

THE Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

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Superstition sheds blood: Science sheds light.

—INGERSOLL.

The Next Religion.

MR. ISRAEL ZANGWILL wrote a play called *The Next Religion*. He was unable to get it produced "on the boards" because the Lord Chamberlain refused to grant it a license. He has revenged himself on that official by publishing it at the price of half-a-crown through Mr. William Heinemann.

Mr. Zangwill's play ought not to have been censored. We say, this, however, on the ground that no play ought to be censored. We are opposed to the censorship altogether. We admit its convenience to the proprietors and managers of theatres, but we resent its restraint upon the freedom and dignity of dramatic literature,—the one thing it is sure to stop being the advent of new ideas. But while the censorship exists, and the majority of the nation (to say nothing of court circles) profess to be Christian, and the law of "blasphemy" is still in operation, it is absurd to expect plays like *The Next Religion* to run the gauntlet. Mr. Baughan, the *Daily News* dramatic critic, was right in declaring that Mr. Zangwill's play is a direct attack on Christianity. Whether in "needlessly offensive language" or not is, of course, a matter of opinion. Mr. Baughan is not bound to be pleased with Mr. Zangwill, and Mr. Zangwill is not bound to please Mr. Baughan; and when this difficulty is multiplied, as it were, by the whole theatre-going population of Great Britain, it is simply overwhelming.

"The play's the thing," says Hamlet. From that point of view it is not easy to say whether *The Next Religion* is a success or otherwise. Anyone might read *Othello* and see that it would be a great success if acted, but the test of experiment is needed for plays of this calibre. What is certain is that Mr. Zangwill has made his play the medium of a drastic criticism of Christianity. We can quite understand, too, that a great many Christians would find its language very "offensive." A freethinking doctor says to a Church parson who has bought a telescope, "Heaven is your speciality." The same character exclaims to his clerical friend, "What! a British parson and only one kid." A fanatical Christian blacksmith remarks of the sparks from his forge, "Ay, it be a glorious sight—always minds me of the souls in hell." The parson himself, who has grown into a sceptic, refers to "Those played-out stage properties—Angels, Squalling Saints, Golden Floor!" He also tells his believing wife that "The real Good Friday would be that which gave us the cure for cancer." A bishop is called "the blessed black-beetle." He is said to have "practically won a new territory for Christ—and the British flag." Finally, to shorten the list of such things, a "black proselyte" confesses at the Congress of Races held in London "how uneasy he feels when he has to say to converted cannibals: 'Take, eat, this is My Body!'"

As a sample of Mr. Zangwill's more serious vein we may take the following:—
"Lazzaroni of religion, we have drowsed too long in a tropical theology, that has enervated and unmanned

us. We talk as if scrofulous babies dropped from heaven, and poverty and disease were providential opportunities for prayer. But just as the millions who died of yellow fever might have been saved if instead of looking up to the skies they had wiped out the mosquito, so we might have cleaned out our swamp of misery and evil centuries ago if we hadn't looked to some gigantic genie in the clouds to do all our dirty work and give us golden floors to squat on into the bargain."

This is from the lips of the Rev. Stephen Trame, the Church parson, who mentally and morally outgrows Christianity, without taking the final step of becoming an Atheist. On the practical side he holds with "One world at a time." "Death is death," he tells his wife. "What else," he asks, "makes its blackness and its beauty, its terror and its tranquillity?" From which we should judge that Mr. Zangwill has been reading Ingersoll, who puts this idea more tersely as well as more beautifully in the noble epigram that "Love is a flower that grows on the edge of the grave."

Stephen Trame's wife passionately asks him if the sleeping dead will never wake, and he finely replies, "We wake in our children." This is followed by a Meredithian passage, the Wilfrid mentioned in it being his own little son:—

"Before Wilfrid came, life did sometimes seem a blind alley leading to a tomb—now through *his* eyes I look beyond, and crying to the new generation 'God-speed,' I shall be content, after the heat and burden of the day, to fold my hands in sleep."

The first and second acts of Mr. Zangwill's play are an attack on Christianity and a suggestion of "the Next Religion" which Stephen Trame, leaving his church and pulpit, goes out into the world to preach. "The next religion," he says, "will be larger than Christianity, not smaller; harder, not easier." It is "the religion all honest men are coming to"—which is rather vague. It is "the religion that accepts the Revelation of Science." It is a religion, in short, something like Sir Oliver Lodge's minus the belief in personal immortality. Man has to co-operate with God—help him along, so to speak—and generally to make himself a very important person in the universal economy; which is another proof that every religion has to minister to man's ludicrous though solemn-faced vanity. "Me and God"—as the old satirical poem on the Kaiser said.

A millionaire comes along and "runs" the ex-Rev. Stephen Trame; draws a cheque for £10,000 to start with, just when he and his wife are almost wanting bread in the wilderness; and finally fixes him up as the High Priest of the Next Religion in a magnificent new temple. Everything goes well and Mary Trame at last agrees with her husband. But this only lasts for a few minutes. The fanatical Christian blacksmith appears on the scene with his hammer, meaning to kill the blasphemous ex-clergyman; instead of doing so, however, he kills the son Wilfrid; and the mother, in an agony of grief, returns to her old belief in a future life, and refuses to be reconciled to anything short of personal reunion with her child. And as Mr. Zangwill makes her mother-love eloquent, and gives her the last word, it is arguable that his attack on Christianity is in the interest of Theism plus Immortality, which seems to us a "lame and impotent conclusion." G. W. FOOTE.

Religion and Life.—III.

(Continued from p. 291.)

THE argument that because the interests of the individual and of the species clash, a supernatural sanction is needed to force conduct along special lines, may be answered by reference to facts. Is it really true that there is conflict, or is it only apparent? I think the answer to this must be that the deeper, the more permanent, the truer interests of the individual harmonise with those of the community. It hardly needs elaborate argument to prove that a community in which individual conduct did not, on the whole, fall into line with the general wellbeing would soon, as a community, disappear. The individual is a communal product, his nature calls for human fellowships; and it is therefore only by social life that his interests are served. One may grant, what is sufficiently obvious, that all individuals do not act so as to promote social welfare, nor need one assert that any individual always acts in this manner. But against this it might be urged that the tendency of some to act in an anti-social manner may be an expression of a quality that is in itself of great social value. It is conceivable that human life might be so fashioned that every individual would instinctively fall into his place in the social structure, and his conduct approximate to the mechanical exactitude of the cell-making bee. But in that case progress would be at an end. Progress depends upon mental variation, just as biological development has depended upon physical variation. And you cannot have variation in one direction only. It must occur in all directions; up as well as down, for worse as well as for better. And thus the assumed perception of the conflict of individual and racial interests may be only the exercise of a quality that is of profound importance to the welfare of the race.

But assuming that an opposition between individual and racial interests actually exists, as our authors imagine, the question arises, How comes it that supernatural sanctions supply the needful corrective? Of course, it is not to be assumed that the medicine men of savage races have access to any genuine supernatural illumination. Such a belief would place *Heredity and Society* outside the category of scientific works. The illumination is fancied, not real. How, then, does it happen that teachers of supernaturalism perceive what are the interests of the species, and by their imposed sanctions promote them? Well, the answer is that they do not invariably do this. Amid the welter of supernatural sanctions some are good, some are bad, some are indifferent. The indifferent may persist for an indefinite period. The bad—if they are sufficiently harmful to the community—will be soon abandoned. If they are only moderately harmful they may persist, their injurious effects being made good by other forces at work in the community. The good ones are preserved and elaborated. Thus, a variety of custom—good, bad, and indifferent—are struck out under the ægis of supernaturalism. They have a supernatural aspect because the whole of life has this aspect in its earlier stages. But the force creating such sanctions is not supernaturalism but life. In other words, social evolution directs the course of supernaturalism, as it directs all else connected with communal man.

Mr. and Mrs. Whetham seem to disguise this process from themselves by referring to the "intuitive scientific insight" by the aid of which certain supernatural sanctions are provided for desirable conduct. This is one of those "blessed" expressions that, in the interests of clear thinking, one would like to see banished from every scientific work. An intuition, in any direction, is not a primitive mental fact. It is the summation of experience, not its beginning. It is, so to speak, compressed experience, a mental process in which the distance between premiss and conclusion are passed over so

rapidly that consciousness cannot detect the stages of the process. It was not original "intuitive scientific insight" which led primitive supernaturalists to insist upon the value of certain courses of conduct; it was a mere expression of social selection. The whole tendency of social evolution is to preserve those whose natures are consonant with the welfare of the species. Properly understood, the operation of the survival of the fittest is plainest where Mr. and Mrs. Whetham fail to discern its effective operation. When these authors say, "Down through the ages we see the promise of some ultimate religious reward or punishment invoked to send the warrior to battle, to bind the members or tribe or nation into an effective whole, and to hold the units of a family, while, at all events, the young need parental support for their proper development," they are simply putting the cart before the horse. These things are not because of religious sanction. The religious sanction is there because they are persistent and inevitable social facts.

I pass by with no more than a bare mention of the fact that all we know of primitive human history leads to the conclusion that supernatural sanctions are strongest just when there is least necessity for curbing the individual, and weakest when the necessity for it is greatest. Mr. and Mrs. Whetham's argument assumes the contrary. It assumes that, in early society, the individual needed breaking in to the social yoke, and that this was only to be accomplished by religion. But the need of primitive life is not for a breaking in, but for a breaking out. Primitive social life is simple, the individual is in much closer harmony with it than is the case in a later stage, and revolts are of very unfrequent occurrence. The war of egotisms comes in with the development of civilisation; but it is precisely at this stage that supernatural sanctions lose their efficacy. They are least powerful when, theoretically, they are most needed. Mr. and Mrs. Whetham's theory is quite out of touch with the facts.

Finally, the placing of a supernatural sanction as the opposite of a rational sanction, is quite unjustifiable. The authors assume that religious beliefs are "irrational," which they are most certainly not. A supernatural sanction is based upon reason, and is, while it is completely effective, an appeal to reason. Instead of it asking for "unselfish conduct of no immediate advantage to the individual," during the larger part of human history, the advantage or disadvantage promised or threatened are of the most immediate character. Where the supernatural sanction no longer appeals to the reason of the mass of the people, and when the consequences, instead of being immediate, become remote, supernatural sanctions quite fail to be effective with the "mass of mankind," and influence only selected individuals. The truth of this is seen in the fact that among savages, where, in the circumstances, supernaturalism is "rational," religion does influence people. Under civilised conditions, where supernaturalism becomes relatively "irrational," it fails to influence them. One might ask Mr. and Mrs. Whetham how otherwise can they explain the constant laments of teachers of supernaturalism that people are more influenced by the attractions of the world, that is, life, than by religion? The only sound generalisation is that mankind is guided mainly by their instincts and feelings, not by their reasoned theories; and that harmony between instincts and feelings and the interests of the species is secured by the compelling power of social selection.

