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And therefore, though a scholar must have faith in his master, yet a man well instructed must judge for himself; for learners owe their masters only a temporary belief, and a suspension of their own judgment till they are fully instructed, and not an absolute resignation, or perpetual captivity.—BACON.

The New Age.

THE New Theologians are never tired of reminding the Old, and incidentally the rest of the world, that we are living in an entirely new age; but, as a rule, they omit to state that the newness of the age consists very largely in the fact that it devotes itself to scientific research and literary criticism. It is true that nothing stands to-day where it did fifty or a hundred years ago; but the theologians neglect to put this truth in its true perspective. They seem to be under the impression that they are the people to whom the world is indebted for this new age; but they are radically mistaken. They are one of the effects, not causes, of the mighty change—that is so patent to all, the real cause or creator, of it being science. They are simply a by-product of the great scientific discoveries of the last half-century. While Secularists have greeted these discoveries with loud and grateful cheers, the New Theologians have only been “perplexingly aware” of them, as one of them candidly confesses. It was these marvellous discoveries that forced them from the old moorings which had held them securely through every previous disturbance; and so terrific was the wrench that they had to leave anchors and cables and bridles behind and take to drifting, which they have been doing ever since. They can never get moored any more, because they have lost all their ground tackle. Oblivious of this, some of them talk glibly about “the bankruptcy of Science,” and “what scientists do not know,” assuring us that the mid-Victorian science is already as dead as Queen Anne; but every non-theologian of average intelligence is fully aware that such talk is mischievous nonsense. It is theology, not science, that has become bankrupt in this new age. One divine observes that science “wishes to be absolved to-day from pronouncing on any of the ultimate problems of life”; but the truth is that science has never concerned itself, either directly or indirectly, with “the ultimate problems of life.” It is theology that undertakes that unprofitable, because impossible, task. Another man of God calls attention to the fact that the science of to-day leaves theology alone, and is sympathetic rather than hostile, whereas the Huxleyan science bitterly attacked the Christian creed; but here again the theologian is utterly wrong. Science no longer attacks theology because theology has dropped every dogma the truth of which could be scientifically tested, and intrenched itself in a region insusceptible of either observation or experiment.

So far from being bankrupt is science that it can legitimately be described as marching on to final victory. Hitherto it has triumphed at every point. A Christian bigot gets vigorously cheered by a Christian mob when he declares that “even in the

scientific world Darwinian evolution is as dead as last year's newspaper, and that the scientific world is coming back to God as the unseen Evolver.” It is quite possible that Scribners, of New York, have published a book, entitled, *No Struggle for Existence: No Natural Selection*, and that a popular evangelist refers to it as “giving abundant proof that Darwin was a dreamer and a romancer”; but neither the book nor the evangelist deserves a moment's serious notice. It must be admitted, however, that an orthodox theologian is bound, if at all consistent, to pronounce Darwinism, root and branch, absolutely false, because, if true, it discredits and destroys the Biblical conception of the world. We do not blame the Rev. Dr. Dixon, of the Metropolitan Tabernacle, for standing by Moses and giving Darwin the go-by, for he has a perfect right to do so, if he can compound with his reason; but when he goes on and claims that in so doing he has the support of “even the scientific world,” we must say plainly that it is he, not Darwin, who is the “romancer.” What he says is the direct opposite of the truth. On this point we have the testimony of no less an authority than Sir Ray Lankester, who, in a letter to the *Daily Telegraph* for October 2, 1911, wrote thus:—

“The assertion that the theory of organic evolution as left by Darwin is now generally held to be inadequate is fallacious. Darwin's theories are generally held to be essentially true. It is obvious that they are capable of further elaboration and development by additional knowledge, and always were regarded as being so by their author and by every other competent person. But that is a very different thing from holding them to be ‘inadequate.’ They are adequate, because they furnish the foundation on which we build.”

Thus, while the Old Theologians have been impotently though consistently cursing and swearing at it, and whilst the New Theologians have been inconsistently and vainly currying favor with it by whittling Christianity, bit by bit, away, science has been making steady progress, not by abandoning old positions because they were seen to be insecure but by strengthening them in every way possible, and by pressing forward and erecting new ones.

We now come to examine the work accomplished by historical and literary criticism. Towards this as well as towards physical science the two theological schools maintain different attitudes. In the estimation of orthodoxy criticism is of the Devil and should not be tolerated. It has no right to lay its impious hands on God's Holy Book. The New Theologians, for the most part, and Liberal Christians generally, accept the well-attested conclusions of criticism and endeavor to adapt their conception of Christianity to them. This is found to be a tremendously difficult task. Speaking of Jesus Christ, a well-known New Theologian says:—

“We are all aware that the great questioning of our time has not left his reverent figure untouched, that the waves of criticism have crept up even to his blessed feet, and we have to understand that he, like all others, must abide the critical questioning spirit of our age. Some of us know where that questioning has left him. Historical criticism, applied to the New Testament by various schools, has determined that the Jesus who is there portrayed is either simply a man like any one of us or absolutely a myth.”

As a matter of fact historical criticism has determined nothing of the kind. It is not even capable of coming to the absurd conclusion that a person

who had no human father, who gave sight to the blind and raised the dead, and who having himself died rose again on the third day, was simply a man like any one of us. There never has been, there never can be, such a man. Whether anyone of whom such things were falsely reported ever did live or not, is another question altogether. Now, historical criticism has succeeded in showing, not that Jesus was either a mere man or wholly a myth, but that he belongs to the general family of Savior Gods or God-men, with whom Pagan mythologies so plentifully abound. It is only when the critic degenerates into the theologian that he forms his theory of the nature and character of the Gospel Jesus. There are three such theories at present in vogue. According to the first the Gospel Jesus actually lived on earth as a supernatural being united to human nature, who lived a supernatural life, died a supernatural death, and supernaturally burst the bonds of death, and thereby became the Savior of the world. According to the second theory, held by all Liberal Christians and by some of the New Theologians, Jesus was a God-inspired human teacher, who surpasses all other teachers the world has ever seen. Some speak of him as the Divine man, and others as the divinest amongst the sons of men who are all divine. According to the third theory the Gospel Jesus never lived at all, but is to be taken as an imaginative symbol of the eternal life of God. Now, as between these conflicting theories criticism as such has no opinion and utters no judgment. All it points out is that there is no essential difference between Jesus and scores of others in the class to which he rightfully belongs. If he lived, why not they? If they did not exist, except in the imagination of their devotees, neither did he.

Those who hold that Jesus was only a man and yet regard themselves as his disciples, maintain that his teaching about God and man and the relations between the two is perfect and final, a complete revelation of the way of salvation through faith. Now, granting that he really did live as a mere man, all the teaching attributed to him cannot be genuine. Many of the sayings reported to have fallen from his lips are unutterably absurd. Who can read the Fourth Gospel, for example, in which he claims to be of a different origin and to stand on a totally different footing with God from the people that surrounded him, calls himself the Divinely-appointed judge of the world, and predicts that his death on the cross shall be the means of attracting the whole human race to his side—who can read such utterances, and still believe that he who made them was a good man? What criticism determines is, not that a good man was never silly enough to speak of himself in such a strain, but that it is impossible to accept any recorded saying as having certainly come from a historical Jesus. We know that among Liberal Christians there is as yet no agreement as to the amount of genuine history the Gospels contain. In view of this how foolish it is to assert that, after all, the only truly important question is, not what we think of Jesus, but what Jesus thinks of us? Obviously if Jesus never lived, or lived only as a mere man, he is incapable of any thought whatever concerning us. When a Liberal Christian, or a New Theologian, avers that such is the only vital question, he is still unconsciously the slave of the orthodox theology he professes to have renounced. For the critic, who is prepared to follow the dictates of his reason, even the ethical teaching ascribed to Jesus possesses no greater sanctity than that attributed to other religious founders. It occupies a much lower level, indeed, than the moral system believed to have been formulated five hundred years earlier by Buddha. In point of fact, the Christian ethical code found in the Gospel is a wholly impossible one, of the truth of which statement the history of Christendom furnishes an all-conclusive evidence. There never has been a single Christian in eighteen hundred years.

Yes, we are living in a new age, in which priest and parson are ceasing to be of any account, an age

that is learning to treat ecclesiastical pretensions with positive contempt and to listen only to the voice of trained intelligence. The Churches were never more zealous and energetic, and they were never so impotent. The God of Providence never lived, however much twaddle the preacher may talk about him. The Rev. Stuart Holden tells us that he was "providentially" prevented from sailing in the *Titanic*, for which he is most grateful. What infinite egotism, and what a crushing blow to God's moral character. God allowed sixteen hundred persons to perish in the sea, while wireless telegraphy, the only real providence in the case, rescued eight hundred. We are at the dawn of a new age in which man shall be his own savior, providence, and god, and in which every man shall be every other man's brother and helper.

J. T. LLOYD.

Religion and Life.

A GROWING and most desirable interest in the development of a healthy type of human being has been expressing itself of recent years. The immense growth of knowledge in biology, the acuteness with which we are feeling the pressure of many social problems, the increased scientific attention paid to the nature and prevention of disease, with the advance of the all-conquering doctrine of evolution, have together resulted in a serious questioning of the old and generally accepted position that the breeding of the human animal is the one instance in which forethought is either undesirable or useless. Up to the present the new science of eugenics cannot be said to have been productive of any well-established and generally accepted consequences. The problem is too many-sided, and the factors far too complex for this to have transpired. But one has hopes for the future. And, at any rate, it would appear to be a sound generalisation that the nation that attends to the protection of its territory and the volume of its trade, but leaves unattended the nature of the human material it is producing, is laying up for itself a store of trouble in the not distant future.

The problem becomes more acute with the development of civilisation. In a less advanced civilisation than our own a certain standard of health is maintained by the more drastic action of natural selection. The weakly die quickly because there is not the means available for keeping them alive. Diseases are more fatal in their visitations, and to that extent less harmful to the race. For by an elimination of the susceptible, an immune type is left in possession of the field. Above all, not merely is there absent the means of keeping the weakling alive, but the absence of such means involves the impossibility of the weakly perpetuating their kind. In advanced civilisations the tendency runs in quite the opposite direction. Our knowledge enables us to keep alive people who, in its absence, would inevitably die. And our sympathies demand that our knowledge shall be exerted to the uttermost. No one desires that our knowledge shall remain in abeyance, or that our sympathies shall be unsatisfied. All that is necessary is for the one to be adequate and the other effective. For knowledge is terribly partial when it saves a life to-day at the cost of presenting society with a half-dozen ruined lives to-morrow; and sympathy is ineffective when it relieves suffering now only to provide greatly increased suffering in the near future. Under such conditions knowledge and sympathy become hindrances to social development, instead of aids.

