

THE Freethinker

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Whether the State shall be a monarchy or a republic, aristocratic or democratic, are subordinate questions. The great question is: Shall the modern State be spiritual or secular? Shall it be governed theocratically by irrational beliefs and clerical arbitrariness, or nominally by rational laws and civic right?—HAECKEL.

More About "Blasphemy."

AUGUST bank-holiday was marked by blustering weather, but the "meterological conditions," as the newspapers would say, did not deter the London crowd from rushing off to their favorite seaside places. We happened to be at one of these Cockney-frequented spots, and we spent some time during the day in studying the trippers' manners and customs. Occasionally we felt tempted to follow the lead of the midshipman in the old story, whose father—a clergyman, if we recollect aright—had desired him to send home an account of the manners and customs of the people at the various spots his ship touched at in her voyages. Of one spot the young fellow gave a brief but striking report. It was all done in four words: "Manners, none; customs, beastly." But that wouldn't have been true of all, or even the bulk, of the Cockney crowd. What struck us most, as it has struck us so often before, was their deadly dullness. They seemed to herd together for fear they should lose themselves separately. Their time was mainly spent in yelling at each other, in visiting the public-houses, and in listening to perfectly proper but not too classic open-air entertainments,—brake rides and boat trips filling up the rest of the program. Of the Cockney girls on these occasions it must be said that there is something Amazonian about them. Let no man imagine that their uncouth ways are any invitation to dissoluteness. He would soon find out his mistake, and unpleasantly enough too. They often separate themselves from their men folk and go about without them, only meeting them again at mealtimes and on the way to the station for the homeward journey. Their language is apt to be shocking, but they mean nothing by it—it is only a fashion of speech. But the language of many of the men is apt to be deliberately disgusting. You find it at its worst when they join the procession (for swarmery is a passion with them) up the main street to the railway trains, when they have paid their last visits to the licensed victuallers before facing the drought of the journey to London. We listened to them attentively on Monday evening. We wanted to hear all we could of the mouth exercise of the people who are so lovingly cared for, and firmly protected against blasphemous and profane public speakers, by the authorities and the police. Well, after listening attentively, we beg to assure the authorities and the police that their precautions are quite unnecessary. The crowd of common people—and it is only the "common people" that are the objects of official solicitude—were perfectly safe, for the simple reason that they had nothing to learn. No unbelieving "blasphemer" or user of "profane

language" could have taught *them* anything; in fact, the mildest of them could have taught *him* a great deal. There is, indeed, something extremely comic in the situation. You hear the language of the people who are to be protected—you see the look of pious anxiety on the face of the constables who are told off to protect them—you then listen to the speech of the harmless, necessary "blasphemer,"—and you must be very stolid if you don't explode on the spot.

This is a rather long introduction to the present article, but it is not wasted. It illustrates a certain aspect of the late "blasphemy" prosecutions which has been too much neglected.

Let us now turn to the latest "blasphemy" case at Leeds. The young man named Bullock, whose sentence to three months' imprisonment at the Leeds Assizes, was referred to in our last issue, appears to have considerable courage if little discretion. We call him a young man, but we might better call him a lad, for he is only nineteen years old. This fact should have been taken into account by the judge, who treated him like an old and hardened offender. At one point Mr. Justice Bankes displayed what is very difficult to discriminate from vindictiveness. When the police arrested Bullock at Sheffield he told them that what he had said in his lecture at Rotherham was "not accidental," he had said it "wilfully." What he meant, of course, was that he had said it *deliberately*. Yet the judge made no allowance for the lad's illiteracy; and when he said from the dock that he would not unsay any opinion but he would apologise for the words that were found most offensive, he was told in effect that it was too late, that he ought to have pleaded Guilty, and that he had meant to offend his audience because he had uttered the offensive words "wilfully." This was a grossly unfair use of the lad's expression, and the sentence founded upon it was positively savage.

This unfortunate lad said nothing substantially that is not said thousands of times a year in every part of England. He is paying the penalty of having more zeal than learning. His education and his way of life had left him deficient in good taste. It is very regrettable, of course; but is it exactly a crime? And does it deserve three months' imprisonment? Others may reply as they please. We unhesitatingly answer No.

Bullock used the language of his class. Everybody knows what it is, and that it means nothing. Illiterate people, not knowing the real weight and force of the right word, eke out their meaning with emphatic adjectives. Bullock appears to have used only one. To say a thing was false, or harmful, or wicked, was not enough for him; he had to say it "damned" this, that, or the other. Bad taste, we admit—and bad policy too. But is it as bad as knocking a wife about badly on the blessed Sabbath, for which many a professed Christian has got no more than "seven days" on the Monday morning? Wouldn't it have been sufficient to prosecute the lad under the Police Clauses Act for using "profane language" in a public place? Wouldn't the maximum penalty of a fortnight's imprisonment under that Act have met "the merits" of the case? Why all that relentless barbarity to the poor lad? He was a Freethinker—and those who prosecuted, tried, and

sentenced him were Christians; and offending *their* feelings constituted his only crime.

What chance has any Freethinker who is prosecuted in that way? The dice are loaded against him before the game begins. How can he hope to win against such odds? He has the chance that a sheep might have against a butcher who meant to cut his throat? We repeat what we said last week—"Blasphemy" prosecutions never fail. We are reminded of Hone's case. But that was really a political prosecution under an ecclesiastical form. We are not aware that Hone was even a Freethinker. We are also reminded of the Gott, Weir, and Pack case at Leeds in 1903. But that case never went for trial. It was dismissed in the Police Court on a technical point by a not unfriendly magistrate. An epigram cannot be a disquisition. It should have been obvious that what we meant by "'Blasphemy' prosecutions never fail" was that "blasphemers" are never acquitted, and that if one jury disagrees the "blasphemer" is caught by another—as we ourselves were at the Old Bailey in 1898. A hypercritic might point to the prosecution of Charles Bradlaugh for "blasphemy." But that case turned entirely upon technical evidence. Had he any responsibility for the *Freethinker*? And as it could be demonstrated that he had no such responsibility, the jury's verdict of "Not Guilty" was a technical verdict, having no relation whatever to the question of "blasphemy" in itself.

Bullock was provided with a solicitor, who engaged counsel, at the expense of the National Secular Society. We know nothing of either in London. The engagement was made by the Sheffield Branch at the outset of the proceedings. But without going into details, which would be difficult in the absence of a verbatim report, we are bound to say that in all such cases in future—unless we find a sympathetic barrister who could and would take the case—we shall advise the "blasphemer" to defend himself.

(To be concluded.) G. W. FOOTE.

Substitutes for Religion.

SOME time ago a Glasgow clergyman delivered a course of sermons on "Substitutes for Religion." Various systems—Agnosticism, Secularism, Positivism, etc.—were examined, and all, of course, rejected in favor of Christianity. The fallacies in these sermons were at least three in number. First, there was the assumption that some sort of religion was essential to human welfare. Second, there was the assumption that all the good associated with religious organisations ought to be placed to the credit of religion. Finally, it was assumed that Secularism, for example, aimed at being a substitute for religion. On these lines it is tolerable to make out a passable case for Christianity. The weakness of such a case is that it ascribes to the Freethinker something he is far from intending. He is not out providing substitutes for religion, for the reason that he denies religion as such to be either necessary or useful. He does not submit for discussion the proposition, "Granted the disappearance of religion, what is there that will profitably take its place?" but rather, "How far does religion minister to what we may all agree are the common needs of human society?" In other words, the Freethinker asks people to consider whether anything is done by religion or religious organisations, either in the shape of ethical teaching, social guidance, or political counsel, that could not be done by social organisation freed from all trace of religious teaching.

This raises the essential question in a perfectly unambiguous manner. For it is no part of the Freethinker's case that much good is not done by people in the name of religion, or that the Churches as mere organisations may not be useful centres of activity. Only the other week a clerical opponent thought to help his case by reminding me of the

many good men and women associated with the Churches, and who were laboring to benefit others. I replied by admitting the statement—which was, indeed, one of my counts against religion in general. It is one of the evils of religion that it does succeed in enlisting in its service many good men and women, utilising their intelligence and sympathies in the service of a cause quite unworthy of them. The objection to religion is not that it takes the bad and keeps them bad, but that it as often seizes the good, and, by a misinterpretation of their feelings, and by a distortion of their sympathies, uses their goodness to bind them to a system that perpetuates the very evils against which they are fighting.

It may be granted, even, that much of the good done by Churches is done by people who are convinced that their conduct is due to the acceptance of certain doctrines as true. Many people say so, and there is no reason to accuse them of consciously lying. But all religions are bound up with a number of non-religious elements, and it is by no means an easy task to determine the precise influence of the two factors. Many people are quite incapable of such discrimination, and there are probably very few with whom the question ever arises. The vast majority are content to take the explanation of their conduct, as they take its direction, from others. With them a casual connection is very easily mistaken for a causal one, and the historic identification of the religious and secular sides of life easily leads to their being regarded as inseparable.

The cardinal fact of the matter is organisation. And organisation is not a religious fact at all; it is a social characteristic. Men organise themselves for all sorts of ends, religious and non-religious, and once the organisation is effected there is manufactured a social opinion that keeps individual members up to the mark. Social pressure creates organisation, which is afterwards utilised in the interests of religion. Those who have watched closely the reported cases of conversion by the Salvation Army and other religious agencies will have realised that it is not belief in any sort of doctrine that is the really effective force, but the social pressure exerted by a new circle of acquaintances. Eliminate the influence of organisation, and what is left to the credit of religion? Leave an individual to the unsupported influence of religion, and the result is the production of an anti-social asceticism or an unstable social type. In brief, the good usually ascribed to the Church, as a Church, is mainly the product of organisation. In this respect a Church is a replica, on a small scale, of society at large. Trade unions, political clubs, sporting clubs, schools, all have the same influence on individual members. It is the simple pressure of the herd upon its units.

Any organisation, therefore, may serve the purpose of inducing compliance with a fixed standard of conduct. Whether it be a good one or a bad one, it will at least do this; because it is ultimately expressive of the fundamental characteristic of gregariousness. But while some organisation is inescapable, its form will be determined by the presence of a belief. And, again, the kind of belief is of subsidiary importance. The essential thing is that the belief shall be shared by several; and whenever this is the case we have the consciously expressed desire for organisation. Thus it is often urged against the Freethinker that a religious belief leads people to work heartily for various causes. But this is not a peculiarity of religious belief; it is a common feature of all belief. The Nihilist, the Anarchist, the Socialist, the Atheist, are all moved to action by their beliefs. It is possible to argue that religious beliefs have a greater value than others, but it is the height of folly to argue that their disappearance will alter either the desire or the capacity for organisation and effort.

