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Thought is never thrown away: wherever it falls, or runs, or rests, it fertilises.—LANDOR.

Blessed Be Ye Poor.

A LEADING London newspaper once opened its columns to a discussion of the question, "Is Christianity Played Out?" In a certain sense it is *not* played out. To use a common expression, "there's money in it." Despite the "poverty" of the "lower clergy," for whom so many appeals are made, the clerical business beats all others, if we compare the amount of investment with the size of the dividend. Relatively speaking, the profits are magnificent. There are some curates with only a workman's wages, and of course they merit our deepest sympathy. It is quite shocking to think that a disciple of the "poor Carpenter of Nazareth" has to subsist and support his dear children on such a miserable pittance. It is a calamity which calls for tears of blood. But, on the other hand, there are Archbishops with princely incomes, Bishops with lordly revenues, Deans and Canons with fine salaries and snug quarters; and between the two extremes of the fat bishop and the lean curate is a long line of gradations, in which, if we strike an average, the result is very far from despicable. It may be added that, while the leading Nonconformist ministers, at least in England, do not rival the great Church dignitaries in the matter of income, they often run up to a thousand a year and sometimes over it. Taking the average of their incomes, we have no hesitation in saying it is beyond what they would earn in the ordinary labor market.

Joseph Symes asked, "Who's to be Damned if Christianity is True?" Certainly, he said, the clergy stand a fine chance. They are more likely to go to Hades than the congregations they preach to. On an average they are better off. They preach, or *should* preach, the blessings of poverty and the curse, nay, the damnableness, of wealth. According to the teaching of Jesus, as we read it in the Sermon on the Mount, and as we find it illustrated in the parable of Dives and Lazarus, every pauper is pretty sure of a front seat in heaven; and every man of property or good income is equally sure of warm quarters in hell. But you do not meet parsons in workhouses, though some of them get a good deal of outdoor relief. Go into a country parish and look for the clergyman's house; you will not find it difficult to discover. The best residence is the squire's, the next best is the parson's. Everywhere the clericals appropriate as much as they can of the good things of this world. They find it quite easy to worship God and Mammon together. The curate has his eye on a vicarage; the vicar has his on a deanery; the dean has his on a bishopric. The Dissenting minister is open to improve his position. Sometimes he is invited to another church. He wrestles with the Lord and makes inquiries. If they prove satisfactory, he recognises "a call." Other people, in ordinary business, would honestly say they were accepting a better situation; but the man of God is above all that, so he obeys the Lord's voice and goes to a position of "greater service," though it would puzzle him to show an extra soul saved by the alteration.

Modern Christianity is simply an organised hypocrisy. The note of modern apologetics is the phrase of "Christ-like." In one respect the gentlemen who strike this note *are* Christ-like. They live on the gifts of the faithful, including those of "rich women." But the likeness ends there. In other respects they are dissimilar to their Master. He *died* upon the cross and they *live* upon the cross. Yes, and many of them get far more on the cross than they would ever get on the square.

Doubtless we shall be censured in vigorous Biblical language for speaking so plainly. But we mean every word we say, and are prepared to make it good in discussion. Men should practise what they preach. Those who teach that poverty is a blessing should themselves be poor. Those who teach that God Almighty cried "Woe unto you rich!" should avoid the curse of wealth. If they do not, they are hypocrites. It is no use mincing the matter. Plain speech is best on such occasions. When the great Dr. Abernethy told a gouty, dyspeptic, rich patient to "live on sixpence a day and earn it," his advice was more wholesome than the most dexterous rigmorale.

"Blessed be ye poor" and "Woe unto you rich" are texts with which the Church has bamboozled the multitude in the interest of the privileged classes. The disinherited sons of earth were promised all sorts of fine compensations in Kingdom-Come; meanwhile, kings, aristocrats, priests and all the rest of the juggling and appropriating tribe, battered on the fruits of other men's labor. The poor were like the dog crossing the stream and seeing the big shadow of his piece of meat in the water. "Seize the shadow!" the priests cried. The poor did so. But the substance was not lost. It was snapped up and shared by those who gave the advice.

The people have been told that the gospel is a cheap thing—without money and without price. That is the prospectus. But the gospel is frightfully dear in reality. Religion costs more than education. England spends more in preparing her sons and daughters for the next world than in training them for this world. Yet the next world may be nothing but a dream, and certainly we *know* nothing about it; while this world is a solid and often a solemn fact, with its business as well as its pleasures, its work as well as its enjoyments, its duties as well as its privileges. To keep people out of hell and guide them to heaven (places that only exist in the map of faith), we spend over twenty millions a year. This is a sum which, if wisely devoted, would remedy the worst evils of human society in a single generation. It would found countless institutions of culture and innocent recreation; and, by means of experiments, it would solve a host of social problems. Instead of doing this, we keep up a huge army of black-coats to fight an imaginary Devil; yet we call ourselves a *practical* people. Christianity has its roots deep down in the *wealth* of England, and this is the secret of its power, allied of course with its usurped authority over the minds of little children. The churches and chapels are mostly social institutions, Sunday resorts of the "respectable" classes. For any purpose connected with the real welfare of the people Christianity might just as well be dead and buried—as it will be when the people see the truth.

G. W. FOOTE.

The Primitive Mind.

WHAT is it that properly entitles one to be called civilised? At first glance this seems a tolerably easy question to answer and many authoritative definitions might be cited in reply. There are savage people and there are civilised people, and while it will be freely admitted that there is a sort of borderland where savagery and civilisation mingle, still, it will be said, eliminating these, it is not difficult to separate the savage from the civilised person. And so far as outward trappings are concerned, this must be admitted. The savage has no railways no electric tramcars. He does not go beneath the waters in submarines, nor above them in aeroplanes. He cannot load his table with delicacies, nor clothe his body with fabrics collected from all parts of the earth. His house is plain and his art is crude. When he goes to war his weapons are simple, and in peace his arts are few. He is deplorably ignorant of what we call the secrets of nature, and surrounded by many terrors from which we are free. His life is shorter and harder while it lasts. It would seem easy enough, then, to discriminate between savage and civilised people.

On the surface, yes; and that is about as far as the observation of most people penetrate. They are concerned with clothing, housing, ease of communication, and rapidity of movement. These are the kind of things that lead us to talk of our having civilised a race because we have taught them to wear trousers instead of a waistcloth, to walk by the moral standard of Clapham instead of by that of their own country, and to talk of Jesus instead of their own Mumbo-Jumbo. It does not strike us that we may give the savage all we possess without making him really civilised, or even without those who give being civilised themselves. It is not really a difficult thing to teach savages to ride in a train instead of walking, or to wear a different kind of clothing to that which he has hitherto worn. He will take quickly enough to "civilised" foods; and, after the first fright, will quite appreciate many of our scientific marvels—and understand them quite as well as the mass of our own population. He will greatly prefer our weapons of warfare to his own. No civilised person could show a keener appreciation of the power of "civilised" weapons of destruction than does the poor, ignorant savage. Given the chance, he will get drunk with all the thoroughness of an English gentleman of a hundred years ago.

It is easy enough to separate tribes or nations or races into civilised or uncivilised so long as we are solely concerned with external trappings. It is when we put these on one side that the difficulties commence. A century or so ago a civilised State would have been distinguished from the savage one on the ground that its members were under a regular government, and bound by settled laws and recognised customs. This was because the life of savages appeared to be unsettled, unorganised, and with no other rule save that of brute force. A little deeper knowledge showed that the savage is more completely under law and custom than that of the civilised man. The savage is tied down in a thousand and one ways that would be extremely repellant to civilised people. His life is regulated in all its details, and he seldom dreams of complaint or revolt. It is, in fact, the unreality and pressure of social law that makes savagery so large and so permanent a fact in human history. Were the savage less under the control of law and custom, progress would be a much larger and more uniform phenomenon than it is.

A common description of a civilised person is one who is courteous, obliging, considerate, refined in manners. This has at least the merit of discarding trappings and coming nearer to the man. But it makes the work of classification harder instead of easier. Savages are not lacking in civility, in courtesy, or hospitality. Travellers who have gone amongst uncivilised peoples have borne a very

general testimony to the good feeling with which they have been received. Where the white man has been met with ill-treatment it is almost always because the savages have been taught by experience to regard the white man as an enemy. And of course, if the white man goes—as he often does—outraging all the tribal customs and beliefs, he is inviting trouble, and sometimes it arises. But even then it has to be remembered that if a visitor to England wantonly outraged some of our tribal customs and insulted some of our tribal fetishes, he might also look out for rough treatment. Kindness, courtesy, sympathy, hospitality, belong to both savage and civilised. They belong to the more fundamental human qualities, and have little necessary connection with the arts and sciences that go to make up what we have in mind when we talk about civilisation. Savages get born, grow up, get married, become parents, and die just as do civilised people. And the feelings that accompany these states and conditions are with both more or less alike.