In other words, we have succeeded in partly eliminating the operation of forces that kept the unfit from multiplying without doing anything to keep them from being born. But if we are not to have the survival of the fittest, and still progress, we must have the birth of the fittest. And not only the birth of the fittest, but the preservation of the

fittest, once we have them. To express it still more fully, the ideal condition is not only where the fittest are brought into existence, but where the environment is of such a character as to emphasise the qualities that constitute fitness. Half the facts that form the groundwork of much of the nonsense one reads about race decadence are more due to nurture than nature. Babies born in the slums may have the potentialities of desirable citizens, but defective nurture may easily prevent their actualising. Not that the stock is of unimportance; quite the contrary; but the most desirable stock will be of small value unless the environment is of such a character that desirable qualities of both mind and body are duly stamped as fittest. And this registration, so to speak, is essentially the function of the environment. It is that which makes cowardice or courage, cunning or simplicity, the condition of survival.

An adequate consideration of the subject necessitates cutting one's way through a host of superstitions, social, economical, and religious—particularly the latter. Indeed, the main object of my writing is to deal with "The Biological Influence of Religion," as expounded by Mr. W. C. S. Whetham and his wife in their just issued book, *Heredity and Society*. And as a proper understanding of the influence of religion on race development involves an understanding of the nature of the general problem, I purpose glancing at these other aspects first.

I referred above to the nonsensical talk of race decadence that one is apt to meet in the columns of newspapers and to hear from ill-informed speakers. Sometimes this takes the form of a sort of statistical calculation which results in the man of the future appearing as a bald-headed, toothless, weak-muscled, poor-sighted monstrosity that seems hardly worth breeding. Or it takes the form of calculations showing that cities only live by feeding, vampire-like, on fresh country blood. Or, yet again, our feelings are harrowed by statistics concerning the growth of insanity, and by calculations showing that at the present rate of increase society will in future be made up wholly of lunatics. Or, finally, there are mournful prognostications concerning the natural and inevitable decay of races in virtue of the operation of some assumed law that nations, like individuals, have their seasons of infancy, maturity, old age, and death. I mention the more important fallacies only—there are hosts of minor ones—because these have a really vital bearing upon the chief question with which I am now concerned.

The first two, that concerning the effect of city life and the growth of insanity, may be taken together, since both involve the same misunderstanding of evolutionary processes. The basis of the generalisation that the human race decays under the conditions of city life was first brought prominently before the public by a calculation which showed that it was practically impossible to find in London anyone with a London ancestry, on both sides, for three or four generations. Now, bearing in mind the enormous growth of London during the last century, a growth mainly due to the influx of people from the country, it would be little short of marvellous if during that time no London person on either side of a person's ancestry had mated with a newcomer from the country. The mere shifting of population would make such intermarriage inevitable. But against such a generalisation there is the solid and indisputable fact of the existence of the Jewish people—on which the authors of *Heredity and Society* base much of their argument for the beneficial influence of religion on biological development. Now the Jews have been a city race, not for four generations, but for forty and more. During the mediæval and modern period they have not only dwelt in cities, but have been compelled to dwell in the most crowded and unhealthy portions of cities. But the Jews certainly do not show a diminished fertility or signs of decay. Where they are kept to themselves their birth rate is high; where they are not

it approximates more to that of the surrounding peoples.

The truth is that what takes place in cities is not racial decay, but a more active selection, and in one sense a selection of a different type. Of course, insufficient food and evil sanitation are bad for the race, whether in town or country, but neither of these are essential to city life. If we take the case of disease, and measure health, not merely by the absence of disease, but by the power of resisting it, then we should have to declare the city man, in some directions, more healthy than the countryman. Take a thousand people fresh from the land, place them in, say, the East end of London, and they will show a much greater liability to disease than those already living there. This is because selection against certain diseases has been already at work amongst the town dwellers and has eliminated the more susceptible; it has yet to do its work amongst the country born and country bred people. And as disease appears to be the one selective agency that is clearly at work in civilised society (I think Dr. Archdall Reid has clearly shown this to be the case), the city man really represents the healthier animal of the two. We are no more justified in calling the countryman a hardier and healthier organism than the Londoner than we are in calling of two plants that one hardier which succumbs to the first nip of frost. Town life simply tends to develop certain qualities, depress others, and evoke new powers of resistance. But there is no evidence whatever for a belief in any consequences of city life that are fatal to the perpetuation of the species.

So also with insanity. Here there is much talk of the increase of insanity, also of its being a consequence of the stress and strain of city life. Those who talk in this way do not stop to ask themselves whether insanity really shows itself more plentifully in cities than in agricultural areas, or in centres of commerce like London, Manchester, or Glasgow, or whether there is more insanity in professions that are associated with nervous strain than with professions and occupations of a more somnolent character.

Now, there is no question of an actual increase in the number of insane persons, known as such, in every civilised society. Some of the increase may be due to more effective methods of registration, but this certainly will not account for all of it. It is one of the features of all civilised societies, and of every portion of every civilised society. There is a much larger number of lunatics in proportion to population in London now than there was twenty years ago. But the same thing is true of the West of Ireland. And if we are to put the increase of lunacy in London down to the nervous strain of city life, to what are we to attribute the increase of lunacy that has taken place in Ireland? Neither is there any evidence that the classes subjected to the fullest stress of modern life show a greater percentage of insanity than other classes. There is, in short, no evidence whatever of any increase of insanity in the race, so far as the stock is concerned. There is only an increase in the number of insane persons due to the non-operation of certain forces that once kept this type from multiplying.

C. COHEN.

(To be continued.)

Nations can win success, can be rich and powerful, can cover the earth with their armies, the seas with their fleets, and yet be selfish, small, and mean. Physical progress means opportunity for doing good. Wealth is the end of the despicable, victory the purpose of brutality. But there is something that rises above wealth and power—something above lands and palaces—something above raiment and gold—it is the love of right, the cultivation of the moral nature, the desire to do justice, the inextinguishable love of human liberty.—*Ingersoll*.

Modern Materialism.—VII.

(Continued from p. 262.)

"The most valuable researches, couched in the language of the specialist who cannot write, are likely to remain infructuous for all but determined students, and finally to be re-written by somebody who has, perhaps, less discrimination. Why should not 'a popular audience' read history? The fact that it is made unreadable is a disgrace to learning. If Darwin had had the brilliant style of Huxley, he would not have been less sound, and would have won appreciation much earlier. If clear writing is an art rather than a science, it is an art everyone should practise. Some great men have deliberately made themselves difficult to understand, but they are not the greater for that. Is it a sin to be elegant and amusing, as well as instructive? We hope not. Writers with these characteristics are always suspected, but they do better service to learning than the composers of unreadable monographs. We have emphasised this point more than once, regretting that Science, the great bringer of light to-day, should have so many followers who are experts in tedium and obscurity."—*Athenæum*, April 12, 1912, p. 431.

"The greatest modern event—that 'God is dead,' that the belief in the Christian God has become unworthy of belief—has now begun to cast its first shadows over Europe.....In fact, we philosophers and 'free spirits' feel ourselves irradiated as by a new rosy dawn by the report that 'the old God is dead'; our hearts thereby overflow with gratitude, astonishment, presentiment, and expectation—at last the horizon seems once more unobstructed, granting even that it is not bright, our ships can at last start on their voyage once more in face of every danger; every risk is again permitted to the knowing one; the sea, our sea, again lies open before us; perhaps there was never such an open sea."—NIETZSCHE, *The Gay Science*, § 343.

DARWIN and Spencer did not write for the people; they did not attempt to popularise their ideas. They appealed to specialists, to the scientific world at large. Spencer's works on Biology and Psychology would be Greek to the "man in the street." Darwin's work on the *Origin of Species*, says Professor Tyndall, in his famous "Belfast Address," "was by no means an easy one"; there were even "some really scientific men.....who entirely mistook Mr. Darwin's views. In fact, the work needed an expounder, and it found one in Mr. Huxley." There are now six-penny editions of the *Origin of Species* being published for the benefit of the working man. The publishing of such a work, with the idea of propagating Rationalism, bespeaks either a gross and contemptible ignorance of the working man, or else it is a mere money-making affair. We have known working men who, attracted by the fame of this work, have obtained copies, under the impression that they are going to learn all about evolution, but have soon wearied of it, and given up the subject altogether.

It was Huxley, Clifford, and Tyndall who popularised evolution, who translated the Greek of Darwin and Spencer into pure and lucid English, so that those who ran might read. It was singularly fortunate that at this time three such masters of science and expository skill should arise to do battle with the entrenched forces of ancient faith and unreasoning dogma. Never in the history of the world had such a combination been seen. Professor Huxley, the biologist, Professor Tyndall, the physicist, and Professor Clifford, the mathematician, divided the whole field of science between them, and expounded it in terms of evolution.

Huxley took the ideas of the *Origin of Species*—so dry and forbidding to the ordinary reader—and clothed them in the raiment of his sparkling and iridescent style. The clear and intense, but cold, intellectual light of Spencer, was shot with the rainbow colors of Tyndall's prose poetry. Clifford, the equal of Huxley and Tyndall in his command of clear and limpid English, was also fired with enthusiasm for the new ideas, and vigorously denounced the wickedness of historical Christianity and expounded the higher ideals and ethics of evolutionary Atheism.

Never, declared Canon Liddon, in 1866, "never since the first ages of the Gospel was fundamental Christian truth denied and denounced so largely, and with such passionate animosity, as is the case at

this moment in each of the most civilised nations of Europe."*

But the year 1874 may be marked as the great year in which the evolutionary guns were unmasked and began openly to play upon the ancient fortress of Christian superstition, breaching the walls and tumbling tower and bastion into irretrievable ruin. It was in 1874 that Professor Clifford began that brilliant series of lectures and essays which only terminated with his death at the early age of forty—an irreparable loss to Freethought. In his lecture, delivered in 1874, "The First and Last Catastrophe," he deals with the beginning and end of the world from the evolutionary as against the religious standpoint. And after pointing out that our conscious life must come to an end without any further continuance, he asks, "Do I seem to say: 'Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die?' Far from it; on the contrary, I say: 'Let us take hands and help, for this day we are alive together.'"

It was in 1874, at the annual meeting of the British Association at Belfast, that Professor Tyndall delivered the famous "Belfast Address" in which he traces the growth of evolution from its tentative beginnings in the ancient Greek philosophy down to the present day. He says, "the science of ancient Greece had already cleared the world of divinities operating capriciously through natural phenomena," more than two thousand years ago they had discovered the method and used instruments in aid of scientific research. Science was well advanced:—

"What, then [asks Tyndall] stopped its victorious advance? Why was the scientific intellect compelled, like an exhausted soil, to lie fallow for nearly two millenniums before it could regather the elements necessary to its fertility and strength?"