The fear that a rejection of religion involves a lowering of the standard of life may be met by one or two simple observations. The history of religion,

like the history of all else in nature, is the record of an evolution. We no more have the same religion that our ancestors had than we wear the same clothing or dwell in the same kind of houses. We make use of the same formulæ and the same expressions, but our interpretation and meaning is vitally different. In a world of incessant change, it is impossible for even religion to remain stationary; and both consciously and unconsciously it undergoes modifications. The fact of change is obvious and undisputed; its cause is a more debatable question. But the more closely this question is studied, the clearer it becomes that, instead of religion moulding life, it is ultimately life that moulds religion. One need only look at current Christian teaching, and compare it with that of fifty years ago, to realise this. Such a doctrine as that of eternal damnation was not dropped by Christian preachers because it shocked Christian sentiment, or because it was discovered to be theologically unsound. It was dropped because the pressure of non-religious forces had made it impossible for it to be longer held. A more truly socialised feeling rejected such a teaching, not as an outrage upon the nature of God, but as an insult to the nature of man. So, also, with the pulpit dwelling upon a "social Christianity." Social salvation has become a dominant note in Christian preaching, because a growing number of people are ceasing to bother themselves about salvation of any other kind. It is always the pressure of opinion outside the Churches that determines the form of the teaching within. In relation to this, the problem of a Church is always twofold: first, an endeavor to keep the age in line with the Church, and when this can no longer be done, by methods more or less dishonest, to bring the Church into line with the age.

We see the same thing if we take the history of religion on a broader scale. The Christianity of the Eastern races, who were amongst its earliest converts, continues substantially unchanged. They retain many of the crude superstitions that characterised the early Christians. In these cases, so long as the social environment changes but little, there is little modification in the religious belief. The same religion carried among Western peoples, and subject to profoundly different circumstances, becomes completely transformed. The quietistic elements are suppressed or glossed over, direct illumination from God is dismissed as an idle dream, and Jesus, the thaumaturgist, becomes the preacher of a new social gospel working for social regeneration rather than for purely spiritual ends. I have taken Christianity as an illustration of this principle, but in its degree any other religion would serve. In a famous passage, Gibbon pointed out that on the result of a battle in the eighth century hung the determination of the religion of the Western world. Probably, if Charles Martel had been vanquished, the Koran might have been preached at Oxford in place of the New Testament. But had this happened, it is tolerably certain that Mohammedan priests would ere this have interpreted the Koran in much the same way that Christian priests have interpreted the New Testament. Religion may retard the development of ethical and social sentiment, but it can never prevent their ultimate supremacy.

The problem, then, is really not that of providing substitutes for religion. This assumes that religion is discharging some useful function in life, and consequently that its disappearance will leave a gap that must be filled. The vital problem is, as I have said, to discover how best to make people realise that the credit given to religion belongs elsewhere, and that a society without religion would not lack anything in life that is of real value. It is not merely that art, and science, and literature, and human courage, and intelligence, and affection, remain apart from religion, but that the so-called religious life itself remains in what religionists now regard as its most valuable aspects. We realise, as Freethinkers, that to-day religion is living by an exploitation of the social side of human nature. When Christians tell us of the good done by this or

that Church, we are not at all surprised, and it offers no presumption against our Freethought. We should be the more pleased if Christians were twice as good as they are, and Churches many times more beneficent. But it would not alter our opinions of either religion or of Christianity. For we see in this no more than the working of human nature, which is older, wider, and deeper than any religion that the world has ever seen. Our work, therefore, is not to provide a substitute for a decaying creed, but to make all realise that the essential human qualities will only gain in clarity of expression and effectiveness of action by the removal of superstition.

C. COHEN.

Faith and Criticism.

A FEW years ago, it was the fashion of the pulpit to distinguish between organised Christianity and what was called essential Christianity. Organised Christianity, it was reluctantly conceded, had never been a brilliant success, had never taken the world by storm and radically transformed it; but essential Christianity had always been present, silently doing its mighty work, and was now more powerful than at any previous period. When asked what it meant by essential Christianity the pulpit returned various and sometimes conflicting answers. It was now the spirit of Christ, now the spiritual power of the Cross, and now the love of God mysteriously pervading the world. It was a way of speaking peculiar to the pulpit, and it appealed only to those who had been for generations pulpit-moulded and pulpit-governed. To all outsiders the difference between an organised and an unorganised Christianity was indiscernible, because they had never come across the latter type, nor seen a single evidence of its existence.

That apology for the failure of the Christian religion is seldom heard to-day. Even Dr. Horton has ceased to present it in its original form. It is the alleged religionisation of science and philosophy that engages his attention at present, and by science and philosophy he really means Sir Oliver Lodge, Bergson, and Eucken, the latter of whom he pronounces "the greatest thinker" of this generation. This is a new pulpit note; and it is becoming very general. The sudden conversion of science and philosophy is declared to be the marvel of the age. Consonant with this note is another, namely, that all the Christian sects are in essential agreement. This is now brought forward as a valid excuse for the existence of so many different denominations. They differ, we are assured, only on minor points, while on the essentials they are all quite sound. Even Professor L. P. Jacks, D.D., editor of the *Hibbert Journal*, makes that claim for all the so-called Liberal sects. In an interview which appears in the *Christian Commonwealth* for July 31, he is reported to have spoken thus:—

"I think it quite absurd to keep up artificial barriers to separate those who, in all essentials, agree with one another. But you are right, too, in regard to the meaning of Liberalism. It is more a method than a creed, more an attitude of mind towards all religions than the outcome of one religion. When I meet a man who is in any genuine sense religious, I am so pleased that I generally forget to ask what kind of religion it is he holds. All religion is very good, though one sort may be a trifle better than another; but the difference does not mean so very much after all. Genuine religion I mean, not phases and formulæ."

It would be interesting to know what kind of a man Professor Jacks regards as being "in any genuine sense religious." It is beyond controversy that Bradlaugh was an exceedingly good man, though he did not own a single rag of supernatural faith; would Dr. Jack characterise him as "in any genuine sense religious"? Mr. Robert Blatchford says: "I don't want a faith; I have no use for it." Would the Professor include him among those who are "in any genuine sense religious"? We notice that in the same number the *Christian Commonwealth*

makes an offensively foolish allusion to Mr. Blatchford as "this kind-hearted, illogical, true Christian, by which we mean Jesus-man." Surely, the very climax of absurdity and illogicality is reached when a man who holds that the Universe was never created, but gradually evolved by the operation of natural forces, and that "there is no purpose behind life," is yet spoken of as "a true Christian." The truth is that true criticism shatters all faith and makes it utterly impossible for the critic to be in "any genuine sense" a supernaturalist. Is Professor Jacks prepared to label a person who is in no sense whatever a supernaturalist as "in any genuine sense religious"?

We are convinced that organised Christianity alone is an object of knowledge and criticism, and that it is organised so variously that it is not possible to discover what is. We are of firm opinion, however, that the differences of organisation are so great that there are no essentials in which all are agreed. Take Presbyterianism and Unitarianism, and you have two systems absolutely at variance as to essentials. There is a never ending conflict touching essentials between the Papacy and Episcopacy, between Baptists and Pedobaptists, between Calvinism and Arminianism; but the widest disagreement of all is between all forms of Christianity and scientific criticism. In the eye of criticism all supernatural systems are alike unbelievable because of the terrible outrages to which they have in all ages subjected the human reason. Their claims are so irrational and humiliating that in a scientific age they can be tolerated only by the most blindly credulous. For example, in a very clever discourse published in the *Christian World Pulpit* for July 31, the Rev. John A. Hutton, M.A., of Glasgow, declares that Christianity places the reason in an extremely subordinate position. Christians must exercise supreme care in the selection of the questions they ask. "The asking of questions with regard to life," this divine tells us, "ultimately is a kind of luxury which, thank God, the majority of people cannot afford." We knew that before. We have learned by experience that asking questions of a serious nature about life is fatal to faith. Mr. Hutton himself says, "And what is thinking but the asking of questions and the discovery of answers?" Perfectly true; but the reverend gentleman does not give us permission to think except so far as thinking does not endanger faith.

At this point Mr. Hutton gives a curious application to Pragmatism:—

"Students of philosophy will know that this is the point that Pragmatism makes. A thing is true, say the Pragmatists, under the cheery guidance of William James, of Harvard, a thing is true if it works—if it works. Now, of course, if we had lots of time it would be easy to raise difficulties; but we may accept that philosophy as a certain help over an immediate stilo. You must only expect from a man one part of the mystery of God, and Pragmatism rendered immense service to our age when it made that a kind of watchword, that a thing is true when it works."

We, too, are somewhat partial to Pragmatism, and freely admit its applicability to Mr. Hutton's argument; but we are bound to add that in its application to religion Pragmatism is not a sound system. It is true that the repression of the intellect enables faith to live and thrive; but to allow faith to work on such terms is to violate our own nature. It is high treason against our constitution, and the penalty is internecine war between the faculties of the mind. You may ask as many questions as you like, Mr. Hutton teaches, and you may answer them to the dictation of your reason; but you must see to it that they are such questions and answers as do not touch the regions over which faith holds sway. It is a humiliating and demoralising doctrine, and the man who teaches it is sure to undergo mental deterioration. There are questions which believers cannot ask and honestly answer without slaying their faith. That is entirely true; and as a Christian preacher, though not as a man, Mr. Hutton is fully justified in warning his hearers to have nothing

to do with them. "There is a whole class of questions, brethren," he truly observes, "which simply die in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ—they die of shame"; but he is wholly mistaken when he states that "when we come face to face with reality we never ask questions." The instance of reality submitted to us is the strangest conceivable. It is that of a drowning child. "If you are a man," exclaims the orator, "you are in after that child before you think about it." We are dealing here with a beautiful elemental instinct of which the intellect approves, although there are cases in which obedience to it results in the loss of two lives through the rescuer's inability to swim. A drowning child is an indisputable reality; but it is equally indisputable that man's soul, God, the unseen world, sin, salvation through the murder of Jesus, and the life to come, are all but imaginary realities, and the man who has no faith is never brought face to face with them; he lives and dies in peace, without realising that "his own little intellectual faculties are of no account," and without experiencing the necessity of falling "back on the truth of the saying that the Eternal God is his refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms." Indeed, his death-bed is as bright and happy as that of the strongest believers, and much happier and brighter than that of the overwhelming majority of them.