That "no merely rational system of ethics" has yet been found that will be thoroughly effective with the mass of the people (I do not know that any evolutionist believes that mankind has ever been, or will ever be, guided by a purely intellectual calculus) may be true enough, but, on the face of it, the charge lies with equal strength against any system of supernaturalism. No system of supernaturalism has ever been devised that has kept human nature up to the mark indicated by its teachings. The fact of this

being so is the constant theme of preachers of all religions in all ages, and it is certainly not less so with the preachers of our own day. The tremendous force of supernatural sanction, amongst civilised people at all events, is pure myth. For the cultivated mind it obviously does not exist. But cultured people have got into the habit of believing that while supernatural sanction does not influence them, it does, in some undetermined manner, influence others of a different class. And, meanwhile, as though to emphasise a love of contradiction, it is a constant complaint that supernatural sanctions quite fail in influencing the class for the benefit of which it is upheld.

Mr. and Mrs. Whetham are writing as sociologists, and therefore one would expect them to appreciate the truth that by its very nature supernatural or religious sanctions offer a very effective obstacle to social development. It is quite true that with "primitive peoples religious sanctions are invoked to enforce obedience to all the complicated laws and customs of savage life," but in concluding from this that "Races which know how to use these means of strength have inevitably supplanted those without them; thus the religious instinct, in helping those in whom it is hereditary, itself spreads through mankind," the authors reach a generalisation that is justifiable by neither theory nor fact.

The theory that primitive man needed "breaking in" is, as I have already pointed out, quite untrue. His great need is to break out. All scientific observers are agreed as to the difficulty of getting primitive peoples to adopt new customs; and the same trait is observable among the lower classes in civilised communities. And among the forces of which humanity is conscious, and which are most resistant to change, religion is undoubtedly the greatest. It is in cultivating a fear of change that religion is most powerful. And supernaturalism does not preserve a custom because it is good, but because it is there. We see this in the preservation of archaic forms in religion generally, in the tenacity of such customs as suttee in India, or of witchcraft in Europe, of the general dislike to change exhibited by the religious mind, and of the close harmony between religion and established interests all over the world. For reasons already stated, some of the customs sanctioned by religion are bound to be, on the whole, good customs, but against the modification of custom, in terms of the needs of a new generation, there is no more effective barrier than that of religion. Mr. and Mrs. Whetham need not go further than their own department of study to find ample evidence of this.

The statement that those races with whom supernaturalism is most developed have supplanted those of a contrary type may best be met by a flat denial. There is not a spark of evidence to be found anywhere to support such a statement. So far as the contests of primitive peoples are concerned, there is not the slightest evidence that any were wanting in appreciation of supernatural powers. There is only evidence of varying degrees of social or military development. But supernatural beliefs were common to both, and were most often equally developed. And when we leave primitive peoples and deal with historic races and nations, the proof is all in the one direction. When the Greeks overran Egypt, who placed greatest reliance on supernaturalism, Greeks or Egyptians? When Rome, in turn, conquered both Greece and Egypt, who, again, relied most on supernaturalism? Sceptical in relation to the Egyptian, the Greek was religious in relation to the Roman. When the barbarians overran the Empire, they defeated a people who had become saturated with supernaturalism, and whose social weakness had increased with it. Was it better military organisation, or a more developed supernaturalism, that carried Mohammedanism victorious over so many Christian countries? Was our own conquest of India due to a more developed supernaturalism than was possessed by the Hindoos? These facts, and many others of a similar kind that

might be cited, are so obvious that I do not think anyone will dispute them. The really correct generalisation is that the nation or race that has spent its energies in developing and organising supernaturalism has sooner or later succumbed to others of a different kind. This generalisation of Mr. and Mrs. Whetham is proof only of the power of religious belief, or of the desire to speak well of religion, to interfere with what should be a careful scientific survey.

With Mr. and Mrs. Whetham's treatment of the Jews as an example of the helpful influence of religion, I will deal in my next article. C. COHEN.

(To be continued.)

Desperate Apologetics.

THE May Meetings are now in full swing, and the religious press is already crowded with sermons, presidential addresses, papers, and speeches by the leaders of Christian thought in the various Churches of our land. The one unvarying theme is the Christian religion as the power of God unto the salvation of the world. At present this religion is admittedly under a cloud; but yesterday it performed mighty miracles, and to-morrow it shall conquer the world. This is the only message, and it is false. One of the institutions that meet in May is the Congregational Ministers' National Fraternal, the object of which is to deal with questions affecting the work of ministers and their relations to their churches. The other day this Fraternal held a theological conference, at which an attempt was made to prove that Christianity is a superhuman religion. A paper was read on the subject by the Rev. A. C. Hill. This gentleman was honest enough to inform his audience that they are confronted to-day by a situation without precedent in the history of the Church. What the situation is the report in the *Christian World* for May 9 is not full enough to make it clear. Mr. Hill referred to some "new academic priests" who are evidently hostile to the Gospel of Christ. He maintained that Christian apologists had played into their hands "by fighting on critical ground chosen by those opponents." The natural inference is that on purely critical ground the divine has not the least chance of proving his case. In Mr. Hill's opinion "by fighting on critical ground they surrendered the cause of religion to a new hierarchy of academic priests." Then comes this most curious sentence: "Whether it was a matter of philosophers or historians, they could not leave the result to them." Again the irresistible inference is that if the result of the critical examination of Christianity were left to the critics Christianity would be destroyed. It is almost incredible that an intelligent divine could be foolish enough to make an admission so damaging to the cause he is supposed to have so much at heart.

The Christian apologist, then, if he wishes to be successful, must on no account enter into debate with these "new academic priests," because in argument he will not have a leg to stand upon. What then? This is Mr. Hill's answer:—

"In these matters the experience and judgment of the normal man, and especially the experience and judgment of the best men and women, of the saints, must be allowed to count."

Who is the "normal" man? The man who is found hanging on the preacher's lips twice every Sunday, the man who exalts faith above reason, and who believes not only in the absence of, but against evidence. All scientists who build on fact, all Higher Critics who treat the Bible as if it were a human product, all who do not think it worth while to darken the doors of church or chapel, are "abnormal" people. The best men and women are of necessity Christians. Indeed, they are for ever telling us that they are the light of the world and the salt of the

earth. Browning, in *Christmas Eve*, tells us of a man who by accident found himself inside a place of worship, listening to such absurd assertions. The little flock assembled there swallowed them all with boundless delight, and the winter of its discontent was turned to glorious summer under the charm of the preacher's voice.

"My old fat woman purred with pleasure,
And thumb round thumb went twirling faster,
While she, to his periods keeping measure,
Maternally devoured the pastor."

The stray visitor endured the comic performance as long as he could; but at last his patience ran out—

"'Twas too provoking!
My gorge rose at the nonsense and stuff of it,
And saying, like Eve when she plucked the apple,
'I wanted a taste, and now there's enough of it,'
I flung out of the little chapel."

Mr. Hill's reasoning did not improve as he proceeded with his theme. He held that if the truth of Theism is admitted there can be no difficulty in constructing a cumulative proof that in the religion of Jesus there is "a superhuman power." There would then spring up, he contended, "a theology which, while still a matter of faith, none the less commended itself to the intelligence of the normal man." Of course, everything the preacher says is intelligible to his "normal" man; but to the independent thinker there is absolutely no proof that Christianity has ever wielded supernatural power. Through all its history it has proved itself to be so deplorably human. The curious thing about Mr. Hill is that while holding that if the truth of a certain dogma be assumed the truth of so many other doctrines can easily be established, yet he himself, so far as this report of his paper is concerned, did not even attempt to prove anything. He contented himself with bare assertions. He asserted that, whatever mysteries there may be, "they did have a rational theory of the origin of the world and of the Divine method of government." If he meant the Biblical theory, we boldly declare that its rationality has been positively disproved by the discoveries of science. If by "the Divine method of government" he meant a perfect method, we challenge him to cite a single instance of its operation. The statement that this world has always been governed by a God of justice and love is belied again and again on every page of history. Indeed, Mr. Hill virtually admitted this himself later on. After claiming that they had "a rational theory of the origin of the world," he said that "Nature by itself was a revelation of evil and injustice as much as of good." What a terrible indictment of the Supreme Being that sentence implies. Nature is the work of his hands, and he watches over and sustains it every moment; and yet Mr. Hill is made to say that "in Nature there seemed to be a confusion of all moral distinctions." Thus the reverend gentleman himself went out of his way to furnish us with a conclusive proof of the irrationality of the Biblical theory of the origin of the world.

Mr. Hill waxed perfectly reckless towards the close of his paper. Speaking of Christ, he said:—

"Whatever their theory of his personality might be, there were all the signs that his entry into the world was a distinct break in the natural law of causation."

Will the reverend gentleman favor us with his definition of "the natural law of causation" and describe one of the signs that it was broken at the entry of Jesus into the world? It is true that the Gospel Jesus is a superhuman person; but there is no evidence that the Gospel Jesus ever lived. What we have in the Gospels is the portrait of a purely mythical being. It is easy enough to enlarge grandiloquently on "the moral majesty of the character of Christ, whose ineffable purity had always reduced to despair in their self-contemplation the purest of his followers"; but they who do so draw upon their imagination. The Gospels do not tell us enough about their hero to enable us to form an intelligent estimate of his character. The Chris-

tian estimate of him is based upon Christian theology, and not upon biographical facts.

We are told that Mr. Hill referred to "the institutions that had sprung from Jesus, and the corruptions which his religion had survived as alike testifying to the superhuman origin of their religion." The chief Christian institution is the Church; and if Mr. Hill can honestly and dispassionately read the history of the Church as written, say, by the late Dean Milman, or even by the late Dr. Green or Professor Schaff, and still maintain that it testifies to the superhuman origin of Christianity, he will certainly take the biscuit. Who can count the witches it has callously burnt? Lecky says that "tens of thousands of victims perished by the most agonising and protracted torments, without exciting the faintest compassion." We read that a single bishop burned six hundred at Bamberg, while at Trévis seven thousand were put to death. Who can count the unbelievers, heretics, and Jews whom the Church has from time to time mercilessly tortured and slaughtered? Why, under the Inquisition in Spain alone nearly 100,000 victims were put to death. Then think of the bloody wars that have been waged in the Christian name. It is computed that some nine millions perished in the various Crusades. Mr. Hill spoke of the corruptions which Christianity has survived; but it would be much truer to say that Christianity has survived, not *in spite*, but *by means*, of disgraceful corruptions. The Church first enslaved, and then tyrannised over, the minds of men. This is a history of which no decent man can feel proud, and before which Christians should bow their head in deep humiliation.

