely had the wolf had time to eat, and lick its paw,  
Ere it was dead—and buried in a famished lion's maw;  
Then the lion turned to slink away, but a rifle bullet sped—  
And all at once the king of beasts was numbered with the dead.  
That night the human hunter, kneeling on the lion's skin,  
Besought the God of one and all to cleanse him from all sin;  
And ended his petition thus: "O Lord, with heart and mind  
I thank thee that thy righteous laws are merciful and kind!"

Of course, to carry out and finish up the scheme and plan  
Of retribution, it's arranged that the Devil take the man;  
But one thing I can't understand—my wits may be too slow—  
Is: Who's to kill the Devil? That's the thing I want to know.

—James Ball Naylor.

Two sailors entered a tabernacle at Portsmouth, where a revival was going on. Several of the "workers" described themselves as vile sinners, brands plucked from the burning, and the like. One of the tars, believing their statements, whispered his mate: "D'ye hear what damned scoundrels we have got among Jack? Let's sheer off before the whole crew are sent to blazes."

"We've all been converted," said the pious shopkeeper, "and can't sell milk on Sunday; but we can oblige you if you come round to the back door."

\* Huxley, *Science Hebrew and Tradition*, p. 144.

## Acid Drops.

Being asked what he and his fellow-crusaders were going to do against the Wells-and-Moir fight, the Rev. F. B. Meyer blandly said he didn't know. They would continue to protest against glove-fights generally, but they had not decided to agitate against this particular encounter. In the present case, the fighters were fairly matched, and there was no danger of a black man winning. What a consummate hypocrite and busybody this Meyer is! What on earth has he to do with whether boxers are fairly matched or not? That is a question for themselves and the referee—and, if it goes far enough, for the police. The black man winning is quite another question. That was the real danger—although Jesus Christ himself, if he ever lived at all, must have been half a black man himself. Then there was, as Johnson notices, the good virtuous advertisement gained at his expense; and, finally, the gratified envy of knowing that the black man wouldn't be allowed to win that £6,000.

Mr. Meyer frankly confessed at Whitfield's on Sunday that he did *not* intend to try to stop the Wells and Moir fight. Asked "why?" by members of the audience, he had to confess just as frankly that "no racial question was raised." That's it! as we said all along. The talk about "brutality," "degrading and disgusting spectacle," and so forth, was all meant to stop a black man from beating a white one in a fair and equal encounter. The mountain has labored and brought forth this dirty disreputable little mouse.

Evidently some of the Nonconformist clergyman are envying the Rev. F. B. Meyer the advertisement secured over the Johnson-Wells' episode. The Rev. Stanley Parker, of Newcastle-on-Tyne, accordingly wrote Johnson a coolly impertinent letter, inviting him to enter the ring as an evangelist, presumably under the generalship of the Rev. S. Parker. Seen at the Newcastle Theatre, where he is appearing nightly, Johnson authorised the following reply, which again proves him to be a man of brains as well as of muscle:—

"By defeating Wells I could not say what effect that would have had on the country, but I want to say this: Has not England got India, where they are all black people? Doesn't she control a great part of Africa, where they are black people? I do think the minister should limit his business to the pulpit, because the Bible itself speaks of no colors. It simply says: 'Do unto men as you would have them do unto you.'

"I think that Mr. Parker should live up to that if he is going to preach the Gospel. People expect to get to know what they have gone to learn. He must be prejudiced, judging by the words of his letter. I think that they are fair-minded people in England, just the same as in any other place, and they have proved it to me. Stanley Parker is simply looking for notoriety."

The last sentence takes the Rev. Stanley Parker's measure to a nicety. The whole game has been a notoriety hunt, with the addition of a contemptible fear lest a black boxer should beat a white one. And by men who boast that their Gospel takes no notice of the distinction of race or color, too! We should not care to get a living as a professional boxer; but if we had the capacity for it, and could choose between standing in the ring with Jack Johnson and running as the consort of Stanley Parker and F. B. Meyer, we should not hesitate in choosing the negro.

"Unto him that hath shall be given." It is a good Christian text. And the Queenslanders, who are mostly Christians, have acted upon it by presenting King George V. with a splendid bay charger sixteen hands high. That is all right—in its way. King George has the charger—but when is he going to charge?

England claims a fairly large portion of the earth's surface, delivered to us, of course, by Providence for the benefit of other people. But if Dr. R. F. Horton is to be believed, we claim as ours many other things beside. For instance, there is courage, and risking one's life to save others. In a recent sermon on "Brotherhood," Dr. Horton remarked that in many parts of the world "a kind of cowardice comes over men when they are called upon to face danger to help their brothers. But it is not so in England." And he explains that in England there is always a "sudden up-rush of self-sacrificing heroism." Well, we hope it is so, but it is the first time we have ever seen it publicly stated that courage is the exclusive possession of Englishmen. And it takes a narrow and essentially ignorant—ignorant, in spite of the possession of a university degree—mind like Dr. Horton's to state it. Moreover, this is Dr. Horton's brilliant conclusion: Englishmen have this courage because they are

Christians. "Men do not help each other unless they are incipient Christians." Really! We were under the impression that people who are not Christians have also evidenced courage when needed. And what of the Christians who are not in England? If *they* have courage, why praise Englishmen? If they have not courage, what of the power of Christianity? And was there really no courage or devotion in the world before Christianity appeared? Dr. Horton and the Bishop of London ought to run a united mission. Torrey might beat them for sheer lying, but for ignorance they could hold their own, even with him.

We thought most people nowadays—except Christian Evidence lecturers of the poorest type—had got over the raw-head-and-bloody-bones picture of the French Revolution. Dr. Horton seems to be still in that primitive stage of historic imagining. The most appalling period through which a country ever passed, we are told (it was really not nearly so appalling as the pre-revolutionary period through which France itself had passed) was the carnival of blood consequent on the horrors of the Jacobins and of Robespierre. And this was because, "My brothers, France had lost God." Dr. Horton might, at least, try to get hold of what are the facts of the case, even though he failed to comprehend their significance. And the truth is that the revolutionary France which had lost God—if ever that occurred—was the France which, as he says, made Wordsworth rejoice and converted the country into "a great brotherhood." The France of the Terror was a France that had not lost God, but had re-established him, or it. Not that we endorse Dr. Horton's conception of the Terror. Carlyle hit the right nail on the head when he said that in no other period of French history had the people suffered less. It is more than half-a-century since Carlyle said this, but lies are hard to kill, and interested lies are practically indestructible.

Rev. Dr. Forsyth and the Rev. R. J. Campbell laid down together on the Congregational Union's platform. Which was inside the other is a matter of opinion. Our own opinion is that Campbell was inside Forsyth. What the City Temple Oracle had to say about Christ was virtually a capitulation. The Congregationalists have not gone over to him; he has gone over to them. Take the following passage of Mr. Campbell's speech as reported in the *Daily News*:—

"The question is, Did Jesus live or did He not? And if He died, was His personality actively necessary in the Christian field of life?"

"Dr. Anderson does not deny the historicity of Jesus. That is a misconception which exists in a great many minds. Dr. Anderson has done more, in my judgment, than any living man to make it clear that the new liberal Christianity is not identical with, but widely different from, what is commonly understood as Unitarianism. Dr. Anderson and those who think with him do not believe that Christ was merely an idea; He is to them the fact of facts, without which it would be impossible to account for human nature or our presence in this world. But they did not believe this Christ was ever centred in one human body; they felt that we should look for Him in every human heart.