It is simply not true that "we live by faculties deeper, more authoritative than pure reason." It is not true even of Christians. There are times when many of them become emotionally intoxicated and experience such unspeakable pleasures and enjoyments as De Quincey had when inebriated by opium; but such seasons of nervous excitement, however delightful while they last, are abnormal and injurious, and are possible only when the reason is in abeyance. To imagine that they are supernaturally induced is to labor under a vain delusion. They are induced by perfectly natural means. Before they come faith has to be sharpened by contact with numerous grindstones, such as hymn-singing, Bible-reading, private and public prayers oft repeated, and special missions conducted by emotionally qualified men. Sometimes faith is so very blunt that all the grindstones in the world cannot give it that keen edge which alone can produce that emotional condition described as ecstatic communion with God. But in ordinary, normal life Christians are governed by reason, like other people.

Now, to think is to ask questions, and to pelt faith with rational questions is eventually to kill it. It collapses the moment you begin to cross-examine it. To be kept alive at all, it must be continually pampered. It exists alone on highly seasoned condiments. A fairly strong dose of pure reason poisons it at once. The main business of the Church is to beget it in childish minds, supply it with tempting delicacies all through the period of adolescence, and always to shield it against all intellectual poisons. Priests and clergymen are fully aware on what a slender thread its life hangs. That is why they curse the intellectualism of the age with such frantic violence. Once we succeed in persuading people to listen seriously to reason's appeal we shall have dealt their faith a fatal blow; and they will ere long enter upon a healthier, happier, and more efficient life. Here's to Reason's Day of Triumph!

J. T. LLOYD.

The Evolution of Life.

THE Nebular Hypothesis teaches us that our sun and all his attendant worlds were developed from a vast gaseous mist which once extended beyond the orbit of the planet Neptune, the outermost known member of the solar system. This primeval fire-mist was in all probability the outcome of a collision between dead suns or other once luminous bodies. As the ages rolled on, much of the heat of this incandescent cloud was radiated into outer space,

and concentrations occurred in various parts of the vapor. In this manner the earth and its sister planets ultimately assumed the form of molten masses careering round an immense central concentration—the evolving sun.

As a consequence of radiation our globe at last lost enough of its original heat to enable it to gain a superficial covering. As the temperature of the earth decreased its crust became more thick and solid, and in course of time the depressed parts of the cooled and wrinkled surface became the receptacles of the long-repulsed rain, which now descended from above. Thus did the forces of nature create land and water.

Of life's beginnings we possess no direct knowledge. The preservation of the earliest organic forms was rendered impossible owing to their delicate structure and ultra-microscopic size. The first forms were doubtless fairly uniform both in structure and function. Single-celled plants at last arose, minus leaf, root, or stem. But the foundations for the vegetable kingdom of future ages had been laid. At a later stage a variation of the primitive and indistinct plant cells occurred, and minute animal cells emerged. These unicellular organisms subsisted on the nutritious juices of their vegetal cousins. Thus commenced that struggle for existence which was destined to play such a tragic part in the drama of life's development.

It is obvious that little progress could be made so long as plant and animal organisms remained in their single-celled state. But the time arrived when cellular co-operation was rendered possible. All one-celled organisms multiply by simple division, and the daughter cells of the original mother cell lead separate lives. But slightly higher forms do not become completely separated. These cells are held together by protoplasmic processes; and as a consequence of continued multiplication and the binding together of successive generations, cell colonies or confederations arise. But the economic problem in the past, as in the present, was beset with difficulties. And in the struggle for food many expedients were devised, and any favorable variation was of immense importance to the organism which displayed it.

Among primitive cell colonies thus loosely organized each separate cell was self-supporting. In a circular or ball-shaped group of cells it was imperative that as many cells as possible should be in touch with the food and atmospheric oxygen of the outer world. As the cells multiplied in number the struggle for outside accommodation became intense. Through lack of air and food the inner cells of this animal colony were threatened with death and decay. This disadvantage was surmounted by the evolution of the morula or mulberry stage of cell life. The inner cells were forced up to the surface and the vacated interior became filled with water. The cell colony had now assumed the form of a small mulberry-shaped mass overspread with a single layer of cells.

The increased size of these cell colonies brought further difficulties in its train. It thus became necessary to subordinate extreme cellular individualism in the interests of the colony as a whole. Instead of each separate cell existing for itself alone, it was compelled in some measure to live for others. In this way the division of labor became imperative; particular functions were assigned to particular cells. The co-operative stage of cell society had been reached.

The ancestors of the sponges appear to have been the first of these enterprising creatures. Certain cell workers were now withdrawn from the surface to their original position in the interior of the colony. As a result, a tube or cavity was gradually formed, and the cell colony came to consist of an outer and an inner layer of cells. This constitutes the famous *Gastrula* stage of Haeckel. The outer cells attended to protective and reproductive matters. The inner cells promoted the circulation of the water-borne food through the internal cells as a

whole. Even in the most highly evolved of living sponges similar conditions continue to prevail.

From the same stock as sponges higher organisms were evolved. Corals, sea-anemones, jelly-fishes, and hydras are examples of these. The principle of the division of labor had been extended. Animals now enjoyed the advantage of a primitive mouth, which led to a cavity in which digestion took place. Primitive nerves also began to appear, and sundry cells became capable of stinging unwelcome intruders.

From the early organisms which, on separate lines of evolution, had ushered sponges and stinging animals into life, another development of far greater promise had arisen. Creatures which had acquired the habit of boring into mud and sand were in the waters. These wormlike organisms possessed the supreme advantage of locomotion. A further important modification is to be observed in the circumstance that the opening, which more lowly organisms utilised as a mouth, in these worms became a complete channel through the length of the body. Certain of the more stationary of these worms appear to have been the ancestors of the sea-cucumbers, star-fishes, sea-lilies, and sea-urchins. Along another line of ascent worms developed into primitive molluscs, and in course of time sea-snails, mussels, and kindred forms were dwelling in the seas. Other worms were evolving on more ambitious lines. The nerves were being concentrated in the head region, and a rudimentary brain was slowly developed. Primitive eyes came into existence likewise.

Some of these worms became ringed or segmented, and were the ancestral forms of many interesting invertebrate orders. From these ringed worms (Annelids), lampshells and polyzoans proceeded in one direction, while shrimps, trilobites, scorpions, and king-crabs developed in another. The first forms of fish seem to have sprung from the same stem. The plants of life's dawning period appear to have advanced on similar lines of development. The fungus plants never attained a high position in life. Fungi they were, and fungi they remain. But the microscopic algae were endowed with potentialities for higher things. From these lowly plants proceeded the seaweeds in all their abundance, and some of these spread to the lakes and rivers, and became the parents of our land vegetation.

The Cambrian Rocks afford ample evidence of life in that period. But their fossil remains presuppose many millions of years of previous evolution. Sponges in a variety of forms dwelt in the seas. Corals were widely distributed; jelly-fishes, sea-lilies, and star-fish abounded; judging from their tracks and tunnelings, worms were numerous. Lampshells—brachiopods enclosed in two-valved shells somewhat lamp-like in shape—flourished in the Cambrian waters. Molluscs related to snails, mussels, and periwinkles shared their habitat, and trilobites everywhere abounded. Barnacles and shrimp-like crustaceans added to the life of the ocean. Although marine invertebrate life was well represented in the Cambrian period, it was a somnolent age. The large majority of living things were quite stationary; they were either buried in the mud, or rooted to the ground, or attached to briny rocks. Those that indulged in exercise moved very tardily. The silence of the seas was disturbed by the shrimps and the snails alone.

Of terrestrial life the rocks yield no trace. Still, a few lowly aquatic plants must have settled near the shores. But the earth was as silent as the ocean save for the disquietude incident to earth-shocks, hurricanes, and rainstorms.

The Cambrian era passed away, and the Ordovician reigned in its stead. No changes of any great importance had occurred. It is true that sponges and corals were highly developed; some of the latter approaching modern forms. Graptolites advanced immensely during this period, and their fossil remains have been found in Europe, Australia, and the two Americas. The crinoids, or sea-lilies, had also gained ground; some very graceful forms with

feathery appendages had appeared. Brittle stars, star-fishes, worms, and lampshells were all in evidence. Sea-urchins about the size of cherries were new-comers, but their stay was destined to be a long one. The nautiloids of the preceding period now displayed themselves in modified forms as cephalopods. Some North American forms reached a colossal size, carrying shells a foot in diameter in front, and twelve feet in length. These creatures must have played havoc with their less powerful neighbors. The trilobites made rapid progress, but this period was their Golden Age. Ostracods, barnacles, and sea-scorpions were all doing well, and the descendants of these last became in later times important denizens of the rivers as well as of the seas.

Marine life in the Ordovician seas was well protected from aggression. It is highly probable that soft-bodied fishes ranged the waters, although their remains as yet have eluded discovery.

Land vegetation was represented by "horse tails" and club mosses. And fern-like plants were also in existence. A few winged insects had appeared—the probable descendants of tiny marine crustaceans of earlier ages.

The next division of the Palæozoic epoch was the Silurian period. The struggle for existence had become more pronounced, and life showed signs of greater activity. Plant life was developing in various directions. But the wasteful process of spore reproduction continued; the seed producing flora was yet to come. Sponges were flourishing in greater variety, and reef-building corals had put in an appearance. The graptolites were showing signs of the competitive strain, and by the close of this period became a back number. Sea-lilies occupied the oceans in prodigal abundance, and made many daring innovations. Star-fishes, sea urchins, and brittle stars were all moving with the times. Lampshells were now at the height of their career, and made a brave display on all the ocean coasts. Bivalved molluscs were making little progress, and the sea snails and other univalved molluscs showed no very noticeable advance. The titanic cephalopods of the Ordovician appear to have become extinct, but other nautiloids were holding their own. Some of the sea scorpions had attained a length of a couple of feet.

There is no positive proof of the existence of back-boned animals throughout the larger part of the Silurian period, but as it neared its close they made their appearance in a primitive form. Most of these vertebrates were fish-like in form, but in structure they were more closely related to hags and lampreys. Nevertheless, some true fishes swam the Silurian seas. This is proved by the remains of certain small sharks. A new power had thus arisen which was destined to extend its dominion from the ocean to the earth and air.