Mr. Hill also "adduced the fact of the Church in her all-inclusive sweep to-day" as further proof of the superhuman character of Christ. Well, let us look at the Church as it appears to-day, split up into hundreds of different sects or factions, many of which do not recognise one another at all except for purposes of vilification. There is no common platform on which their officials can meet on friendly terms. Even in our own country few of them are even on speaking terms; and although the majority of the people are giving them all the go-by, they are constantly quarrelling with one another about something, such as the validity of orders, religious education in the schools, and disestablishment. And yet they are looking forward to spending eternity in the same heaven!

Yes, apologetics has fallen upon evil days and become shockingly reckless in its habits. It shows no respect whatever for history; and it tells the blackest lies without a blush. Its desperation is doubtless due to the fact that the Church which it undertakes to defend is in a state of decay, that it is being left behind as an exploded superstition. And in proportion as it is receding, science is advancing, holding in its hand a brilliant lamp which shows us the true path of life.

J. T. LLOYD.

More Words on Shakespeare's Will.

WE had not room to say all that we wanted to say on this subject in last week's *Freethinker*, and there is a good deal that we reserve for our projected (and partly executed) book on Shakespeare. What we propose to say now is therefore just the proper conclusion of last week's article which the limit of space compelled us to omit.

We demonstrated, it will be remembered, not only that the pious exordium of Shakespeare's will could not, either directly or indirectly, be his own composition, but was a form used by his lawyer that had been current many years previously.

It will be interesting as well as pertinent to add some facts concerning the will itself and its hurried completion during Shakespeare's fatal illness.

The draft of the will was prepared in January, 1616, under the direction of Francis Collins, a

solicitor then residing at Warwick. Shakespeare was then "in perfect health," which he was not, of course, when he signed it on what proved to be his deathbed. Its completion was probably postponed on account of the approaching marriage of his daughter Judith. It had to be hastened, however, when Shakespeare was seized with a dangerous fever in March. His lawyer was hastily summoned from Warwick, bringing with him the draft of the will that had been lying at his office since January; this was slightly amended at the poet's bedside and became his actual will. "The corrected draft of the will," as Halliwell-Phillipps says, "was so hastily revised at Shakespeare's bedside, that even the correction of the day of the month was overlooked," and "an unusual number of witnesses were called in to secure the validity of the informally written document." The document itself is written upon "pot-paper," then commonly used by solicitors for their drafts. "It is beyond reasonable doubt," to quote Halliwell-Phillipps again, "that the will in its present form, is a manuscript prepared for engrossment, and that the latter would have been subject to a careful revision or even to the introduction of additional matter. We may confidently assume that, if circumstances had permitted it, a fair copy would not only have been made before the execution, but that such errors as those which are found in the statement of the regnal years, or in the duplication of the bequest of the plate, would have been corrected. If the will be accepted as a lawyer's draft, there is really very little in it to create a serious perplexity." Mr. Halliwell-Phillipps adds that "the form of the superscription"—which Christian apologists now appeal to as Shakespeare's personal testimony to the truth of the Christian religion—"was a common formula with professional men, as may be seen from numerous examples of the early part of the early seventeenth century which are attached to wills preserved at Somerset House."

This then is how the case stands. Shakespeare gave substantial instructions to his lawyer in January; the lawyer prepared a rough draft, and nothing further was done until Shakespeare was attacked by an unexpected illness; then the draft was brought to his bedside, hastily revised there, and executed as his will,—no less than five witnesses being called in to cover any informality.

There is another point to be noticed. Shakespeare was a "myriad-minded" genius. Nature endowed him with all sorts of faculty. He did not make a fortune by his writings, but by his labors as an actor and stage manager, and by the careful investment of his savings. He was evidently an excellent man of business. It was perfectly natural that his will should be a purely business document. Sentimentalists have complained of this. One reverend gentleman was so disappointed at the contents and style of Shakespeare's will that he could not help observing that it was "absolutely void of the least particle of that spirit which animated our great poet." Of course it was. Shakespeare had the sense to keep poetry and business apart. No man ever had more common sense than was displayed by the greatest poet in the world. It was exactly like Shakespeare to give business instructions as to his will and leave all the rest to his lawyer.

From every point of view it is obvious that nothing in Shakespeare's will is his except the business details and the words "By me William Shakespeare." His lawyer was responsible for all the rest.

When the draft of his will was brought to his bedside Shakespeare was too ill for gratuitous trouble. All he was concerned about at that moment was the right disposition of his estate. He did notice the omission of his wife's name, and that was rectified. If he had strength enough left to notice the pious exordium, with its abrupt "In the name of God, Amen," his face probably lit up, though perhaps faintly, with one of those delightful smiles that must have played so often like soft summer lightning under that wise brow.

G. W. FOOTE.

The True Resurrection.

IN *Lloyd's Weekly News* of April 14, there appeared a sermonette by the Rev. H. Mayne Young, of St. John's, Westminster, intitled "The True Resurrection," the burden of it being that the body of the risen Christ was not the body that was crucified and buried. Thereupon, being interested in the subject, I wrote thus to the rev. gentleman:—

"If the body of the risen Christ were not the crucified body, please to explain the doubting Thomas episode (John xx. 24-28). And if the body of the risen Christ were not ordinary flesh and blood, what of the statement in the last chapter of the gospel according to St. Luke, from the 36th to the 43rd verse?"

To my surprise, I have received a most courteous reply; and I so speak because my previous experience of parsons had induced me to think otherwise. Here is the rev. gentleman's reply:—

"In answering the apparent difficulty raised by these verses, I would say that the appearances of the Risen Christ during the forty days between His Resurrection and Ascension were *materialisations*, obviously intended to convince His disciples of the continuity of His individuality, and that naturally He would appear in the form most calculated to assure them of the reality of His individual continuity. We read in the Gospels that He appeared now in one form and now in another, and that sometimes He was not at first recognised. Manifestly, on these occasions, He appeared in the form with wounded hands and side in order to give them the clearest proof of His Personal existence after death. These *materialisations*, however, gradually became more and more etherealised and unearthly, until at the last appearance on the mountain in Galilee, some were unable to recognise Him. So, then, we may believe that the form assumed by Our Lord at His appearance to Thomas was not a permanent *materialisation*, but merely temporal, and for the moment the best for purposes of identification."

The doctrine propounded by the rev. gentleman is a new one, and proves beyond all doubt that the Christianity of to-day is not the Christianity of the Gospels, not the Christianity that was taught in my young days.

The rev. gentleman, in his sermonette from which I am quoting, says that "the body in which Christ appeared on and after the third day was obviously very different in certain respects from the body of flesh and blood in which, two days before, he had been crucified, and which was laid, worn and wounded, in Joseph's tomb"; and that "we have only to read the records of his appearances—of how his spiritual embodiment passed through closed doors.....to convince ourselves of this difference." But, in so saying, he bases his opinions on mere assumptions, ignoring the Gospel statements on the points which are staring him in the face.

He assumes that because the body of the risen Christ is said to have "passed through closed doors," that it was "visible now in one form and now in another," and that it "was by no means always recognised at once," it must have been a different body to that which had been crucified. But why so? Surely the being who could still the waves (Mark iv. 39) and raise the dead (John xi. 48-44), could, at any time have taken any human form he liked.

Moreover, the reverend gentleman overlooks the fact that, on those occasions to which he refers, Christ appeared in both bodies; if, indeed, there were any difference between them. Thus we read that when Mary Magdalene saw him in the garden she at first took him to be "the gardener," and said unto him: "Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away." But when Jesus spake to her, "she turned herself, and saith unto him Rabboni, which is to say, Master" (John xx. 14-16). And when Cleopas and another disciple, on their way to Emmaus, were joined by Jesus, they knew him not; but "when he sat at meat with them, their eyes were opened, and they knew him, and he vanished out of their sight" (Luke xxiv. 15-18)—clothes as well as body. What

"spiritual embodiment" was there in the clothes? And what is meant by "their eyes were opened"? Had they been supernaturally blinded, or what?

Further, as to the "materialisation" of the body of Christ—whatever the rev. gentleman may mean by that word—it was, if the Gospels be true, the same *before, as it was after, the Resurrection*. For do we not read that, after the feeding of the multitude with five loaves and two fishes, Christ "constrained his disciples to get into a ship, and to go before him unto the other side"; that subsequently he transported himself to where they then were; that when they "saw him walking on the sea they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit"; and that their fear was not appeased until "Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid"? (Matt. xiv. 15-27). What more extraordinary story of supernaturalism than this is there in the Gospels? And, if the Gospels be true, what becomes of the doctrine that the body of the risen Christ was not the body that was crucified and buried?

That, according to the Gospels, the risen body was the body that had been crucified is beyond all doubt; for do we not read that—

"when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Christ and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be with you. And when he had so said, he showed them his hands and his side.....But Thomas, one of the twelve called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hand the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe. And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them. Then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you. Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side; and be not faithless but believing. And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God" (John xx. 19-28).

And let it not be forgotten that a crucified person was only fastened to the cross by nails that were driven through his hands and feet; and that, when Christ was upon the cross, "one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there-out blood and water" (John xix. 34).

A similar scene occurred on the evening of the day when the two disciples, who had gone to Emmaus, had returned to Jerusalem. They were telling their brother disciples what had happened to them when "Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and said unto them, Peace be unto you. But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit. And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself; handle me and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have. And when he had thus spoken he showed them his hands and his feet. And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, he said unto them Have ye here any meat? And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb. And he took it, and did eat before them" (Luke xxiv. 38-43).

How comes it that the rev. gentleman has ignored these plain statements?

The rev. gentleman bolsters up his assertion by quoting Sir Oliver Lodge, who says: "The body notoriously had not its old properties, for it appeared and disappeared, and penetrated walls." But, in so saying, he simply begs the question at issue, which is, "Are the Gospel stories true?" not "Do they contradict one another?" No one knows better than Sir Oliver does that scientifically they are false. He states a scientific fact when he tells us "that organic structures are subject to wear, tear, and renewal..... that the youth has no parts of the body with which he was born, nor will he retain any parts of his present body when he is middle-aged." But he does not attempt to explain how this "wear, tear, and renewal" of Christ's body could have taken

place during the few hours that it was in the tomb. In this instance, Sir Oliver speaks as a theologian, and not as a scientist.

If the body of the risen Christ were not the body that was crucified and buried, what need was there for the crucified body to have vanished from the tomb? And that it had vanished the Gospels plainly state. The angel who rolled back the stone from the entrance to the tomb said to Mary Magdalene, "Fear not ye; for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here; for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay." What other meaning can be attached to these words than that the Christ had vanished from the tomb in the body in which he was crucified and buried? (Mat. xxviii. 2-6).