And he answers, "Christianity had appeared," and "the Scriptures which ministered to their spiritual needs were also the measure of their science." During the long night of the "Dark Ages," the "ages of faith," science was banished from Christendom, and Greek science was only preserved to us through its cultivation by the Arab and the Moor. Tyndall goes on to trace its rise in Europe again to the work of Copernicus on the paths of the heavenly bodies, published in 1543, whence "The total crash of Aristotle's closed universe, with the earth at its centre, followed as a consequence; and 'the earth moves' became a kind of watchword among intellectual freemen." Since then, science has been marching on. He points out that even Bishop Butler believed the world was created four thousand years before Christ, but since then, he observes, we have learned,—

"that not for six thousand, nor for sixty thousand, nor for six thousand thousand, but for æons embracing untold millions of years, this earth has been the theatre of life and death. The riddle of the rocks has been read by the geologist and palæontologist, from sub-cambrian depths to the deposits thickening over the sea-bottoms of to-day. And upon the leaves of that stone book are, as you know, stamped the characters, plainer and surer than those formed by the ink of history, which carry the mind back into abysses of past time, compared with which the periods which satisfied Bishop Butler cease to have a visual angle."

He next gives an outline of the Darwinian theory, and goes on to speak of the "still wider grasp and radical significance" of "the doctrine of the Conservation of Energy" and the indestructibility of matter, and from that to the philosophy of Herbert Spencer; and asking:—

"Is there not a temptation to close to some extent with Lucretius, when he affirms that 'Nature is seen to do all things spontaneously of herself without the meddling of the Gods?' or with Bruno, when he declares that Matter is not 'that mere empty capacity which philosophers have pictured her to be, but the universal mother who brings forth all things as the fruit of her own womb?'"

In conclusion, warning religion off from any part

* *The Divinity of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ*, p. 498.

or lot in explaining the origin or destiny of the universe. He declares:—

"The impregnable position of science may be described in a few words. We claim, and we shall wrest from theology, the entire domain of cosmological theory. All schemes and systems which thus infringe upon the domain of science must, *in so far as they do this*, submit to its control, and relinquish all thought of controlling it. Acting otherwise proved disastrous in the past, and it is simply fatuous to-day."

The "Belfast Address" aroused a storm of angry protest from the clerical party, who publicly denounced Tyndall as an Atheist and Materialist; but they had better have kept silence, for Tyndall retorted with an "Apology" in which he carries the war still further into the enemy's country. "Let us argue the matter out," says Tyndall:—

"I hold the nebular theory as it was held by Kant, Laplace, and William Herschell, and as it is held by the best scientific intellects of to-day. According to it, our sun and planets were once diffused through space as an sun and planets were once diffused through space as an impalpable haze, out of which, by condensation, came the solar system. What caused the haze to condense? Loss of heat. What rounded the sun and planets? That which rounds a tear—molecular force. For æons, the immensity of which overwhelms man's conceptions, the earth was unfit to maintain what we call life. It is now covered with visible living things. They are not formed of matter different from that of the earth around them. They are, on the contrary, bone of its bone and flesh of its flesh. How were they introduced?"

"Was life implicated in the nebula," he asks, to be evolved later on? Or was it the work of a Being or God standing outside the nebula, "whose origin and ways are equally past finding out?" He puts that solution aside, declaring emphatically that,—

"As far as the eye of science has hitherto ranged through nature, no intrusion of purely creative power into any series of phenomena has ever been observed. The assumption of such a power to account for special phenomena, though often made, has always proved a failure. It is opposed to the very spirit of science."

Tyndall goes on to ask, What authority his opponents have for their belief in the creation hypothesis? And replies that "They can do no more than point to the Book of Genesis, or some other other portion of the Bible":—

"But [he declares] the Book of Genesis has no voice in scientific questions. To the grasp of geology, which it resisted for a time, it at length yielded like potter's clay; its authority as a system of cosmogony being discredited on all hands, by the abandonment of the obvious meaning of its writer."*

At the same meeting of the British Association inaugurated by Tyndall's Address, a paper by Professor Huxley on "Animal Automatism"—subsequently printed in the *Fortnightly Review*, November, 1874—was read, which caused an even greater sensation than Tyndall's Address. Taking the assertion of Descartes, that all animals, with the exception of man, are mere automata—nothing more than exceedingly complicated machines without consciousness—Huxley extends the theory of automatism to man. Without staying to examine this theory—which Huxley supports with some exceedingly subtle arguments well worth consideration—Huxley foresaw that this hypothesis would arouse the wrath of the clergy. But far from trying to placate them, he anticipates their onslaught and defies them in good set terms. He observes:—

"And, seeing how large a share of this clamor is raised by the clergy of one denomination or another, may I say, in conclusion, that it really would be well if ecclesiastical persons would reflect that ordination, whatever deep-seated graces it may confer, has never been observed to be followed by any visible increase in the learning or the logic of its subject. Making a man a Bishop, or entrusting him with the office of ministering to even the largest Presbyterian congregations, or setting him up to lecture to a Church Congress, really does not in the smallest degree augment such title to respect as his opinions may intrinsically possess. And when such a man presumes on an authority which was

conferred upon him for other purposes, to sit in judgment upon matters his incompetence to deal with which is patent, it is permissible to ignore his sacerdotal pretensions, and to tell him, as one would tell a mere common, unconsecrated, layman: that it is not necessary for any man to occupy himself with problems of this kind unless he so choose. Life is filled full enough by the performance of its ordinary and obvious duties."

He concludes by saying that if a man elects to praise or blame another for his conclusions,—

"he will commit a sin more grievous than most breaches of the Decalogue, unless he avoid a lazy reliance upon the information that is gathered by prejudice and filtered through passion, unless he go back to the prime sources of knowledge—the facts of nature, and the thoughts of those wise men who for generations past have been the best interpreters."

The year 1874 witnessed a regular pyrotechnic display of Freethought. No sooner had Clifford fired his rocket into the air, than Tyndall and Huxley sent theirs up together; then Clifford replied with another. Then a tremendous explosion occurred, from a carefully laid mine, which shook the Christian citadel to its very foundation. This was the anonymous work, *Supernatural Religion*, also published in 1874.

(To be continued.) W. MANN.

Frederic Harrison on Atheism.—II.

WHAT we have said of Comte's hatred of Atheism applies to Mr. Harrison in his degree. He chooses to assume that Theists, Agnostics, and Atheists are three distinct classes, whereas they are really only two. You either believe in God or you do not believe in God. There is no middle course. It is not a middle course to say you know nothing of God. The Atheist knows nothing of God either. Both the Atheist and the Agnostic are "without God in the world." Mr. Harrison can only dispute this by defining Atheism arbitrarily; by asserting what is not true, that Atheists *deny* the existence of God. They do nothing of the kind. The most aggressive Atheist of the nineteenth century never did it. Charles Bradlaugh declared, after Thomas Cooper, "I do not say there is no God, but this I say, I know not." Those who declare that there is a God are bound in logic to say what they mean; it is their duty to define the leading term in their proposition. The task then remains of seeing whether the definition is in harmony with the facts of experience.

Mr. Harrison is an Atheist in the sense in which Atheists use the designation. It is idle to say that *disbelief* is *denial*. There is a clear, practical difference between the two words. A sensible man has quietly to disbelieve a number of things he hears; he is not, however, called upon, nor even prepared, to deny them. To disbelieve is still to keep an open mind; to deny is to close the mind in closing the question. Mr. Harrison's attack on Atheism, indeed, occurs in a destructive essay on Theism. The vigor and thoroughness of his criticism of the belief in God are enough to satisfy the greatest "negationist" among "unbelievers." The Atheist reads it, smiles, rubs his hands, and is satisfied. But these demonstrations of approval annoy Mr. Harrison. "Here," he says, "what are you grinning at? I'm no Atheist. Don't you suppose for a moment that I'm anything so foolish and odious. My sympathies are rather with the Theist on the opposite pavement; but he sees I don't believe his dogmas, and he won't have me—though I love 'religion' as much as he does, and use the word every five minutes. I am not going to join you though; and as I can't walk on the pavement I prefer I'll keep in the middle of the road."

May we venture to suggest that Mr. Harrison's objection to Atheism is not so much logical as social?

* Tyndall, *Fragments of Science*, 1876, pp. 547, 548. The Belfast Address is reprinted in this volume.

We believe he has always been a wealthy man, moving in the best "society," and admiring the people at a very convenient distance. The most high and mighty God in England is Respectability, and more than Theists worship him. Huxley himself burnt a pinch of incense on that Deity's altar. He was particularly anxious to have it known that he had no connection with lower-class iconoclasts like Bradlaugh. And are we too severe in hinting that Mr. Harrison has "a sort of a smack, a smell to" of the same apprehension?

We cannot refrain from telling Mr. Harrison that he lost his head as well as his temper in calling Atheism all those nasty names. Adjectives only beg the question. Atheism is either right or wrong, true or false. There cannot by any possibility be a "wicked" opinion. It can only be accurate or inaccurate. One man thinks there is a God—another man thinks the proposition lacks proof; how, on that account, can one possess any moral advantage over the other? Mr. Harrison's epigram, borrowed from Comte, that "Atheists are the most irrational of all Theologians," is for smartness and emptiness worthy of the late Mr. Oscar Wilde. And why does Mr. Harrison represent "Self-Creation or Chance" as the Atheistic hypothesis of the universe? He really ought to know better. Neither expression exists in the Atheist's vocabulary. As for Atheism being not only "rank sophistry" but "positively repulsive," we will give Mr. Harrison no other reply than leaving him alone with the offspring of his ill-temper.

With regard to Atheism leading to "egoism, conceit, and hardness," we can only appeal to Mr. Harrison's sense of humor. One would have thought that there was more egoism in one preacher who cried "Believe or be damned" than in all the Atheists in the world. Atheism is not dogmatic, it respects freedom of thought, it recognises the right to differ. Then the "conceit." What conceit in the Atheist can match the conceit of those who flourish the key of all the secrets of the infinite universe, talk as if they were "pals" of God, and affect to be familiar with the other side of the curtain of death? Then the "hardness." Why the very word shows how little Mr. Harrison knows either Atheism or Atheists. The greatest Atheist who ever lived expressed the essence of Atheistic morality in the sublime sentence, which evolution has justified—"Conscience is born of love."

Mr. Harrison's diatribe against Atheism makes us think of the modesty and humility of Positivism; of the tender way in which Positivists rebuke "advanced" people of all schools for not joining the Positivist Church, of the unassuming way in which they bear themselves (with their "three persons and no God," as Jowett described one of their meetings) in presence of a multitude of dissidents from their particular views. Positivists, of course, are not like Atheists; they never give themselves airs, their leaders are never pontifical, they never talk like oracles, they are never haughty, in fact their meekness is proverbial. The sin of "spiritual pride" was never seen in their midst. They are the people; and wisdom, or at least good manners, will die with them.