Passing onward to the Devonian period, we find fish life strongly in evidence. Sluggish fish-like creatures, provided with a dentine skin protector, were numerous. But they failed to adapt themselves to a progressive environment, and were all extinct by the end of the period. Joint-necked vertebrates related to lung-fishes had been evolved, and although some of the later forms reached fully twenty feet in length, they were merely evolutionary experiments and soon dwindled to extinction. But the sharks had made marked progress, and other fishes provided with bony scales were in the seas. In certain of these ganoid fishes, the gristly spinal column had undergone some amount of ossification. Sea scorpions had become larger; some of the faster swimmers measured nearly six feet in length. The trilobites continued to decline, but curious attempts were made to cope with an unfavorable environment, which met with little success. Molluscan life was making headway, although the nautiloids had received a check. But their cousins, the ammonoids, had become prominent. Oysters had arrived, and certain snails appear to have developed a lung-chamber, thus qualifying themselves for residence

on land. Lampshells were declining, but sea stars and urchins were proceeding onwards.

A few insects were added to the land population, and club mosses, calamites, ferns, and vegetable growths, known as cordiates, adorned the landscape in old Devonian times.

The plant life of the Carboniferous period was similar in character to that of the preceding Devonian, but it attained immense luxuriance and wide variation. A wealth of winged and wingless insect life swarmed in the forests. May flies were on the wing, and some related forms were huge creatures with bodies eighteen inches long (Meganura). Many scorpions had developed lungs, and were dwelling on land. Spiders and land snails were in being.

The seas teemed with life, though some old forms, such as the sea lilies, were declining. In various regions, and notably in the ocean which then covered Belgium, corals flourished. Sponges, old and new, abounded. Star fishes and urchins remained much as they were, and sea-cucumbers, or holothurians, had appeared. Lampshells made a good display, and some gigantic forms sprang into existence. Although the lampshells were past their prime, they continued to display wonderful powers of adaptation. Some of the molluscs had remained unchanged since early Cambrian times, but a few new forms had risen into being in the Carboniferous period. The trilobites were now verging to the point of extinction. The ranks of the sea-scorpions were considerably thinned; in fact, they appear to have completely vanished from American waters.

The primitive vertebrates had met with varying experiences. All the armored semi-fishes were gone, and the joint-necked fish were gone, too. Sharks everywhere abounded, some of which were varying in the direction of skates and rays. The ganoids had developed both in size and structure. Some of these had strengthened the skull, and the tail was assuming a more modern character. Nevertheless, the fish family had lost its leadership of the animal world. Lung-breathing vertebrates were now able to reach the land. Amphibians had been evolved, and crawling creatures resembling lizards and salamanders added to the beauties of the landscape.

T. F. PALMER.

(To be continued.)

"The preponderance of Roman Catholics among the inmates of our prisons is a fact recognised and lamented by Cardinal Farley; but large as it is, it would be still greater in this State except for the activity of the Church in keeping its followers from going to the penitentiary after they have been convicted by the courts. The Rev. Thomas J. Lynch, a Catholic priest who calls himself 'supervisor of correction work for Catholics' and who runs a lobby or probation office in connection with the courts, reports that during the past year 'we had on probation to us 585 adults.' These were convicted criminals, upon whom the magistrates and judges were induced to suspend sentence. Had they not been Catholics they would have been numbered among the inmates of the penal institutions. Criminal statistics based on the number of Catholics actually confined are therefore incomplete. For comparison with the number of criminals of other denominations they should be increased, in New York, by 585."—*Truthseeker* (New York).

It is not surprising that the dockers at Greek ports have refused to work a ship with the ill-omened name of Charon. For Charos, as they usually call him now, is a being still constantly on the lips of Greek peasants, as Mr. J. C. Lawson has shown in *Modern Greek Folklore and Ancient Greek Religion*. Only Charos is not now the ferryman of Styx, but Death himself, as Mr. Lawson thinks the old Charon originally was. Modern Greeks have found no difficulty in working Charos in with Christianity. He even appears as St. Charos, and is constantly mentioned in epitaphs on Christian tombstones. He is imagined sometimes as a tall, spare, harsh-faced old man; sometimes as a lusty youngster with hair of raven black, riding forth on a black horse to slay and ravage.—*Daily Chronicle* (August 2).

Acid Drops.

Mr. Cunninghame Graham, when Mr. Ben Tillett asked God to kill Lord Devonport, suggested that God was on strike too. But those who get their living by pretending to represent him are everlastingly assuring the people who waste their time by listening to them that the greatest of all workers is God; but what on earth or in heaven has he ever done? There are countless thousands of men whose profession it is to speak in his name, when all the time they know quite well that he has never spoken in his own, either to them or anybody else. He is said to be the Supreme Being, though he has never once declared himself, nor done anything to protect his name and interests. Innumerable times has he been besought to defend the right in bloody wars; but the victory has invariably gone to the biggest, best led, or bravest battalions. In other words, he has ever been an absentee Deity—dumb, uninterfering, uninterested, irresponsible, non-existent.

Disastrous floods having visited the north and north-west of England, the Bishop of Ripon ordered prayers to be said for fine weather. The weather got worse, if anything, at once. God *must* be on strike, unless the Bishop of Ripon is a poor commission agent.

Rev. William Tanner, eighty years of age, vicar of Dundee, Bristol, has been deprived of his living by the Bishop of Bath and Wells, in pursuance of the judgment of the Divorce Court granting his wife a decree of separation on the ground of her husband's legal cruelty. There is no moral. There would be a big one if Mr. Tanner were a Freethought lecturer.

"If we were allowed to believe that this is God's world," said Dr. R. F. Horton, "as certain rose-water gospels of to-day teach us, we should be Atheists." Much greater theologians than Dr. Horton have said the same thing, although they have tackled the subject from a different point of view. But the admission completely justifies the attitude of the Atheist, and that is its chief significance to us. For it means that so long as we stick to reason, there is no evidence whatever to be found in the structure of the world that will prove the existence of a God. You may believe in a God as an act of unreasoning faith, or you may with equal unreason accept a revelation of God's existence, but if you study the world, determined to be guided by the evidence alone, the logical result is Atheism. The great Cardinal Newman said so; Dr. Horton says so; and Atheists said so long before either Newman or Horton were born.

According to Canon Inge, Atheism never yet destroyed a religion. The only two enemies religion has to fear are internal corruption and the advent of another and a stronger religion. Historically this expresses a truth, but the truth only skims the surface of things. Atheism stands for a frame of mind that at any time only a minority of the people can rise to, and hitherto the historic conflicts have been in the nature of a conflict between religious opinions rather than a fight on the clear and logical issue of Atheism *versus* Theism. But there is no denying that the tendency of things is in this direction. Thus, a little more than a century ago, the fight raged between Christian Theism and Deism. Controversialists busied themselves discussing whether certain views of God were reasonable or unreasonable, praiseworthy or blameworthy, without the deeper question of whether there was any ground whatever for a belief in God being raised. Gradually, the Christian took up the position he had attacked, and Christianity became content with a vague and nebulous Deism. Meanwhile, those who had attacked Christianity also advanced. The idea of God itself was placed under the scalpel. It was dissected, its origin traced, and its development described. With the result that Christianity has not to-day to face an enemy that is content to take the existence of God as a common ground for discussion, but one which questions the validity of a belief in God in any form. It is, consequently, true that historically Atheism has never yet destroyed a religion, but it is none the less true that Atheism is a frame of mind that represents the logical issue of the religious conflict, and one which Christianity must either succeed in crushing or be crushed by in turn.

As to the corruptions of Christianity, it would be just as true to say that it is preserved by them as to say that it is destroyed by them. A very large part of what are called the corruptions of Christianity are the alterations and adaptations made from time to time to enable it to live. Christianity, in the form in which it was held during the

first three centuries of this era, would be accepted by no one to-day outside a lunatic asylum. Most of the dogmas and doctrines propounded from time to time were merely attempts to adapt revised teachings to a new generation. Christianity had to become corrupted in order to continue in existence. We see a repetition of the same process in our own day with those who imagine that, by emphasising social or ethical reformation, they are returning to a purer form of Christianity. It is nothing of the kind. It is no more than the spirit of the age forcing a new modification on the Christian Churches. It is a fresh form of "corruption," and, as usual, the corruption is hailed as a reformation.

Archdeacon Graham attended the meetings of the United Methodist Conference, and explained his presence by saying that, in spite of all differences, times were such that it was absolutely necessary to find a *locus standi* on which they could fight shoulder to shoulder against the Atheism and unbelief which faced them. Evidently the Archdeacon is getting alarmed. He reminds us of the old saying, "We had better hang together; or, by God, we shall hang separately!"

"How they love one another!" Who? The Christians. Where? Anywhere. Especially in Belfast. Recent exhibitions of Christian loving kindness there remind one of the conclusion of Swinburne's "Hymn of Man."

The following is from the *Pioneer* (India):—

"Jews have odd surprises in Russia. The other day a man was arrested on a charge of blasphemy in Kieff, the city where the trial of another Jew for sacrificing a Christian child is to take place. The blasphemer had gone on some business to the house in which the chancellery of the General-Governor is situated and had happened to meet Prince Erestoff, an official, on the staircase. His Highness shouted to him to go away, and told the hall porter, with some asperity, to be careful not to let any more Jews into the place. The offender meekly replied that, after all, Christ was a Jew. The Prince then sent notice to the police that the man was to be charged with blasphemy, and as a matter of fact, the statement of a plain fact has cost him a week in prison; for the court decided that the remark he made, in the mouth of a Jew, was blasphemous. Princes, policemen, and judges, of course, are all good Christians."

Christians are only too apt to forget that Christ was a Jew. His mother was a Jewess; his father (we mean the flesh and bone one) was a Jew; his apostles were Jews; and when one of the twelve committed suicide, his place was filled with another Jew. If there had been no Jews there would have been no Christians.

Mr. Balfour is capable of acute criticism in philosophical matters, but one point raised by him in connection with the International Eugenics Congress, showed a complete misunderstanding of the point at issue. And our ill-informed journalists, from the *Times* downward, have repeated his criticism as a really weighty judgment. Mr. Balfour's argument was as follows:—Eugenists lament the survival of the unfit. But according to Natural Selection, a species survives because it is the fittest. If, however, we are encouraging the increase of weak-minded individuals, and those of weak physique, it follows that in some way poor brains and poor physique make some people more efficient than those of stronger brain and body. Either this or we are wrong in our reading of evolution.