"My own experience of Jesus renders me immune to all argument about his non-historicity. Jesus Christ is the central fact of my spiritual life, I worship Him, I trust my soul in Him for time and eternity. It is a very real spiritual existence, this Jesus, so real that all the theorising in the world is not going to displace Him from His pre-eminence in the hearts of those who hold fellowship with Him.

"If we had never had such a Christ in the flesh we should never have known anything of the Christ of the Spirit; we should still be craving for such a Christ, as the one great need of our poor, struggling, earthly life."

"Jesus of Nazareth in my experience," Mr. Campbell said in another sentence, "is inseparable from the eternal Christ." Thus is conceded the "historicity" of Christ,—and that magical word falls like oil upon the Congregationalist trouble. What the blessed word *means* in this case is left vague; like other shibboleths it serves the turn, and that suffices. But in Mr. Campbell's mouth, unless he goes back on all he has himself uttered, and disowns the utterances of his friend and colleague, Dr. Anderson, the "historicity" of Christ can mean no more than some unrealisable personality behind the Gospel stories; for Mr. Campbell and Dr. Anderson, between them, give up the Virgin Birth, the Resurrection, and nearly, if not quite, all the miracles. Such is the "historicity" of Christ nowadays. And Dr. Forsyth and the Congregational Union are so delighted with the shibboleth that they fall on Mr. Campbell's neck and weep,—and he himself sheds a few tears on the other side. It is a touching spectacle. But how it invites satire, derision, and contempt from outsiders.

Congregationalists, like other sects, have been discussing why people cease going to church. Every reason is assigned but the right one. People are ceasing to believe what is preached there.

A good story appeared the other morning in the *Daily Chronicle*. Three trustees had to address the Postmaster-General, who was then a lord. "My lord" was considered ungrammatical, so the letter began "Our Lord."

More "Providence." An earthquake caused an enormous tidal wave in the Gulf of California, which swept away several towns. Nearly a thousand people perished and thousands were rendered homeless. Many people were swept into the sea as the tidal wave retreated, and were devoured by sharks. "He doeth all things well."

Poor Materialism! What a knocking about it does get! Whenever a certain class of people want to suggest anything disagreeable, or degrading, they call it "materialistic," and the trick is done. Every little scribbling journalist, every pulpit-banging preacher, seems to feel himself equal to the task of demolishing Materialism. For example, *Public Opinion* published a special number the other day to celebrate its half century. For that issue some special articles were written, and a good proportion of the writers fell foul of Materialism. Sir W. M. Ramsay leads off with the observation that when he was a young man there was a strong tendency towards a materialistic view of the universe. But now the more we learn "the more inert matter recedes, and the more we find ourselves dealing with force or power in some one of its infinite variety of manifestations." Dear, dear! We beg to inform Sir William Ramsay that, in spite of much spiritualistic jargon, the outlook of scientific men to-day is more materialistic than ever it was before. What-  
ever the stuff of the universe be called—matter, force, energy, or anything else—it is conceived in terms of conservation and mechanism, and that is the *very essence of Materialism*. We feel ourselves to-day, says Sir William, "more immediately in the presence of God; we know that God is spirit, not matter; we have learned that it is the fool who says in his heart 'There is no God.'" As is usual in such cases, Sir William becomes more positive in his statements as they become incapable of proof. If we were inclined to imitate Sir William's courtesy in speaking of those who do not know they are in the presence of God, we should say that he is evidently determined that the fool shall not lack congenial company.

On other pages of *Public Opinion* those two giants—in their own estimation—of literature, Mr. Harold Begbie and Mr. James Douglas, also have something to say about Materialism. Mr. Douglas cheers his readers, or himself, by the reflection that "we are in the early stages of a revolt against a half century of Materialism." We are rebelling against "the arrogance of opinion and the effrontery of science." We haven't the ghost of an idea what this means, nor, we dare swear, has Mr. Douglas. But it *sounds* imposing, and so it will serve its purpose, no doubt. The great thing is to talk against Materialism, as though, in the lower sense of the word, there were any greater ethical Materialists than the mass of religionists. Mr. Begbie is plainer, more daring, and *his* stupidity is the more easily discoverable. He says:—

"Materialism is the enemy. Out of Materialism can come nothing but ugly strife and severing discord. [Query: What is the discord like that doesn't sever?] But religion harmonises all differences, composes all quarrels, and unifies the wills of men in one logical and saving energy."

We are delighted to learn that the wills of men are *unified* in one thing, whatever it is. If they were unified in more than one, it would be as awkward as death coming in the middle of life instead of at the end. But we would like to make the acquaintance of the religion that composes quarrels and harmonises differences. It certainly doesn't exist in this country.

But, in spite of all these abusive epithets, Materialism grows. For the essence of Materialism is not any particular theory about the nature of "matter," but a conception of the universe as a plexus of forces indestructible in their nature, calculable in their operation, and independent of any external directive agency. And without this the whole of science is a mere tissue of empty, worthless phrases.

Curiously enough, the same issue of *Public Opinion* quotes from an article in the *New York Independent* which gives twelve of the men who are most influencing thought in all parts of the world. Six of the number are Freethinkers—Haeckel, Poincaré, Metchnikoff, Bernard Shaw, H. G. Wells, and Maeterlinck. And of the remaining half-dozen there is not a full-fledged Christian among them. Evidently the heretics hold the mental life of the world in their grip. They cannot, it is true, count on the support of Messrs. Begbie and Douglas, but they will, no doubt, bear up under the deprivation.

The Bishop of Peterborough (salary £4,500 a year) is just the sort of gentleman to sing the praises of royalty and aristocracy. Delivering the presidential address to his Diocesan Conference at Peterborough lately, his lordship rejoiced at the enthusiasm displayed at King George's Coronation, which helped them to believe in the firm hold that the monarchy retained upon the people of our British Empire. But, alas, there is a fly in so many ointment pots! "They had heard," his lordship said, "of some disastrous signs of the indifference shown by the so-called working class, especially in the North, towards the English crown." Thus bad begins, but worse remains behind. The Bishop bewailed still more the deadly "apathy that had been recently experienced when the nation's Upper Chamber had been reduced to impotence." Wicked working classes! How is it that they are forgetting to "humble themselves lowly and reverently"—as the Church Catechism says—"to all their betters?" Give them the lash, good Bishop, give them the lash! But take care they don't turn it on you—and make your dose proportionate to your salary.

Low Churchmen want the Prayer Book revised ceremonially. High Churchmen want it revised theologically. Rev. James Adderley, often called Father Adderley, in an article in the *Fortnightly Review*, says: "There is hardly a single service in the Book which is calculated as it stands to meet the needs of the present generation, whether as being educated or as being uneducated." Even its language, however beautiful, is "antiquated." Yes, but not more so than the Bible's. We wonder if Father Adderley will agitate to get that revised too. The new edition, if it ever materialises, might be called "Omniscience Up to Date" or "Divine Wisdom Revised."

The Dutch portion of South Africa is growing warmer on the subject of Christian National Education. One of their papers, quoted in the *Bloemfontein Post*, goes to the length of denouncing infidelity in high places. "In the present Cabinet," it says, "it is no secret that unbelief is, with four exceptions, strongly represented." "It is a dishonor for a Christian people," adds the pious Dutch paper, "that such is the case." The good Christians want their own way in everything. 'Twas always thus.