To me the marvel is that nowadays sky-pilots admit, and pretend to explain, the manifold absurdities regarding Christ which are to be found in the Gospels—as if that which must be beyond human ken could possibly be understood and explained. In my young days people were taught to believe in the miraculous, that is, in the supernatural, *because it is incredible*. Then it was purely a matter of faith; for the Christian then said, as I have heard him say, "I believe the Bible, and if the Bible had told me that Jonah swallowed the whale, I should have believed it." All this goes to prove that the Gospel stories are stories, and nothing more.

J. W. DE CAUX.

Acid Drops.

The Bishop of London, whose gonius is so well-known, has discovered a solution of the coal-strike problem. All the miners and owners have to do is to think of the black diamonds as "God's coal." It will be all right then. Everybody can see that now it is pointed out. Bishop Ingram's salary ought to be doubled for this great discovery. One's only hesitation about the doubling is that as he loses on the first £10,000 he may lose still more on the second £10,000. Even some good things are not to be done in a hurry.

While admitting the transcendent value of the Bishop of London's discovery, we beg to observe that there is nothing novel in his economics. In this direction he is, in fact, platitudinous. He quotes Scripture to the effect that "the laborer is worthy of his hire." We believe all employers admit that. The question at issue is what is the proper amount of his hire—and the Bishop doesn't help to settle that. Similarly with regard to the Bishop's other principle that "the first charge upon any industry ought to be the wages of the people who carry it on." Doesn't the Bishop know it is so now? Does he imagine that "wages" is ever anything else than ready cash? The workman *must* be paid first. He can't afford to give credit. But the question remains of *how much* his wages should be. And here again the Bishop of London furnishes no assistance.

The vicar of St. John's, Newcastle, proposes that chapels should be provided on liners. "Such a sanctuary of silence," he says, "to which one could retreat from the chatter of the smoke room, or the laughter of the music rooms, or the shouts of deck games, would fill a real place in the economy of a great ship." Very likely. It would be a nice shelter for those who had "had too much" of anything.

"God alone," the Newcastle vicar says, "was forgotten in the planning of the *Titanic*, and He has made Himself remembered." Rather a rough way though, wasn't it, to drown all those women and children besides the hundreds of passengers and crew? The reverend gentleman's "God" might have intimated that he was still in existence in a far more merciful way. It is astonishing how vicious parsons and priests represent their Deity.

Mr. E. L. Scott, Keeper of the Muniments, Westminster Abbey, has made yet another discovery in relation to the *Titanic*. He writes that "it is a very strange and solemn fact" that the second lesson of the service on the day on which the *Titanic* sank was the Burial Lesson. This would be the last Bible lesson to which the drowned passengers listened. We do not quite see the strange and solemn

aspect of the coincidence. Probably Mr. Scott thinks it is more than a coincidence. Perhaps he believes that "Providence," knowing they would be drowned, prepared them for their fate by making them assist at their own funeral service. If that is not what Mr. Scott means, what does he mean? The strange thing about Mr. Scott's letter is the evidence it affords that when people get on religion they are almost certain to say something silly. And that is not so strange, after all. It is such a common experience—to the Freethinker.

Dr. Len Broughton, our latest American importation in the preaching line, is a quite worthy equal to Dr. Dixon. His theology is on the same crude level, and both are representative of the most ignorant type of ignorant evangelicalism. Such stories as those of Lazarus and Dives, for instance, he takes as an actual historic fact. And with it there goes, as a matter of course, belief in a literal hell. In a recent sermon he stated his conviction that people would recognise each other in heaven, and proved it by Dives' recognition of Lazarus. Such men as Dr. Broughton and Dr. Dixon are useful in their way. They should help to remind Freethinkers that the old Christianity is not yet dead, and that much of the professed liberality read of is only on the surface. And the way in which the preachers of a more "enlightened" form of Christianity support and welcome these men gives one the suspicion that a reversion to type would not be impossible if conditions were favorable.

We venture to correct Mr. Silvester Horne on a question of fact—not that we believe it will prevent him repeating the misstatement. Speaking at the Sunday School Union, he said it was curious how the question of the education of the child set people quarreling in the House of Commons. We beg to point out that there is no serious quarrel on this point in the House of Commons or elsewhere. The quarrel is over what kind of religion shall be given to the child, and that is an entirely different question. Properly speaking, it is not education at all. If the priests of the various denominations would leave the child alone there would be an end to the quarreling. People do not quarrel about education; they discuss it. They may commence by discussing religion; they invariably end by fighting about it. This is one of the glorious consequences of religious love and brotherhood.

Mr. Philip Snowden, blind to this obvious aspect of religious history, makes fatuous appeals to the Churches in the interests of peace. The Christian Church, he says, "has it in its hands to stop war." But the Christian Church has this power less in its hands to-day than at any other period of its history. And if during times when it wielded all but supreme power it did not make even for a lessening of war, why should any different result be expected to-day? Mr. Snowden might reply that the Churches are in a different position to-day; they are more under the influence of public opinion, and public opinion is more enlightened than it was. But if this be so, it is public opinion that we must look to for help, and the Churches will only move as this force operates. With this we should be inclined to agree, only it suggests the further question, Why bother about the Churches? Educate public opinion, and you may leave the Churches out of account. They will act as public opinion forces them to act, and will cry for peace or preach war on the pressure of the moment. This is a simple statement of fact, and Mr. Snowden is doing himself small credit in not seeing and acting upon it.

In his Presidential address to the Congregational Union, the Rev. Dr. Adeney raised the usual Nonconformist protest against the State patronage of religion. And it also resembled other protests from this, in claiming for themselves the very thing they were protesting against. He cited the case of the investiture of the Prince of Wales, when Nonconformist ministers stood side by side with the ministers of the Established Church. Logically, he should have protested against this identification of a State function with a particular religion. Instead of this, he expressed the hope that we should see on future occasions "the full flood of religious life, not merely the ritual of the privileged denomination, giving volume and dignity and significance to the great function." So that all that Dr. Adeney really wants is for the State to patronise his religion in addition to that of others. His objection is to a monopoly of the patronage. If all Christians receive a share he will be content. For the full flood of religious life that Jewish, Mohammedan, and other non-Christian priests are to take a hand in the "great function," but only that all Christians are to have an equal share. The rest of the nation may go hang for all Dr. Adeney cares.

We are glad to know that Seddon, the murderer, was a very good Christian—in his way, and went to glory in a most triumphant manner—when the hangman had done with him. The following bit of news is taken from the *Daily Chronicle* (May 10):—

"Particulars of Seddon's last moments were related by the Rev. Frank Swainson at the annual meeting of the Monthly Tract Society just held at the Church House, Westminster.

"He said that he had been summoned to the condemned cell when Seddon had refused to see the chaplain. Seddon, who had been a Christian worker, asked him what there was to show that there would be any retribution for sin. He (the speaker) then turned to the stories of the flood and the destruction of Sodom, and further to the 'green hill far away'; but Seddon said: 'Stop there, Jesus Christ was a good man, but, after all, only a man.'

"Then the memory of the tract entitled, 'God or Devil,' which had set aside doubts he himself once had in regard to the divinity of Christ, came to him, and he left a copy with the condemned man. When he returned to see the prisoner a few minutes before his execution, Seddon said, 'You have brought me back to my old faith, I know him to be my God and my Savior,' and he went to the scaffold ten minutes later, singing, 'Just as I am without one plea.'

Christianity is a religion that gives even murderers an assurance of a reserved seat at the Hallelujah Chorus.

Mrs. Mary Ellen Tanner has obtained a judicial separation from her husband, the Rev. William Huddleston Tanner, of Cornwallis-crescent, Clifton, and vicar of Dundry, on grounds of cruelty. The man of God is eighty years of age. He seems to have had a perfect craze for charging his wife with immorality. Sir Samuel Evans, the judge, described one of his letters as "filthy." But this sort of thing causes very little excitement nowadays. The superior morality of the clergy has long been a pricked bubble.

From the *Daily News* of May 10:—

"A coachman named James Harrison, who knelt on the bed and said prayers before savagely assaulting his wife, was committed for trial yesterday by the West Ham magistrates."

A novel instance of the efficacy of prayer.

The *Freethinker* is not a political journal, but freedom of the platform and the press is always our concern. We are also concerned about justice and fair-play. Consequently we consider the prosecution of Mr. Tom Mann a very partial proceeding while Unionist politicians are allowed, not only inside the House of Commons, but outside it, to talk treason and rebellion with impunity. The bulk of the working people of this country are not without reason for believing that Mr. Tom Mann is really prosecuted because he is a working-class politician. Moreover, as the language he was indicted for is rather ill-advised than criminal, it would have been considerate as well as politic to give him the benefit of the First Offenders' Act. In that case he would simply have been bound over to be of good behavior and to keep the peace. In the circumstances, six months' imprisonment seems to us a vindictive sentence. We imagine that the Home Secretary will find reason to shorten it; not out of any principle or good feeling, but on the ground that the Labor party is too powerful to offend gratuitously,—unlike those outcast Freethinkers.

Mr. C. L. Rothera, the City Coroner of Nottingham, presented some very unpleasant facts at a Convocation meeting at Church House. He stated that there were at least 300,000 children in the elementary schools of London who are regularly given alcohol. There was also a marked increase in drinking among working women. This is ill news indeed. We should like to know, for our part, whether this state of things is so creditable to Christianity, which is the established and endowed religion of England, as to justify it in sending Freethinkers to prison for "blasphemy"—which, by the way, was the very charge on which the Founder of Christianity was arrested and prosecuted?

Christian Churches are growing more and more bitter against everything of an unorthodox tendency on Sunday. Even the Pleasant Sunday Afternoons are now falling under condemnation. The Presbyterian Church of England is informed by its Committee on the State of Religion and Public Morals that there are some facts which "suggest that the great P. S. A. movement is not always a real adjunct to the religious work of the Church." Protest is made against "political meetings on the Lord's Day which make no effort to disguise their character, and Brotherhood and similar meetings, which in many cases are mainly political, though gathering in the name of religion." The advisability is

suggested of an inquiry as to whether these movements are not "becoming increasingly hostile to the Churches, and a hindrance to their work." We have long expected angry outbursts of this kind.

The Rev. Bernard J. Snell is a very good preacher, as preachers go, but, being what he is, he has a preacher's natural limitations. In a recent sermon, he said that he did not suggest that a man who did not believe in immortality could not be a good man, but it was much harder work for him. This is quite a Christian view of the matter, but it is quite wrong. A good man does not find it hard to be good, although it seems difficult to drive it out of a Christian's head that to be bad is to have a devil of a good time here; while to be otherwise involves privation, denial, and a deal of general discomfort. Of course, accounts will be squared in the next world—on the Dives and Lazarus plan—but while you are in the world to be good means more or less self-denial. We can assure Mr. Snell that Freethinkers do not find it any harder to be good than do Christians, while they have a much better reason for being so. Mr. Snell is under the delusion that life means nothing if it ends with this world. But the meaning of life is—life; and whether we live after death has really nothing to do with the question of goodness or badness. We live and we feel and we think, and our feelings and thoughts have reference to this world and no other.