We are therefore encouraged to ask Mr. Harrison whether he cannot find it in his heart to show a little more consideration for the poor, faulty Atheist. "Let us not forget," he himself says, "that every advance in thought, whether philosophical or religious has been won by animated discussion—nay, by unsparing exposure of antiquated sophisms." It thus appears that even iconoclasm has its uses, that the destruction of prejudice and superstition is a good work, and that pulling down with a view to rebuilding—according to the necessary practice of long-inhabited places of civilisation—is not a thing to be treated with kicks and curses. Mr. Harrison's age is too advanced for such tasks, but he might cheerfully leave them to younger hands.

G. W. FOOTE.

Acid Drops.

We have deemed it advisable to reproduce a Leeds contemporary's report of the trial and sentence of Mr. Thomas Jackson for using "profane language" at public meetings in Victoria-square. Our reproduction includes the "profane language" which the defendant is alleged to have used. As he did not challenge the accuracy of the witnesses in that respect, we presume he said what was reported; and it is solely on that ground that we give it publicity in our columns. We have also procured and read the Police Act of July 22, 1847, under which Mr. Jackson was prosecuted. And we are now in a position to criticise the case safely; meaning by *safely* being sure of our ground.

Mr. Jackson was, in our opinion, quite right in arguing that the Act was not applicable to his case. It never could have been intended to apply to public discussions on religion. Probably the police resorted to it because Leeds is getting tired of "blasphemy" prosecutions. The whole Act is one for regulating common police business. Under the heading of Nuisances there is a long list of ordinary street offences that are punishable by not more than fourteen days' imprisonment; such as obstructing the street with horse vehicles or costermongers' barrows, letting ferocious dogs be at large, or having shop blinds and other things placed to the public danger or inconvenience. There is a reference to prostitutes soliciting in the streets, and to the persons guilty of indecent exposure; and then comes this clause: "Every person who publicly offers for Sale or Distribution, or exhibits to Public View, any profane, indecent, or obscene Book, Paper, Print, Drawing, Painting, or Representation, or sings any profane or obscene Song or Ballad, or uses any profane or obscene language." Such persons are committers of common nuisance, and are liable to be arrested or summoned under this Act, and committed to prison for not more than fourteen days. Now it must be evident to any fair-minded person that such a clause in such an Act could only rightly be applied to disorderly conduct in the public streets. To apply it to words used in the course of religious discussions carried on in perfectly orderly meetings, held on large open spaces where such meetings are regularly permitted by the authorities, is little, if at all, less than an outrage on common justice as well as common sense. We do not believe that Mr. Atkinson, the senior Stipendiary Magistrate, would lend himself to such an outrage. The police appear to have a more docile instrument in Mr. Marshall.

Mr. Jackson was not prosecuted for "blasphemy," so that question does not arise under these proceedings, and we need not consider his argument on the subject; besides, it is very imperfectly reported. His language, while not too elegant, was certainly not "profane language" in the common meaning of the words. That his language annoyed a policeman is very little to the point, for annoying a policeman is not necessarily profanity. The only other witness for the prosecution was evidently a bigoted, and apparently a noisy, opponent of the lecturer's principles. Where the "disorder" or the "nuisance" came in it is difficult to discern—especially under the Police Act. The defendant might easily have become a real nuisance, and caused disorder, if he had read out some blue or even purple selections from the Bible. As the matter stands, he is suffering a fortnight's imprisonment for speaking disrespectfully of a policeman's God. This is what free speech has come to in England. Yet there are Freethinkers in Parliament who are afraid to open their mouths in protest against such a state of things; and even the Labor Party doesn't seem any better than the Liberals or the Conservatives in this connection.

Mr. Hall Caine's "verses for the survivors of the *Titanic*" show that anything is good enough for religious purposes. Such inferior, and indeed wooden, verses would never be printed in any other connection. Just look at the first verse:—

"Lord of the everlasting hills,
God of the boundless sea,
Help us through all the shocks of fate
To keep our faith in Thee."

Did anybody ever see such uninspired stuff? Those "everlasting hills" and "boundless sea" and "shocks of fate" are as original as bread and butter. They have done duty for ages. One is tired of the sight of them. One is even tempted to be hypercritical, and to observe that hills are not really everlasting nor is the sea boundless—for if you sail far enough upon it anywhere you come to land, so that it is a toss up whether the sea bounds the land or the land bounds the sea. And the last two lines! What a compli-

ment to the Deity! It is so hard to keep our faith in him, considering all the "shocks of fate" we suffer, that we have to implore his assistance in the business. We need something, that is, to stifle the cry of our reason against the dogmas of faith. Such is Mr. Caine's first verse. And the others are like thereunto.

The recent tornado which swept across the States of Missouri, Illinois, and Indiana, on April 22, blew huge portions of buildings for miles through the air, uprooted trees, and carried human beings long distances, finally dashing them to death. Hundreds of people were injured and some sixty killed. Mr. Hall Caine didn't write a hymn on that incident. We cannot quote him therefore. But there are Bible texts appropriate to the occasion. Here is one. "His tender mercies are over all his works."

One reverend gentleman had a theory of his own with regard to the loss of the *Titanic*. He said that God put the iceberg there, but man put the ship there,—so the disaster wasn't God's fault. The question left is, who put the reverend gentleman here? It wasn't a creditable piece of work whoever did it.

The pious gentlemen who talk so airily about God's good (if mysterious) intentions should turn seriously human for a few seconds and ponder the following testimony of Mr. Lowe, the fifth officer of the *Titanic*, given before the America Committee. When the great ship sank:—

"All lights disappeared. For an interminable hour the night air was rent with wailings, shrieks, and cries. There was literally one great chorus of moans, gradually diminishing, until even the strongest struggler in the water had gone down to his grave two miles in the deep."

God—if there be a God—saw and heard all that, and never helped. The worst man on earth could not have acted in that way if he had any power to assist. "God helps those who help themselves." And nobody else. The proverb is quite true; it is also ironical—and atheistic.

Passengers on the German steamer *Bremen*, passing some days afterwards over the spot where the *Titanic* went down, saw a number of dead bodies floating about. One group of men, all in life preservers, were "locked together as they died in the struggle for life." But one spectacle, which made the women passengers on the *Bremen* shriek and faint, displayed the love that is stronger than death. "We saw one woman in a nightdress," Mrs. Johanna Stunke said, "with a baby clasped closely to her breast." Even in death they were not divided. The great sea itself could not tear the baby away from the drowning mother's clutch.

Just such a spectacle did we imagine all those years ago when we were writing the chapter on "Noah's Flood" in our *Bible Romances*:—

"At length all is over. The highest hills are covered. No more cries reach the cruel heavens. The last strong climber has fallen into the yeasty waves, the last stout swimmer has sunk in despair. Night descends upon the universal sea; the stars gleam forth in untroubled beauty, the moon sheds her soft light on the waste of waters; and lo! there floats a young mother, with long swaying hair, and arms locked tightly round her firstborn, who lies lifeless on her cold dead breast."

According to the Bible the Deity looked down on that too with the greatest appreciation.

After all the newspaper gush over the "British way" with regard to saving women and children first, which just shows that Christians are the most boastful people on earth, we are confronted with the fact that of the 179 women in the third class only 98 were saved, and of the 76 children only 23. What a comment these figures are on the unctuous utterances of the British press—especially the London "halfpennies"!

The Rev. J. Stuart Holden writes that he was "Providentially prevented sailing by the *Titanic*." His passage was taken, but his wife's sudden illness prevented him sailing. So that "Providence," not desiring to lose so valuable a servant as Mr. Holden, afflicted his wife with an illness for which her husband, presumably, thanks God. He was "Providentially" saved. All the rest, by inference, were providentially drowned.

Commenting on the loss of the *Titanic*, a question is asked by "Historicus," of the *Methodist Times*, that deserves consideration. The question is, "Is the human race evolving gradually out of the fear of death?" He replies that one is almost inclined to answer, Yes. We fancy that, more

than one is inclined to fancy at first, it is largely a question of education and general environment. Fear of death is not, we think, a very marked feature of savage life. And in the classic nations of antiquity men knew how to die nobly when occasion demanded. A morbid terror of death is far more characteristic of purely Christian times than of any other period. We know of nothing in the old Pagan world that at all approaches the morbid terror of death that existed under Christianity. The constant harping by Christian preachers on the necessity for comfort and sustenance in the face of death shows how deep was this fear. Dislike to dying is healthy and desirable; fear of dying is almost as unhealthy and as undesirable. What the modern world has been fighting against is the Christian-fed fear of the hereafter; and if, as "Historicus" notes, the higher races seem to be rising superior to it, this may be taken as one of the many gains from the weakening of Christian influences.

One should be careful with definitions. In rebutting the charge that the disestablishment of the Church is a national repudiation of religion, Mr. McKenna said that the religion of a nation can be nothing else than the religion of the individuals composing the nation. This sounds almost a truism; and yet, think of what is involved. In England the religions of the individuals composing the nation comprises Mohammedanism, Judaism, Confucianism, Roman Catholicism, a couple of hundred varieties of Protestantism, and numerous other odds and ends of religions. Now if the religion of a nation is the religion of the individuals composing the nation, perhaps someone will say, What is the religion of England? Mr. McKenna might offer a prize to any M.P. who will provide a satisfactory answer to the conundrum.

Now we do not think it would be difficult for anyone to prove that disestablishment—genuine disestablishment, we mean—does invoke the repudiation of religion by the State. It means that so far as the State stands for the expression of national consciousness it must have nothing to say on the question of religion. It may express the national consciousness on the conduct of railways, the getting of coal, the paving of roads, or the management of drains. It may say nothing at all about religion, except that everyone may believe as he lists. The State puts the maintenance of religion, or the expression of opinion about religion, as a subject beyond the scope of its activities; and if that is not substantially a repudiation of religion, what is it? It is more than a repudiation of religion; it is an assertion that so far as the State is concerned it is no matter what religion you believe in, or whether you believe in any at all. For no State could afford to ignore a subject that was of vital consequence to its welfare.