"God helping us we will not allow this outrage to be perpetrated." So says the Bishop of St. Asaph with regard to Welsh Disestablishment. He may live to see what the help of God is worth.

Bishop Welldon "fears a democracy which is not controlled by allegiance to the law of Jesus Christ." He said this to a meeting of parsons, who loudly applauded it. What he meant, of course, was this: "Speaking on your behalf, as well as my own, I fear a democracy which may *dispense with us*."

Miss Gertrude Elliott is starring in America with a play called *Rebellion*, a divorce play, upon which, it appears, the Catholic Church has placed its ban. Interviewed by the *Pittsburg Leader*, Miss Elliott stands up for the play. She says she has no quarrel with religion except when "its established rules blindly follow the precepts of dead centuries and dead people, brushing and sliding past the issues of import."

Pastor Russell—the gentleman whose face, freely displayed about London nowadays, makes you wonder if it expresses moony simplicity or profound astuteness—publishes a weekly sheet in connection with his "free lectures" at the Albert Hall. We see that it contains advertisements of his other productions; one of which announces that his *Scripture Studies*, vol. i., "is reclaiming more infidels, helping more sceptics, and establishing more Christians than any other book in the world." Poor old "God's" book isn't in the competition.

"A Pained Observer," in the *Llanely Star*, complains of the "rising tide of indecency" which is flooding the country, and says it is caused, at least in part, by the Nonconformists who "have abolished the Bible from our schools." This is news. We were not aware that Secular Education is the Nonconformist policy, even in Wales.

The Free Church Council has steadily opposed all applications for the use of the Llanely theatre for Sunday concerts. It is now applying for the use of the theatre itself, with a view to running "sacred concerts" on Sunday. All the arguments they have employed against other applicants could be turned against the Free Churchmen themselves.

The Palestine Exhibition at the White City, Newcastle-on-Tyne, has given rise to considerable controversy between Jews and their would-be converters. Jewish criticism of the London Society for Promoting Christianity Amongst the Jews includes charges of what is practically "bribery and corruption." The London Society's reply is an absolute denial and a challenge to produce evidence. This challenge has been taken up at Newcastle. Mr. David I. Sandelson, the son of Rabbi Sandelson, is trying to form a committee of inquiry, and he wants the London Society to nominate one half of its members; but it appears to us that his invitation is not likely to be accepted. Mr. Sandelson puts one question which goes to the very heart of the matter:—

"Can they point to any Jewish family of wealth and position that has been converted to Christianity through the influence of any one of their societies? If our charge of bribery and corruption is not true, how is it that they confine their activities to poor Jews? Are not the wealthy Jews in Piccadilly as greatly in need of salvation as poor Jews living in the densely populated districts of the East End of London? Or is it not because, before a Jew will swallow the Christian pill, it must be thickly coated with Christian gold?"

We should like to see a real attempt on the part of the London "Jew" Society to reply to these queries. Anyhow, the investigations and conclusions of a responsible Jewish committee would carry weight with candid, intelligent people, and we hope Mr. Sandelson's idea will be carried through.

The London *Daily Express* (too late for notice in our last issue) published a remarkable interview with Dr. Evans, who has spent many years in India, and had just upset the Bangor Free Church Council by some plain truth about missions and missionaries. In particular he said that reports sent home by missionaries are "cooked" for publication so that the public may be induced to continue their subscriptions. We venture to reproduce an important part of this interview:—

"When I was out in India," he said, "complaints were made to me by missionaries in many parts of the country that when they send home reports on the unfavorable side of their work these are trimmed—if they are published at all—so that they will not have an unfavorable effect on missionary contributors.

"The whole system of missionaries in India requires revising. Christianity is introduced to the Indian in European garb, and the Bible is treated as a Western book. Many Indians have complained to me that Jesus Christ is pictured to them in a top hat and frock coat, instead of a turban and sandals.

"The principles of Christianity should be given them with the Bible, and let them read and understand it in their own way.

"It is a well-known fact in India that Christian servants are not to be trusted, though there are exceptions. They are not as truthful and honest as Mahometans and Hindus, and if a native is seen drunk it is ten to one he is a Christian. In fact, Mahometans and Hindus are teetotalers from religious convictions.

"Missionaries have complained to me that the secretaries of their particular missions at home write to them calling attention to the fact that missionaries of other denominations in their particular districts have sent home reports showing increased conversions, while their membership is stationary. They forget that these converted Christians migrate from one denomination to the other, and it is but natural that missionaries have flocks of varying dimensions."

"Dr. Evans added that there are in India large numbers of what are styled out there 'rice Christians'—men who become converted for the sake of obtaining food. Once a Hindu accepts food from a Christian he is ostracised, and is compelled to become a Christian.

"While he is not opposed to the principles of missionaries, Dr. Evans thinks more freedom should be given to natives, and they should not be hedged in by sectarianism. The different sects, he says, seem to be in competition for the best show of converts."

Most of this is familiar to inquirers and critics who have looked closely into the missionary business, but it will be news to the general public, and we hope it will make them think. It is fair to add that the London Missionary Society pooh-poohs Dr. Evans's charges, but it does not propose to meet them in any way whatever. It stands upon its dignity, which may not be strong enough to bear the weight put upon it.

Freethought is causing agitation at Darvel, Ayrshire. A few "saints" are giving the orthodox some bad quarters of an hour. They tried to get the *Freethinker* placed on the public table of the Darvel Institute, but a Free Church minister, who is also a member of the Committee, strongly objected to such a demoralising paper being allowed there; it would pollute the minds of the young! The reverend gentleman was rebuked by an elder, also a member of the Committee, who said that if Christianity couldn't stand against

the *Freethinker* it wasn't worth defending. When the vote was taken there were five for fair-play and seven against it. Better luck next time! Meanwhile, the wonder was not the seven but the five.

The great George M'Naught—he must be a great man though his name is against him—writes to the *Dumfries and Galloway Standard* against the unrestrained presence of the *Freethinker* in the Ewart Public Library. It is not to be expected that so lofty a being would read this journal, but he "glanced through its pages" and found it "was full of nothing else but blasphemy and derision of the Christian religion." Now the great M'Naught belongs to the Christian religion himself,—if, indeed, the Christian religion doesn't belong to him; and he objects to such a paper lying about—with a smiling face, as it were—inviting all and sundry to peruse it. He thinks it should be removed from the reading-room table and put where it could only be obtained by asking for it. For it mightily offends the great M'Naught,—which is in itself a sufficient reason for putting it out of sight; moreover, it is so calculated to "corrupt young minds." Probably the great M'Naught's own mind is not in a corruptible condition. But consider the young! For our part, we do consider the young; and we would sooner commit suicide than afflict them with the filthy stuff which the great M'Naught and his friends force upon their attention—in the Bible.

Lord Charnwood, the Mayor of Lichfield, read a paper at the Church Congress on social reform with especial reference to eugenics, which is a subject that he appears to have studied in a peculiar fashion. He delivered himself as follows, for instance, according to the *Daily Telegraph* report:—

"The idea that men and women could, and should, set about deliberately to breed great poets and great naval commanders, and clever mechanics, and people of delicate moral susceptibility, and so forth, was not a practical idea nor a wholesome one."