We can, indeed, only consider a next world as at all desirable so long as we conceive it as similar to this one and peopled with the same kind of human nature. That is, we extend this world beyond the grave. We value the assumed next world in proportion as we have learned to value this one. No one who thought life a curse would long for its perpetuation; while the fact that some desire its perpetuation proves that they believe life itself to be a desirable thing. But this is not making the value of the present depend upon the future; the value of the future depends upon the present. And when Mr. Snell says that if this life be all, it would be wise to take short views and be very prudent, the answer is that it is seldom prudent to take short views, but that prudence—real, profitable prudence—consists in making our views as long as possible. Man's real happiness lies in self-development, and self-development of necessity involves others. In short, we commend to Mr. Snell the Ingersollian view—The place to be happy is here, the time to be happy is now; and, as you cannot be happy while others are miserable, make others happy likewise.

The *Methodist Times* says: "We boldly claim the permanent authority of St. Paul in behalf of the emancipation of women both in Church and State." "Boldly" seems an ill-chosen word. "We have the impudence" would be much nearer the truth of the situation.

General Booth, celebrating his eighty-third birthday at the Albert Hall, told his enthusiastic followers—"In a few days I am to undergo an operation which is to restore my vision, and make me a young man once more." The General might make money by advertising the operation which makes old men young again. A lot of elderly rich Christians would do anything to keep out of heaven, and pay half their fortunes (or more) for a new lease of life in *this* world.

Rev. T. Given Wilson, of St. Mary's, Stratford, E. London, seems to have a poor memory, which betrays him even in the brief course of half an hour's speech. He told the St. Mary's Brotherhood on a recent Sunday afternoon that he himself "claimed to be a freethinker." Later on he told them that "The anarchist was a freethinker. The thief was a freethinker. The debauchee was a freethinker..... Freethought was increasing because lax morality was increasing." The reverend gentleman's claim to be a Freethinker places him in very awkward company. Perhaps he will oblige us by being a little more explicit. Under which of these categories of freethinkers does he rank himself?

According to the Rev. A. L. Kitching, author of *Studies of Child Races in Central Africa*, the nearest equivalent for "God" amongst the Teso people is "hunchback." Do they mean that religion gives them the hump? We wonder.

Having got rid of President Diaz, who practically made modern Mexico, the Mexicans are plagued with the armed and bloody quarrels of various aspirants to the presidency; and "Providence" is treating them at the same time to earthquakes and volcanic eruptions.

Mr. George White, who died at Melksham lately, has left £100,000 to the Bishop of London's Fund. As this is the

testator's whole estate we judge that he was in a funk about kingdom-come, and considered the Bishop of London a person of influence at celestial headquarters.

"Why don't the workers of the land love the Churches?" This question was asked by Mr. G. J. Wardle, M.P., at one of the Congregational Union meetings. "Because," he replied, "the movement for bettering their conditions has come from outside and not from within the Churches. I myself was driven outside the Church because I took up these questions, and I found I could do the work better outside than I could from inside." Some of our readers will be glad to keep Mr. Wardle's confession by them.

Here is another "straight tip" to the same Congregational Union meeting—this time from the Rev. Fleming Williams. We quote from the *Daily News* (May 10) report:—

"He claimed that the people are developing a social conscience in the exact ratio in which the Churches are neglecting to cultivate it. The inevitable result will be our Churches will be left high and dry. The world will go on forgetting our existence. They will leave us to discuss our little theological conundrums, which, though of profound interest, hardly affect the great needs and wants of the world."

This is plain enough. But what, after all, does Mr. Fleming Williams want? Churches are not established and maintained in the name of sociology but in the name of religion.

The London Missionary Society's annual meeting was noticeable for one thing. It gave Dr. Wardlaw Thompson, the foreign secretary, an occasion to deplore "the prevailing apathy regarding missionary work" even "in the face of unprecedented opportunity." Sir William Mackworth Young, formerly Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab, said the same thing. He declared that "the apathy of Christian people in the matter of foreign missions was appalling." People are evidently finding out that promoting the welfare of their own nation is better than Christianising the "heathen" in foreign parts.

The Bristol and South Wales District meeting of the United Methodist Church was remarkable for two things; a sad confession of increasing debts and decreasing membership. We hail the occasion for both with great satisfaction, though the afflicted Church officials have our sympathy.

From the *Evening News*, May 9:—

"An archdeacon's wife has dressed and sold a thousand dolls a year in aid of a Central African mission. After all, a string of beads does not take long to affix, and the style would presumably be Central African."

Shocking! How on earth *did* this wicked paragraph creep into our contemporary's pages?

Mr. George Lansbury was one of the speakers at the Browning Hall Labor Week ceremonies. Some of his friends, he confessed, had expostulated with him for confusing Laborism with Christianity; and it seems to us that the expostulation was deserved. If the claims of Labor are worth anything they will stand without being mixed up with a number of theological doctrines that are fated to rejection one day, whether that day be earlier or later. And we suggest to Mr. Lansbury that his friends who told him that "the Christian Labor movement was merely an attempt on the part of Christians to chloroform the working classes and smother Socialism" were not very wide of the truth. This is part of the historic policy of the Christian Churches, and it is not likely to alter under the blandishments of Mr. Lansbury. Like many others, Mr. Lansbury talks much of the social zeal inspired by religious belief; but the kind of zeal inspired by religion is not likely to be of much permanent service to social reform. To know what is needed, to see how to get it, and to use it wisely when obtained, are requisite conditions of real progress, and those who cannot reach this point without religious "inspiration" stand very little chance of getting there with it. Mr. Lansbury's remark that "some Socialists are more or less Agnostic" has a quite religious ring about it, and evidences the usual religious obtuseness to facts.

"Cricket," says a Melbourne paper, "is peculiarly a Christian game. No pagan nation ever played it." Neither did Jesus Christ and the twelve apostles.

Mr. McKenna has been talking to the Newspaper Society on the law of libel. He strongly deprecates "vindictive damages." Why doesn't he say something against "vindictive" sentences on Freethinkers who incur the displeasure of Christians?—for that is all "blasphemy" comes to.

Mr. Foote's Engagements

Sunday, May 19, Rationalist Peace Society's Demonstration at Queen's (Minor) Hall.

May 26, N. S. S. Conference, Leeds.

To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1912.—Previously acknowledged, £137 9s. 8d. Received since:—John Grange, £2 2s.; E. Kirton, 5s.; W. A. Yates, 2s. 6d.; E. Vincent, 5s.

JOHN GRANGE, subscribing to the President's Honorarium Fund, writes: "It is superfluous to say that I have great pleasure in doing this. I am as eager as ever to devour the *Freethinker* each week. It has a freshness that is perennial. I trust it will endure to see me out, as it has long been an essential part of my mental life."

"S" (Sheffield).—We omit your name as you desire on the ground that "Christians are so very intolerant." They are, and that is one of our reasons for warring against their faith. Glad you find the *Freethinker* "just splendid."

W. H. DEAKIN.—Your "kindest regards" are passed over to Miss Vance. We will notice the interview with Pastor Russell next week.

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

H. PANKHURST.—We had a paragraph on the reverend T. Given-Wilson's utterance in type already. We note with pleasure that the West Ham Branch has passed a resolution calling on him to withdraw or justify. We don't suppose he will do either, so it is well that we treated him in the general spirit of our "Acid Drops."

ARTHUR STOREE.—For a cheap book you could hardly do better than get R. R. Marett's *Anthropology* (1s.) in the "Home University Library." It will give you references to larger works if you wish to pursue the subject further.

W. C. INGLIS.—Much obliged for your trouble, but May-Day is a good deal behind now; in fact, it belongs to history,—so fast do things move nowadays; still, we have found your letter interesting and encouraging.

E. B.—Many thanks for cuttings.

W. A. YATES writes: "May I say in all sincerity that you are the man in all England for whom I have the greatest admiration and respect. Why? Simply because it was you who first let in the chastening light of Freethought into my darkened, religion-saturated mind." This correspondent is informed that the ex-priest he inquires about got engaged by the Unitarians. Family reasons, we fancy.

J. THACKRAY.—Quite so. The Powell case was reported in the *National Reformer*, and Mrs. Besant (then an aggressive Atheist), who always had a kind heart, looked after the "murderer's" wife and children. Had we been on the jury Powell would not have been convicted. He struck an unintended blow under great provocation.

T. W.—Thanks for the Paine reference.

J. C. GOODFELLOW.—Your suggestion shall be borne in mind, but good portraits (we wouldn't print poor ones) are very expensive. Thanks for the fresh list.

T. A. JACKSON.—We are postponing our remarks on your case in order to include them in the *Freethinker* that will be current on the date of the Leeds Conference. This will be for the best.

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.

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

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

Sugar Plums

There was a much improved audience at South Place Chapel on Sunday evening, and Mr. Foote's lecture was followed with keen attention and much applauded. Mr. Cohen, who occupied the chair, made a successful appeal for a good collection. He also elicited some questions from the audience, but there was no set discussion.

This is "Peace Sunday" (May 19). During the week the International Peace Congress has been holding its meetings at Caxton Hall. This makes "Peace Sunday" all the more appropriate. Heaps of sermons will be preached to-day on the so-called Prince of Peace, and it will be declared from countless pulpits that all the peace there is in the world is owing to Christianity. But a very different story will be told in the Queen's (Minor) Hall, where a meeting is to be held by the Rationalist Peace Society. Mr. J. M. Roberts, M.P., occupies the chair, and the list of speakers includes Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner, Miss K. B. Kough, Mr. Herbert Burrows, Mr. G. W. Foote, Mr. G. Greenwood, M.P., and Mr. S. H. Swinny, the Positivist leader. This is an excellent bill of fare, and the admission to all seats is free. The hall should therefore be crowded.

Councillor A. B. Moss contributed last week a long and powerful letter to the "Prayer Debate" which is going on in the *Camberwell Borough Advertiser*. This debate is bound to do good. It is sure to set a number of people thinking.

Will some "saint" in the neighborhood post his *Freethinker* weekly, when he has done with it, to Mr. R. C. Young, West Ham Union, Leytonstone, N.E.? Also let us know he is doing it—as we don't want half a dozen "saints" doing it in ignorance of each other.