Any really radical and penetrating classification of civilised and uncivilised quite breaks down when applied to either nation or races. We might go by mere numbers and say that whether we call a people civilised or uncivilised depends upon the character of the majority. But that is radically unfair to the minority in one direction, and over flattering to the majority in the other. It does not enable us in the least to determine whether certain individuals ought to be placed with the savage or the civilised, the primitive or the advanced, and only very roughly as to the proportion of each in any selected society. We cannot take gentleness, or honesty, or hospitality as supplying the required test, since there are tribes whom no one would hesitate to call primitive, and who might well challenge comparison with much more "advanced" people. To be satisfactory and scientific, the test needs to be one that can be applied to individuals rather than to groups or to a whole race. And while the emotional or moral element need not be wholly discarded, it must be predominantly mental in character. A very casual examination is enough to show that it is mainly in the mental outlook that the difference between the cultivated and uncultivated mind lies.

What, then, are the outstanding characteristics of the primitive mind? We shall be fairly safe in saying that two of the prominent characteristics of primitive intelligence are small powers of adequate generalisation and an intelligent sense of causation. Neither are altogether absent from the primitive intelligence, but neither are they sufficiently developed to be useful guides in the understanding of natural or social phenomena. There is no slowness in generalising about an undeveloped mind; the tendency is rather in the opposite direction. All of us know people who, like the Frenchman in the story, having landed at Dover and encountered a man carrying a sack, immediately wrote home saying that all Englishmen carry sacks. So we find people disliking red-haired men because a red-haired man once did them an injury, or attributing a good influence to something or someone for an equally unsatisfactory reason. It is the same with causation. The primitive mind connects events in terms of causation as does the cultivated intelligence. Only it lacks the skill in detecting true causes, is without the patience that enables one to submit to an absence of explanation rather than put up with an unjustifiable one, and is always mistaking a mere casual connection for a casual sequence.

Approaching the question from this point of view, the thing that is forced on one is that the primitive mind, or a primitive outlook on life, is not at all a question of chronology. It is not even a question of the whole of any given individual. There are people belonging to what would be called, and properly called, a comparatively primitive social state who would be really less primitive than some belonging to a comparatively advanced social state. And nothing is more common than to find people who are advanced—even scientific—when dealing with some

aspects of life, and who are yet crudely primitive when dealing with other aspects. We find a man taking a sanely rational view of social subjects, and yet becoming plainly and aggressively primitive when dealing with religion. Or—less commonly—we find the situation reversed, and a fairly advanced view of religion giving place to primitive notions of sociology. Or yet again, one may be rational in both religion and politics, and yet be primitive the moment a purely ethical question is raised. There are very few men capable of looking at the whole of life from a thoroughly rational point of view. The earlier and primitive notions are continually forcing themselves to the front. And, although they may advance a number of reasons for the voicing of these primitive views, it requires little reflection to estimate them at their real worth.

There is no necessity, then, to seek for manifestations of the primitive intelligence in remote districts and with uncivilised tribes. The well-dressed Oxford-street loungeur may be as good an illustration as the unclothed savage. It may be discerned as clearly in our own House of Commons or in a modern church as in a primitive pow-wow or savage witch-dance. The method of reasoning is often substantially the same; the outlook on life often identical. Only recently, for example, the police made an attack, by way of certain regulations, on fortune tellers, of whom some hundreds exist, it is said, in the neighborhood of Oxford-street. I do not know that the regulations will do much good; in any case, the roguery prohibited is so harmless, when compared with other roguery that escapes attack, that it hardly seems worth bothering about. But the vogue of the fortune teller serves to show the prevalence of the primitive type of mind. Not that this particular proof is greatly needed. Common experience furnishes plenty of evidence. If a ladder is stretched across a pavement, notice the number of people who will refrain from walking underneath. See of how many well-known men it is related that they will not sit down thirteen at table, or carry about a charm "for luck," or who have a superstitious dread of certain days, or dates, or numbers. These superstitions turn up in the most unlikely places and with the most unlikely people. And they are all evidence of the existence of a mass of semi-quiescent superstition, of the prevalence of primitive mental characteristics that cannot be without some very powerful influence in determining our social life, although it may not always be easy to say just where and how it operates.

(To be continued.)

C. COHEN.

Strange Admissions.

A SUBJECT of universal discussion in Christian circles just now is the growing indifference to religion. It overshadows all other topics in the minds of the readers of the Churches. It occupies a prominent place on the program of every conference, congress, and mission held up and down the country. Professor Adeney, in his address from the chair of the Congregational Union, made frequent references to "the religious unsettlement and popular impatience characteristic of our age," and expressed the startling conviction that the Divine ordinance of preaching is not calculated to put an end to such a state of things. Upon the "surging multitude in streets and shops and mills," he admitted, "our preaching has no effect; for this sufficient reason that they never hear it." He said:—

"While the preacher is doing his work better his hearers are becoming more exacting. More than that, even where the preacher is known to be capable and sincere, the old authority of the pulpit has disappeared. Congregations no longer sit under their minister; they are more inclined to sit on him."

Principal Selbie, of Mansfield College, Oxford, read a paper on the same depressing theme. He characterised the indifference to religion as "widespread,"

and alluded to the mourning of good men "over what Newman called 'the dreary, hopeless irreligion' of the great masses of the people." Dr. Selbie has absolute faith in the redeeming efficacy of the old Gospel, in the readiness and ability of Christ to save the lost, and in the alleged fact that the Church is the instrument of the Holy Ghost; but he cannot close his eyes to the real fact that the generality of the people do not share his faith. The blame for this he imputed to the Churches, to their too low a standard of membership, their conventionalism and lack of reality, and their sinful divisions. But the puzzling problem is how Churches indwelt by the Holy Ghost, with the glorified Christ as their ever-present Head, could ever fall into such grave and incapacitating faults; and this problem both Principals ignored.

And yet, of all problems, this for the Churches is the most important. It is easy enough to throw the responsibility upon "the growing luxury, the wealth and comfort of the lives of a great many within the Churches," upon the undoubted lack of passionate sympathy with and determined effort on behalf of the poor and dispossessed, or upon the minister in his lukewarm, perfunctory performance of his various duties; but this often unfair distribution of blame leaves the real question untouched. The crucial question is, Why has the ever-living, omnipotent Christ failed to accomplish the work committed to him before the foundations of the world were laid? Why have the great and precious promises he is reported to have made with such strong confidence remained unfulfilled to this day? We are told that "the depth of the world's need appeals to the depth of God's compassion"; but is "the depth of the world's need" greater than "the depths of God's compassion," seeing that the former still remains unrelieved by the latter? The usual answer is that God has seen fit, in his infinite wisdom, to work through the Church, which is always imperfect, and often deplorably corrupt as well; but this answer begs the whole question; for it brings us back to the query of why the Church is so imperfect and corrupt. In Ephesians v. 25-27 we find these words:—

"Christ loved the Church, and gave himself up for it; that he might sanctify it, having cleansed it by the washing of water with the Word, that he might present the Church to himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."

Now, inasmuch as the Church undoubtedly is quite as imperfect and corrupt as Principals Adeney and Selbie represent her to be, the only rational conclusion is that Paul's Christ is a pure myth, and that the Church has always sailed under false colors; or, in other words, that the Christian religion is a rope of sand, and that in their discussion of the widespread indifference to it the divines indirectly expose its falsity.

The Rev. Mr. Rhondda Williams, as is usual with the school to which he belongs, tried hard to minimise the failure of Christianity by drawing a distinction between Christianity and organised Christianity, and attributing the failure exclusively to the latter. Mr. Williams imagines things and then pursues them as realities. He has his dreams, and then tells them as if they were experiences of his waking hours. According to him, the Labor movement is a Christian movement, and the social conscience that is growing in all directions is a Christian conscience. This is distinctively a New Theology contention; and it is entirely false. The bulk of the people who possess social sympathies and endeavor to give practical expression to them are not aware that there is in their life "a purpose higher than any merely human purpose, at work for good," their only consciousness being that they are only obeying the dictates of the highest and best within them, which is wholly human. The fact is that nobody knows of anything that is superhuman. Humanity represents the summit of the evolutionary process on this planet, whatever may be the case elsewhere. No matter what idea a man may enter-

tain as to the future of his race, one incontrovertible fact concerning it is that it is of an entirely human origin.