Very likely; but who advocates it? Eugenists simply say that breeding from good stock, under good health conditions, is possible, and must of necessity improve the race thus produced. When Lord Charnwood maintained that "the multiplication of fit progeny" would have to depend on "that high romantic temper about marriage and the family which Christianity had engendered" he simply talked nonsense, and talked it in flat defiance of authentic history.

The Bishop of London contributed a speech to the same discussion. This right reverend father in God is always much concerned about England's decreasing birth-rate. His outcry about babies is "Let 'em all come!" But he does not, presumably, add his little lot to the total. We agree with him that population is excessively maintained by the feeble-minded, and on this point he seems to be right. How else is Dr. Ingram's position as Bishop of London to be accounted for?

The Bishop of London is advertising "Secrets of Strength." Is it for "men only"?

It is said that Bishop Doyle (Catholic), of Lismore, left only eighteenpence at his death. Even that was eighteenpence more than his Master left.

"Oh, ma'am," said the old woman to the visiting Bible woman, "the Lord is very good to me. My husband was killed in a colliery pit; I lost my only son at sea; and I'm blind, and can't sleep or move about for the rheumatics. But I've got two teeth left in my head, and, bless and praise his holy name, they're opposite each other."

A certain Rev. Dr., with a taste for long words, paraphrased "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear" as "He that is accessible to auricular vibration, let him not close the gates of his tympani."

The officials of a Kansas town had vainly endeavored to disperse a mob, when a minister mounted a box and announced a collection. That did it.

"Mother, what is an angel?" "An angel? Well, an angel is a child that flies." "But, mother, why does papa call my governess an angel?" "Well, she is going to fly too in the morning."



### Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, October 22, Town Hall, Birmingham; at 3, "Marie Corelli and Everlasting Life"—at 7, "The Cross and the Crescent."

October 29, Liverpool.

November 5, Leicester; 12, Manchester; 19 and 26, Queen's Hall, London

December 10 and 17, Queen's Hall, London.

### To Correspondents.

C. COHEN'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—October 22 and 29, Queen's Hall, London. November 5, Stratford Town Hall; 12, Hammersmith Ethical Society; 19, Stratford Town Hall.

J. T. LLOYD'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—October 29, Birmingham. November 5, Queen's Hall, London; 12, Queen's Hall, London; 19, Leicester; 25, Stratford Town Hall. December 31, Haringgay.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1911.—Previously acknowledged £303 15s. 2d. Received since:—Edmonton, 1s.

THE VANCE TESTIMONIAL FUND.—Previously acknowledged, £155 3s. 9d. Received since:—Edward Oliver, £1. 1s.; Edmonton, 1s. *This Fund is now closed.*

L. GENTLE.—The new edition of Frazer's *Golden Bough* is in process of publication; the complete work is to fill six volumes at 10s. 6d. each. There is no cheaper issue. Thanks for cuttings.

J. W. WHITE.—Socialists have never flattered Bradlaugh; they also recognise "blasphemy" and the "sin against the Holy Ghost." We don't know that we are called upon to pay special attention to Mr. Hyndman's view of Bradlaugh's character and temperament. Our own view is pretty well known already.

EDWARD OLIVER hopes it is not too late to associate his name with the Vance Testimonial. "I have not forgotten Miss Vance's kind services," he says, "at the funeral of our old friend Edward Self some years ago.....I am glad to see such a good response to the appeal; it marks a hearty appreciation of well rendered services."

A. S. BOND.—Yes, the three opening lectures at Queen's Hall were rather out of the common, and were perhaps all the more successful on that account.

R. H. GRANT.—We are afraid that the Edmonton Branch must apply to the lecturers itself, in the ordinary way. We are pleased to hear that Mrs. Boyce made so successful an appeal to her working-class audience on Sunday.

A. M.—Not the same, we believe. The facts about the "watch story" may be found in Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner's *Life of Charles Bradlaugh*, published by Unwin at 2s. 6d. Very likely J. C. Orr, of Kirkintilloch, can consult it at a local library.

D. MACCONNELL.—We have written on the subject, several times. We don't object to self-sacrifice. Anybody has a right to sacrifice himself for others; what we deny is his right to sacrifice others for himself. And please note that what a selfish person in a funk can be induced to do to save himself is not the criterion of right and wrong.

W. H. DEAKIN.—We have passed your N. S. S. subscription over to the secretary. Thanks for personal good wishes.

W. P. BALL.—Much obliged for cuttings.

J. PARTRIDGE.—Glad to hear Mr. Cohen had successful meetings at Birmingham on Sunday, and that the Branch committee are pleased with their start at the King's Hall.

E. B.—Many thanks for cuttings.

F. E. RAYMOND.—(1) The photograph is amusing, with the *Freethinker* bill in it. What was done by accident in this case is done deliberately in other cases. Spirit photographs, of course, are "fakes." Photographers laugh at them. (2) Glad you still enjoy our journal so much, after four years' reading, and are still pushing its circulation amongst your friends and acquaintances.

C. J. PEACOCK.—Thanks for a sight of your friend's letter. Mr. Sharman, whom he refers to, has been dead a great many years. He was one of those who met us outside the gates of Holloway Prison in 1884. Glad you speak of "the admirable *Freethinker*" after reading so many hundreds of copies.

H. H. SCHOLEY.—Will be useful. Thanks.

G. D.—We must continue to stick to our own proper work. It is the hardest and most thankless of all, and perhaps we love it all the more on that account. We keep an eye, however, on the fields of politics and sociology, and have our own thoughts on both. Thanks for cuttings.

SOME correspondence stands over unavoidably till next week.

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

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

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

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

### Sugar Plums.

Mr. Foote is doing a month's lecturing now in the provinces. He starts to-day (October 22) at Birmingham, where he lectures, afternoon and evening, in the magnificent Town Hall, which takes a great deal of filling, and involves a proportionate effort on the part of the lecturer. Mr. Foote's subjects on this occasion should be specially interesting and big audiences are expected. It must be understood that questions may be asked after the lecture, but no discussion is allowed. This is the condition on which the use of the Town Hall is granted. The N. S. S. Branch has no choice in the matter.

Tea will be provided at a small charge per head, between the afternoon and evening Town Hall lectures, for visitors from a distance.

There was a fine audience at Queen's Hall on Sunday evening, when Mr. Foote finished his course of three lectures on "Modern Female Prophets"—the last being Miss Marie Corelli. We are happy to add that the large meeting included a considerable number of ladies. Such an audience in unfavorable weather—it began to rain a couple of hours beforehand—throws a curious light on the orthodox statement, so often repeated, that Secularism is dead. The lecture was followed with very close attention, and was enthusiastically applauded. Dr. Marshall made an excellent chairman, and succeeded in drawing one opponent—a lady. Several questions were asked also, and satisfactorily answered.

We hope the success attending the start at Queen's Hall will continue. We don't see why it shouldn't. The "saints" have only to bestir themselves a little, and do a little missionary work in the shape of advertising, to secure satisfactory audiences for Mr. Cohen and Mr. Lloyd, who now occupy the Queen's Hall platform for a month between them. Mr. Cohen's titles are attractive and promising. His first lecture will be delivered this evening (Oct. 22). There will be music for half an hour before every lecture of the three months' course—and good music too. The "saints" should note this fact.