Unfortunately, the disestablishment of the Church in Wales does not mean the disestablishment of Churches or of religion. It will not mean that even if disestablishment in England were to follow Wales. It is supposed to mean it, we know; but this is sheer delusion. As things are in Britain, the disestablishment of a Church only means the establishment of the Churches collectively. It means that the State and the Government for the time being would continue to patronise and support religion, as it does at present. For we ought never to forget that all forms of the Christian religion are subsidised and protected by the State to some extent. Christian opinions are protected by the law, taxes that should be paid by church and chapel are remitted, and they receive various forms of State patronage. And how is the disestablishment of the Episcopalian Church going to affect these things? Will Nonconformists cease to ask for State protection and patronage? No one who knows them can believe this. What of the expression of municipal religion in the shape of mayoral visits to church or chapel, prayers in Council meetings, etc.? Episcopalianism is not the only form of Christianity that is in reality State protected and State supported. All are, in their degree, established. The Nonconformist boasting of his *Free Church* is as ridiculous a figure as the average Englishman talking of priest-ridden Ireland. He might as truthfully talk of priest-ridden England. For England is priest-ridden. Not by the same priesthood that rules in Ireland; but when one's neck is trodden on the kind of leather that covers the oppressive foot is of small consequence.

Four boys were charged at Hull with housebreaking. After being cross-questioned as to why they did it, they confessed that it was owing to visits to picture shows. Whereupon Mr. Silvester Horne solemnly inquired of Mr. McKenna whether something could not be done to check this demoralisation of the rising generation by the means of the deadly cinematograph film. Now, we have our opinion

about the intelligence of any man who can really believe that boys took to housebreaking because they went to a picture show. Mr. Horne may profess to believe this, because he is professionally engaged in getting boys to attend Sunday-school, and the picture shows are serious competitors. Of course, when boys are brought up for doing wrong, and their elders, not nearly so shrewd as the boys themselves, invite them to say that a picture show, or a penny dreadful has caused them to do wrong, they obediently say what is desired. But really the encouragement to vice in any picture show we have ever seen has been microscopical. Their chief feature has always appeared to be that of a most painful and depressing morality. Everybody who does wrong, in a villainous manner, gets morally mauled before the piece is concluded, and those who do wrong in a good humored manner are made piously to repent before the lights go out—or up. Awhile ago it was penny-dreadfuls that did all the damage. Now it is picture shows. When will these stupid busybodies in the world of morals realise it is they themselves, holding up either books or pictures as causes of demoralisation, that provide an excuse for those they are reprimanding. Men are not bad because they read bad books or look at bad pictures. They look at bad pictures and read bad books because they are bad themselves. And what is true of adults is true also of those of younger years.

“Francis C. Moore, of New York city, recently dropped dead just after addressing those present at the dedication of a new Y. M. C. A. building. If he had been stricken while out on a Sunday fishing trip it would be a divine judgment. As it is, God has called him home. The true religionist always has an explanation, and can always find credulous listeners to accept it.”—*Truthseeker* (New York).

Dr. A. C. Dixon, the malinger of Ingersoll, is still at his nefarious job. This time, according to a report in the *Baptist Times* for April 26, he has vilified many thousands of good and noble women who cannot swallow his creed. “A woman,” he says, “who did not know God, or who refused to believe in him, was one of the monstrosities of the world.” A man who can descend to such language is absolutely devoid of the sense of truth and responsibility; and we are only excessively merciful when we call him the hopeless slave of blind prejudice.

Not only did this man calumniate all Freethinking women, without knowing anything about them, but he also cursed all religions except his own. “Next to sin,” he is reported to have said, “religion did more to damn the world than all else put together,” which, in a sense, is true of all religions, including his own, though not in his sense. We will not demean ourselves by calling Dr. Dixon a “monstrosity”; but it is not too much to say that he is about the very best specimen of the pious fibber the world can show. Whatever may be true about the religions of China, it is an incontrovertible fact that, morally, the Chinese are not one whit behind Britishers. An American lady missionary admitted, recently, that the Chinese are already so eminently good that the only thing they seem to lack is the knowledge of the Bible and Jesus Christ, which knowledge, on her own showing, they clearly do not need. Is it only by telling lies that Spurgeon's Tabernacle can be filled nowadays?

The Vicar of Burton-on-Trent is in the doleful dumps in consequence of the gradual secularisation of Sunday in his parish. Even in Lent, this year, Glover's Band was engaged to play at the theatre on two Sunday evenings. This was very shocking. A friend of the reverend gentleman “deserted his church (or rather chapel) for the ministrations of Mr. Glover,” and had the hardihood to tell him “that he found the evening very elevating, or inspring, or some such phrase”; and this was more shocking still. On week evenings such performances would be heartily welcomed; and the only real objection to them on Sundays is that they thin the congregations at the various churches and chapels. However, the Vicar virtually confesses that he is on the losing side; and his only comfort is derived from the consciousness that “if the entire secularisation of Sunday for Burton comes in a few years, more or less, we shall be glad, while there seemed yet a chance of influencing our fellow-citizens, faithfully to have borne our witness.” We congratulate the Vicar on his good sense.

England will soon be the home of lost liberties if things keep on as they are now going. At the Kennington Easter Vestry Meeting, the vicar's warden raised the question of snoring in church. He said some people complained, and the wardens didn't know what to do. We beg our readers to observe the sly way in which the question was raised. It was not objected that people went to sleep, only that they

snored. But some people can't sleep unless they do snore; and to stop them snoring is to forbid them sleeping. It is all very well these gentlemen saying they don't wish to interfere with the time-honored Englishman's privilege of going to sleep in church; no one but a fool would be taken in by such a palpable subterfuge. It is evidently sleeping during sermon-time—one of the Englishman's dearest privileges that is being attacked in this surreptitious manner. Let people be on their guard against their being robbed of the only protection they possess against the attack of the preacher. In fact, if they don't keep their eyes open they will soon find themselves prevented sleeping altogether.

It takes little—in some directions—to satisfy religious people nowadays. A *Methodist Times* reviewer declares that the “old dogmatic note of Materialism is passing away,” and is pleased thereat, because a recent work on biology says “The striking feature of the present state of biological science is that nothing we discover sufficiently explains the intimate connection, the marvellous regulation of all processes in living substance.” Up to this point the reviewer reckons it all to the good for religion. So long as there is ignorance there is hope. But the scientist in question goes on to say: “I cannot but add that there is nothing to indicate that the phenomena of life are ruled by forces which are different from chemical and physical energies in inanimate nature.” And so the reviewer asks, “Only this after forty years of most profoundly skilled research?” He is happy because there is “only this.” Had there been more than this, a demonstration of the way in which biological forces were generated, he would have been most miserable.

Over forty years of research have failed to tell us all about the nature of life. Marvellous! How much longer than forty years have religious people had the matter in hand without being able to tell us anything at all? And how has the note of Materialism changed from which it was forty years ago? Materialists did not say they knew how life was generated: all they said was they were confident that the future would give the world that knowledge. And they are more confident of that than ever. Nothing has occurred to shake that conviction, and everything that is known of life processes lends it strength. The only consolation for the religionist is that we do not yet know. And so long as we are ignorant he is not without hope.

The late Mr. W. T. Stead was going over to America to take a considerable part in pushing the new Religious Forward Movement, which seems to be financed by millionaires. No doubt the millionaires have good business reasons for what they are doing, but we are quite sure that Mr. Stead's motive was perfectly simple and honorable. He explained his position in what was to be his last number of the *Review of Reviews*. “I expect to leave by the *Titanic* on April 10th,” he concluded, “and I hope I shall be back in London by May.” He left by the *Titanic*, but he will never be back in London again. He did not reach New York either, where he was to address a meeting at which President Taft was to be present. Instead there was a memorial meeting in honor of the dead publicist at the Carnegie Hall on Monday evening, April 22, which was apparently largely patronised by clergymen. The platform was so anyhow, and clerical speakers are generally inaccurate. Rev. Dr. Newell Dwight Hills, most of whose praise of Mr. Stead we cheerfully endorse, ridiculously attributed to him the phrase “The United States of Europe”—which, of course, belongs to Victor Hugo. Dr. Hills told a story of Mr. Stead's prophesying that he would die by violence. “I had a vision,” he said, “of a mob. I believe I shall not die as you expect to, but that I shall be kicked to death in the street.” So much for visions! Not even “Julia” gave Mr. Stead any warning. He heard nothing from her when she might have been of use.

A Shakespeare service was held in Southwark Cathedral on April 23, with Mr. F. R. Benson as the preacher. The portion of his sermon reported in the *Daily News* was extremely Sunday-Schoolish. Members of the Actors' Church Union present at the service, and their clerical friends, evidently think that Shakespeare worshiped in that House of God. There isn't the slightest evidence that he ever put his foot inside it—or inside any other church in London. Actors and clergymen are so apt to forget that Shakespeare had brains.

Dr. Campbell Morgan says that “London needs Dr. Dixon.” We knew London was bad enough, but we hardly thought it had come to this.

Rev. Walter Hugh Earle Welby left £23,163. How could he get through the needle's eye? There are no coal strikes where he is now.

Mr. Foote's Engagements

Sunday, May 5, South Place Chapel, Finsbury, E.C.: at 7, "Lessons of the Shakespeare Festival."

May 12, South Place Chapel.

To Correspondents.

C. COHEN'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—May 5, Victoria Park; 12, m., Finsbury Park, a., Parliament Hill.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1912.—Previously acknowledged, £126 15s. 8d. Received since:—Helena Parsons (Mrs. Horace W. Parsons), £2 10s.; W. H. Deakin, £5 5s.; R. B. Harrison, 2s.; N. B. (Sydney), 10s.; G. B. Tarring, 2s.

ROBERT YATES.—We don't see anything in it that calls for our criticism. Thanks for your efforts to promote our circulation.

E. MILLS.—Pleased to see your letters in the *Wolverhampton Express*. It is a pity that Freethinkers don't make better use than they do of their local newspapers. We have often said so, and we should like to emphasise it now.

WIGAN AGNOSTIC.—We have not seen any newspaper report of the two Bishops' speeches you refer to. Of course it is natural that Bishops should object to Secular Education. Who can blame them for defending their professional interests?

G. W. W. MORRIS.—Your friend, the late Horace W. Parsons, would be as pleased as we are at your letter; seeing it was at his suggestion that you became a regular and appreciative subscriber to this journal.

G. B. H. McCLOSKEY.—We agree with most of your letter, but action is more difficult than speech on this matter. We must wait a bit to see what will become of the new effort to form a general Committee for the Repeal of the Blasphemy Laws. Such a body should be better for the purpose than the N. S. S. acting alone. In the latest Leeds case, as you will see, the proceedings were not under the Blasphemy Laws at all. One acceptable feature of the changed attack is that only a short sentence is possible. See our further remarks in "Acid Drops."

C. H. JOHNSON.—Glad to hear that the *Freethinker* has counted for so much in your mental liberation. The verses are rather too hurriedly written. The manner is not quite worthy of the matter.

N. B. (Sydney).—Sorry to hear that free speech is no better off with the Labor Party in power than under any other Government. Our shop manager is executing your order.

H. E. SLOPER.—If your letter is a joke it is far-fetched; if it is serious your friends should look after you.

C. D.—Yes, we saw the cartoon in the *Sketch*, and it was very rough on the curate tribe.

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

W. H. DEAKIN.—Thanks for increased subscription, acknowledged elsewhere; also for your interesting letter and the photographs. The one you specially draw our attention to is very striking.