Of course, even Mr. Williams believes that the Church ought to be preserved, because, despite all that may and must be said to her discredit, "the best religious life of the country was still in the Churches." Nothing is more certain than that Christians are the best people in the world, if we believe their official champions, and this is why they teach that the whole world must be converted to Christianity. "When people tell me," said Principal Adeney,—

"that the Church is an anachronism, a mass of worn-out apparatus, only fit for the scrap-heap, I ask, What is to supersede it?—the newspaper?—the day school?—the science course?—Socialism?—Syndicalism? Since none of these things have yet accomplished the redemption of society, is it not a little hazardous to name them in preference to the society which, with all its faults and failings, has proved in the past to be so largely God's instrument for the saving of the race? You are offering us a program for the future in exchange for a fact of the past. Is that a solid ground on which to build our hopes?"

Here Dr. Adeney appears as a special pleader, and by no means an ingenious one either. His appeal to the past is specially unfortunate, and only to an assembly of fellow-believers could he have made it with safety. To affirm that the newspaper, the day school, the science course, Socialism, or Syndicalism has not yet accomplished the redemption of society is to admit that the Church, with nineteen centuries behind her, has not done so either. Besides, Dr. Adeney knows as well as we that the newspaper and the day school have always been—

"Even like a fawning greyhound in the leash,"

and know not the meaning of freedom. Release the press and education from their religious fetters and they will do wonders for the intellectual and moral uplifting of the masses. As for science, everybody knows that the Church kept it under lock and key for upwards of a thousand years, and that ever since it gained its liberty not so long ago it has showered innumerable boons upon the world. We are not afraid to declare that science has done much more for humanity during the last fifty years than the Church has done during her entire history. Dr. Adeney says that we are offering "a program for the future in exchange for a fact of the past." True; and a most splendid exchange it is too. We are offering knowledge in exchange for faith; realities in exchange for dreams; earthly welfare for heavenly glory; the service of known man for slavish devotion to an unknown God; full appreciation of the wholesome pleasures of this life for phantom joy in the Holy Ghost. Is it not a most desirable and beneficial exchange? If the Church will only retire from the press and the day school, and let science have free course in all its departments, if the clergy of all denominations will but renounce the foul crime of persecution, drop their pet habit of self-glorification before the world, and learn to keep to their own last, we are bold to assure Principal Adeney that the future of mankind will be a vast improvement upon its past. All through the ages the Church has been vainly pretending to set up what is vaguely called the kingdom of God, whilst already science has met with considerable success in the promotion of the kingdom of Man, which is at once an intelligible and intelligent conception.

The burden borne by the two Principals at the Manchester meeting of the Congregational Union was the consciousness of the "painful fact" that, because of "the dreary, hopeless irreligion" of the great masses of the people, there is no early chance of their being recognised "as the reconstructors of society." Listen to their wail: "They—the great masses of the people—go on their way with complete indifference to our psalm-singing and our sermon-preaching." What a calamity! The world is doomed! And all this has come to pass in spite of the oft-repeated assertion that "mankind is

incurably religious." Mankind has, indeed, been for long a dreadful sufferer from the malady; but at last it has passed the crisis, and the cure is working magnificently, as was abundantly testified by the two Principals at Manchester. It is the praises of a dying faith that are being so lustily sung to-day. No wonder the music is in the minor key. Is any serious effort being put forth to prevent the dreaded catastrophe? There is a most stubborn fight shown, but not so much for the faith itself as for the many unjust privileges which it conferred upon its adherents in the days of its might. On behalf of supremacy in the schools and the monopoly of Sunday there are plenty of "Die Hards" among both clergy and laity. But the death-knell has sounded.

J. T. LLOYD.

Slandered Humanity.

No sensible person can endure a prig or a snob; but, surely, even in the words of a Biblical writer, a man is entitled to think of himself "soberly, as he ought to think." The sweeping condemnation of humanity involved in Christian doctrine is the *Ultima Thule* of Pessimism: "There is none righteous; no not one"! What a gang of actual and potential blackguards men and women must be! Could any more pernicious doctrine be taught than this? According to Christian teaching, we are all originally and essentially degraded and vicious, and the only means by which we can be changed is by *miracle*. The whole fabric of Christianity rests on this basis of the miraculous.

It matters not to the earnest Christian fire-eater that the basic dogmas of his "faith" are unscientific and anti-moral, and therefore *untrue*. Give him Biblical authority, and he will condone any outrage and justify any crime.

The most appalling examples of extremism are to be found among the orthodox. Their God is the Creator and Ruler of the Universe; he is entirely good, perfect, sinless. And he created human beings, strange to say, who have an invincible tendency ever to do what is wrong! If he created man, he also, surely, endowed him with this tendency.

"But, no," says the Christian, "man is tempted of the Devil, who has spoiled God's handiwork." Alas, what then becomes of the claim that the Christian God is omnipotent? The Christian remedy, however, for poor human wretches is the vicarious sacrifice of Christ, the son of that same perfectly good, omnipotent God. It is more than a case of the innocent suffering *with* the guilty. It is a case of the innocent suffering *for* the guilty. We poor degraded units of humanity are, by a simple act of "faith," to be at once transformed from fiends incarnate into angels of light.

When the Christian finds that his "revealed religion" is riddled by the shots of critics, he resorts to what he calls "religious experience," which, when examined, is usually found to consist of hysterical delusions and hallucinations. Ecstasies are very different things from experience, and every normal sane man or woman knows that all his or her "experience" negatives the possibility of any immediate transformation resulting miraculously from the glance of an eye or the turning of the head. Intelligence and common sense tell us that all processes known to us are *gradual*. No normal man becomes abnormal in a moment of time, as no degraded man becomes morally perfect in a moment of time. But, in spite of the Christian attempt to reconcile his faith with natural processes, he confidently assures us that the besotted murderer who accepts Christ to-day, and is hanged to-morrow, is, immediately on his death, fit—even in the twinkling of an eye—for the company of the best and purest and most elevated beings we can know; whereas, the man who has led a blameless life, who has excelled in charitable and generous deeds, and who has been a comfort to all in distress, is, on his death, if

he but reject the fundamental dogmas of the Christian faith, at once consigned to the horrors of eternal torture in the company of the most degraded and impure.

Now, we may assert with confidence that the determining factor as to the course any human being will take in a given set of circumstances is something over which that human being has no control. Each one of us is a bundle of conflicting feelings, ideas, impulses, and emotions. Oliver Wendell Holmes says: "A rose will not flower in the dark and a fern will not flower anywhere." We are dependent altogether upon our ancestry and our surroundings. Adam Smith says that, up to the age of ten there is very little difference to be noted between the son of a duke and the son of a street porter. What we are we have been made: not by ourselves, not by God or the Devil, but by evolutionary processes.

The last man to go to the trouble of defining his terms is the Christian. What is "good" or "bad" to him he fixes by his rigid and unscientific dogmas. It is all through making the final Court of Appeal, my lords, Miracle and Mysticism.

But human beings are not to be uplifted by a doctrine of pessimism and hopelessness. The so-called God of the orthodox has played the very devil with human development. The doctrine of the atonement, for example, produces lives of vice and deathbed repentances. It either makes an intolerable snob or an intolerable sinner.

The dualistic teaching of Christianity not only involves itself in self-contradictions and absurdities, but it assumes, as already suggested, that human beings are essentially vicious and immoral—an utterly pessimistic and unfounded slander. Dualism or pluralism has ever led to contradictions, inconsistency, discord, and dispeace. Most of the suffering endured by mankind in all ages has been inflicted by it. Monism stands for a universal harmony. It is marvellously simple, yet delicately intricate and beautiful. Even the humblest is able to recognise its harmonising, and broadening, and kindly influence in recent years. Monism is just a Universal Oneness or unity, the mighty law that governs the universe. It is steadily raising mankind to a nobler plane. Every being and everything comes within its scope. The universe is not a conglomerate concourse of *dissecta membra*. We are all parts of one great whole, interdependent upon each other, but each one full of mighty potentialities and capacities to help his fellows. The Christian religion has made every community in which it has secured power an arena of hostile and warring elements. The race that is "set before" the Christian is very like that described in the old Scots ballad:—

"Aff they a' gaed gallopin' gallopin'
Legs an' airms a' wallopin' wallopin'
'Deil tak' the hendmost,' quo' Duncan Macalapin,
The Laird o' Tillybenjo!"

Order, harmony, precision, knowledge, justice, are things that have no place in the Christian's calendar. But the Christian is a preferable character to the God for whom he professes to speak, and whose most zealous ambassadors have for so long vilified the submissive and abject—because ignorant—human race.

Dualism means ignorance, inefficiency, conflict, and pain. Monism means wisdom, efficiency, peace, and healing. "Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap." Sow the seed of Monism and reap health and life. Sow the seed of Dualism and reap disease and death.