The Stratford Town Hall course of lectures are advertised on another page. The four Sunday evenings will be filled by Mr. Cohen, Mr. Lloyd, and Miss Kough. Mr. Foote could not spare a Sunday for this course of lectures. He will try to make up for it in the spring.

East Londoners generally should make a note of the special course of Sunday evening lectures arranged for January in the Shoreditch Town Hall, under the auspices of the Secular Society (Ltd.).

Mr. Lloyd had excellent meetings at Glasgow on Sunday, the attendance being the largest he has had there for a long time. There was no discussion, but some interesting questions were raised and dealt with.

The death of Arabi Pasha has given rise to the report that the Egyptian leader's defence, all those years ago, was conducted entirely at the expense of Wilfrid Scawen Blunt. We have no desire to minimise the generosity of Arabi's friend and supporter; very far from it, indeed; but we remember one £5 which was voted for Arabi's defence by the National Secular Society's Executive, and duly acknowledged by Blunt. It was Bradlaugh who brought the matter before the Executive; it was Mr. G. W. Foote who proposed the vote of £5.

Bradlaugh, according to Mr. Hyndman, was a bit of a bully, who believed in the struggle for existence, and the survival of the fit—always including himself. Bradlaugh, as known by his friends, was always fighting for the poor, the weak, and the oppressed.

There was an awkward blunder in Mr. Foote's front-page article in last week's *Freethinker*. In the last sentence of the penultimate paragraph the expression "Yes, the illegal sectaries will disappear" should have been "the *illogical* sectaries."

## Clerical Obscurantism.

THE Old Testament Deity sternly counselled his chosen people that, when they inherited their patrimony in the promised land, they were never to imitate the abominations of their dispossessed enemies. Their sons and their daughters were not to pass through the fire; enchantments and divinations were forbidden; the weird practices of witches were utterly discountenanced. Those Israelites who consulted with familiar spirits, necromancers, wizards, or charmers stood condemned. Various quaint incidents preserved in the New Testament, however, point to the doings of wizards and magicians as quite ordinary occurrences.

The rationalistic tendencies of the Greek intellect are nowhere more noticeable than in its attitude towards natural phenomena. The inductive method, which Christian Europe was so slow to re-discover, dominated the mind of Aristotle. And when science and philosophy found a temporary haven in the celebrated city which Alexander built, and in which his ashes were laid to rest, the spirit of freedom in research was extensively cultivated. Euclid, the great geometer, was a native of Alexandria, and was one of the glories of its Museum. Hero, the first recorded inventor of the steam engine; the famous mathematician Archimedes; Hippocrates, the father of medicine, were a few only of the mental titans whose disciples added to the glory of the Alexandrian School. The beneficent influences of these sages to a great extent persisted down to the close of the fourth century of our era. By this time the Christian religion had become supreme in the councils of the State. The Archbishop of Alexandria, the scoundrelly Theophilus, with the frenzied assistance of his fanatical clergy, and the pious rabble, seized the opportunity for the purpose of wantonly destroying the magnificent Temple and Museum. The world-famous Library, in which the choice works of antiquity were treasured, and containing on its shelves some 700,000 volumes, was also most criminally destroyed. The nephew of Theophilus succeeded his uncle as Archbishop of Alexandria. This priest, who has come down to us as "Saint" Cyril, followed in the footsteps of his predecessor. He completed the work of Theophilus by murdering Hypatia, thus extinguishing the light shed by Pagan antiquity.

The rise and progress of the Church was coincident with the decline and fall of science and reason. The growth of the physical and natural history sciences was arrested by this historical tragedy for some fifteen hundred years. The almost universal belief in the approaching end of the world, to be followed by the Last Judgment, very naturally caused men to regard mere natural inquiries as futile, if not positively impious. Nor was this view confined to the early centuries; it completely dominated the thought of the later Middle Ages.

But as Nature continued to pursue the even tenor of her way, when even the most awe-inspiring comets were seen to pass away, leaving the earth unharmed, the human mind began slowly to divest itself of its theological terrors. In the thirteenth century arose Albert of Bollstadt. This able man must be considered as one of the great pioneers of modern science. He entertained the possibility of life at the antipodes; he remarked upon the influences exerted by mountains, woods, and streams upon animal and vegetable organisms. The great Humboldt discovered in his writings the germs of physical geography. But the Church condemned him; he became an object of hostility and suspicion; he was menaced with persecution for sorcery. Albert of Bollstadt—the greatest scholar of his priest-ridden age—was driven to relinquish his scientific studies, and compelled to devote the life that remained to him to the elaboration of theological and metaphysical cobwebs. Another thinker, Vincent of Beauvais, was likewise diverted from science to unreason by the same sacerdotal power. Thomas Aquinas, a former pupil of Albert of Bollstadt, and one of the most remarkable

men that ever lived, suffered his intellect to be paralysed by his clerical environment. The blind alley opened up by these men's misapplied endeavors misled mankind for ages. Science was not merely deemed futile, but dangerous. The results gathered by bold adventurers into Nature's recesses were ascribed to the arts of magic.

In these benighted ages it was almost blasphemous to deny the benign or baleful influences of black and white magic. While, in earlier periods, white magic was utilised in curing diseases, and in ascertaining times and seasons most propitious for journeys and enterprises, dealers in the black arts, on the other hand, were supposed to be engaged in secretly and maliciously bringing disease and death upon men, animals, and vegetation. One of the earliest laws made by Constantine, after his conversion to Christianity in the fourth century, was directed against dealers in the black arts. The penalty for this alleged crime was the humane one of being burned alive. A distinction was, however, drawn between black and white magic. In a proclamation issued by the emperor, it was stated that magic employed to cure the sick, or to protect the crops from inclement weather, was perfectly legitimate. But as the years rolled by, severity against magic increased. Black and white magic were now regarded as equally harmful; both were traced to the machinations of the prince of hell. By the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the popular fear of magic and witchcraft out-distanced the dread of hell itself.

The alchemists were now preparing the way for the later science of chemistry, but these pioneers were regarded by most ecclesiastics, and all peasants, as colleagues of Satan. In 1317, Pope John XXII. levelled his Bull against the alchemists; in this and various other Bulls and briefs, God's agent on earth makes not the slightest distinction between genuine science and quackery. The Pope complains that he and all his faithful flock stand in mortal peril from the devices of the sorcerers. He declares that these wretches send devils into mirrors, and are able to kill men and women with a magic word. He says that they actually attempted to kill him by piercing a waxen likeness of himself in the name of Satan.

It was quite in harmony with the intellectual stagnation of this period that, in 1163, Pope Alexander III. forbade the study of physics to all ecclesiastics. At a time when all that passed for education was in the hands of the clergy, this was tantamount to the suppression of all scientific inquiry. The violation of this rule incurred the penalty of utter avoidance and excommunication.

One of the most poignant sufferers in the army of Humanism was Roger Bacon. Draper placed the elder Bacon before his Elizabethan namesake in point of greatness. White's view is, perhaps, juster. He says:—

"The advance of sound historical judgment seems likely to bring the fame of the two who bear the name of Bacon nearer to equality. Bacon, of the Chancellorship and *Novum Organum*, may not wane; but Bacon, of the prison cell and the *Opus Major*, steadily approaches him in brightness."