W. GREGORY.—A paragraph was already in type. We wish the Kingsland Branch a success worthy of its zeal and activity.

W. MCKENZIE.—Tuesday is too late for a satisfactory paragraph. But we join you in disgust at the *Glasgow Daily Record's* mixing up a bandit like Bonnot with a hero like Ferrer.

H. SMALLWOOD.—Thanks for cuttings. "Specimen" stamped back numbers of the *Freethinker* being forwarded to you for distribution.

G. CROOKSON.—See paragraph re Conference. We shall deal with Shaw as promptly as possible. His "sermon" is published as a penny pamphlet by the *Christian Commonwealth* people.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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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.

There was another good audience at Queen's (Minor) Hall on Sunday evening, when Mr. Foote delivered the last of the 1911-12 winter session lectures there. The audience included a gratifying number of ladies, and was altogether most appreciative and even enthusiastic, the applause at the end of the lecture being particularly ardent and prolonged. Miss Kough occupied the chair.

Mr. Foote is delivering two special lectures at South Place Chapel on Sunday evenings, May 5 and 12. The chair will be taken at 7 o'clock—not 7.30 as at Queen's Hall—and "saints" are asked to make a note of the change on this occasion. Details of these lectures will be found in our advertisement pages. There is no charge for admission to any part of the building; all seats, that is to say, are entirely free; but it is to be hoped that the "saints" who attend will come prepared for a liberal contribution to the expenses. It is hoped even to make a little money for the Society. To this end neither the lecturer nor anyone else will make any charge for services rendered. Beyond the rent and the advertising every penny will accrue to the Society's exchequer. It may be added that the Society—for various reasons—has had a very expensive winter season in 1911-12, and something on the credit side of the account just now would be very welcome.

The subject of the first of these two South-place lectures is "The Shakespeare Festival and its Lessons." The Stratford-on-Avon celebrations this year have been rather obscured in the newspapers by the *Titanic* disaster, the hunting down of the French motor-bandits, and other exciting incidents; but Shakespeare will remain of interest to the world when all these incidents are forgotten. Mr. Foote will, in the course of his lecture, deal to some extent with Shakespeare as the greatest of Humanists, with ample illustrations from the plays.

It must not be supposed that there is going to be any final hitch with regard to the National Secular Society's Conference on Whit-Sunday. It will take place all right, and the Conference Agenda will duly appear in next week's *Freethinker*—with all particulars as to place, time, and arrangements. There are fall-back halls available elsewhere, of which we say no more at present. We are still trying to effect an entrance into Leeds, and the police appear to be trying all they know to keep us out. We shall know for certain in a few days at the outside whether we are to have a hall in Leeds or not. Immediately we know we shall fix the Conference up accordingly—sending out notices by post and inserting them also in the next issue of this journal. Meanwhile we beg to ask all members and friends of the N. S. S. whether the condition of things does not call for a large, busy, and resolute Conference, as a prelude to strong action against insolent Christian bigotry.

We have not heard yet (naturally) how Mr. Cohen got on at Belfast. Catholic and Protestant have been making din enough there, and we are hoping that Secularism will get a fair look in. To-day (May 5) Mr. Cohen resumes open-air work in Victoria Park, lecturing near the bandstand at 3.15 and 6.15.

Mr. Hilaire Belloc has sent us his long-awaited letter on the Ferrer case, and we have passed it on to Mr. Heaford, who is an expert on the subject. Mr. Belloc's letter and Mr. Heaford's reply will both appear in our next issue.

Mr. R. H. Rosetti is resuming his open-air Freethought propaganda at Laindon, Essex, in association with Miss H. Pankhurst. A start is to be made on Saturday, May 11, at 7 p.m., opposite Luff's hairdressing saloon. We wish the enterprise all success.

The Wood Green Branch has issued a neat little syllabus of its outdoor lecturing work from May 5 to October 20. The back of this four-page production is devoted to advertising the *Freethinker*, for which we tender our thanks. Other Branches might follow this Branch's example without a heavy burden of expense and trouble.

The gospel of Secularism can be heard free, gratis, and for nothing in North London to-day (Sunday) when the Islington Branch of the N. S. S. commences operations on behalf of the Executive in Finsbury Park at 11.15; the Kingsland Branch at the corner of Ridley-road at 11.30; and

the North London Branch at Parliament Hill Fields at 8.15. We wish all of them large and appreciative audiences.

The debate on religion still goes forward in the *Camberwell Borough Advertiser*, both Christians and Freethinkers getting a fair hearing, which is a welcome change from most newspaper controversies. Last week's instalment included an able letter on Prayer by a Peckham contributor, and Councillor Hearson looks in again with his customary vigor.

We much appreciate a letter (enclosing cheque for the President's Honorarium Fund) from Mrs. Helena Parsons, widow of the late Mr. Horace W. Parsons, one of the N. S. S. vice-presidents, in whose death the Freethought party lost a warm and constant supporter, and we ourselves an old and intimate personal friend. We have always valued highly the adherence of women to the Secular movement, not only because of their incalculable influence in the family, which is the basis of all the rest of human life, but also because on the whole they are more constant and faithful than men, besides being less prone to hide their principles for the sake of convenience or respectability. When women have convictions they rarely go back upon them or fall into indifference. And though it may sound very odd, we are satisfied by long and watchful experience that it is men rather than women who are terrorised by Mr. Bumble and Mrs. Grundy. We have been intending to write at length on this topic, and one of these days we will find, or make, an opportunity.

Renewing his subscription to the *Freethinker*, which circumstances compelled him to interrupt six months ago after enjoying the paper for twelve years, a reader says: "I shall be a new creature when I get it once more." Few papers have such devoted readers as ours.

About Italian Freethought: La Università Popolare.

JUST at this moment the name of Italy—for centuries past the seed-plot of scientific scepticism—is under the cloud of dust and shame associated with the disastrous incursion into Tripoli. But the achievements of the Italian arms in the domain of spoliation and massacre, though more showy and costly than the steady and more civilising labors of her thinkers and enlightened publicists, are intrinsically of lesser importance than the educational labors of the band of Freethinkers, philosophers, and scientists who are spreading the influence of Rationalism amongst the intellectuals of Italy, not by force of arms, but by the force of ideas.

I have just become acquainted with what, to me, is a new and active Freethought centre of light and learning radiating from the intellectual capital of Italy—Milan. As not a few Italians, resident in England and elsewhere, are regular readers of the *Freethinker*, I propose, on their account and for the information of the general Freethought public, to say something about the useful work of culture and propaganda connected with the Università Popolare* which has its seat in the famous Lombardian city.

The Director of the "Popular University" is a thinker and writer of European reputation, the Avvocato Luigi Molinari. Signor Molinari is the author of one of the earliest of the many pamphlets issued immediately after the death of Ferrer, and, I may add, that Molinari's pamphlet† is one of the fullest, and certainly one of the best, of the appreciations of Ferrer which were poured forth from the indignant pens of so many public men, in almost every country under the sun, when the tragedy of Montjuich was consummated. In some respects Molinari's pamphlet is quite unique as a contribution to the Ferrer literature, inasmuch as when the definitive life of Ferrer and the ultimate authoritative appreciation of his labors comes to be written,

some of the interesting documents preserved for us in this pamphlet—notably the section (pp. 5-15) on the pedagogic results of the Escuela Moderna—will have to be reviewed and taken into due account.

The *Università Popolare* is the name of a fortnightly review which is now in the twelfth year of its publication (16 pp., 20 centesimi). Each annual volume of the review comprises 768 pages, in which history, science, philosophy, and ethics are dealt with from a pronouncedly Rationalistic point of view. In the present volume Dr. Romeo Manzoni is contributing an interesting series of articles on the "Natural History of Man," and Molinari is continuing his articles giving the results of his admirable researches into the history of civilisation in the Middle Ages. These latter articles form the sequel to his "Compendium of Universal History," the first volume of which* has just appeared. This new production of Molinari's prolific pen is a masterpiece in the popularisation of the fruits of science, at the same time that it is a magnificent reproof of the ineptitude of so many learned men whose learning only serves to cloud their style and befog their readers. In this work Molinari expounds the evolution of the cosmos and the story of the early ages of humanity in clear and simple language, and, at the same time, in a form eminently scientific and exact. In this volume the story of cosmic evolution and of the budding civilisations of the East, of Greece and Rome, passes before us in a splendid panorama full of movement and vitality, and, above all, with charming sincerity.

Besides all this, the Università Popolare issues a vast assortment of Rationalistic publications drawn not merely from the home-bred genius of Italy, but from the whole pantheon of Rationalistic writers in all countries. It is encouraging to find that elegant editions of Spencer, of Renan, of Andrew Dickson White, and hosts of other writers whose names (like Grant Allen, Edward Clodd, Mangasarian, and Récclus are well known in connection with the world-wide Rationalist trend of thought) are put on the market in the land of the Popes, and that they are read and sold in ever increasing numbers in a country which some of us too lightly associate with omnipresent squalor and superstition.

I have just received the first volume of the *Biblioteca Germinal*, issued at the publishing offices of the Università Popolare. The opening volume of the new series, entitled "Il tramonto del Diritto Penale," is written by Luigi Molinari, who not only as a lawyer, but as a student of penology, is well qualified for the humanitarian task of reform undertaken in this booklet (pp. 124, 1 lire). I should like to commend the perusal of this temperate and philosophical exposure of the cruel futilities of the modern prison system, to the Howard Association and the Humanitarian League. Like Beccaria, who, of course, was a great Freethinker, Molinari denounces the inhumanities which arise from the utterly false notion that it is the business of the State to take revenge upon the criminal and make him feel, in the solitude of his cell, the fangs of the collective vengeance of the nation. He shows how naturally this temper of mind flows from the prevailing theological conceptions of Christianity. "If God," he says, p. 24, "in his infinite goodness has invented for sinners the sufferings of hell, it is more than natural that the serafic angel, man, made in the image and likeness of his Creator, should have invented the most painful corporal punishments for the guilty, and especially for the heretic. Thus the most reasonable conclusion to which one should come (and it would appear that in the past men came very near to the realisation of that noble ideal) would be this: to send the delinquent direct into the presence of God in order that his judgment, against which there is no appeal, might plunge the sinner into the infernal abyss for all the ages of eternity." No doubt too much of this malignant spirit of divine revenge still hovers about the prison

* Università Popolare. Via Carlo Poerio, N. 38, Milano.

† *Vita e Opere de Francisco Ferrer*. Centes. 50.