SIMPLE SANDY.

A GOOD CUSTOM.

As the Duke of Cambridge fell on his knees for family prayers at Chatsworth, he exclaimed in a loud voice, "A d—d good custom this."—*Correspondence of Sarah Spencer, Lady Lytton.*

The Voltaire of America.

"Yet Freedom! yet, thy banner torn, but flying,
Streams, like the thunderstorm, against the wind."

—BYRON.

AN advanced movement like our own can have no better champion than a humorist. No human emotion is so readily awakened as that of which laughter is the sign. And if the cause be a great one, and if the arguments, barbed by wit and winged by laughter, have any intrinsic worth, they strike the deeper and take the stouter hold because of the humorous nature of their presentation.

In a theological discussion a laugh is a blessing; thus a laugh-maker like Colonel Robert Ingersoll was genuinely our benefactor. The artificial solemnity of the subject make a joke more jocund, as the arms of a dusky maiden give a double beauty to her pearls. The defenders of that transcendent imposture known as Christianity have lost themselves in trackless deserts of so-called evidence, and almost drowned the subject in oceans of verbiage. But Colonel Bob, the Voltaire of our day, challenged the defenders of orthodoxy with a smile. There was no point of real importance upon which the Colonel did not touch wittily. There were few fallacies in that enormous tissue of lies which he did not laughingly expose. Nowhere is he so happy as when he smilingly describes how religions grew out of the hotbeds of ignorance, fraud, and mystification. Although a master of the lash, he uses his whip caressingly. He does not cut his subject to ribbons like Swift, nor, like Voltaire, sting like a thousand wasps. Rather is he a Voltaire into whom has passed the geniality of Renan. It is a mellowed and transformed Voltaire looking upon a sadder world with the laughing eyes we know so well. That was one of the many reasons why the Colonel had such bitter enemies among the long-necked geese of orthodoxy. The defenders of the religion of the Man of Sorrows realised that it is ridicule that kills. Gravity was what they wanted, for they knew that opponents who treat religion too seriously play their game for them.

Colonel Ingersoll occupied the position as a militant Freethought orator and writer which Bradlaugh filled here. Both were big men physically and mentally; both could sway popular audiences; but here the resemblance ends. Bradlaugh sought to beat down Christianity by sheer force of logic and law. His speeches read like judicial utterances by the side of the brilliant, sparkling orations of Colonel Ingersoll. America dearly loves rhetoric, and Pagan Bob as an orator had no equal in the States. He wrote, too, quite as brilliant and delightful a style as his spoken words. He was "answered" over and over again by ministers of all denominations, was deluged with abuse, and even drew Gladstone and Manning into the controversial arena. Ingersoll's *Mistakes of Moses* is a Freethought "classic," and still commands a huge circulation wherever the English language is spoken. Thirteen years after his death his lectures are as widely read and discussed as during his lifetime. Such literary vitality is the surest test of his power, for it is rare that controversial matter is endowed so richly as to survive the purposes of the moment.

In the last issue of the *Forum*, Mr. E. M. Chapman contributes a review of Colonel Ingersoll as a theologian. Writing from the orthodox standpoint, he pronounces Ingersoll too much the creature of a half-century that was too scientific. He considers that he was more of a rhetorician than a leader, and only a half-hearted evolutionist. He had no passion for the past, and measured religion by its accidents rather than its essence. There is more to the same sorry purpose, showing that the orthodox leopard has not changed its spots; but it is preferable to the Christian charity of Dixon and Torrey, which thinketh evil of all opponents. It is good to find that Ingersoll is still discussed so many years after his death, for there is no Freethought leader

whom it is more necessary to remember. He was of the race of the Sun-treader whom Browning worshiped this side of idolatry. He was the mouth-piece of liberty and fraternity, believing as he did, that freedom was the very breath of brotherhood. He was the orator of Freethought, with that universal appeal which the mere rhetorician never succeeds in attaining. His was a genius in which intellectual liberty appeared as beautiful a thing as a flower, or a bird, or a star. At heart a poet, he found the world a place of ethical ideals, and he was no less exalted when he spoke of the golden hope of humanity than when he described the incomparable beauty of a little child's laugh. Imagination and humor were the qualities in which Ingersoll surpassed the orators of his time; but his humor was his most unassailable work. A handful of his jests are, perhaps, the finest contribution to Freethought literature since Voltaire. His work, too, is full of a fine and noble indignation, directed against all that was cruel and despicable in religion.

Ingersoll's claims to be a great American are undisputed. The Rev. J. Minot Savage, one of the most scholarly American divines, said long ago that Ingersoll was "the most remarkable orator—a master over a popular audience." Gladstone admitted that the Colonel wrote with "rare and enviable brilliancy." Frederick Douglass, the ex-slave, himself a Christian, has borne testimony to the welcome he met on Ingersoll's threshold when no one else in Illinois would take the nigger in. One may not unfairly sum the Colonel's private life in the words of Marshall Wilder, who wrote: "People may say all they like of his infidelity, but I wish a good many people I know had some of his religion." One thing, at least, quotations like this prove. They prove the absurdity of those people who prate as if Ingersoll were a commonplace antagonist. The Ingersoll we treasure was a keen-eyed warrior, as well as a very noble man, who fought in the Army of Human Liberation, and who never wavered in holding aloft the standard of Freethought against all the gods of the Pantheon.

MIMNERMUS.

N. S. S. Social.

AN enjoyable evening was spent at Anderton's Hotel on Thursday, October 17, when the "saints" and their friends foregathered for the first N. S. S. Social of the season.

A letter was read from the President, explaining that he was not really well enough to travel, especially after midnight, in returning home, but his thoughts would be with them in the midst of his editorial work.

Miss Lilian Gordon, Mr. Harry Hayward, and Mr. Hows contributed a most enjoyable musical program. Mr. Arthur B. Moss gave one of his well-known recitations, and Miss Bishop and Miss Earthy played a pianoforte duet, which was loudly applauded. The dance music was under the direction of Mr. R. Wood, of the West Ham Branch. Mr. Quinton again proved himself a tactful and amiable M.C.

Although Mr. Foote's absence necessarily cast a certain gloom over the evening's amusement, and Mr. Lloyd, who is recovering from a severe attack of influenza, was much missed, the genial conversation of Mr. Cohen and Mr. Moss greatly assisted the elder representatives from the various Branches to pass a very pleasant time, while the younger members and their friends footed it merrily.

We were glad to welcome the veteran Mr. Ridgway, hale and hearty in spite of his eighty odd years, and Mr. J. G. Dobson, of Manchester, and hope at our next reunion to find a greater number of our old stalwarts, who should not fail to take these opportunities of meeting each other.

E. M. V.

Police-courts are not always marked by an atmosphere of piety, but the exception to the rule occurred in a court where a very religious man against whom one of the neighbors had made a complaint, was being tried for some trivial offence. The complaining witness was called to the stand to relate his side of the story, and the defendant listened closely for several minutes. Then his personal feelings overrode court etiquette, and he rushed up to the judge, fervently exclaiming: "Your honor, the brother is lying. Praise the Lord!"

Acid Drops.

"They're all doing it"—as the song says. Here is the stodgy *Athenæum* following the example of the stodgy newspapers, and doing its utmost to minimise Meredith's scepticism and maximise his Christianity. Not a word is said in our contemporary's review of the *Letters* about his decisive letters to Mr. G. W. Foote. On the other hand, even cheap exclamations in early letters to personal friends, such as "God bless you!" are pressed into service to show that he was more orthodox than was generally supposed. The *Athenæum* ought to know that such exclamations mean nothing at all, except that they will probably please the recipients. We suppose our contemporary has heard of Lucilio Vanini, who was burnt for Atheism at Toulouse. When the death procession neared the place of execution, and the victim caught sight of the stake, he started back and cried "Good God!" "You believe in God, then," said one of the priests who were assisting at his martyrdom. "No, no," Vanini replied; "it's only a fashion of speech."

Another piece of fatuity! The *Athenæum* says that Meredith prayed every day at his life. So did Auguste Comte, the founder of Positivism, who proposed to reorganise human society "without God, and without King, by the systematic cultus of Humanity." So do most of, if not all, his followers; and they have broken altogether with the supernatural. Prayer doesn't make them Christians, neither did it make Meredith one. And what is the use of quoting bits of a complimentary character to the Christian in early letters, without so much as hinting at the *per contra* in later letters? This is mere bigotry, and dishonest at that.