Roger Bacon antedated Francis Bacon by more than three centuries. He opened up the paths that led to the invention of clocks, lenses, and burning glasses. His chemical achievements were also very remarkable. He substituted real reasoning for metaphysical speculation. He courageously experimented in an age in which the patient inquirer and investigator was deemed an associate of Satan. But the heavy hand of the Church was laid upon him; he was condemned to silence because he dared to think and doubt.

Bonaventura, the then idol of the theological market-place, became his implacable enemy. St. Bonaventura was the general of the Franciscan order of which Bacon was a member. The epithets "infidel," "Atheist," and "Mohammedan" were flung at the progressive friar. The two great religious orders, Franciscan and Dominican, united to darken the dawning light of chemistry and

physics. Bacon was flung into prison, and he was immured for the sad space of fourteen years. He was not restored to liberty until he had reached the advanced age of eighty years, and he did not long survive to cause scandal to his judges. When one reflects upon the inveterate hatred of the clericals to science and progress; when one remembers their almost despotic power, one marvels that science successfully overcame the innumerable obstacles placed in her path.

Despite the unfavorable nature of their environment, champions of truth continued to appear. Our knowledge of these men is very fragmentary; their brave struggles are chiefly known through the reactionary endeavors of their ecclesiastical foes. A multitude of natural philosophers were beggared, tortured, and even led to execution for daring to depart from the dogmas and decrees of sacerdotal obscurantists.

Even after the revival of letters and the great geographical discoveries had shaken the Church, the clericals had so much popular ignorance and prejudice at their beck and call that the path of the natural inquirers was beset with theological thorns. In late sixteenth century Italy, Porta contrived to carry out studies which have given mankind the camera obscura, and his work in physics and chemistry possessed enduring merit. But the scientific society he founded was dissolved; he was commanded to Rome by Pope Paul III., and forbidden to prosecute further researches.

In France the clergy were also at their old business. Acting under clerical pressure, the Parliament of Paris, in 1624, prohibited chemical experiments under the severest penalties. In 1657 the Accademia del Cimento assembled for its first session in Florence. Redi, Borelli, and Oliva adorned its gatherings, and many solid contributions were added to science. But the clergy instinctively recognised their most deadly antagonist in any society founded to promote civilisation and knowledge. Although the Academy enjoyed the patronage of Prince Leopold de' Medici, he was soon bought over by the enemy with a cardinal's hat. Borelli was beggared, and Oliva was so bitterly persecuted, and so shamelessly tortured, that he committed suicide in despair. And these are but three instances out of multitudes which could be cited.

But the reformed churches were no more enlightened than the Catholic. In 1715, a cellar-digger was suffocated while working underground at Jena. The medical faculty of the University decided that his death was due to a deadly gas, and not to the malice of the Devil. A shout of indignation at once arose from the clerical university of Wittenberg. The pronouncement of the Jena doctors was stigmatised as "a proof of the lamentable license which has so taken possession of us, and which if we are not earnestly on our guard, will finally turn away from us the blessing of God." When compared with Catholic methods this is mildness itself, but the Church had been split in twain by the Reformation, and its powers for evil in consequence curtailed.

The venerable university of Oxford was the scene of Robert Boyle's scientific labors. Although he was a man above suspicion or reproach in his relations with his fellow-men, he was bitterly reviled by the Oxford parsons. His scientific studies were denounced as sapping the foundations of faith. Boyle was traduced, ridiculed, and even ostracised. And all this happened in the middle of the seventeenth century at our great centre of "culture." But the philosopher ignored this mob of clerical and lay detractors, and his discoveries gave a tremendous impetus to a series of subsequent chemists.

Dr. Priestley was another victim of the allied forces of the ignorant populace and the clergy. This eminent philosopher had dedicated his life to science and civilisation. But the Birmingham mob, egged on to their disgraceful work by the Anglican clergy, who harangued them as "fellow churchmen," ruined his house, destroyed his library and philosophical instruments, with the papers representing the results

of many years' research. They drove him into exile, and his life would not have been worth a moment's purchase had he fallen into their clutches.

The same unprogressive spirit was displayed in 1832, and even later. When, at an earlier date, the British Association honored Oxford with its first visit, Dr. Keble, of "Christian Year" fame, was a power in the university. This cleric indignantly protested against the conferring of honorary degrees upon the eminent scientists then assembled in Oxford. In a communication to Dr. Pusey, Keble wrote "that the Oxford doctors have truckled sadly to the spirit of the times in receiving the hotch-potch of philosophers as they did." The men upon whom this meek clergyman thus looked down included Faraday, Dalton, and Brewster.

The theological spirit is ever at heart in eternal enmity with knowledge; Catholic and Protestant have each opposed the advance of science so far as their power permitted. In the words of the great physicist, Professor Mach, "Nor was any engine too base for the Church to handle in this struggle. She considered nothing but how to conquer; and no temporal policy ever was conducted so selfishly, so unscrupulously, or so cruelly."\* One of the leading lessons derived from a study of clerical obscurantism thus teaches the necessity of sound secular instruction from the elementary school up to the university.

T. F. PALMER.

## Secularist Work.—II.

BY JAMES F. MORTON, JNR.

(Concluded from p. 668.)

THE argument against the appropriation of public funds for sectarian institutions is equally self-evident, and to the same effect. It is a national disgrace that the necessity should have arisen for such a demand; that the Churches can even dream of seeking the privilege of putting their hands directly in the pockets of other people. Such institutions as minister to the needs of the sick and unfortunate take an infamous advantage of the necessities of those who crave shelter, when they use the relief afforded as a means of bribing the poor victims to come under the influence of their proselytising activities. All charitable and relief institutions of every character should be rigidly secularised, as a matter of common decency. No one should be forced or tricked into attendance on religious services, which would not be sought but for the need of begging for material help. To call the practice of the Churches and other religious bodies, in sectarianising what ought to be left on a basis of common humanity, cowardly and infamous, is to deal in gross flattery. Such vile presuming on the needs of human beings is the work of ghouls, not of men and women fit for the name. The crime is not so evident where there is no direct proselytising of the inmates of charitable institutions. Still, it is not wholly an honorable transaction; for the religious body solicits assistance from disbelievers in its doctrines, on purely humanitarian grounds, and then proceeds to take to itself all the credit for the philanthropic enterprise, to make capital of it, and thereby indirectly to increase its sphere of influence and win readier attention to its propaganda. So it is far better that charitable institutions be removed altogether from the sphere of religious controversy. If some of them are unfortunately left in sectarian hands, however, the least that can be asked is that they be supported exclusively by those who claim the management of them, and choose to conduct them as agencies of the Church or other religious body. If they cannot live on those terms, let them drop the religious aspect, and then ask for public assistance. Nothing else is even decently honest.

\* *Science of Mechanics*, p. 447.

The abolition of official religious services and of the use of the Bible in public schools is only a call for fair play. The Koran, the Vedas, the Upanishads, and the *Age of Reason* are not taught in the public schools; and it is obviously unfair to select the text-book of the Christians for the purpose. While Christianity remains so nearly dominant, the Bible cannot be used as an ordinary book, and subjected to the same dispassionate criticism given to other works introduced into the schools. If brought in at all, it must be as a work possessing peculiar sanctity and authority; and thus the State at once makes itself the arbiter among disputed religious views, and pronounces officially in behalf of the claims of Christianity. Since the population is made up of Christians and non-Christians, possessed alike of citizens' rights, absolute neutrality on the part of the civil government is the clearest possible duty. To hold otherwise is a confession of inability to appreciate fair play, and of unfitness to apprehend American institutions.