The National Secular Society's Annual Conference takes place on Whit-Sunday at Leeds. The business sessions, morning and afternoon, are for members only. The evening public meeting in the large and handsome Assembly Hall, Briggate, will be free, of course, to all comers; and addresses will be delivered by the President (Mr. G. W. Foote) and Mr. C. Cohen, Mr. J. T. Lloyd, Mr. W. Heaford, Mr. A. B. Moss, Mr. F. Davies, Mr. John Grange, and Miss K. B. Kough. The Metropole Hotel will be headquarters, and delegates and visitors who want to secure accommodation there or elsewhere should inform Mr. G. Weir, 59 Elford-grove, Leeds, as early as possible. There will be the usual luncheon for delegates and visitors between the morning and afternoon meetings. There will also be an excursion on Whit-Monday to the quaint and historical town of Knaresborough on the river Nidd, celebrated for its old castle, dropping well, and cave of Eugene Aram. A hot luncheon is being arranged there at 2s. a head.

We repeat our invitation to the Secular party to make this Leeds Conference the occasion of a strong rally. The police are on the warpath again, and they appear to have the active sympathy of the Home Secretary. There has been a fresh outburst of police attack in the Midlands. Some members of the Nottingham Branch of the N. S. S. went over to Ilkeston on Sunday and held an open-air meeting there which lasted for nearly two hours in excellent order. Then a heckler, possibly with the knowledge of the police, came and created some unpleasantness, but no serious trouble looked likely, but the police took the opportunity of interfering. Mr. F. Chasty and Mr. D. C. Muirhead went to the station with the police and were treated in a most peremptory manner. It is alleged in the *Nottingham Evening News* that "blasphemous expressions of the most outrageous character were used," but Mr. Chasty informs us that these were "untrue or distorted." The charge is said to be "profanity and blasphemy"—which is nonsense. We have advised the defendants how to act, and guaranteed on behalf of the N. S. S. the cost of employing a solicitor. That is all we can say at the moment. We must add, by way of conclusion, that these police attacks—evidently proceeding on a general plan—compel us to warn the Secular party that a period of difficulty and danger is probably approaching.

Amongst the announcements for next autumn we note the *Life of Swinburne* by Mr. Theodore Watts-Dunton. We hope it will not be written in the spirit that caused Mr. Watts-Dunton to let a Church of England parson mouth Christian shibboleths over Swinburne's coffin. Another announcement for the autumn is the *Letters of George Meredith*. Lord Morley was to have edited this collection, but he has found himself too busy to do it—just as he was too busy to write a memorial volume on another old friend, James Cotter Morrison. The Meredith family is seeing the work through the press. It will be in two volumes, and contain four unpublished portraits. Copies of our own letters from Meredith were supplied to his son in response to the public invitation, and in acknowledging them Mr. Meredith junior called them "an important series." If they are not adequately represented in the collection, we shall have to take steps to show from them how Meredith stood towards Freethought.

Modern Materialism.—IX.

(Continued from p. 294.)

"Harmonious order governing eternally continuous progress—the web and woof of matter and force interweaving by slow degrees, without a broken thread, that veil which lies between us and the infinite—that universe which alone we know or can know; such is the picture which science draws of the world, and in proportion as any part of that picture is in unison with the rest, so may we feel sure that it is rightly painted."—PROFESSOR T. H. HUXLEY, *Lay Sermons*, 1874, p. 278.

"This tendency on the part of matter to organise itself, to grow into shape, to assume definite forms in obedience to the definite action of force, is, as I have said, all-pervading. It is in the ground on which you tread, in the water you drink, in the air you breathe. Incipient life, as it were, manifests itself throughout the whole of what we call inorganic nature."

"In the eye of science *the animal body* is just as much the product of molecular force as the stalk and ear of corn, or as the crystal of salt or sugar."—PROFESSOR J. TYNDALL, "Scientific Materialism," *Fragments of Science*, 1876, pp. 415-7.

"Can another body, then, avail to stay the hand of death, and shall man by a second nervous system escape from the ruin of the first? We think not. The laws connecting consciousness with changes in the brain are very definite and precise, and their necessary consequences are not to be evaded by any such means."—PROFESSOR W. K. CLIFFORD, *Lectures and Essays*, 1886, p. 175.

"To me the conclusion has for many years commended itself—that the materialist and mechanical scheme of nature (including man's nature), elaborated by physical science, is true and trustworthy, whatever there may be outside and beyond the possibilities of human knowledge."—SIR RAY LANKESTER, *Modern Science and the Illusions of Professor Bergson*, 1912, p. 11.

HUXLEY, Tyndall, and Clifford now carried on a brilliant, if desultory, warfare with the forces of superstition. Huxley and Tyndall, however, while doing valuable work in popularising Materialism, always repudiated the name, in this, unfortunately, following Spencer down the wrong turning, thereby involving themselves, as we shall see, in a tissue of contradictions. Clifford here parted company with Huxley and Tyndall, and carried evolution to its logical conclusion in materialistic Atheism.

Herbert Spencer, who moulded the bullets for Huxley and Tyndall to shoot, remained in the background, leaving others to deal with the enemy. Only once did he descend into the arena. This was in the *Nineteenth Century* (November, 1895) in reply to Lord Salisbury's attack on evolution in his Address to the British Association in 1895. And then only after fruitless appeals to others to administer the physic.

It was in applying the methods of Materialism to the problems of life, mind, and consciousness that the bitterest opposition was shown, and this was wholly due to religion. As Tyndall himself observed:—

"Were not man's origin implicated, we should accept without a murmur the derivation of animal and vegetable life from what we call inorganic nature. The conclusion of pure intellect points this way and no other. But this purity is troubled by our interests in this life, and by our hopes and fears regarding the life to come. Reason is traversed by the emotions, anger rising in the weaker heads to the height of suggesting that the compendious shooting of the inquirer would be an act agreeable to God and serviceable to man."*

Tyndall points out that our earth was at one period in a nebulous, or molten, state, during which it was impossible for life to exist. We now find it covered with a luxuriant growth of vegetable and animal life. "Did creative energy pause?" asks Tyndall, until this matter had condensed sufficiently for a crust to gather round the planet, for air and water to become isolated, seas and soil to be formed; until the sun's rays had become tempered to be chemically fit for the decompositions necessary to vegetable life? "Having waited through those æons until the proper conditions had set in, did it send the fiat forth, 'Let there be Life!'" (p. 459). He puts the creative hypothesis on one side as wholly unneces-

sary. Again, in his article on "Vitality," written as early as 1865, he answers a similar question:—

"Supposing a planet carved from the sun, set spinning round an axis, and revolving round the sun at a distance from him equal to that of our earth, would one of the consequences of its refrigeration be the development of organic forms. I lean to the affirmative. *Structural* forces are certainly in the mass, whether or not those forces reach to the extent of forming a plant or an animal. In an amorphous drop of water lie latent all the marvels of crystalline force; and who will set limits to the possible play of molecules in a cooling planet? If these statements startle, it is because matter has been defined and maligned by philosophers and theologians, who were equally unaware that it is, at bottom, essentially mystical and transcendental."*

Although every evolutionist believes that life has developed from matter by natural means at some period of the earth's history, and although some scientists—notably Dr. Charlton Bastian—have claimed to have observed the evolution of life, in the laboratory, from non-living matter, yet the great majority of scientists are not satisfied with the proofs advanced. Some of them believe that there is only one phase in the history of a planet when life evolves automatically from inorganic, or unorganised matter—without the aid of a living germ. But many others, and their numbers are growing year by year, believe that the synthesis of life in the laboratory is only a matter of time. With this phase of the subject we shall deal more fully later on.

The opponents of evolution were not slow to seize upon this want of experimental evidence to declare that the origin of life was due to the direct action of God, and that science was quite incompetent to account for the origin of life, consciousness, and mind. But, says Tyndall in his Belfast Address, although science has not produced life by laboratory methods,—

"By an intellectual necessity I cross the boundary of the experimental evidence, and discern in that Matter which we, in our ignorance of its latent powers, and notwithstanding our professed reverence for its Creator, have hitherto covered with opprobrium, the promise and potency of all terrestrial life."

And he further asks:—

"Divorced from matter, where is life? Whatever our *faith* may say, our *knowledge* shows them to be indissolubly joined. Every meal we eat, and every cup we drink, illustrates the mysterious control of Mind by Matter."

But, as we have observed, Tyndall followed Spencer in his repudiation of the name of Materialist, for which he gives the following reason:—

"In affirming that the growth of the body is mechanical, and that thought, as exercised by us, has its correlative in the physics of the brain, I think the position of the 'Materialist' is stated, as far as that position is a tenable one. I think the materialist will be able finally to maintain this position against all attacks; but I do not think, in the present condition of the human mind, that he can pass beyond this position. I do not think he is entitled to say that his molecular groupings, and motions, explain everything. In reality, they explain nothing."

And again:—

"You cannot satisfy the human understanding in its demand for logical continuity between molecular processes and the phenomena of consciousness. This is a rock on which Materialism must inevitably split whenever it pretends to be a complete philosophy of life."†

When Tyndall is advocating materialistic methods and theories, he is always clear and logical, but when he attempts to repudiate the name, he becomes vacillating and confused in the extreme.

For instance, we are told that the microscope is powerless to show us the intimate structure of matter; we know that the diamond, the amethyst, and countless other crystals have a structure, but it

* Tyndall, *Fragments of Science*, 1876, p. 352.

* *Fragments of Science*, p. 464.

† *Fragments of Science*, pp. 420-503.

cannot be seen with the highest powers of the microscope. Tyndall says:—

"It cannot be too distinctly borne in mind that between the microscopic, and the true molecular limit, there is room for infinite permutations and combinations.....When duly pondered, the complexity of the problem raises the doubt, not of the power of our instrument, for that is *nil*, but whether we ourselves possess the intellectual elements which will enable us to grapple with the ultimate structural energies of nature."*

But, on another page, we are told,—

"Our difficulty is not with the *quality* of the problem, but with its *complexity*, and this difficulty might be met by the simple expansion of the faculties we now possess. Given this expansion, with the necessary molecular data, and the chick might be deduced as rigorously and as logically from the egg, as the existence of Neptune from the disturbances of Uranus, or as conical refraction from the undulatory theory of light" (p. 418).

Then we have a couple of pages devoted to showing the helplessness of the Materialist to explain the facts of consciousness, winding up with the anti-climax, "Perhaps the mystery may resolve itself into knowledge at some future day" (p. 421).

If we do not "possess the intellectual elements" to enable us to grapple with the problem, how can the difficulty be solved by a "simple expansion of the faculties we now possess," so that "the mystery may resolve itself into knowledge at some future day"? Or, in other words, "how can we experience an expansion of a faculty we do not possess?" Such was the inextricable confusion and contradiction Tyndall introduced into the subject through accepting Spencer's "Unknowable."