* *Compendio di Storia Universale*. Vol. i. (Lire 3).

house, where the victims of our social system are held in the iron grip of the law. When our politicians have done tinkering with the Governmental machine, they will perhaps find time to remember the multitudes who are kept in what is truly termed "durance vile," and will set to work to get rid of some of that "vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord" attitude that disgraces our modern criminal administration.

Quite a magnificent work issued by the Università Popolare is Professor Augusto Villa's work, *Religion and Science*.* In a series of glowing chapters, in which the author enshrines the latest and most profound researches of the best English writers and of a whole galaxy of thinkers and investigators, the results of whose labors are outside the ordinary range of the English reader, the author unfolds his crushing exposure of the nakedness of religion when viewed under the searchlight of modern science. The student of religion, especially the investigator of comparative religion, will be glad to obtain this fresh and suggestive contribution to the already rich body of literature which has grown up around these subjects. The perusal of this volume makes one long to obtain a fuller knowledge than is here imparted of some of the works which compose the hitherto unsuspected bibliography—especially of Italian authors like Graf—laid under contribution for some of the startling conclusions which Professor Villa puts before us. The chapter on "Sacred Prostitution" and the other on "Asceticism" would alone suffice to make this work a remarkable contribution to Freethought literature. I cannot too warmly recommend Professor Villa's work. Those of my readers who take my advice and read him will, I am certain, agree with me that Professor Villa has written one of the best manuals in our literature on the vexed question with which he treats, and will join me in the hope that his remarkable work may soon see the light under new skies in an English translation.

My closing words will be, good luck to the Università Popolare, and may its eyes, and ours, be gladdened (in the language of Professor Villa) by "the vision of that brighter future, to which Humanity will attain when the baseless and lying conceptions of religion shall be stricken with death."

WILLIAM HEAFORD.

Old Testament History.—VIII.

(Continued from p. 267.)

WE come now to the period in the history of Israel which may more truly be called historical; namely, that in which two lines of kings reigned in Palestine contemporaneously—one of the kingdom of Judah, in the south of that country, over the tribes of Judah and Benjamin only; the other of the kingdom of Israel, in the centre and north, over all the other tribes. The story of how this division was brought about (1 Kings xii. 1—20) may or may not be fictitious; but the kings named in the two kingdoms, and the majority of the events recorded in the two books of Kings, may, as a whole, be reasonably regarded as historical. The commencement of these two lines of kings will be better understood from the following tabular form:—

B.C.	JUDAH.	Years.	B.C.	ISRAEL.	Years.
929	Rehoboam	17	929	Jeroboam	22
912	Abijam	3			
910	Asa	41			
			908	Nadab	2
			907	Baasha	14
			893	Elah	2
			891	Zimri	0
			891	Omri	18
			873	Ahab	22
870	Jehoshaphat	25			

The Biblical compilers have in most cases noted the year of accession of kings in one kingdom by the

year of the reigning king in the other. Thus, Abijam is stated to have commenced to reign in the 18th year of Jeroboam, and Asa in the 20th of Jeroboam. Similarly, Ahab is said to have become king in the 38th year of Asa, and Jehoshaphat to have ascended the throne in the 4th year of Ahab. It would seem from some of these statements that several of the kings reigned a year less than that recorded; as, for instance, Abijam in the foregoing. This is accounted for by the fact that part of a year at the end of a reign was reckoned as a whole year: Abijam reigned 2 years and some months. Again, in the account in 1 Kings, Baasha is said to have reigned 24 years, and Omri 12 years. If this were correct, Ahab would commence his reign in the first year of Jehoshaphat. On the Moabite Stone it is stated that the two reigns of Omri and Ahab amounted to 40 years. Of Omri it is recorded in 1 Kings xvi. 23 that he "reigned over Israel twelve years: six years reigned he in Tirzah." If this statement be taken as 18 years, we get the 40 years of Omri and Ahab, there being then but 14 years left for the reign of Baasha—which is probably correct.

In reading the historical books of the Old Testament it should be borne in mind that those books have been edited by priestly writers after the Exile. One of the results of this editing is that the religions of the people and their kings are described from the post-exilic point of view, the laws and regulations in the Pentateuch being assumed to have been in existence all the time the Israelites were in Canaan; whereas the so-called "books of Moses" were unknown in Israel before the Exile. Hence, in the time of the judges we are told that the people of Israel "did that which was evil in the sight of Yahveh, and forgot Yahveh their god, and served the Baalim and the Asheroth" (Judg. iii. 7). As a consequence of this infidelity, "the anger of Yahveh was kindled against Israel, and he sold them into the hand of the king of Mesopotamia," who oppressed them for eight years. Now, it is not at all improbable that the Israelites, during the period of the judges, did actually come under the yoke of all the nations mentioned; but these servitudes were not caused by the worship of other gods than Yahveh, neither had the last-named deity any hand in bringing about those oppressions. The same editors also say of many of the kings of Israel and Judah that they "did that which was evil in the sight of Yahveh" by worshiping the gods of Canaan, and they represent some of them as meeting with punishment for so doing.

As a matter of fact, however, the tribes that were known as "Israel" never worshiped the god Yahveh. Being good and conservative Canaanites, they served the same Canaanitish deities which had for centuries been worshiped by their fathers. The serving their ancestral gods during the period of the judges was not an infidelity to Yahveh, for they had never worshiped that deity at all. The frequent mention of "the Lord" in the narratives is due solely to the post-exilic editors, who have systematically misrepresented the history of Israel. Saul, the first king over the tribes, was a worshiper of Baal, as was also his son Jonathan. We know this from the simple fact that Saul named one of his sons Ish-baal—a "man of Baal" or "servant of Baal," and Jonathan had a son whom he named Merib-baal—"Baal contends" (Chron. ix. 39, 40). These names the latest editors have changed into Ish-bosheth—"man of shame" and Merib-bosheth—"the shameful contends" (2 Sam. ii. 8 v. 4; etc.), though the latter name, by the error of a copyist, is written Mephibosheth. It goes, of course, without saying that no father would call his son "a man of shame." David, who succeeded Saul, was of the tribe of Judah, and was the first king that worshiped Yahveh, from whom the name of that tribe was derived. David's son Solomon, however, "went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, and after Milcom the god of the Ammonites," and he built high places for Chemosh the god of Moab, and for Molech the god of Ammon

* *Le Religione e la Scienza*. Pp. 259, Lire 3.

"on the mount that is before Jerusalem" (1 Kings xi. 5-7).

With regard to the kingdom of Israel, not one of the nineteen kings that reigned over it was a worshiper of the god Yahveh. Jeroboam, we are told, "made two calves of gold.....and he set the one in Bethel, and the other put he in Dan." For such unspeakable wickedness this king, when his name is afterwards mentioned, is spoken of as "Jeroboam the son of Nebat who made Israel to sin." The reasoning attributed to Jeroboam for setting up these calves is thus stated: "If this people go up to offer sacrifices in the house of Yahveh at Jerusalem, then shall the heart of this people turn again unto Rehoboam king of Judah." This statement is not in accordance with fact. The people did not go up to Jerusalem to offer sacrifices at that time or even before the Exile. They offered their sacrifices upon the "high places" that were scattered throughout the land. It was not until less than four decades before the end of the kingdom of Judah, that the book of Deuteronomy—in which the command to take all offerings to Jerusalem first appeared—was mysteriously "found" in the temple, and the new regulation became known. Solomon's temple was built for ornament, not for use. Only "three times in a year did Solomon offer burnt offerings and peace offerings upon the altar at Jerusalem" (1 Kings ix. 25). The people offered no sacrifices there at all. As to the "calves" set up by Jeroboam, it is probable that these were large images of wood, overlaid with gold, representing the two cherubim in the inner recess of the temple which stood with outstretched wings watching over the ark (1 Kings vi. 23-28). These guardian angels were huge man-headed winged bulls that were then superstitiously regarded as guardians or protectors of buildings in Assyria and Babylonia.

Another result of the post-exilic editing of the more ancient records is a number of manufactured predictions interpolated in the earlier narratives. The first of these is the punishment meted to Solomon for serving other gods than Yahveh. In this case, we are told, Yahveh *himself* said to that king:—

"I will surely rend the kingdom from thee, and will give it to thy servant. Notwithstanding *in thy days* I will not do it.....but I will rend it out of the hand of thy son.....I will give one tribe to thy son for David my servant's sake" (1 Kings xii. 11-13).

Before writing this, the compiler knew perfectly well that ten tribes had revolted from Rehoboam, and had made Jeroboam, an officer under Solomon, their king. Hence the prediction put in the mouth of the god Yahveh.

The next example is that of Jeroboam. In this case "Ahijah the prophet" is said to have uttered the following prediction in the name of Yahveh against Jeroboam:—

"Behold, I will bring evil upon the house of Jeroboam, and will cut off from Jeroboam every man child.....Yahveh shall raise him up a king over Israel, who shall cut off the house of Jeroboam that day" (1 Kings xiv. 10, 14).

The compiler, when writing the foregoing, had his eye upon the usurper Baasha, who, after assassinating Jeroboam's son Nadab, the then king of Israel, "smote all the house of Jeroboam; he left not to Jeroboam any that breathed" (1 Kings xv. 29). Baasha's action here was a practice common to nearly all usurpers in that age.

A third example is that of Baasha. In this case the prophet "Jehu the son of Hanani," speaking in the name of Yahveh, is made to say:—

"I exalted thee out of the dust, and made thee prince over my people Israel; and thou hast walked in the way of Jeroboam.....Behold, I will take away the posterity of Baasha, and the posterity of his house" (1 Kings xvi. 2, 3).

When it is remembered that Baasha had made *himself* king by the murder of his predecessor, it is really amusing to hear the god Yahveh say "I exalted thee.....and made thee prince over *my* people

Israel." Needless to say, Yahveh had no hand in Baasha's exaltation; neither, again, could it be said that the men of the kingdom of Israel were *his* people. The compiler, of course, knew, before fabricating the prediction, that Zimri "smote all the house of Baasha," etc. (1 Kings xvi. 10, 11).

There are more of these manufactured prophecies during this period; but the reader will have no difficulty in identifying them. The main point to be borne in mind is that the post-exilic editor had the whole history of Israel and Judah, from Rehoboam to the Exile, lying before him to suggest where fraudulent prophecies might easily be worked in. The object of this systematic falsification of history was, no doubt, the edification of future generations, and, by showing them that the god Yahveh punished in their posterity all who "did that which was evil" in his sight, to keep them firm in their allegiance to that deity.

In addition to the falsifications noticed, there are several narratives inserted in the reigns of the kings in the foregoing table, which appear to have been taken, with little alteration, from the more ancient "histories," but which are purely legendary. The chief of these are: the "man of god" at Bethel (1 Kings xiii. 1-end); Jeroboam's wife (1 Kings xiv. 1-18); "Elijah the Tishbite" (1 Kings xvii., xviii., xix., xxi. 17-29); a prophet and "man of God" (1 Kings xx. 13, 14, 22, 28, 35-43); the prophet Micaiah (1 Kings xxii. 7-28, 38). It will thus be seen that more than three whole chapters are devoted to the Tishbite.