Everyman, the newest venture in commercial journalism, was bound to have a Meredith article. "George Meredith in His Letters" was the title of it, and the writer was Darrell Figgis. It plays the same old tune. Meredith was a Freethinker, but all the while he was yearning to be a Christian, or something of that sort, even like unto Darrell Figgis. Yes, and he was trying to believe in Immortality—not the immortality of the race but the immortality of Darrell Figgis. Meredith's published poetry answers all this, without recourse to his Letters. Take this superb line:—

"The living throb in me, the dead revive,"

Realise that line, and you will understand that Meredith meant only what was purely natural when his beloved wife died, and he said in a letter to John Morley "She lives in me." The dead live in us, or nowhere. Meredith held to that in all his experiences.

After all the preliminary puffing of *Everyman* what a ridiculous mouse the convulsed mountain brought forth. Apparently it is going to live up to its name by publishing a pennyworth every week of commonplace writers for commonplace readers. Fancy the Rev. R. J. Campbell being brought in to write on "The Future of the Churches"—as if anybody cared about the future of the Churches except the Churches themselves. One first-rate contributor is included in the contributors. Dr. Alfred Russel Wallace tries to answer Dr. Schafer. And all his reply amounts to this, that we cannot conceive living cells acting as they do without the aid of some outside power. But what are our conceptions determined by? Our habits of thinking. Dr. Wallace has really nothing else to offer in reply to Dr. Schafer, for he does not deny the facts.

This is really not bad of the Bishop of London. Addressing a meeting of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, he said that the great danger before Christianity was Islam. This was the most formidable enemy, "and the most formidable enemy because of its virtues." The Bishop added, "the great danger is that it seems very often to the native a much more effective faith than Christianity." Many travellers have borne the same testimony, looking at the matter from another point of view, and have pointed out that the improvement in a native tribe that embraces Islam is much more marked than when a tribe embraces Christianity. Still, it is good to see a man like the Bishop of London taking for once in a while a sensible view of things.

Naturally, the Bishop soon recovered from his lapse into rationality. There were some things, he said, which made one recognise that Christianity was far superior to Islam. These things were the Incarnation of the Son of God and the effect of Christianity on the position of women. We are not concerned with the doctrine of the Incarnation, although we are quite at a loss to see how this makes Christianity

superior to Islam—unless there is a competition as to which religion can be the most absurd. But the question of the position of women is a question of historic fact. And the fact is that the whole influence of Christianity as a religion has been to foster a lower view of the nature of woman and of her social functions than any other creed that ever dominated the Western world. Islam, like all Eastern religions, relegates woman to a subordinate position, and one could imagine a Mohammedan quoting the Bible and the New Testament in endorsement of his own religious teachings on the subject. And for sheer denunciation and obscene vituperation of woman, we defy the Bishop of London to show any literature in the world that compares with the writings of the great Christian leaders of the first four or five centuries Anno Domini.

Miss M. E. Durham, one of the *Daily Chronicle's* special war correspondents, wired from Podgoritza on October 18 that the Moslem Albanians were siding with the Turks, while the Christian Albanians were siding with the Montenegrins. She then reported an attempt on the life of a Catholic priest at Rioli. He escaped unhurt, however, from the ruins of the building which the Moslems blew up with a bomb introduced through the window. Shocking! Those awfully wicked, base, brutal, and bloody Moslems! But see the next passage in Miss Durham's telegram:—"All the Moslem villages near the Catholic tribes have been burnt." Dear innocent Christians!

The Bishop of Bristol says that the number of Roman clergy who apply for admission to the English Church is at least as large as the number of Anglican clergy who leave that Church for Rome. He also declares that large numbers of Nonconformists are being admitted to the English Church. The Bishop may be right on both these points, and Nonconformists may also be right when they say they get many converts from both the English and Roman Churches. The truth is, we believe, that there is a constant exchange among all the Churches without any of them being real gains. In relation to each, they may hold their own; but, in relation to the outside world, they are all steadily losing ground. Some people drift from one Church to another, but the steady drift of people away from them all still continues.

The Rev. Dr. Adeney, in the course of his Presidential Address to the Congregational Union, said:—

"I visit prosperous Churches in manufacturing towns of Lancashire and Yorkshire, and learn that here they are building a new organ, and there they are furnishing a new [Church] parlor.....But I observe that while the manufacturers live in stately mansions, and have fine paintings, and drive to their offices in swift motor-cars, their work-people are huddled together in back-to-back houses that double the infant mortality."

Just so; and this bears ample testimony to the serious nature of all the parsonic talk on the gravity of the social problem. If anything the clergy are saying really threatened vested interests, the money kings of the country would not be building new organs and furnishing new parlors. They know that the talk is so much dust in the eyes of the people, and they are quite willing to provide a rostrum from which it may be thrown.

Dr. Adeney also said that "wise, discerning thinkers" had warned them that in the Materialism of our day we were following the example of pagan Rome. Some men who manage to get a reputation for wisdom and discernment will, apparently, say anything. But we beg to remind Dr. Adeney that Rome did not deteriorate owing to an overdose of Materialism, but from a surfeit of spiritualism. Whatever other causes co-operated to ensure the decay of the old Roman civilisation, there can be no question that the influence of the Eastern religions holds a prominent position. Christians, with a distortion of the facts and a disregard for truth that is the badge of the tribe, have seen fit to picture pagan Rome as losing its religion and thus turning with gratitude to Christianity. As a matter of fact, Rome was never so religious in the whole of its history as it was in the third century of this era and the latter part of the second century. The triumph of Christianity was no conquest of a lofty religion over a non-religious people. It was a conquest of a people whose brains had become enervated by devotion to half obscene and wholly absurd religious beliefs, of which Christianity stood as the visible representative.

The Congregational Union discussed—as do all religious congresses nowadays—the Labor problem. And, as usual, the talk ran along lines of brotherhood, the Christ ideal, etc., etc. It all sounds very well; it inspires the clergymen present with the notion that they are playing the part of

real reformers, it satisfies the shallower minds among the Labor leaders, and it keeps a few working men within the Church who might otherwise be outside. But it would puzzle anyone to say how anything is done by these vaporings towards a solution, or even an understanding, of the Labor problem. The proof of this is that none of those who are interested in keeping things as they are seem in the least offended or hurt at what is said. On the contrary, they listen and approve. It is exactly what they would say themselves. It is often what they do say, in different language, when cutting down wages or refusing an advance. It is all part of an elaborate and not over-subtle game of bluff. When we hear of an exodus of the champions of vested interest from any of the Churches in consequence of these sermons on the Labor question, we shall believe the clergy are in earnest.

In the discussion on miracles before the Congregational Union, Dr. Garvie said people forgot that laws of nature were only observed uniformities. True; although it took a long while to force this truth home to theologians. But while it is true, there is a deeper truth involved. A law of nature is an observed uniformity; but once the uniformity has been established and the conditions of its occurrence understood, its negation is simply inconceivable. It is the last aspect of the matter that is conveniently overlooked, and it is fatal to the religious argument. Let us take as an illustration the turning of water into wine. Up to A. D. 30 it was part of human experience that water remained water, and never became wine. At that date a man comes along who takes a quantity of water, and by mere conjuration turns it into wine. So long as we know nothing of the constituents of water and wine, and if we accept the testimony offered for the transformation, the miracle would take its place as one of the observed uniformities of nature—that is, the generalisation that water could not become wine would have to be modified to make room for the experience. But when we know the constituents of both wine and water, the matter wears a different aspect. We can think of water, and we can think of wine. We can think of certain elements common to both, and of certain elements that are possessed by wine only. And by no possibility can we think of water becoming wine unless we suppress our knowledge of what wine really is. A miracle thus becomes an occurrence that simply defies being thought of as true. You may say you believe it, but you cannot mentally realise it. Hume was quite right in his famous argument against the credibility of miracles; but there is a deeper and still more powerful objection. And that is, given a complete understanding of the uniformities that establish a law of nature, and we cannot even think of their abrogation. As usual, the "advanced" clergy are replying to the sceptical position of a good half century since.

The Bishop of London talks more nonsense to the hour than any other Christian in this metropolis. According to the *Newcastle Weekly Chronicle* he is now suggesting that "the depraved wretches who conduct the white slave traffic should be flogged." It is curious how the Christites are nearly always so eager to resort to the most brutal methods of punishment. Nothing is more certain in jurisprudence than the fact that violent sentences do not put down violent crimes. All they do is to brutalise the community. We wonder, too, if the Bishop of London wants the flogging to be administered impartially—to women as well as men. And if not, why not?

The dearth of curates is afflicting the Church. Rev. G. C. Fanshawe, vicar of Godalming, raises a lamentation over this sad trouble. Curates even refuse a "call" when they find there is no "regular system of confession in vogue." It is quite amusing. Still, we are glad to see the poor despised curate bucking up under cover of the law of supply and demand.