But this quite mistakes the point of view of the Eugenist. His point of view is simply that the increase in the number of mentally and physically undesirable is due to the fact that the principle of the Survival of the Fittest is not permitted free operation in human society. People of weak mind and body survive, not because of their "fitness," but because of the knowledge and sympathy of society in general. The action of society as a whole prevents their paying the price that would otherwise result from their deficiencies. Nor does the Eugenist raise any serious objection to this. His great complaint is that we are doing nothing to prevent the birth of the unfit, and that their rapid multiplication is raising a serious problem with which society must deal or perish. This danger may be exaggerated, but that it exists no one will deny. A much sounder line of criticism for Mr. Balfour to have followed would have been to point out that, so far as knowledge and sympathy are keeping alive a stock that weakens the social structure, so far as knowledge and sympathy make man more capable of survival, the survival of the fittest tends to result in the survival of the unfittest. And to this the reply would be to "take a hair of the dog that bit you." Increased knowledge and a more intelligent sympathy will readjust the balance of forces. We suffer in the meantime, doubtless;

but ultimately more rational ideas of the responsibility of parentage, and a better attention to the conditions under which people live, will remove the evil that exists.

One characteristically British point was raised at the Congress—by an American. Dr. Hoffman pointed out that a large number of the people of America were of foreign—non-British—extraction. The foreign-born women had larger families than native women. This state of things, said Dr. Hoffman, "must have a most injurious and lasting effect on national life and character." Unless the native Americans made it their duty to increase more rapidly, "there was no chance for the survival of those British ideas and British institutions which tended to make the world a fit place to live in." We suggest that this gentleman with the very British name is quite out of place in a scientific gathering. His proper sphere is a political meeting, and there should be plenty of scope for his services during the Roosevelt-Taft campaign. The idea that British institutions alone make the world a fit place to live in may be quite pleasing to some people, but it reminds us of Dr. Johnson's explanation to a lady of how he came to define a certain word as he had done—"Ignorance, madam, pure ignorance."

"Religion" used to head the classifications of "Books Received" in a certain London newspaper, and "Fiction" appeared at the bottom. But now "Fiction" heads the list while "Religion" comes a good way down, and will no doubt reach the bottom at last. Some profane critics might suggest that the difference between "Fiction" and "Religion" is by no means essential.

Cardinal Bourne made a long speech at the recent Catholic Congress on "Christian Unity." This is an old dream, which never gets any nearer realisation. But the Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster is a sanguine gentleman. He sees (in his mind's eye—nowhere else) the once Colony but now Dominion of Canada leading the movement of unification. Canada is to be Catholicised first, and all other parts of the British Empire are to follow suit. We shall all lie down at last, faithful sons of the Church, and let the priests tread upon our necks. It is a very rosy dream—for the priests; but is not at all likely to attract the average man throughout the English-speaking world. We admit that the Canadian Catholics are bigoted and insolent enough to attempt this impossible task. Two years ago, with Cardinal Bourne amongst them, they carried the Host through the streets of Montreal, protected with rifles and bayonets to settle the hash of any Protestant who dared to look or speak contemptuously of what at the time we called "taking God for a walk." And the rifles and bayonets would be ready at any moment to carry this aggressive religion a bit farther. But the city of Montreal is not the whole of Canada, and the rest of the Dominion will never be brought into the Catholic faith. Moreover, there is a third movement in Canada which is beginning to make headway—the movement of Freethought. That is what Protestant and Catholic both have reason to dread.

Jesus Christ was accused of being a friend of publicans and sinners, and was unable to plead "Not Guilty." But the word "publican" in old English, which the Gospels are translated into, does not mean a drink-shop keeper. It means a tax-gatherer. Many licensed victuallers, however, perhaps the bulk of them, are not acquainted with that fact; which probably accounts for the eagerness with which the Birmingham publicans accepted their Bishop's invitation to hear him preach at All Saints' Parish Church. They not only attended themselves, but they persuaded their customers to attend also; and it must have been a fine old beery congregation. The Bishop pleaded in his sermon for liberty to drink as well as to go thirsty, but he urged that a man who drank glass after glass at a public-house bar was a slave, and it was the publican's duty to help him to regain his liberty. We don't see how a publican could do this, at any rate successfully, without getting rid of his best customers; and if the church-going publicans said, as is reported, that they liked the Bishop's sermon, they must have misled the reporters with a wink of the glad-eye.

It is an extraordinary thing but people have been known to kill themselves through fear of death. At a recent Rotherhithe inquest on William Hart Boxer, aged fifty-seven, it appeared that he hanged himself to avoid an operation for cancer. Man is a bundle of irrationalities, and religion intensifies every other mischief.

One of Thomas Hardy's most powerful poems is on the subject of a man who neglected his own family to save money enough to build a splendid Christian church. When it is built and open the trouble begins. Thinkers say that the Christian religion is all a mistake, and he sees that nobody acts upon it in practice; so, finding he has sacrificed everything and everybody for a fiasco, he takes a short cut out of the mess by hanging himself one night in the empty church before the altar. No doubt the shop assistant, William Lane, of Preston, who was found hanging in a room at the rear of the Catholic Apostolic church, of which he was a member, was ignorant of Thomas Hardy and all his works. Very likely he thought the better the place the better the deed. Anyhow, his Christianity didn't save him from suicide; which is our point.

Why cannot preachers leave poor Jephthah alone? Why are they for ever preaching sermons the aim of which is in some way to justify or palliate the enormity of his cruel deed? He sacrificed his daughter in fulfilment of a vow; but Agamemnon did the same, to appease an angry goddess. Yet no sermons are ever delivered in justification or explanation of Iphigenia's murder. Why fasten attention exclusively on the unfortunate Hebrew? The Rev. L. Marshall, who, by the way, is a two-fold bachelor, a B.A. and a B.D., undertakes, in a sermon which appears in the *Baptist Times and Freeman* for August 2, to "indicate the place which this story has in the economy of Divine revelation," and "the message of eternal truth, adaptable to every age, which it contains." Well, now, if Mr. Marshall were a New Theologian, he could deliver a similar address about any superstitious murderer in all history.

Of course, being the slaves of superstition, Jephthah and Agamemnon could not have acted otherwise; and if the stories are true, they were justified in doing what they honestly though mistakenly believed to be their duty. Now come "the spiritual truths" which Mr. Marshall imagines he disentangles from "the crudity and barbarity" of Jephthah's story. Jephthah did right in "putting God before his daughter"; but we maintain that he did wrong in putting an *imaginary* deity before a *real* daughter. If God existed he could neither order nor permit such a horrible deed. We hold that the claims of earth are not only the supreme, but the sole, claims that man is called upon to heed, the claims of God and eternity being purely fictitious.

Another "spiritual" truth which Mr. Marshall pretends to disentangle from Jephthah's sacrifice of his daughter is that it is "man's duty to be true to his word *at whatever cost*." We affirm that if a man makes a vow and discovers afterwards that he had no right to make it, it becomes his imperative duty to break it. Edward Irving gave his word that he would marry a certain woman. Afterwards he saw clearly that he had made a huge mistake; but having given his word he kept it at the cost of wrecking his own life, and more or less the lives of others. No, it is *not* our duty to keep our word "*at whatever cost*." There are thousands of words given, or vows made, which would be infinitely more honored in the breach than in the observance, and which would be broken without hesitation if those responsible for them would but look at them from a rational point of view. Fidelity to obligations and veracity are essential elements in social life; but fidelity and veracity do not necessitate the keeping of one's word "*at whatever cost*." The cost of offending one's own conscience, or the cost of ruining other lives, is altogether too high to pay for keeping a word that ought never to have been given. The men of God should go elsewhere than to Jephthah's vow for a shining example of steadfast honor.

It was a vestry meeting at Shenstone parish church in Staffordshire. Sir Richard Cooper called the Rev. Eben Molloy an "infernal liar." The vicar was just as pleasant to the baronet. An outsider finds it impossible to judge between them. Perhaps he ought to believe them both.

Rev. Benjamin Gibbons, of Waresley House, Hartlebury, Worcestershire, left £88,935. Poor Christite! Where is he now? The New Testament says plainly "in hell." We pity him, and would help him out if we could. But we are afraid his fate is fixed.

The first woman bishop in the world is Margaret La Grange at Los Angeles. Paul says that a bishop must be "the husband of one wife." How is Margaret going to manage that?

Mr. Foote's Engagements

(Lectures suspended until September.)

To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1912.—Previously acknowledged, £176 lls. 11d. Received since :—Colonel H. H. Hart, £2.

L. K.—Please don't send any more translations from Voltaire. All the things you mention—and a great many more—have been translated, and well translated, into English already, and are not exactly inaccessible. We thank you for your kind offer, but we cannot let you waste your time.

J. B.—We have agreed to make the experiment of continuous Sunday evening lectures at Queen's Hall from October to December inclusive, and we must fulfil the undertaking strictly. We cannot break it for one provincial city more than another—much as we regret being unable to take October 20 at the Birmingham Town Hall. For the other matter see "Acid Drops." Thanks.

T. F. GREENALL.—Your blind friend has our cheerful permission to publish the works of ours mentioned in Braille for the use of readers afflicted with blindness, for whom we have deep compassion.

A. MURRAY.—The passage you refer to occurs in *As You Like It*, Act II.

A. DANIELSSON.—Politicians are getting almost as tetchy as priests. We "took up" no "hostile attitude against Ben Tillett." We said nothing at all about his general opinions and sentiments. We simply criticised a religious utterance of his—and we would have served Lord Devonport in the same way if there had been occasion. Persons who publicly talk folly about God are fair game for us in this journal, whether they or their friends like it or not. We care not who they are or what camp they belong to.

J. W. F.—The handbill contains no name or address, and cannot, therefore, be treated as official.

E. B.—Cuttings very welcome.

ANONYMOUS correspondents are once more reminded that their letters go into the waste basket unread. We always look at the end of letters first.

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

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

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

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Sugar Plums.

We have received a pleasant letter from a correspondent in Kashmir—a lovely and alluring name just now when August is arriving in England amidst wind and rain, and even snow and frost. "I have just read," this correspondent writes, "'How to Help Us' in the number of June 23. Previously I did not understand what 'President's Honorarium Fund' meant. I enclose a cheque for £2. I have no objection to my full name appearing with rank—namely, Colonel H. H. Hart. I find the *Freethinker* most interesting, and—may I say so?—amusing." We are pleased to be found amusing as well as interesting. Laughter is excellent medicine for the mind. And when a man can laugh at superstition—which he does when he enjoys a joke at its expense—he is above it, and looking down upon it, and is therefore free from its sinister influence.

Mr. M. M. Mangasarian, whose successful Freethought work in Chicago is known to our readers, has written us a

welcome letter from Paris. He has been travelling through Spain, and he informs us that, while at Cordova, he called at the Archbishop's palace and purchased a *bula* over the counter. Mr. Mangasarian hopes to meet us in London before returning to America. We hope so too. His daughters are with him, and they also wish to see the editor of the *Freethinker*, who would certainly be delighted to meet them.