Before dealing with Huxley's treatment of Materialism, we should like to call attention to a book just published, which opens a new epoch in the history of Materialism in this country. It is entitled *Modern Science and the Illusions of Professor Bergson*. The author is Mr. Hugh S. R. Elliott, the editor of the Letters of John Stuart Mill; and contains a preface by Sir Ray Lankester. The work is an attack upon the philosophy of Professor Bergson, who has been so loudly trumpeted by the religious press as the "great French philosopher," the new champion of religion, who is, once for all, going to destroy Atheism and Materialism, and cast them to the void. The importance of this work lies not so much in its refutation of the sophistries of Bergson, but in the fact that it accepts Scientific Materialism as the only true and solid foundation of science, and that this view is endorsed by the acknowledged leader of science in this country, Sir Ray Lankester. For the first time in our history do we find the names of Lamettrie, Vogt, Cabanis, Moleschott, Feuerbach, and Buchner mentioned without scorn and contempt, in a work prefaced by our leading scientist.

Buchner's *Force and Matter* is described as "a brilliantly written polemic," and Cabanis, the founder of Scientific Materialism, is spoken of as "the distinguished physiologist."

The author declares that "As far as we are concerned, matter is matter, force is force; the Materialism of science is a sound hypothesis, and no other hypothesis has yet been shown to be sound" (p. 157). And again:—

"For, while in philosophy there have been elements and tendencies of all kinds, in science there has only been one tendency—that towards Materialism. The history of scientific discoveries is a history of Materialistic successes: for no scientific discovery has ever been made that is not based upon Materialism and mechanism" (p. 167).

We think this work will prove a decisive factor in the history of Materialism; it will encourage the weaker scientists who accept Materialism, but disavow the name, to pluck up courage and openly proclaim their principles.

W. MANN.

(To be continued.)

Old Testament History.—X.

(Continued from p. 299.)

THE table of the succession of the kings of Judah and Israel, continued from the last, is given below. Azariah of Judah (769 B.C.) is stated to have reigned 52 years (viz., down to 717 B.C.). This king was succeeded by his son Jotham (16 years), and the latter by his son Ahaz (16 years); but we find from the Assyrian inscriptions that Azariah was king in 738 B.C., and Ahaz was king in 734 B.C. The reign of Azariah has therefore to be curtailed, and that of Jotham limited to 3 years. The last-named king is, however, stated to have governed the kingdom during the latter part of his father's reign. Similarly, the reign of Pekah, king of Israel, who is said to have reigned 20 years, has to be reduced.

B.C.	JUDAH.	Years.	B.C.	ISRAEL.	Years.
769	... Azariah	... 33	748	... Zachariah	... 5
			748	... Shallum	... 08
			747	... Menahem	... 10
737	... Jotham	... 3	737	... Pekabiah	... 1
			736	... Pekah	... 5
735	... Ahaz	... 11			
			732	... Hoshea	... 10
724	... Hezekiah	... 29			
			722	... Samaria captured	

Azariah of Judah, we are told, was one of the few model kings who "did that which was right in the sight of Yahveh." And as a reward for this exemplary conduct, the god Yahveh "smote the king, so that he was a leper unto the day of his death, and dwelt in a lazar house" (2 Kings xv. 5). This can scarcely be called kind of Azariah's god; but the affliction was, no doubt, sent in accordance with the Bible statement that "whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth." It is at least a satisfaction to know that the Lord's ways are not as our ways. The mendacious writer of the Chronicles, however, has fabricated a story to the effect that Azariah—whom he calls Uziah—took a censur, and went into the temple to burn incense, which only "the priests, the sons of Aaron, that are consecrated to burn incense," were permitted to do; that the high priest (whom he calls Azariah) and fourscore other priests withstood him in the temple; that he still persisted, and that to prevent him doing what was unlawful the god Yahveh smote him with leprosy (2 Chron. xxvi. 16—20). In this lying story, fabricated to justify the "Lord God," the words "the priests, the sons of Aaron" are sufficient to prove its fictitious character. There were no priests, the descendants of Aaron, in existence then or at any other time; they existed only in imagination—in the Pentateuch. The name Uziah, given in the Chronicles, was never borne by Azariah, though we find it thrice used in the account in 2 Kings (xv. 13, 30, 32), probably taken by a copyist from the Chronicles.

In 2 Kings xv. 19—20 we are told that in the reign of Menahem of Israel "there came against the land Pul the king of Assyria: and Menahem gave Pul a thousand talents of silver, that he might be with him to confirm the kingdom in his hand.....So the king of Assyria turned back, and stayed not in the land." This is historical in all except the name of the Assyrian king. It was Tiglath-pileser III. who came into Palestine, to whom this money was sent, and who is correctly named in verse 29. An inscription, it is true, has been discovered in which this king is called Pul; but it is not a contemporary record, being dated some two centuries later—a fact which shows how late some of the Hebrew records were compiled. The inscriptions of Tiglath-pileser are in a somewhat mutilated condition; so that it is difficult to get a connected account of his operations in Syria and Canaan. The following are some fragmentary extracts:—

- 739 B.C.—"the tribute of the kings.....Azariah of Judah....."
- 738 B.C.—".....Judah.....of Azariah, my hand greatly captured....."
- 738 B.C.—".....the tribute of Reson of Syria, Menahem of Samaria, Iliron of Tyro."
- 734 B.C.—"The tribute of.....Salamanu of Moab.....Metinti of Askalon, Jeho-abaz of Judah," etc.

* *Fragments of Science*, pp. 448-9.

732 B.C.—“.....the land of Beth-Omri.....a selection of the goods and furniture of its people to Assyria I sent. Pekah their king I put to death: Hoshea I appointed to rule over them. Ten talents of gold and a thousand talents of silver as tribute I received from him, and to Assyria I sent.”

From the foregoing historical record the first point to be noticed is, that Menahem of Samaria was king in 738 B.C., and Hoshea became king in 732: yet between these two dates there reigned, according to the Bible history, Pekahiah for 2 years and Pekah for 20 years—which, as Euclid says, “is absurd.”

In the next place, we see the real name of Azariah of Judah, which is written “Azri-yahu,” the Hebrew being “Azar-yahu.”

Moreover, we find that the full name of Ahaz of Judah was “Jeho-ahaz,” the first half having been omitted by the compilers of the book of Kings, probably to distinguish him from another Jehoahaz who reigned later. Furthermore, we learn that the Bible account of the death of Pekah and the accession of Hoshea is incorrect. In 2 Kings xv. 30 we read:—

“And Hoshea the son of Elah made a conspiracy against Pekah the son of Remaliah, and smote him, and slew him, and reigned in his stead.”

Nothing is said in 2 Kings of Tilgath-pileser coming to Samaria, and deposing the reigning king and setting up another.

The next Assyrian king who came to Palestine, according to the Bible account, was Shalmaneser. Hoshea, it is stated, had paid tribute “year by year” to this king, and had then ceased to do so. “Against him came up Shalmaneser king of Assyria,” who “went up to Samaria, and besieged it for three years.” At the end of this period “the king of Assyria took Samaria, and carried Israel away into Assyria” (2 Kings xvii. 3–6). Furthermore, “the king of Assyria brought men from Babylon, and from Cuthah, and from Avva, and from Hamath, and from Sepharvaim, and placed them in the cities of Samaria instead of the children of Israel: and they possessed Samaria, and dwelt in the cities thereof” (2 Kings xvii. 24). The king of Assyria here mentioned is said to be Shalmaneser IV.; but the latter king was succeeded by Sargon in 722 B.C., and it was Sargon who captured Samaria (722 B.C.), not Shalmaneser. The new people placed in Samaria, it is further stated, “knew not the manner of the god of the land,” and so did not worship him in the customary manner; consequently “Yahveh sent lions among them, killing some of them.” In this dilemma they sent to the king of Assyria asking that one of the priests who had been carried away might be sent to teach them. With this request the king complied, and a priest was sent who “came and dwelt in Bethel, and taught them how they should fear Yahveh,” with the result that “they feared Yahveh, and served their own gods.” It is needless to say that this story of the lions, etc., is a fabrication. The people of the kingdom of Israel had from the first served the more ancient gods of Canaan, and every one of their kings had done “that which was evil in the sight of Yahveh” without anything special happening to them. The lions story was the invention of the post-exilic editor, who in this chapter makes the deportment of Israel the subject of a homily for the edification of the Jews of his day and all future generations. The following are a few short extracts:—

“And it was so, because the children of Israel had sinned against Yahveh their god, which brought them up out of the land of Egypt.....and had feared other gods.....and they built them high places in all their cities.....and they set them up pillars and Asherim upon every high hill and under every green tree: and there they burnt incense in all the high places.....and wrought wicked things to provoke Yahveh to anger: and they served idols, whereof Yahveh had said unto them, Ye shall not do this thing.....And they rejected his statutes, and his covenant that he made with their fathers.....And they forsook all the commandments of Yahveh their god, and made them molten images, even two calves, and made an Asherah, and worshiped all the host of heaven, and served Baal. And they caused

their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire, and used divinations and enchantments.....Therefore Yahveh was very angry with Israel, and removed them out of his sight: there was none left but the tribe of Judah only.....So Israel was carried away out of their own land to Assyria, unto this day” (2 Kings xvii. 7–23).

The words “unto this day” refer to the days of the compiler, two or three centuries after the return from the Exile in Babylon. After the capture of Samaria the book of Kings has nothing more to say of the kingdom of Israel, all the remaining chapters being devoted to the kings of Judah. One would be led to think from this complete silence that all the Israelites of the northern kingdom had been carried away to Assyria, and their cities filled with foreigners; but such was not the case. From the inscriptions of Sargon we learn the exact number of Israelites that were deported. In one of these records that king says:—

“In the beginning of my reign, with the assistance of the Sun-god who helped me to vanquish my enemies the city of Samaria I besieged and captured, and 27,280 of its inhabitants I carried away captive to Assyria..... and in their place I put men to live there whom my hand had conquered. I set my governor over them, and laid upon them the tribute imposed by one of the kings who had preceded me.”

These twenty-seven thousand captives consisted, no doubt, chiefly of young men and women who were considered strong enough to make such a long journey, and were taken only from the capital city of the kingdom. Upon this subject Professor Sayce says:—

“The comparatively small number of Israelites who were carried into captivity shows that Sargon contented himself with removing only those persons and their families who had taken part in the revolt against him.The greater part of the population was allowed to remain in its native land. This fact disposes of the modern theories which assume that the whole of the Ten Tribes were carried away.”