His name was Percy Charles Button. He lived at Maldon-road, Southend-on-Sea. He was a goods porter in the employ of the Great Eastern Railway Company. His recreation was beating boys on the naked buttocks. His weakness, according to his father, was religion. He was fond of reading the Bible and going to church. He will be able to read the Bible where he is now—in prison, for four months.

Lots of people will consider Roosevelt much more eligible for the U.S.A. Presidency now that a fanatical fool has tried to assassinate him. Of course he is no more fit for the post than he was before, but the multitude does not argue in that way, and "Teddy's" prospects are distinctly the brighter for that badly directed bullet. Freethinkers, of course, know the sort of man that Roosevelt is. He called

a far superior man to himself, the great Thomas Paine, a "filthy little Atheist"—three lies in three words; and when he was made aware of the real facts of the case he refused to unsay the calumny. There are publicists, however, in America who can let him have as good as he gives. Mr. George Harvey, editor of the *North American Review*, hits out at "Teddy" in this way:—

"Roosevelt was the first President whose chief personal characteristic was mendacity, the first to glory in duplicity, the first braggart, the first bully, the first betrayer of a friend who ever occupied the White House. It is with distaste amounting almost to nausea that we are forced, in performance of public duty, to recall his breaking of his solemn pledge to the American people to observe the most vital of their great traditions; his brazen disregard of his own written promise; his blatant professions of exceptional probity at the very moment when he was bartering his official influence for large sums of money to be used in the corruption of voters; his deliberate stoppage of prosecution of a trust which the official inquiry ordered by himself had shown to be guilty, at the behest of one who had added the savings of the poor to his corruption fund and who continues to be his chief supporter; his constant villifying of bosses in public while secretly strengthening the hands of all who subserved his wishes; his brutal refusal of justice to a faithful and dying public servant whom he had wanted wronged; his exploiting of the language of the prize-ring in the White House; his sickening repetition of the personal pronoun in public speeches and official communications; his cuttle-fish politics; his shameless demagoguery; his perpetual lying; all the e are spots upon the light from the lamp of experience to which we would but cannot blind our eyes."

We can safely leave the ragging of Roosevelt in the hands of Mr. George Harvey.

Dr. R. F. Horton is off to India, and before departing relieved himself of some of his customary stupidities about unbelief. Unbelievers, he said, are denying men all hope, and robbing the race of the one thing that makes human life possible. And he challenges unbelief throughout the world to tell him "where is any real progress apart from Christ; where is a nation that has any hope apart from Christ?.....To be without God is to be without hope." Dr. Horton's stupidities might well be left to answer themselves; but he serves much the same purpose that the drunken helot did to the Spartan. One would think that even in the pulpit a man could not be found blind enough to ignore a country like Japan or China, or so stupid as not to see that many more things besides religion go to determine a nation's progress. And surely if there is one thing that is characteristic of unbelievers it is precisely the quality of hope. They are optimistic to a fault. Men and women all over the world engage themselves in a crusade that brings them no tangible reward; it exposes them to persecution; they do not dream of overcoming their enemy during their own lifetime; and yet they peg away, content that after they are dead their descendants will reap the reward of their labors. And yet Dr. Horton says the unbeliever must be without hope. Verily, if Dr. Horton cannot keep his mouth shut while in India the natives will be inclined to think he has left England in fear of the proposed Mental Deficiency Act.

The Catholic Truth Society has an odd name. We never know a more striking instance of Dr. Johnson's dictum that the adjective is the natural enemy of the substantive. We see there is a Branch of this Society in Ireland, and it has just been holding its annual meeting at Dublin, the proceedings being reported in the *Irish Independent*. The principal speaker was Cardinal Logue. But the Rev. Robert Kane's, a Jesuit, was the longest and most important one. This holy father was very wroth with what he called "infidel literature." Hear him:—

"The chief weapon of the modern infidel was his literature. On the one side, it had its keen edge of argument, and on the other its subtle edge of immoral passion. For the educated their enemies had books of insidious philosophy or of poisoned science; for the ignorant they had pamphlets or flying sheets with catching phrase and fascinating appeal, winning the blind passions and bewildered wits of the mob by exaggerating their wrongs, defying their rights, and denying their duties. Further, with even greater success, they used the edge of immoral appeal. Many years of long and wide experience had proved to him that faith was most often loosened in its hold or thwarted in its coming by immorality. The second weapon of their assailants was their organisation, which did not merely provide its literature in overwhelming plenty, but brought it into the homes and hands of all."

This subtle method of mixing truth and lies is familiar to the Society of Jesus. "Infidels" are clever, of course; but still more wicked. It is their immorality that has to be most resolutely opposed. Father Kane admits that Catholic literature must be the chief weapon against Infidel literature. That is the method of tolerance, but Catholics must use the method of intolerance also. "But first," the

Catholic spokesman said, "we must hurl back from our shore the inroad of atheistic and immoral books. We must take all lawful means to resist the invasion of these satellites of Satan. A literature that is foul or devilish has no right to live. It is our right, it is our duty to tear it to tatters or fling it to the fire." Evidently the "infidel" has to be fought with dirty weapons first. When that fails he must be fought with arguments. But not *till* then. So *that's* all right. We understand these gentlemen. They tell the truth in unguarded moments. They would burn or otherwise destroy "infidel" books if they could. Yes, and the writers of them too.

One doesn't expect science in a paper like the *Banner of Israel*, but a marked article sent us takes the cake for sublime stupidity. It is written by a reverend gentleman, who defends Genesis and derides Evolution. He disproves the latter in this way. You see a butterfly evolve from a grub, but you never see a butterfly evolve into a sparrow. The Rev. A. B. Grimaldi's friends should look after him. Or perhaps he is related to the famous clown called Grimaldi, and dabbles a bit in the same business.

Judge Parry, at Tunbridge Wells County Court, told a witness who referred to the year 1907 as "07" not to speak of the year of our Lord as if it was a telephone number. By our Lord we suppose the learned gentleman on the bench means *his* Lord. Christianity is not everybody's religion, and Christ is not everybody's Savior. There are people who even believe he is not an historical personage at all. Judge Parry—if he must talk religion in a County Court, where it seems rather inappropriate—should speak for himself, and call Christ "My Savior," not "Our Savior."

Mr. Henry Fletcher's letter in last week's *Clarion* on the general state of affairs in Australia was inserted by the editor with a note that he took no personal responsibility for the contribution. Mr. Fletcher has lived a long time in Australia, and what he says on the subject of religion will be of interest to our own readers:—

"Yearly the control of the Church grows less; if it were not for the support of women, who cling longest to custom and habit, there would be very few churches. To be a parson is to have the worst paid billet in the community, and few Australians qualify for the job. To get parsons and priests they have to be imported. Sunday is a day of recreation in which sports of all kinds are followed. Probably the City of Sydney has not church sittings for one in twenty of the population; yet the few churches are largely empty. And the example of the capital is spreading. The sexes bathe together in the sea. Girls go about by themselves. Mrs. Grundy, if not dead, is a decrepit old lady here. Local newspapers frequently debate: 'Why do people not go to church?' The true answer may be: 'That the article supplied is no longer in demand.'"

We fancy there must be another side to this. How is it that the Catholic Church is so strong that the late Cardinal Moran was said to rule Melbourne? And how did the clergy in Queensland, with the aid of women voters, upset the old system of Secular Education? There is probably a good deal of truth in Mr. Fletcher's statement, but obviously it doesn't cover *all* the facts.

The following letter was addressed recently to a Hong Kong paper by an Englishman living in that place. It never appeared. It would be interesting to learn the editor's reasons for suppressing it. Was there too much truth in it to render it palatable, or had the editor other reasons? If the latter, we offer him space in our columns to ventilate them:—

"MISSIONARIES AND MILITARY.

"The Editor * * * *, Hong Kong.

"Sir,—I was deeply grieved to see in your last night's issue that missionaries in the Tsing-Sing district of the Kwang-Tung province have asked the Governor-General of Canton to despatch troops for their protection and for the suppression of those who are against them. This is not at all in accordance with the traditions of the Christian religion, the boast of which has always been that its professors have ever been prepared to meet martyrdom cheerfully for the sake of their faith. Where would Christianity have been now had it not been for its martyrs? This action of the missionaries at Tsing-Sing is not in accordance with the instructions to turn the other cheek to the smiter, nor are they showing to the world that joy which they are told to evince when men shall despitely use them.

"It seems to me that this appeal to a Governor-General to send heathen troops to protect god-fearing Christians is putting their trust in princes and the sons of men rather than in their God, and one wonders what the Christian converts can think of this action in the face of what they have been taught.—In surprise and grief, yours faithfully,

CONSTANT READER."