We should have liked to see the N. S. S. represented at the International Freethought Congress at Munich, according to the resolution carried at the Leeds Congress, but the Executive has found an adequate representation to be an impossibility. Not to put too fine a point upon it, the cost is prohibitive. Expenses just now are very heavy, the "blasphemy" cases cost money, and there is no sign of their ceasing. Secularism's slender resources must perforce be devoted to home work this year. M. Eugène Hins, the able, accomplished, and zealous secretary of the International Freethought Federation, writes to us from Brussels, under the impression that the N. S. S. is affected by the German scare. We beg to assure him that this is absurd, as he would know if he knew us better. We are not warriors, except for Freethought. English Freethinkers regard all other Freethinkers as belonging to the same country as themselves. We are writing to M. Hins to that effect.

The following towns have been visited by Mr. Jackson, as lecturer, and Mr. Gott as literature-seller and organiser, under the new Propaganda Scheme, during the past month:—Accrington, Ashton, Burnley, Bolton, Bury, Blackburn, Barnoldswick, Colne, Clitheroe, Failsworth, Heywood, Leeds, Nelson, Openshaw, Rochdale, Southport, and Wigan. Mr. Gott reports that the rowdiness of some years ago has almost entirely disappeared. The young men are getting interested, and there is a capital sale of literature. Audiences want to hear more of Freethought, and the lecturer and organiser get kept in a town sometimes for three days, instead of the one day originally intended.

Bournemouth is dropping some of its religious bigotry. Hitherto the godly who didn't want Sunday bands have kept other people from having them. Time after time the Town Council have voted against any relaxation on the "blessed Sabbath." At length, however, it has been decided that a band should play on the pier on Sunday evenings from 8 to 9.45 during August and September.

"It would seem as though Dr. Warschauer were dissatisfied with the impression he succeeded in producing in his recent encounter with Mr. G. W. Foote, President of the National Secular Society (England) and editor of the *Freethinker*. While refusing to join with Mr. Foote in issuing a report of the debate, he has seen fit to publish a book bearing the title the *Atheist's Dilemma*, a copy of which has been forwarded to us with an intimation that 'many people would be interested if you could find space in your paper for an examination of Dr. Warschauer's position.' The publication of the *Atheist's Dilemma* may be a smart move, and it may be a profitable one, but impartial people will be under the impression that Mr. Foote followed the more dignified, as well as the more honest, course in publishing the debate fully, and in leaving those who read it to form their own judgment concerning it. Dr. Warschauer must know that his book will be read chiefly by those who would not under any circumstances read the published report of the debate, just as he must know that his *ex parte* statements, constituting as they do the most flagrant misrepresentation of his opponent's attitude, is a method of procedure which would, in anyone but a theologian, be denounced as ethically indefensible."—W. W. Collins, *Examiner*, Christchurch, New Zealand.

BIG AND LITTLE RELIGION.

This story comes from Australia, where all conversation turns eventually to matters educational, because every parent is painfully anxious that his sons shall pass the standard which will free them from certain years of military service. A visitor was conversing with his host's small son and opened as a matter of course with the words: "Do you go to school now?"

"Yes."

"And what do you learn? Reading, writing, sums?"

"Oh, yes, and I learn religion, too."

"Religion?"

"Yes. I learn the little religion, which teaches that we all come from Adam. But my elder brother is in a higher class; he learns the big religion, and that teaches that we all came from monkeys."

In the Valleys.

HOW the vampires of religion feast, with an insatiable hunger and thirst, upon our natures! They have sucked from us the rich blood of our strength, gorging themselves till, in their strength was our weakness, and we became slaves. With a divine, or a devilish, precognition they have fastened upon the weaknesses of our natures, and usurped them. They have bent the body, and broken the mind, that their purposes might attain fulfilment. Into the softness and tenderness, into the finer and more susceptible feelings, they have insinuated themselves; and into our love have they crept and lain down, to eat, and suck, and live.

For many centuries, how many even the omniscient Lord does not know, or he would have left it on record when he came from heaven for a holiday once upon a time, the vampires made love to man. Calf-love some would name it, affirming man was passing then through the period of adolescence. So insidiously and industriously was this love-making continued that man, in his ignorance, yielded himself unconsciously to it. Its subtle power, its fawning companionship, its constant activity, even when shrouded in remoteness, grew upon him till it became nearly essential to his life. On his body and on his mind the vampires preyed, giving him the idea they were part of his nature. In the darkness they dwelt; but man felt their suckers softly caressing his heart. He enjoyed the sensuous emotion. He esteemed it good. Sometimes they sucked too much, and man experienced pain; but long cohabitation had robbed him of his virility: the pain, he thought, was beneficial chastening, and he humbly bowed before it.

Where our natures are most impressionable, where they are most sensitive, there we find religion strongest. It survives, not by feeding upon the nobler and grander elements of our natures, nor upon those instincts and emotions that give us distinction from the lower animals, but upon the weaknesses of our natures. Religion preys upon our weaknesses. It derives its nourishment from them. It is strongest where we are weakest. Down in the valleys of our natures religion is most powerful. Pain, poverty, ignorance, sorrow, suffering; where these are there also abides religion. And, surely, the truth of this being so evident, it is enough, in itself, to condemn religion in the minds of all thinking men and women.

No man, in his rational moments, when his mind is alive and healthy, can lightly deny the relationship between religion and degradation. Lowness of life is the fulness of religion. And we see it around us on every side. In fact, one might say religion was the manure on the bad soil of human nature. When life was at a low ebb during the Dark Ages, religion grew strong and flourished. Was not primitive man devoutly and terribly superstitious? And to-day, is not religion strongest amongst the low mental type characterised and organised as the Salvation Army?

See how the vampires fasten to evil, covering it with their shiny bodies. See how they dominate diseased minds. See how they snuggle down beside the poor in mind, and the poor in body, and the poor in purse, not to enrich the mind, nor the body, nor the purse by reasonable assistance, but to sanctify the poverty with words, to glorify it with dreams, to dull the discontent in a soporiferous "all will be well."

The soft suckers go round the lacerated heart soothingly, as if to comfort and console. The tired eyes look upwards to a painted mist, and the wearied limbs seem to become relieved and refreshed. To the aimless the vampires would give an aim that would lead life along a definite way to a definite end. "Come to Jesus," they whisper to the sinner struck with remorse and repentance; "he will wash you clean and make you whole." "Believe in him, and your evil past will be something that was, but is

not." And so does religion live in the valleys, amidst the lownesses, the crookednesses, the sufferings, and the foolishnesses, and irresponsibly committed faults, living upon them and on them, clothing them with soft glossy vestures like a luminous haze over a stagnant stretch of bogland.

And all this, according to religion's apologists, constitutes the justification for the existence of religion. It is religion's bejewelled crown of triumph that its place is beside the sore afflicted. Here, if anywhere, we are told, it proves its unspeakable utility in the service of man. Here is seen its chief purpose, and here it realises its full value. Beside the sinner and the sorrowful religion's glory cannot but receive its righteous recognition, we are told; for, while men may quarrel over it and fight for and against it, religion remembereth the sore of heart, the fallen she administereth unto, and the weak she assisteth. And in her works, and by her works, she proveth to all men that her task is essential, and she must live to accomplish it.

With such arguments do the modern religionists bolster up their creed, believing they have gone one step farther than their forefathers, who relied upon the divine inspiration thesis; believing, also, that no antagonism can victoriously assail their view. Wholeheartedly we agree with them in their fond belief. Their religion *does* live in the valleys; it *does* afford comfort to the dwellers in them; it *does* achieve its purpose amongst those who live low lives, bodily or mentally. The lame, the dumb, the blind, religion has spuriously befriended. Around the ailing, the unhealthy, and the poor in spirit has it encircled its suckers. Its call has been, and is, to those benighted ones whose suffering is the bond between them and the Lord Jesus Christ, whose mentality is thin and dependent, whose self-reliance is weak-kneed and shuffling.

Assisting the weak, even assuming religion does accomplish this, may be an estimable task; but how far higher, and nobler, and more estimable, is the task of helping the strong. Attending to the wounds and bruises; pouring soothing ointment over the painful places; easing, however mistakenly, the burdens of life, may be an admirable duty; but how much more worthy and admirable is the toil of those in the vanguard. Working arduously in the valleys of life may be "soul-satisfying," and may do good; but the men and movements that are toiling up the heights of life deserve more of our praise and help. The good they do is incomparably greater; for, while that realised by the one is temporary and individual, that accomplished by the other is for all time and for all men.

How often has religion been on the heights, beside the great and strong, leading men from the valleys of life upwards, cutting and paving the way for the feet of the many? How often has religion championed the desires of the great and strong, and stood by them as they hewed their path from the valleys? Has it not persecuted and rigorously thwarted every endeavor of those who sought freedom, and fresh air, and happiness, and permanent relief from lowness of life? History, with grim growling voice, gives answer, "Yes."

ROBERT MORELAND.

SODOM AND GOMORRAH.

John Drew, the actor, was moved to talk about the Bible at a society dinner one evening. On his way to the club with a friend later on he said:—

"Nobody reads the Bible any more. The ignorance of the average person about the Bible and Biblical things is absolutely amazing. After I had talked my head off regarding the Scriptures this evening, a young lady said:—

"I have enjoyed what you said. But, do you know, I always thought Sodom and Gomorrah were man and wife?"

"An older woman made this comment:—

"Oh, well, I suppose they ought to have been if they were not."

Dolet: The Freethought Martyr.—II.

(Continued from p. 482.)

PADUA was not merely a centre of learning and philosophy; it was a centre of advanced Freethought.