In 1 Kings xiv. 25, 26, we are told that Shishak king of Egypt came against Jerusalem, captured the city, and carried away all the treasures stored in the temple and the king's house. This is correct in all save the Egyptian king's name, which was Sheshonk. That monarch, however, did much more: he captured a number of cities in Israel, Judah, and in Syria; but we hear no more of him after this campaign.

ABRACADABRA.

(To be continued.)

Charge of Blasphemy.

INTERRUPTIONS IN THE SQUARE.

POLICEMAN UPON WHOM THE LECTURER JARRED.

THOMAS JACKSON, a long-haired, clean-shaven young man, wearing spectacles, who has figured prominently lately at the Atheistic meetings in Victoria-square, applied before Mr. Marshall, Stipendiary Magistrate, at Leeds, this afternoon, in answer to two summonses charging him with using profane language. Jackson is said to come from London, and to be one of the lecturers of the British Secular League.

Police-Superintendent Blakey explained that the summonses were taken out under the Town Police Clauses Act. For some time Jackson, in his speeches, had been bordering upon the profane, but gradually he had been getting worse. On the 7th inst., he used the following words: "The Devil is out for revolutionary truths, and your infamous old God to keep you in the dark."

Mr. Blakey said he would urge that the remarks were not made in the heat of the moment, but deliberately, for, as recently as the 17th inst., the defendant said he was going it deliberately, that he was endeavoring to commit himself, but no summons appeared to have been issued.

The second summons arose out of a meeting on the 16th inst. After commenting upon the wreck of the *Titanic*, he uttered the following words:—

"Your God is a brutal monster. I would sooner be among the men and down in the other place than among the slaves. I am too good a man to worship a God who likes to snuff the smell of roast beef and blood. We have learned nothing by eating bread and drinking wine and kidding ourselves we are eating God."

Several police officers gave evidence bearing out Mr. Blakey's statement. One was cross-examined by the defendant as to whether his remarks had occasioned any annoyance to the people in the Square. The officer said they had, and some people had said he ought to have been on the *Titanic*.

WHAT THE POLICEMAN THOUGHT.

His Worship: I should like to have the officer's own view about this. Did it offend you?

The Officer: Well, it certainly is not very congenial to any man who has any respect for the Christian faith.

An independent witness, Joshua Jennings, said he heard the defendant make use of the words "God is a brutal monster," and the remark annoyed him.

Defendant: Is it not a fact that you have made yourself notorious by interrupting at these meetings, so much so that you have got a special nickname?

Witness: You gave it to me.

Are you not in the habit of exhibiting bad temper at the meetings to such an extent that you have become notorious for it?—I have not.

The defendant, in a long address to his Worship, contended that the statute under which he was summoned did not apply in his case. It was, he said, obviously meant to give the police powers to deal with obscene prints, or bad language in the streets, otherwise described as disorderly conduct. He cited several cases, in one of which a judge had stated that a person was entitled to criticise the fundamental doctrines of Christianity, if he did so with due propriety. He proceeded to quote Robert Blatchford and other writers.

Morris Manderson, a witness for the defendant, said that although he did not agree with the defendant's opinions, he did not object to the lectures, and thought they did Christianity no harm.

PRISONER DECLINES TO BE BOUND OVER.

Mr. Marshall said that to his mind there could be no question that the words were profane. He thought it would be very easy for the defendant, with his great ability, to keep within the law in delivering his lectures. He would bind him over in the sum of £25 to be of good behavior for twelve months.

The defendant pointed out that he could give no undertaking in regard to further speeches.

Mr. Marshall: Then you decline to be bound over?

Defendant: I must respectfully decline. I have other speakers to consider, and —

Mr. Marshall: Are you willing to find a surety?

Defendant: I cannot admit I have been guilty of —

Mr. Marshall: Then you must go to prison. Go to prison for 14 days.

The defendant then gathered up his papers, and with these in one hand and a trunk and a silk hat in the other, entered the dock and went below.

—Yorkshire Evening News, April 22.

Christian Justice.

SMITH steals Brown's pocketbook. God forgives Smith, which lets Smith out all right, but he does nothing for Brown. Does that not look like a heavenly premium on crime?

Allbright says, "No person ever had a ghost for a father." That is a "sin against the Holy Ghost," which is "not to be forgiven in this world; neither in the world to come," says Peter Funk, who pours some hot lead in Allbright's ear and sends him to hell. Allbright goes to hell for telling the truth, while the angels wait Peter Funk, the murderer, to the realms of bliss, to enjoy the presence of the redeemed forever. Jones kills Parker before he repents and he goes to hell. Jones repents and is ushered into the presence of God, to be a companion of the saints. Now, if Parker's son should offer to be hanged in Jones' place, would Jones be any the less a criminal?

If a man should write a book and it should contain many great lies, would calling the book "holy" turn the lies into truth?

It is impossible to-day to restore life to the dead. If impossible to-day, was it possible two thousand years ago? Does the difference in time turn the impossible into the possible?

If God brought everything into existence as we find it to-day, is he not the author of evil? If God is the author of evil, can he be good? Would we not be better off without any God than with one who produces evil?

From the time that old Mother Eve ate the persimmon up to the time of the crucifixion, about four thousand years is said to have elapsed. If during this period souls could be saved without a savior, then the crucifixion was a brutal blunder. If souls could not be saved without a savior, then every soul brought into existence during that long period is now broiling on Belzie's great gridiron, a worse blunder. Think of it; for a period of four thousand years almighty power and infinite wisdom bringing countless millions into existence only to fry and sizzle in the old brimstone furnaces.

—"Truthseeker" (New York).

JOHN PROCK.

National Secular Society.

REPORT OF MONTHLY EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD ON APRIL 25.

The President, Mr. G. W. Foote, occupied the chair. There were also present: Messrs. Baker, Barry, Bowman, Cohen, Cowell, Davies, Heaford, Leat, Lloyd, Moss, Dr. Nichols, Quinton, Roger, Samuels, Silverstein, Thurlow, Wood, Davidson, Dawson, Lazarnick, Rosetti, Schindel, and Miss Kough.

The minutes of the previous meeting were read and confirmed.

New members were received for Edmonton, Islington, and Kingsland Branches, and for the Parent Society.

The President explained the reasons that would prevent Mr. Davies carrying out the organising work in the provinces as indicated at the last meeting.

The Secretary reported that it had been so far impossible to obtain a hall in Leeds for the public meeting of the Conference, the proprietors of halls in that town having now to apprise the Watch Committee of the purposes for which halls were to be used, and to obtain their sanction. As this could not yet be obtained, and suitable halls applied for in London were not available for Whit Sunday, the matter was at present at a standstill. The final arrangements were left in the hands of the President.

The notices of motion from Branches for the Conference Agenda, and those to be moved by the Executive, were placed before the meeting. Messrs. Lloyd and Cohen were appointed as Agenda Committee.

The Sub-Committee appointed to deal with the Birmingham resolution re Courses of Study in Freethought delivered their final report, and handed the list of books to Mr. Foote as editor of the *Freethinker*.

The Executive, desiring to express their sympathy with the family of the late Mr. W. T. Stead, the following resolution was carried unanimously:—

"The Executive of the National Secular Society, remembering the late Mr. W. T. Stead's noble action in publicly defending the characters of Thomas Paine and Colonel Ingersoll against the malignant slanders of Evangelist Torrey and Pastor Dixon, even at the risk of seriously offending his English co-religionists, hereby expresses its admiration for his honor and courage, and begs to be allowed to add its humble tribute to the many others that have been paid to his memory since his tragic death in the disaster to the *Titanic*."

The meeting then adjourned. E. M. VANCE, Secretary.

Truth will out. The *Christian World* neatly, but unconsciously, illustrates this by saying that "It is impossible for each denomination to have its particular tenets taught at the public expense, and that is why both Churchmen and Nonconformists agreed on the Cowper-Temple formula." Exactly. Neither side objected to plundering the outside public, but as neither could hope to monopolise the whole of the spoils they agreed to share the proceeds. The *Christian World* grants the position. The only principle involved is that illustrated by a couple of footpads engaged in sharing the purse taken from a solitary and defenceless pedestrian.

The Baptist balance sheet reports having wiped off a deficit of £10,000. But it also reports a new deficit of £12,000. It looks as though it would have been better to have kept the old one. Such, however, is Christian progress.

Obituary.

I REGRET to record the death of the only child of Mr. and Mrs. F. W. Todd, aged two-and-a-half years, from diphtheria. Her bereaved parents will have the sympathy of all West London Freethinkers, amongst whom Mr. Todd worked in the most effective and untiring manner as secretary of the old West London Branch for many years. The Burial Service was impressively read at Greenford Cemetery on Tuesday, April 23, by Mr. J. T. Lloyd.

DEATH has recently claimed a staunch Freethought propagandist in the person of Mr. J. O. Bates, for many years resident in Gloucester, and recently in London. Mr. Bates, who was sixty-three years of age, a vegetarian and a non-smoker, collided with a motor-bus when bicycling, and expired after three weeks' suffering in St. Mary's Hospital on April 17. A day or two before he met with the accident that caused his death he was expressing to me his keen interest in the *Freethinker*, which he taken and read from the first number.—E. M. VANCE.

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.**

SOUTH PLACE CHAPEL (Finsbury, E.C.): 7, G. W. Foote, "Lessons of the Shakespeare Festival."

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 3.15 and 6.15, Mr. Cohen, Lectures.

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): 3.15, W. Davidson, "A Second Coming."

EDMONTON BRANCH N. S. S. (The Green): 7.45, a Lecture.

ISLINGTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Finsbury Park): 11.15, Miss Kough, a Lecture.

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (Ridley-road, High-street): 11.30, W. J. Ramsey, "The Case Against Christianity."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Parliament Hill Fields): 3.15, Miss Kough, a Lecture.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (outside Maryland Point Station, Stratford, E.): 7, W. J. Ramsey, "Christianity a Folly and a Failure."

WOOD GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Jolly Butchers Hill, opposite Public Library): 7, Mr. Allison, "Act of God."

COUNTRY.**OUTDOOR.**

LINCOLN (opposite Corn Exchange): Joseph A. E. Bates—Monday, May 6, at 8, "God and the Titanic Disaster"; Tuesday, 7, at 8, "The Christian Valhalla"; Wednesday, 8, at 8, "Kingcraft—Past and Present"; Thursday, 9, at 8, "Tragedy of the Cross"; Friday, 10, at 8, "The History and Character of Christian Symbolism."

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