We should like to hear more of this matter.

Mr. Foote's Engagements

Sunday, October 27, Queen's (Minor) Hall, Langham-place, Regent-street, London, W.: at 7.30, "The War in the East and the Failure of Christian Civilisation.."

October 6 to December 15, every Sunday evening, Queen's (Minor) Hall, London, W.

To Correspondents.

J. T. LLOYD'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—October 27, Birmingham. November 3, Croydon; 10, Manchester; 17, West Ham; 24, Leicester. December 15, West Ham.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1912.—Previously acknowledged, £229 17s. 1d. Received since:—H. Good, 5s.; Leicester Friends (per E. Pinder), £1 1s.; Gavin Hamilton, 2s. 6d.; J. G. Dobson, 5s.; T. Matthews, 5s.; H—5 20835, £5.

L. B. HEWETT.—A pretty postcard. Pleased to hear that you and your mother (we like the association) were "enraptured" by our Manchester lectures. A sincere compliment, even if exaggerated, is encouraging.

A. J. YOUNG.—See paragraph. Thanks.

E. B.—Thanks.

R. OWEN.—See this week's list. Sorry.

E. PINDER.—Our thanks to you and the other subscribers. Kind regards also to "all of your household." We can understand that the local "saints" are sorry that we cannot visit Leicester just at present. Pleased to know the Shelley articles are regarded as "a bit of extra special."

J. PARTRIDGE.—Glad to hear Mr. Cohen's audiences were so good in such abominable weather.

GAVIN HAMILTON.—We will see. As for the printed letter you cut from a Glasgow paper, it is really laughable. The writer tries to prove Shakespeare religious by quoting religious expressions from the mouths of his characters. Why, only the other day *we*—yes *we*—remarked of a certain lady, "that woman's an angel." Must we therefore be held to believe in angels and in devils; in heaven and hell; in God and Old Nick?

MAY COLEMAN.—Our shop manager has written to the Post Office about your irregularly delivered copy of the *Freethinker*. You shall hear again.

BANKNOTE.—Acknowledged as desired. We note your good wish that the President's Honorarium Fund "will get to a record total this year." The man of God's circular must wait a week.

J. W. GOTT.—You must please be earlier than Tuesday. Same applies to Mr. Jackson.

J. ROBERTSON.—Received. We are writing you.

SOME correspondence unavoidably stands over.

EDWARD OLIVER, sending £5 towards our Fighting Fund, says: "Freethought without free speech is an anomaly that all Freethinkers should assist in combating. I tender this as my assistance."

JAS. BAKER.—Thanks for a sight of the letter. These things are very encouraging.

E. B.—We will make use of the written enclosure. Thanks for the cuttings. We note your strong words *re* our treatment in the matter of Meredith's last letter. But, as you say, this sort of experience is nothing new.

A. BRAMLEY-MOORE, writing us from Alta, Canada, says: "I enclose draft for £10 for the Fighting Fund. Please fight. You have not hinted what expensive litigation signifies. Does it mean tens, hundreds, or thousands? If needed, I think I can promise twice as much about the New Year. I consider support in this cause imperative." We shall have to make a full statement on this matter next week.

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

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

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

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

Sugar Plums.

Mr. Foote had another capital audience at Queen's (Minor) Hall on Sunday evening—and it was a very live audience from beginning to end, with the gratifying proportion of ladies which is now a characteristic of Mr. Foote's meetings. The lecture on "Religion and Marriage" was even more than usually applauded, the humorous passages were thoroughly enjoyed, and the sociological explanations were

followed with breathless attention. A few questions were asked, but Miss Kough, who occupied the chair, could not induce anyone to offer opposition.

Mr. Foote's subject at the Queen's (Minor) Hall to-night (Oct. 27) will be "The War in the East and the Failure of Christian Civilisation." As this lecture will contain interesting and important matter not to be found in any of the newspapers, we beg Freethinkers who attend to bring along as many of their Christian friends as they can. It will be a grand opportunity for a little feasible missionary work.

We are sorry that the weather was so unfavorable (a stronger word might do better) at Birmingham on Sunday. Mr. Cohen's audiences at the Town Hall could not help being affected. The only wonder is that they were as good as they were in the circumstances. We are glad to learn that the weather did not throw Mr. Cohen out of form. His lectures were highly appreciated and much applauded. Better luck next time!

Mr. Lloyd lectures at Birmingham to-day (Oct. 27) in the King's Hall, Corporation-street, which has been engaged by the N. S. S. Branch for many Sundays during the winter, in which enterprise it will have assistance from the Secular Society, Ltd. Mr. Lloyd is well known to the Birmingham "saints" and we hope they will be the means of his introduction to others on this occasion.

Mr. Cohen lectures at the Workman's Hall, Stratford, this evening (Oct. 27), under the auspices of the Secular Society, Ltd., his subject being "The Challenge of Unbelief."

Next Sunday evening (Nov. 3) the course of Sunday evening Freethought lectures will begin at the Public Hall, Croydon—Mr. Lloyd being the lecturer. We hope the local "saints" will give a' possible publicity to these meetings.

The Public Hall, Croydon, is in George-street, three minutes' walk on direct road from East Croydon station, L. B. & S. C. and S. E. & C. railways from London Bridge and Cannon-street. Miss Vance will be glad to hear from local "saints" who can help in advertising these meetings. Small printed announcements can be had on application, and also free admission tickets.

Mr. Cohen's *Deity and Design*, number two of the "Pioneer Pamphlets," is now on sale at the prices in the advertisement on another page of this week's *Freethinker*. The regular price, of course, is one penny; but there are special reductions, not only for the trade, but also for N. S. S. Branches and other advanced bodies wishing to take quantities for distribution.

A friend whose name had perhaps better not be disclosed tells us in a private letter of a lady at whose conversion to Freethought he has, as it were, presided. "The lady," he writes, "is about 88, and since she was 16 years of age she has had a Sunday-school class. Last year her brother mentioned my 'peculiar ideas' on religion, and this led to an exchange of letters, the loan of a few books (to her) and then a few copies of our paper." An extract from one of the lady's letters runs as follows: "I only wish others I know could feel as free in thought as I do now. Only this time last year I was a Sunday-school teacher! At times, when I think of it, it all seems impossible." We should like to see hundreds of Freethinkers pursuing this kind of missionary work.

Mr. Gott reports, too late for details to appear, that the Northern Tour is still going strong, and that the *Freethinker* and *Bible and Beer* are going off as well as ever at the meetings. Mr. Jackson has been "had up" by the stupid Leeds police once more for "profanity." We have no details yet, except that the case has been heard to-day (Tuesday) and that Mr. Jackson has been fined ten shillings with four shillings costs. A manageable figure this time. More of the case in our next.

This is not exactly a Sugar Plum, but it must go here or nowhere. As we go to press we learn of the death of Dr. E. B. Foote, of New York. We are grieved at the loss of a dear personal friend. Our readers knew him as one of our most generous supporters. On many grounds he merits far more than a passing notice. We propose to write of him at some length in next week's *Freethinker*.

Wonders of Recent Science.

AMONG the numerous recent attempts to render more rational our concepts of the statics and dynamics of living matter, none has been more successful than that of Dr. Stéphane Leduc, Professor in the Medical School of Nantes. His work, *Théorie Physico-Chimique de la Vie et Générations Spontanées*, has caused considerable discussion throughout Europe, and was last year translated into English by Dr. Deane Butcher, of the Röntgen Society.* This book is of great scientific value; it had something to do with Professor Schafer's recent pronouncement, and it is recommended by Professor Oliver Lodge in the October *Contemporary Review* to all serious students of the burning question of life's mechanism. And it may be noted in passing that Professor Lodge once more warns theological and other obscurantists that the manufacture of living protoplasm in the laboratory is, in all likelihood, merely a matter of time.

Professor Leduc is an uncompromising thinker, who makes no concessions whatever to official obstinacy or ignorance. He writes:—

"Astronomy teaches us that our globe was detached from the sun in an incandescent state, and geology asserts that this earth has passed through a period of long ages, when its temperature was incompatible with the existence of life. It was only with the cooling of the earth crust that it was possible for living beings to make their appearance. Hence they must of necessity have been produced spontaneously from terrestrial material under the influences of chemical and physical forces. This opinion imposes itself on all who think and judge freely. In the same way, the doctrine of evolution necessitates as a corollary the doctrine of spontaneous generation..... Evolutionists like Lamarck and Haeckel admit spontaneous generation, not as the most probable, but as the only possible explanation of the phenomenon of life."†

Leduc makes plain the fact that living organisms are mainly composed of liquids. These liquids are solutions of crystallisable substances or crystalloids, and non-crystallisable substances or colloids—according to Graham's classification. Liquids are the most important constituents of organic nature, since they are the seat of all the chemical and physical phenomena of life. It is, therefore, in liquid diffusion that Leduc seeks to solve some of the outstanding enigmas of life. He and others have produced in inorganic preparations the identical figures which constitute the curious cell-nucleus changes which precede the division of the living cell, and not only were these karyokinetic figures reproduced, but their varying appearances were displayed in orderly succession.