In demanding the abolition of religious festivals and fasts, we follow the same rule of asking only for equal justice. Whatever presidents and governors may believe as individuals, they have no right as officers of a secular State to force the consciences of their fellow citizens by calling on them all, regardless of varying religious beliefs, to recognise any obligation to what many of them hold to be a purely imaginary being.

We demand the abolition of the judicial oath, which is a complete farce, and of no value as a protection against perjured testimony. Our courts are not proper places for the recognition of inculcation of religious views; and all citizens have equal rights to impartial justice, their private beliefs notwithstanding. The retention of the religious oath is a ridiculous anachronism, as well as being improper in the extreme.

In opposing Sunday laws we fully understand the flimsy pretext of love for labor, which is manifested by the Sunday law advocates whenever they are driven into a corner. That the main purpose of the laws is a religious one, is, nevertheless, always admitted in arguments before legislative committees when the representatives, who have sworn to obey the Constitution, with its guarantees of religious liberty, are publicly appealed to to perjure themselves by deciding according to quotations from the Bible, and arguments based thereon. The clergy, who are the most active supporters of Sunday legislation, are not found in the front ranks of those advocating shorter week-day hours of labor, or other legislation demanded for the benefit of the working classes. Moreover, when they cannot obtain a complete prohibition of Sunday activities, they immediately seek to secure special restrictions of such activities to such hours as will not compete with the services of their churches. This proves their fundamental dishonesty and simple desire to enlist the State on the side of their private interests. The persistent efforts to suppress Sunday baseball and other innocent amusements, which do not require the employment of labor, also testifies to the falsity of the labor pretext, and proves that the real aim is the undemocratic one of compelling religious observance by law. If one day in seven is required for the rest of labor, it would be easy to enact a law forbidding any person to employ another more than six days in any one week, leaving the particular day of rest to be fixed in each case by private contract. That the Sunday theocrats will not listen to such a proposition proves that they do not care a rap about the rights of labor. All that they wish is to drive people to church by taking away all counter attractions from them. For the State to aid them in this impertinent invasion of personal liberty is an exceedingly dirty piece of business.

We demand that laws dealing with moral issues be based on principles of natural or social morality, and not on particular religious dogmas. This is simply to recognise the Republic as a secular one, and implies no letting down of any barriers which

ought to be kept up. We further sum up our position by a general demand for the entire secularisation of the nation and the States, for reasons allied to those adduced in behalf of the particular demands; and to the support of this platform we confidently invite all who really love their country and the truths of democracy.

To effectuate these demands the American Secular Union proposes to take advantage of every legitimate method of propaganda. It is true that the Free-thought movement, by undermining the respect for religious faiths, forms, and institutions, is a natural ally of Secularism. Its ceaseless propaganda tends to break down the superstitious attitude of mind, which so depraves otherwise admirable men and women as to deprive them of much of their moral sense, rendering them willing accomplices in the criminal conspiracy of priestcraft against the rights, liberties, and property of the American people. More direct Secularist activity is, none the less, absolutely necessary. We do not appeal to men and women merely as Freethinkers, but as Americans; and we have the right so to appeal in all confidence to millions of honest citizens who continue to accept the idea of a God, but who are not of so perverted intelligence as to deduce from that belief the right to play the bully and the sneak-thief. The sincere Christian would be a Secularist if he only realised how the poison of State-alliance destroys the ethical and spiritual qualities of his church. We must make them see this, even if we leave them Christians.

Our methods must consist, in the first place, of incessant agitation. The subject must not be allowed to drop. Theocratic robbery of the citizens is a continuing crime, which adds daily to the burdens of the people. The shamelessness of it must be exposed at every opportunity. As we are asking only for common justice, we have a right to take the aggressive. Along with the agitation must go the work of education. The reasons for our demands must be carefully explained, so that even the most ignorant cannot fail to comprehend. The facts must be made so clear that they cannot be obscured. The American Secular Union, which is steadily at work resisting specific encroachments, as well as maintaining the general principle, should receive the hearty support of every Secularist. The greater its constituency the more potent will be its efficiency. Specific theocratic outrages should be brought by individuals promptly to the attention of the secretary Union, who will gladly co-operate with local Secularists in resisting any act of injustice. Legislative work deserves much greater attention than it has hitherto received. The great religious bodies maintain powerful lobbies at all legislative centres. The American Secular Union and State Secularist organisations have much to do in watching Congress and the State legislatures, as well as municipal councils. Bad measures must be vigorously fought by petition, by personal appeal, by argument before legislative committees, and in every other legitimate way. By similar means much can be done to forward good measures. All these things have been rather spasmodically carried on in the past; and what is most needed is greater system and steadiness of pressure. The American Secular Union forms the focal point for the application of our energies. If we will, we can make it a mighty power in the land. Shall we do so? Are our liberties dear to us? The answer to the first question involves the answer to the second.

#### OBVIOUSLY.

Bishop Goodman was one day addressing a Sunday-school when he said in a most expressive way: "And now, children, let me tell you a very sad fact. In Africa there are 10,000,000 square miles of territory without a single Sunday-school where little boys and girls can spend their Sundays. Now, what should we all try and save up our money and do?"

And the class, as one voice, replied in ecstatic union, "Go to Africa!"

## Correspondence

## MR. LLOYD ON "NAMBY-PAMBYISM."

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—May I be allowed to make one or two references to Mr. Lloyd's interesting article in the *Freethinker* of October 8 on "Namby-Pambyism"? His argument for a vigorous and militant Freethought movement is timely, pertinent, and helpful. I am, however, at issue with him on one point. His third paragraph begins as follows:—

"The attitude of Freethought to-day is one of unqualified and uncompromising opposition to every form of supernaturalism. Let no one draw the false inference, however, that opposition means persecution. We are undaunted advocates of complete religious toleration. Our watchword is liberty of thought and speech, and it is under its banner that we wish to do all our fighting. But it must be clearly understood that we are obstinate enemies of the prevailing superstition, and are resolutely set upon doing our utmost to stamp it out. Far be it from us to assert that the Churches do no good, for we know that their good works are both numerous and substantial; but that knowledge does not weaken in the slightest degree our conviction that the Churches are founded upon a lie, and are seriously handicapped, by that lie, in their philanthropic activities."

I venture to think that the plea for a vigorous and militant policy against superstition is weakened by that statement as it is put. I hope that all who may read these lines will re-read the whole of Mr. Lloyd's article, because I am anxious to disclaim any intention to pervert the general sense of the article by tearing a passage from the context. The comment I wish to make, in breaking a brotherly lance with Mr. Lloyd, is this: that it is historically and experimentally wrong to say that the Churches have done, or are doing, good. I am prepared to agree that *individuals* who happen to be within the pale of the Churches do good. For example, it would be ludicrous to suggest that Bishop Myriel in *Les Misérables* is not a noble character; but it would be as ludicrous to say he is a typical Christian. St. Francis of Assisi and other human beings, who denied themselves for their fellows, did so because of an intense human love; but they are exceptions, and like angels' visits, are few and far between.