"The University of Padua was at this time, and during the whole of the century, the headquarters of a philosophical school altogether opposed to the doctrines of Christianity, but which was divided into two sects, one pantheistic, and the other, if not absolutely materialist, at least nearly approaching to it. Both professed adherence to the doctrines of Aristotle, and in terms acknowledged him as their only master and teacher. But as in the Christian Church we have read of some who followed Paul and others Cephas, so among the Aristotelians of Padua there were some who followed the commentaries of Averroes, and others those of Alexander of Aphrodisias. Both disbelieved the immortality of the individual soul, the former on the ground of its absorption. The other sect was in fact, if not in terms, materialist, and absolutely denied the immortality of the soul; nor could its doctrine, so at least its opponents asserted, be distinguished from pure Atheism. Of this latter school Pietro Pomponazzo, better known under the Latin form of Pomponatius, the most distinguished philosopher of the day, was the acknowledged representative. Born in 1462, he studied both medicine and philosophy at Padua, where, being still young, he was appointed one of the professors of philosophy, and distinguished himself by maintaining the pure doctrine of Aristotle (that is, as he interpreted it, Materialism) against his older colleague Achillini, who followed the doctrine and teaching of Averroes. It was in 1516 that he published his treatise, *De Immortalitate Animæ*, in which he maintains that the doctrine of immortality is not to be found in Aristotle, is altogether opposed to reason, and is based only on the authority of revelation and of the Church, to both of which, when his work was attacked, he professed unbounded reverence. His book was replied to by his pupil Contarini, and was attacked by the Inquisition and publicly burnt at Venice. But it met with a defender in Bembo, the constant friend and protector of freedom of thought, and by his influence the book was permitted to be printed with some corrections and a statement by Pomponatius that he submitted wholly to revelation and the Church, and did not in any manner oppose the doctrine of immortality, but only the philosophical arguments which were generally used in its support. This, however, as Hallam remarks, 'is the current language of philosophy in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries which must be judged by and other presumptions.' Pomponatius died in 1525. His celebrity and influence long continued, and were at their height when Etienne Dolet arrived at Padua, where for three years he sat at the feet of the disciples of Pomponatius, drinking in without doubt those materialistic doctrines which, if they did not entirely harmonise with the doctrines of his master Cicero, were at least contrary to Medievalism and superstition, and therefore congenial to his mind."

We are thankful that Dolet pursued his studies amid such surroundings, but we also reflect with a sigh that his after-sufferings were only its natural result. At Padua there was ample toleration, for its scholars and thinkers were numerous enough to ensure their safety; but when the heretical ideas born and nourished there were carried abroad to less favored cities, they brought upon the possessor the bitterest persecution and often a cruel death.

But "literature and not philosophy was Dolet's mistress." After learning from the latter how erroneous was the orthodoxy of his day, he turned lovingly to the former, which he again wooed under the guidance of Simon Villanovus, whose learning, industry, and genius were praised by the best judges of the time, including Rabelais himself. This distinguished man died at the early age of thirty-five, and was deeply mourned by Dolet, his most attached pupil. An epitaph composed by the affectionate young scholar on his master is worth citing as a mental index. The original is in Latin, but Mr. Christie gives us an English rendering:—

"I bid you welcome, reader, and ask your attention for a moment. That fate, which mortals consider to be a misfortune, namely to die early, I think a most happy

lot. Wherefore congratulate me on my death and do not lament me, for by death I cease to be mortal. Farewell, and pray for my repose."

M. Boulmier remarks that "one feels in these few lines, mournful and icy as the bronze they cover, that incurable dissatisfaction with the world, that bitter contempt of life, that cold and sombre aspiration towards the repose of death, which forms a distinctive trait in the character of the unhappy Dolet." Mr. Christie, however, demurs to this, and says that to him Dolet appears to have been of a joyous temperament, and fond of life, for the sake of cultivating his own mind, and also for the sake of producing works that might procure him the fame for which he so eagerly longed.

An elegiac poem in Latin on Villanovus gives us a further insight into Dolet's state of mind at this time. We again take Mr. Christie's English version:—

"O thou whom probity and sincerity made my friend,
Thou who wast joined to me in an indissoluble union,
Thou whom kind fortune gave to me for a comrade,
Thou my companion, now taken from me by cruel death;
Art thou wrapped in eternal sleep and in profound darkness,
So that in vain I mournfully address thee in my song?
Yet what love compels me to do I shall sing, though thou may'st be deaf to it,
I am not ashamed to be accused of too tender an affection.
Farewell, dear friend, the one whom I have loved more than my own eyes,
And whom love compels me to love for ever more and more.
May thy nights be tranquil and thy sleep quiet,
For ever silent, but for ever well.
And if in the land of shadows there is any perception,
Do not reject my prayers, but love one to whom thou wilt always be dear."

This poem, which Mr. Christie describes as one of Dolet's best, both as to language and sentiment, reveals his intense scepticism. His heart yearns after his dead friend, but his intellect cannot trace his presence beyond the tomb. The hinted possibility of continued life is little more than a poetic artifice, and at the utmost it does not exceed the *grand peut-être* of Rabelais—a great Perhaps!

Dolet's intention on leaving Padua was to return to France, but he was persuaded to accompany Jean de Langeac, Bishop of Limoges, who was then on his way to Venice as Ambassador from France. At the early age of twenty-one Dolet became his secretary. Jean de Langeac had been Ambassador to Poland, Portugal, Hungary, Switzerland, Scotland, England, and Rome, and few men of his time had seen more of the world; he was also a patron of men of letters, and himself a man of learning and culture; and his selection of Dolet as his secretary speaks highly for the young Frenchman's character and attainments.

As the duties of his office were not heavy, Dolet found ample leisure for study. He attended the lectures of Egnazio, and continued the preparation of materials for his great work, the *Commentaries on the Latin Tongue*. He also found time in this "fairy city of the heart," as Byron calls it, to fall in love. But his mistress was soon taken by death, as his dearest friend had been before. His epitaph on the fair Elma is described as "stilted and pretentious," and we may conclude that his heart was not severely wounded. At his age, and in that magical city, he was bound to fall in love with some fair one, and his passion was probably no more than a flush of youthful spirits.

Dolet's stay in Venice was but brief. Early in 1532, at the instance of De Langeac, who charged himself with his protégé's maintenance while his studies were being completed, he entered as a law student the University of Toulouse. Under the Romans, and still more under the Visigoths, Toulouse had been the most polished city of Gaul; but at this time it was given over to orthodoxy and ignorance. It had been, centuries earlier, the headquarters of the simple Albigenses, who had for their many virtues and lack of faith been exterminated by what Mr. Christie well describes as "one of the most

horrible and brutal persecutions which the history of the world records," before which "the persecutions of the Christians by the Pagan emperors of Rome fade into insignificance." Thousands of men, women, and children were slain by sword and fire, and a still greater number were tortured, wounded, imprisoned, and robbed. The most smiling and prosperous part of France was changed into a desert. But heresy was crushed, and the most heretical became the most orthodox city in France. At Toulouse, St. Dominic founded his celebrated order, and there shortly after his death the Inquisition was established. Not only the governors of Languedoc, but even the kings of France themselves, could not enter Toulouse until they had taken an oath before the Inquisition to maintain the faith and the Holy Office. In the Place de Salins more eminent heretics were "roasted for the love of God" than in any other city except Paris. Toulouse, even in 1562, anticipated the St. Bartholomew massacre by a wholesale slaughter of the Huguenots within its walls; and "an annual fête in memory of the happy event was instituted in the city, and subsequently confirmed by a Bull of Pope Pious IV., who granted special indulgences to those who took part in it." After the St. Bartholomew massacre at Paris, three hundred Huguenots were led out of prison one by one and butchered by eight students of the University, and the receipts for their payment are said to be still in existence. In the year 1611, Pierre Girardie, the Inquisitor-General, tried and condemned to death a boy of nine years of age, and the poor child was duly burnt alive. Centuries have elapsed since, but one's flesh creeps in recording the infamy.

This citadel of orthodoxy is associated in history with three notable heretics, Bruno, Vanini, and Voltaire. Mr. Christie does not seem to be aware that Giordano Bruno reached Toulouse in the middle of the year 1577, after his flight from Geneva and the tender mercies of Calvin's disciples, and was there elected Public Lecturer to the University, an office which he filled with great success until 1579, when he sought a wider sphere in Paris. During these two years there must have been a lull of intolerance, or Bruno's scepticism in such a city would have certainly cost him his life.

Vanini was burnt alive at Toulouse, on the Place St. Etienne, February 19, 1619. Mr. Christie assigns a different date, 1618, and a different spot, the Place de Salins. And he does not allude to one atrocious circumstance of Vanini's martyrdom. Before being burnt alive, the sentence of the Court was that his tongue should be cut out, and as he was obstinate at the stake his tongue had to be plucked out with pincers!

At Toulouse, in 1762, Jean Calas was condemned to be broken on the wheel. It was this ecclesiastical murder which proved the grand humanity of Voltaire, and gave him an opportunity of standing forth before the whole civilised world as the dauntless champion of justice. Voltaire's vindication of Calas was one of the finest achievements in modern history. It taxed all his wonderful powers, his generosity, his logic, his persuasiveness, his wit, his matchless finesse, and his preternatural energy.

The populace of Toulouse in Dolet's age were "what their spiritual masters had made them." The Reformation was ridiculed in the most sacred part of the cathedral, where a carved figure of a pig was placed, with the inscription, "*Calvin porc prechant*,"—pig Calvin preaching. "If," says Mr. Christie, "rain was desired, the statues of the saints were removed from their places and carried in procession through the city. If a flood was threatened, prayers were addressed to the river itself, and a cross was placed beneath its waves." The church bells never ceased ringing, the people were surrounded with crucifixes, holy pictures, and relics, and, as an orthodox modern historian says, "the whole life of an inhabitant of Toulouse was a perpetual confession of the Catholic faith."

Soon after his arrival, Dolet witnessed his first *auto-da-fé*. He saw Jean de Cartuce burnt at the stake in June, 1532. The greater Rabelais was composing the first book of his *Pantagruel* at this time, and he gives the martyr a niche in his immortal pages. He also satirises the pious city wherein the deed was wrought: "From thence *Pantagruel* came to Toulouse, where he learned to dance very well and to play with the two-handed sword, as the fashion of the scholars of the said university is. But he stayed not long there when he saw that they stuck not to burn their regents alive like red herrings, saying, Now God forbid that I should die this death, for I am by nature dry enough already without being heated any further."

Dolet viewed the state of Toulouse with great indignation, which he lost no time in expressing. On October 9, 1533, he was unanimously chosen "imperator" by the French students. His first oration is said to "possess little that is worthy of our attention." But his second oration was more important. He alluded to Jean de Cartuce and branded his execution as a murder; he declared that the city was "given over to superstitions worthy only of the Turks;" and he boldly questioned its right to "impose its notions of Christianity on all men." His enemies used these passages against him, and early in January, 1534, he found himself in prison. His imprisonment was not of long duration, but it was the beginning of all his misfortunes. During the remaining thirteen years of his life he was five times imprisoned, and nearly half his days were spent in confinement. Well does M. Boulmier remark that Dolet's harangue laid the first faggot of the terrible pile on which, thirteen years later, he was to be consumed.