The Rev. Professor appears to have forgotten that the “modern theories” are all based upon the statements made in 2 Kings—which were religiously believed to be fact—and that those theories have to do merely with the supposed identity of “the lost ten tribes.” It was not until the discovery and decipherment of the cuneiform records that it was known that only a small portion of the ten tribes—probably less than one-tenth—had been deported to Assyria and never heard of again. As a matter of history, the Israelites of the kingdom of Samaria, two years later, felt themselves strong enough to unite with the kings of Hamath, Arpad, and Damascus, in revolting from the Assyrian yoke: in consequence of which the city of Samaria was a second time captured by Sargon, and the ringleaders punished (720 B.C.). After the latter date the kings of Israel or Samaria continued as before, notwithstanding the deportment of the number stated, and we find the reigning king of Samaria named in the inscriptions of three later Assyrian kings, as paying tribute, just the same as the reigning king of Judah. The reason why no further mention is made in 2 Kings of the kingdom of Israel is probably due to the fact that some non-Israelitish people had been placed in Samaria by Sargon. This small element, however, would in the course of time be absorbed in the greatly preponderant population of Israel. The Bible statement which implies that no priests were left in the kingdom of Israel is simply ridiculous. There was no dearth of them, more especially at the two great places of sacrifice—Dan and Bethel.

With regard to the men placed in Samaria, it is most probable that they were all drawn from the neighboring cities of Syria conquered by Sargon. One of those mentioned, Hamath, is correct: Babylon and the others named (which are said to be cities of Babylonia) are quite out of the question. It was not until twelve years later that Sargon became king of Babylon.

The important events in the reign of Hezekiah (whose name appears in the table) must be left to the next paper.

ABRACADABRA.

A "Naming."

ON Sunday evening an interesting little ceremony took place at South-place Institute before Mr. Foote's lecture.

The Chairman, Mr. C. Cohen, announced that, according to custom, Mr. Foote would publicly "name" an infant. This was the baby daughter of Mr. and Mrs. H. Walter (née Florence Foote), and Mr. G. W. Foote's first grandchild.

Mr. Foote, in introducing the little one, remarked that Freethinkers had no desire to ape the ceremony of a faith they had renounced; but the naming of a child had some importance, inasmuch as the birth of every unit of humanity was of importance to the race, and the public naming of this particular child would be of no less interest to the audience from the fact that she was related to him; it was simply the introduction of the little child to those who were most likely to become her friends and companions in her future life. No godparents were needed to make public vows they never intended to keep. The names chosen by the child's parents, "Kathleen Alma Edith," would be recognised by those present as the names of three women who were workers in the Freethought cause. He made no promises for the child, but he did not think the day would ever come when she would have reason to regret having been held in his arms and introduced to a company of reasonable people. "Her Majesty, the Baby" gave evidence of her heredity by comporting herself with equanimity and fortitude on the occasion of her first appearance on a public platform, and smilingly indicated that she had met the speaker before.

The audience evinced their appreciation of this interlude by a round of hearty applause, and Mr. Foote then proceeded with his lecture.

K. B. K.

TWO MEMORIES.

An hour before the great bulk of the *Titanic* broke in two and sank to the bottom of the Atlantic the women and children in the drifting lifeboats heard the ship's band playing the most familiar, the most moving of hymns. At such a time, with the water placid and lighted dimly by the untroubled stars, the effect of this sacred air upon the hearers on the sea, helpless to aid and not knowing their own fate, must have been agonising. What anguish could be greater than theirs? Of the dreadful experience it was the most harrowing incident. They will never hear the hymn again but the hour, the scene, the sacrifice, will return.

It is a relief to turn to an occasion with less of a tragedy in it, and as much heroism, when a band played on a ship's deck while her gallant crew cheered in the shadow of death. It was on that day in 1889 when the hurricane was raging in Samoa harbor. The German flagship *Adler* had driven on a reef and the gunboat *Eber* had struck and turned over. The *Nipsic*, escaping the reef, had stranded on the beach, and the *Vandalia's* hull was submerged on the ragged coral, her survivors in the rigging. Inch by inch the British corvette *Calliope* was fighting her way out in the teeth of the hurricane to the harbor mouth, while the men on the *Trenton*, which was beyond control in the terrible sweep of the gale, looked on at the struggle, oblivious of their own peril. The *Calliope* was straining by. She was gaining! She would make the open sea! Then the band of the *Trenton* struck up the "Star Spangled Banner," and her men lined the rail and above the hurricane their cheering was heard. The *Trenton* drove ashore as the *Calliope* weathered the reef and went out to sea. It is a glorious memory.—*New York "Sun."*

CHRISTOLOGY.

It can be proved that our Christology is mummified mythology, and legendary lore, which have been palmed off upon us in the *Old Testament* and the *New*, as divine revelation uttered by the very voice of God. We have the same conversion of myth into history in the *New Testament* that there is in the *Old*—the one being effected in a supposed fulfilment of the other! Mythos and history have changed places once, and have to change them again before we can understand their right relationship, or real significance. In the various aspects of the divine child, born of the Virgin Mother,—the child of prophecy that Herod sought to slay,—the Christ in conflict with Satan as his natural enemy; the Christ who transforms in the waters, and is transfigured on the Mount; the Christ who is the caster-out of demons; the Christ who sends the devils into the herd of swine; the Christ who descends into Hades, or the earth, for three days, to come forth, like Jonah, or as Jonah, from the belly of Hades, or the great fish, the dragon of the waters; who breaks his way through the under-world, as the conqueror

of darkness and disease, death and devil; as the savior of souls, and leader into light; in all these, and other mythical phases, the Christ is none other than the soli-lunar hero, identical with Khunsu, with Samson, with Horus, with Heracles, with Krishna, with Jonah, or with our own familiar Jack the giant-killer. It is just as easy to prove that an historic Christ never existed as it is to demonstrate that the mermaid, or the moon-calf, the sphinx, or the centaur, never lived. That is, by showing how they were composed as chimeras, and what they were intended for as ideographic types that never did, and never could, have a place, in natural history. For example, Pliny in his natural history describes the *moon-calf* as a monster that is engendered by a woman only. This chimera of superstition was originally the amorphous child of the mother-moon, when represented by the cow that gave birth to the moon-calf. This moon-calf had the same origin and birth in phenomena as any other child of the Virgin Mother; and the mythical Christ is equally the monster, or chimera, that is engendered of the woman only. This is acknowledged when certain of the Christian Fathers accounted for the virgin motherhood of the historical Jesus, by asserting that certain females, like the vulture, could conceive without the male. For the vulture was the Egyptian type of the virgin-mother, Neith, who boasts in the inscription at Sais, that she did bring forth without the male! Hor-Apollo explains that the Egyptians delineated a vulture to signify the mother, because there is no male in this kind of creature, the female being impregnated by the wind—the wind that becomes the Holy Ghost, or *gust*, when Mary was overshadowed and insufflated.

In his Apology, Justin Martyr tells the Romans that by "by declaring the Logos, the first-begotten of God, our Master Jesus Christ, to be born of a virgin mother, without any human mixture, and to be crucified and dead, and to have risen again and ascended into heaven, we say no more than what you say of those whom you style the sons of Jove." That was true. So far as the mythos went the Christians followed and repeated it after the Pagans; but being uninitiated A-Gnostics they continued the mythos as a human history, which made all the difference. The relative positions of those who knew and those who did not know may be illustrated by the man in the moon. That popular figure of speech did not originate in any human reality, but in telling the story without the Gnostic clue the mythos would become a human history; and Justus is in the position of a simpleton who would persuade the learned men of Rome that the man in the moon is a human being, and that the celestial virgin had brought forth Time in person, as the child of the Eternal in a cave by the road-side near Bethlehem, by which means the non-existent had become humanly extant. Naturally, the knowers assumed the mental attitude of the right forefinger laid beside the nose!

Such are the mythical bases upon which historic Christianity has reared its superstructure and built its Babel, with the view of reaching heaven by means of this, the loftiest monument of human folly ever raised on earth.—*Gerald Massey, "Lunolatry."*

The *Sheffield Daily Independent* (May 9) reports the opening of a Wesleyan bazaar at Barnsley by Mr. Joseph Walton, barrister, of Saltburn, the son of the member for the division, Sir Joseph Walton, Bart., and "alluded to as the prospective member for the division"—from which we see how these good, self-denying Christians keep a nice thing for themselves when they can lay hands on it. But all this would not justify a paragraph in this department of the *Freethinker*. What we really want to draw attention to is Mr. Walton's reluctant tribute to the spread of Atheism. We take the following from the *Independent* report:—

"The indifference to religion which was being manifested was very serious, and it was time, he thought, when a strong man, either a layman or minister of the circuit, should give a lead and try if possible to create more interest among the vast body of the people who appeared so apathetic. Every day they saw the number of atheists increasing, and meetings were held every Sunday in the country when everything contrary to Christianity was being preached. Really, he believed they were reaching a crisis. There was a very great responsibility resting upon the churches and chapels, and they should rise to their duty."

We note Mr. Walton's admission with great pleasure. We also venture to hope that the churches and chapels will take his advice. The more Atheism is attacked the more it flourishes. It is Christianity that always stands to lose by discussion.

Sabbatarians are trying to stop all Sunday entertainments including cinematograph pictures, at Niagara Town. Why don't they agitate to have the Falls stopped on Sunday?

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday, and be marked "Lecture Notice" if not sent on postcard.

LONDON.

INDOOR.

QUEEN'S (MINOR) HALL (Langham-place, W.): Rationalist Peace Society's Demonstration.

OUTDOOR.

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

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): 3.15, A. B. Moss, "Prayer and Science."

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

ISLINGTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Finsbury Park): 11.15, Mr. Davidson, a Lecture.

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (Ridley-road, High-street): Mrs. Boyce, 11.30, "Does Religion Save the People?" 7, "Feed My Lambs."

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

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (outside Maryland Point Station, Stratford, E.): 7, J. Rowney, "The Sermon on the Mount."

WOOD GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Jolly Butchers Hill, opposite Public Library): 7, Mr. Allison, "Is Civilisation in Danger?"

COUNTRY.

OUTDOOR.

GRIMSBY (Freeman-street Market): Joseph A. H. Bates—Sunday, May 19, at 7.30, "An Old Story and a New Interpretation"; Monday, at 8, "Before the Dawn—and After"; Tuesday, 21, at 8, "Fond Paradoxes."

HULL (Paragon Square): Joseph A. E. Bates—Wednesday, May 22, at 8, "God, Atheism, and Science"; Thursday, 23, at 8, "Death, Man's Soul, and the Great Beyond"; Friday, 24, at 8, "The Uselessness of Monarchy."

PROPAGANDIST LEAFLETS. New Issue. 1. *Hunting Skunks*, G. W. Foote; 2. *Bible and Teetotalism*, J. M. Wheeler; 3. *Principles of Secularism*, C. Watts; 4. *Where Are Your Hospitals?* R. Ingersoll. 5. *Because the Bible Tells Me So*, W. P. Ball; 6. *The Parson's Creed*. Often the means of arresting attention and making new members. Price 6d. per hundred, post free 7d. Special rates for larger quantities. Samples on receipt of stamped addressed envelope.—N. S. S. SECRETARY, 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

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