The suggestion in Mr. Lloyd's article—at least, what has been conveyed to my mind by the passage above quoted—is that in the Churches we see great philanthropic organisations doing good for humanity, but handicapped in their good works by a *lie upon which they are founded!* But remove the foundation, and what happens to the superstructure? No, Mr. Editor, it will not do. The good men do, in any sphere or environment, or under whatever conditions, is because of their intense humanity, and because of closer and deeper knowledge of truth than is possible to the mass of people subjugated by, and in bondage and servility to, conventional belief in falsehoods.

Here is a subject of philosophical inquiry: Can *good* be done by any association which is founded on a lie? I do not think so. The people with the greatest knowledge and appreciation of truth have always been the most joyous people, and the people enjoying the greatest measure of freedom. Everything that tends to bondage—physical, intellectual, or moral—is *bad, not good—essentially and fundamentally bad*; and the same observation may be said to apply to everything unnatural, supernatural, or extra-natural. The lie upon which the Churches are founded is not a harmless negative thing. It has poisoned the wells of human love; it has withheld knowledge; it has sent fire and pestilence and death; it has caused an enormous mass of preventible human suffering. The good that individuals, who incidentally wear the badge of orthodoxy, have done is a mere drop in the ocean of positive evil that the Churches as organisations have done, designedly and of set purpose. The Churches are first of all associations to furnish a certain profession with a livelihood—a profession which, above all others, continues to exist on the ignorance, weakness, and fear of man. The most ignorant people are the people with no real appreciation of truth. They love a lie and live a lie, and therefore they have no real joy because they have no real liberty.

I think Mr. Lloyd probably had the feeling himself that the sentences I have quoted were not couched in the happiest terms, because the remainder of the paragraph contains expressions which tend to qualify the effect of the statement quoted. I have no desire to be put down as a "quibbler"; but I suggest that the sentence "We are undaunted advocates of complete religious toleration" would have been better with the word "religious" deleted; because surely we are undaunted advocates of complete toleration for all. And I do not love that word "obstinate."

For the rest, I congratulate Mr. Lloyd heartily on his timely appeal and statement. We do need stiffening in these

days of compromise—and the New Theology. We have to fight against sentimentalism. The result of dabbling in the nonsensical mysticism of the modern religionist, who has to depend so much on secular aids to keep ecclesiastical organisations going, is inevitably mental enervation. "The outstanding fact," remarks Mr. Lloyd, "is that Christianity has done incalculable harm in the world." That is a precise and irrefutable statement; but I humbly suggest that it is hardly consistent with the statement which goes before, and which I have ventured to criticise. I do not know but what you yourself, Sir, are entitled to a share of the criticism, for that you occupy the editorial chair; but we know your hands are full enough in all conscience, and it is easy to lose one's blue pencil.

The sound doctrine of Freethought is "Prove all things. Hold fast that which is good," and a process of emancipation is a constructive process which in itself tends to the elimination of falsehoods, and whatever is bad and ugly and hurtful in human life.

SIMPLE SANDY.

[We have never used the sort of blue pencil to which this correspondent refers. If we had we might have exercised it on some of his own writing. Our censorship is confined to decency, sanity, and good English. Articles in our pages are signed, which is the only honest journalism; and the writers are responsible for their own opinions and arguments. We never had any taste for making them conform to ours. This policy is best for us, best for our contributors, and best for our readers. Few editors seem able to act in this way, but few editors work with signed contributors,—and we were born for this job.—EDITOR.]

## SIR THOMAS BROWNE, THE WITCH-BURNER.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—While at one with Mr. Livingstone-Anderson as to the high merits of Sir Thomas Browne's prose style—notably in *Urn Burial*—and of the occasional high level of his philosophical speculations, I join with Mr. Reynolds in detestation of Browne's inhumanity in helping to send to a shocking death two poor old women, innocent of any provable crime. However cogent from his own premises were Browne's reasons for believing in "witches," and, of course, in "witchcraft," he knew that he not only did not know what a witch was, but that he could not for that very reason recognise a witch when he saw one. Whatever authority he fell back on to justify his belief and his cowardly conduct, he had not, and did not, allege that he had any authority which identified the two particular victims of his "evidence" as witches. Whatever he believed, *his belief was not evidence*, and was entitled to much less respect than the belief of any of his Atheistic contemporaries—that witches and witchcraft had no existence outside the brains of such as believed in them. It is to Browne's eternal shame as a man that he who knew his Montaigne so well, and was influenced both in his thought and style by that genius of common sense, should have been so profoundly sunk in a bestial and brutal superstition, whilst the immense majority of his equals and superiors in ability and learning in the Western world, as well as in the Eastern, looked upon such a belief as ignorant and degrading, mad and murderous.

Browne knew the arguments of Atheists and others against the belief in witches, and he knew that he himself *knew* no more about witches and witchcraft than his favorite parrot; and, in fact, all he really *knew* on the subject was that he knew nothing at all.

And knowing that he knew nothing, he should have given evidence to that effect, like an honest witness; should have stated that, knowing nothing of either witchcraft or witches, he could not give evidence against the two poor old women whose murder lies, with so many millions of other murders, at the door of a superstition called religion, which all the Brownes of literature will never again raise to its old-time slaughter-power.

If it be urged in Browne's excuse that he was only one of many in his time that believed in witches, it must be retorted that then his thought was, on this matter, on the lowest level of his time, in company with that of the vile rabble which, in its ignorant bigotry, hunted to the stake, not queens, duchesses, marchionesses, and women of title, but unprotected, aged, and often decrepit and demented poor human creatures whose abject poverty was, in most cases, the only crime of which they could, by evidence, be proved guilty.

ATHEIST.

P.S.—When a Christian asserts that he believes in Christianity because it is impossible—"Credo quia impossibile est," says Augustine—does he mean to say that Christianity is the most absurd religion in the world? If not, why does he not hunt out the most impossible, and give up his Christianity?

## 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.

#### INDOOR.

QUEEN'S (MINOR) HALL (Langham-place, Regent-street, W.): 7.30, C. Cohen, "Man and his Soul."

#### OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 3.15, E. Burke, "The Case for Secular Education."  
CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): 3.15, a Lecture.

EDMONTON BRANCH N. S. S. (The Green): 7.40, J. W. Marshall, "In the Beginning."

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.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (outside Maryland Point Station, Stratford): 7, W. Davidson, "The Defect in Christianity."

WOOD GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Jolly Butchers Hill, opposite Public Library): 7, J. Hecht, "Astronomy: Biblical and Scientific."

### COUNTRY.

#### INDOOR.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Town Hall): G. W. Foote, 3, "Marie Corelli and Everlasting Life"; 7, "The Cross and the Crescent."

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 12 noon, Class; 6.30, Zosimus, "The Path of Progress: Scotland a Hundred Years Ago and To-Day."

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Joseph McCabe, "Australia as a Museum of Evolution." Lantern illustrations.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N. S. S. (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 7, Joseph A. E. Bates, "Philosophy of Materialism."

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, Sidney Wollen, "Where are thy gods that thou hast made?"

#### OUTDOOR.

BIRKENHEAD (Haymarket): Saturday, Oct. 28, at 8, Joseph A. E. Bates, "Death, Man's Soul, and the Great Beyond."

LIVERPOOL (Edgchill Church, outside): Joseph A. E. Bates—Tuesday, Oct. 24, and Thursday, October 26, at 8: I. "Fundamentals of Atheism"; II. "Freethought as a Factor in Character."

## BUSINESS CARDS.

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

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Secretary—MISS E. M. VANCE.

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

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

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

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