Late in May or early in June, 1534, Dolet hastily left Toulouse to avoid a second arrest. He was suffering from a fever, probably brought on by mental anxiety, and he retired to a friend's house in the country, partly to conceal himself, and partly to recruit his health while he shaped his future plans.

Towards the end of July he set out for Lyons, where he arrived on the first of August, worn out in body and mind. "When I reached Lyons," he afterwards wrote to De Boissone, "I had no hope of restoration to health, and even despaired of my life."

Lyons was then, perhaps, the most liberal city in France. It afforded far more intellectual freedom than Paris, and many persecuted scholars and thinkers sought shelter within its walls. Rabelais, Marot, Servetus, Des Periers, all passed several years of their lives at Lyons between 1530 and 1540, while Erasmus, Estienne, Pole, Sadolet, Calvin, and Beza were frequent visitors. Here, it is said, was founded the first of those Academies for which France became afterwards so famous. "But," says Mr. Christie, "it was not only by the presence of men of letters and science that Lyons was distinguished in the sixteenth century, but also by the extraordinary activity of its press, which rivalled that of Paris itself. Lyons was the second town in France where the art of printing was exercised, but it achieved a greater distinction than Paris, inasmuch as from its presses issued the first books printed in France in the French tongue." It was at Lyons that Gargantua and *Pantagruel* first saw the light, and that Marot first printed his *Enfer* and a complete edition of his works.

On his restoration to health Dolet formed an acquaintance with several of the leading men of letters in this city, amongst whom was Rabelais himself. His acquaintance with the greatest Frenchman then living soon ripened into intimacy and close friendship.

G. W. FOOTE.

(To be continued.)

If you have wit, use it to please, and not to hurt: you may shine like the sun in the temperate zones, without scorching. Here it is wished for; under the line it is dreaded.—*Chesterfield*.

The Northern Tour.

The past has been a week of variations and excitements. I had mentioned in my last report our decision to stop a day longer in Southport. We did so, and the result was a really fine, orderly meeting—quite the opposite of the night before. There are enough friends in Southport to form a Branch, and Mr. G. F. Makinson, 53 Liverpool-road South, Birkdale, Southport, has promised to act as secretary and forward the applications.

The week-end we spent in the Burnley district with flattering results. Friday night in Colne, Saturday in Nelson, and Sunday afternoon and evening in Burnley, were all "champion" meetings (the sales for the four meetings being 51s, mostly *Freethinkers*). We are promised a Branch in Colne; Mr. Joseph Brown, 11 Lagar Fold, Colne, being willing to attend to the preliminaries. In Nelson the local Branch has become somewhat disorganised, but Mr. W. A. Holroyd (of the Parent Society), whose assistance was very welcome, has great faith in the possibility of its reorganisation. In Burnley Mr. Geo. Moore, 44 Healey Wood-road, Burnley, who presided at both meetings, has undertaken the work of forming a new Branch.

In connection with Nelson, the following incidents are worth noting. The best place for meetings is in the Technical School Yard, for the use of which permission has to be obtained from the Town Clerk. I had some difficulty in obtaining this, as it appears that much complaint had been made about the lectures given there by T. W. Stewart. I succeeded in persuading the Town Clerk that we had no connection with that individual, and, Mr. Holroyd undertaking to be responsible for the proper conduct of the meetings, we obtained the permit, with the results above stated. In the circumstances I was scrupulously careful to give even the "unco" guid "no ground for complaint; but even so, an individual present assured Gott that "he was on the Free Church Council, and they would see that infidels and Atheists didn't get permission to use the school-yard again."

The rest of the week has been of an annoying character. According to program we should have appeared (on Monday) in Ashton-under-Lyne, but, finding it to be market-day, suffered ourselves to be persuaded into going on to Hyde. Here we fell foul of the market-keeper, who flatly refused us permission to hire a stand—admitting that he did so because he objected to the preaching of anything else other than Christianity. It appeared also that Mr. Bates had been there recently, and had roused their ire. After interviewing the Chief Constable, we made application as requested, in writing, for the use of the ground on the Wednesday following (July 31). The night following, in gloomy weather, we held a very fair meeting in Ashton-under-Lyne, from which a Branch should *certainly* result. The Wednesday arrived with no permit, but plenty of rain; hence a blank night. I think it would be well, before we next visit Hyde, for Miss Vance to write to the Town Clerk for a permit. There is much sympathy, as well as bigotry, in the town. To-night (August 1) we shall try Huddersfield—if the rain permits.

THOS. A. JACKSON.

Same in Chicago.

I HAVE another chapter to write regarding the case of Mr. Weber in Chicago. For two years he has been giving Freethought addresses every evening on the corner of North Clark and Erie, and has many times been arrested. Secretary Reichwald, of the Secular Union, took up his case and carried it to the higher courts. For a long time he regularly held his meetings, and sold the *Truthseeker* and other Freethought literature in peace. His chief enemies are the Moodyites, whose Institute is but a short distance away, and who hold meetings nightly on the opposite corner. They hold their meetings all over the city, drive their trucks up to the curb, and obstruct the side-walk. Since Mr. Weber has been speaking, their meeting on Clark and Erie has been badly put on the "blink." They have tried to defeat him by the use of a big organ, and by thorough Christian blackguardism, but to no purpose, as he gets the people. They are desperate, as when the other night, while I was listening to them, one, a fanatic, with a triangular-shaped forehead running back like a monkey's, started in on the "old infidels." Mr. Weber, a mere boy, has almost driven them wild! They have thought to terrorise him by repeated arrests, but he keeps right on, and though the patrol drives up to the edge of his crowd, he never stops talking until they seize him and throw him in. On Friday night, June 14, they adopted new tactics. A complaint was

lodged against him, not at the precinct station, but at headquarters. An officer, not on that beat, stepped up and requested to see his permit. He showed it, was told that it was not valid, and to stop talking. He kept on and was arrested. To show the meanness of the enemies of Freethought, although his bondsman was on hand, he was locked up for several hours before they would grant him bail. He was finally released, and Mr. Reichwald was informed and was down to court in the morning with the American Secular Union's lawyer. Before they, or even Mr. Weber, had arrived, a "snap judgment" of a fine of twenty-five dollars was given. Of course, we would not stand for that. Higher authority was called upon, and a continuance given until next week. But see their object. On former occasions they were glad to postpone consideration of the cases as long as possible, continuing the matter days, even weeks. This time they determined to make a star chamber matter of it. Instead of being successful, the scoundrels will be obliged to appear in court, show their hand, face a jury, and submit to a good legal pummelling.

Archbishop Quigley, the County Commissioners, and the County Architect have secured, I am informed, six lawyers to defend them in our suit, one being an ex-judge. The Archbishop has omitted the legal gentleman who served him on a former occasion when we compelled him to pay the taxes on property he owned. Chicago Freethinkers are fighters and stand for no nonsense from the black-robed gentry. Some days ago an old woman stopped in front of Mr. Adair's book store, where Mangasarian's debate with Cropsey, entitled *Did Jesus Ever Live?* was exposed for sale. With the glare of insanity in her eyes she shrieked: "Take them out of the window, or I will have you arrested. I am going down to the station right away." Mr. Adair quietly answered, "Madam, do you know that many people have become rich minding their own business?"

In conclusion I would urge upon all Freethinkers to financially support the American Secular Union. It is doing good work and strikes priestcraft in spots where it hurts.

—*Truthseeker* (New York).

FRANKLIN STEINER.

To give any other meaning to the word Christ than "anointed" or "the anointed one," as applied to a king of the Jews, or a ruler over Israel, is to give a dishonest and unwarranted meaning to that word. It is time to rescue once for all this word from its Christian associations. Christ does not mean Savior, and it is dishonest to use the word in such a sense. This age does not need a Savior; it needs enlightenment. It does not need to be saved from hell, but from the fate of ignorance and superstition. This age needs more than anything else to be saved from Jesus.

—*L. K. Washburn.*

Obituary.

I regret to record the passing away of a dear friend and co-worker in the Secular movement—Robt. H. Wharrier, of Bedlington Colliery, Northumberland. One of the best known and most highly esteemed of North-country Freethinkers, Mr. Wharrier was always to be found wherever fighting or work had to be done for the cause. A personal friend and ardent admirer of Charles Bradlaugh, he was ever ready with his support, either in purse, public meeting, or petition, in that great man's strenuous struggle for the political rights of Atheists. The *National Reformer* and the *Freethinker* never had a more loyal supporter, and in the last days of his life the *Freethinker* shared with Paine's *Age of Reason* the favored companionship of his bed. Commencing to work in the pit before he was ten years old, as a trapper boy, his sterling qualities carried him forward until, at the age of forty-nine, he had become the under-manager of a very large colliery. In politics he was a Radical and was one of those who secured the return to Parliament of the Right Hon. Thomas Burt. In the movement for the extension of the Franchise and in that for the establishment of Co-operative Societies, both productive and distributive, he was at all times conspicuous. His funeral, which took place on Thursday, July 25, was attended by a large concourse of people, who listened with very deep respect to the service (Austin Holyoake's adapted) read at the Bedlington Cemetery gates by M. Weatherburn.

—M. W.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 3.15, Miss Kough, a Lecture; 6.15, Mr. Rosetti, jun., a Lecture.

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): 3.15 and 6, A. B. Moss, Lectures.

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

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

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (Ridley-road, High-street): 7, Miss Kough, "Wanted—A Christian."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Parliament Hill Fields): 3.15, C. E. Ratcliffe, a Lecture.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (outside Maryland Point Station, Stratford, E.): 7, E. Burke, "The Pretensions of Theology."

WOOD GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Jolly Butchers Hill, opposite Public Library): 7.30, Mr. Davidson, "Christian Evidences, Ancient and Modern."

COUNTRY.

OUTDOOR.

LANCASHIRE AND YORKSHIRE: THOS. A. JACKSON—*Oldham* (Park Gates): Sunday, August 11, at 11, "When I Was in Prison"; at 3, "Who said Damn?" at 6.30, "Philosophy of Secularism." *Bury* (Front of Circus): 12, at 7.30, "The Latest Thing in Gods." *Sheffield* (Monolith): 13, at 7.30, "Piety and Piffle." *Rotherham* (Town Centre): 14, at 7.30, "Who said Damn?" *Sheffield* (Monolith): 15, at 7.30, "The Devil and All His Works." *Leeds* (Town Hall Square): 16, "What Would Jesus Do?" *Bolton* (Town Hall Steps): 17, at 7.30, "The Cause and Cure of Christianity."

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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