But the most astonishing of Leduc's results are recorded in his chapter on Osmotic Growth—a Study in Morphogenesis. Various substances in solution are capable of forming osmotic membranes when brought into contact with other chemical solutions. If a soluble substance in concentrated solution be placed in a liquid which forms with it a colloidal precipitate, its surface becomes enveloped with a delicate film of precipitate, which ultimately forms an osmotic membrane enclosing it. Osmotic membranes are usually described as semi-permeable structures, or, in other words, as membranes permeable to water but impermeable to solutes. As a matter of fact, these membranes offer different resistances to the passage of water and to that of the various substances in solution. Membranes are very permeable to water, but are only moderately permeable to the various solutes. Any soluble substances thus environed by an osmotic membrane are really artificial cells. In these cells their dissolved substances exercise a high pressure, and the cells, in consequence, expand. The molecules of the solution press upon the walls of the cell and cause it to distend, just as gas increases the size

of a balloon. As the osmotic pressure increases the volume of the cell, the liquid in which it is immersed penetrates its permeable membrane and still further increases its size. Beautiful osmotic cells may thus be evolved out of mineral materials which are surrounded by transparent extensible membranes built up out of similar lifeless matter. "It is astonishing," writes Professor Leduc, "to contemplate the contrast between the hard crystalline forms of ordinary chalk and these soft, transparent, elastic membranes which have the same chemical constitution."

As a rule, however, osmotic growths, instead of forming one large cell, split up into a colony of cells. The first cell becomes the parent of a second cell, and this gives birth to a third, and so on, until a colonial group of microscopic cells, whose separate individuality is maintained by osmotic walls, has been evolved. This constitutes a structure "completely analogous to that which we meet with in a living organism."

In obtaining these results a very large number of chemical substances may be laid under contribution. Easily conducted experiments may be carried out with soluble salts of calcium in solutions of alkaline phosphates and carbonates. As Leduc points out, silicates are essential to the construction of shells and to the skeletons of aquatic animals. Nearly all the metallic salts, and more particularly the soluble salts of calcium, will give rise to the phenomenon of osmotic development when dropped in solutions of the alkaline silicates. The fullest details are given of the manner in which a vast variety of osmotic growths may be produced, and students are thus enabled to repeat the experiments for themselves. Leduc gives the chemical constituents of solutions in which he has generated osmotic growths which sometimes attain a height of 40 centimetres or more. The various forms are truly remarkable, and embrace curious worm-like structures, vegetable forms, roots, leaves, twigs, and terminal organs. "These forms are stable as soon as the gelatine which forms part of their composition has cooled and set, and may be carried about without fear of injury."

Nor are these products confined to their watery home. Some of these artificial organisms may ascend from their solution into the atmosphere. The cell continues to grow by absorption of the liquid at its base, and may rise above the surface of the liquid to a height of two centimetres.

"This is a most impressive spectacle, an osmotic production, half aquatic and half aerial, absorbing water and salts at its base, and losing water and volatile products by evaporation from its summit, while at the same time it absorbs and dissolves the gases of the atmosphere."

Like unto a living thing, these wonderful structures derive their nourishment from their environment, and then assimilate and organise it for maintenance and growth. When the weight of an osmotic structure is compared with that of the mineral fragment which formed its starting point, it is found to exceed its mineral germ many hundred times in weight. It has been ascertained as a result of careful experiment that the precise weight gained by the osmotic product has been lost by its mother liquor. Moreover, before the matter in solution can be assimilated by an osmotic product it has to undergo chemical transformation. For instance, calcium chloride when growing in a solution of potassium carbonate is transformed into calcium carbonate. In this way an osmotic growth exercises choice. It rejects the potassium of its liquid medium while it absorbs water and the radical CO₂, while it at the same time "eliminates and excretes chlorine, which may be found in the nutrient liquid after the reaction."

So far as is at present known, osmotic pressure and osmosis are the only ordinary natural forces which display these phenomena of organisation and morphogenesis. In certain solutions numerous dissimilar structures arise, some of which may reach a height of 30 or 40 centimetres.

* *The Mechanism of Life*, Rebman's, 1911.

† *Mechanism of Life*, p. 165.

"Some are so flexible that the stems bend, falling in curves round the centre of growth, like leaves of grass. And if the liquid which has produced these forms be diluted the growths assume the appearance of trees or corals. Other preparations have led to the production of floral and seed-pod structures."

Although osmotic pressure is by far the most potent influence in morphogenesis, the chemical nature of the liquid is not without its special influence on the forms which arise. When, for example, a nitrate is contained in the mother liquor, spikes or thorns are apt to appear. Other chemicals in solution tend to produce catkin forms or vermiform growths. In addition to these and numerous other interesting forms, most remarkably realistic fungus structures are built up in solution. The artificial fungi which Leduc produced bore such a perfect resemblance to mushrooms and toadstools that they have been mistaken for ordinary fungi even by experts. The stems of these osmotic fungi are made up of bundles of fine hollow fibres, while the outer surface of the head may be smooth or scaly. In some instances the under surface of the head is provided with "orifices or canals similar to those seen in many varieties of fungus." But the most realistic of all these fungus forms are those whose stalks are white, while their caps are yellow, with a black under-surface. Equally wonderful are those plant-like growths which are green in color, some of which will twine in spirals round larger and more heavy forms. Shell-like figures are of constant occurrence, and in some osmotic plant structures the stems and "leaves" are of different colors.

Leduc divides osmotic productions into two groups. Some, like the silicate growths, are stationary:—

"Like vegetables, they develop, become organised, grow, decline, die, and are disintegrated at the spot where they are sown. Others, especially those which are grown in alkaline carbonates and phosphates, have two periods of evolution, the first a fixed period, and the second a wandering one. During the first period their specific gravity is greater than that of the surrounding medium, and they rest immobile at the bottom of the vessel in which they are sown. As they grow, they absorb water, and their specific gravity diminishes. Little by little they rise up in the liquid, and finally acquire a considerable amount of mobility, being rapidly displaced by every current. Hence, it is very difficult to photograph these mobile osmotic growths, which swim about in the mother liquor, and are often provided with prolongations in the forms of cilia, and sometimes with fins, which undulate as they move. Some of these ciliary hairs are evidently osmotic in their origin, being localised as a tuft at the summit of the growth."

From one individual seed may proceed an entire series of osmotic forms. A vesicle appears, which afterwards contracts, and this contraction goes on until a part of the vesicle is severed from the parent form, and then floats off as a free amoeba. The same phenomenon takes place in worm-like structures. A single seed in this manner will generate a succession of worm-like or amoeba-like entities.

Aged osmotic forms may be restored to a state of youth. When the osmotic force necessary to its life has become exhausted, the osmotic structure is at the point of death. A worn-out calcium growth may be rejuvenated by placing it in a concentrated calcium chloride solution. This treatment revives the degenerating growth, and it renews its evolutionary development when restored to its original liquid home.

The foregoing facts clearly indicate that osmotic products have an evolutionary history. To quote Leduc's summary:—

"An osmotic growth.....is nourished by osmosis and intussusception; it exercises a selective choice on the substances offered to it; it changes the chemical constitution of its nutriment before assimilating it. Like a living thing, it ejects into its environment the waste products of its function. Moreover, it grows and develops structures like those of living organisms, and it is sensitive to many exterior changes which influence its form and development. But these very phenomena

—nutrition, assimilation, sensibility, growth, and organisation—are generally asserted to be the sole characteristics of life."

It can no longer be denied that no clear lines of demarcation separate the living from the lifeless. And when life first arose in its ocean birthplace, the processes followed were doubtless similar to the processes which Leduc's researches disclose.

T. F. PALMER,

What Has Christ Done for the World?

A Lecture delivered in the Studebaker Theatre, Chicago,

BY M. M. MANGASARIAN.

THE lecture of this morning closes the series in which we have been comparing Pagan and Christian ideals. The religion of the Pagans was indigenous, that is to say, it was a home product; the Christian religion, on the other hand, is exotic, that is to say, it is not native to our soil or climate; it was bred abroad. The Greek gods had Greek names, and the Latin gods had Latin names. From the names of our gods it can readily be seen that they are foreigners.

Again, the Pagan divinities spoke the same language as the people over whom they presided; our gods do not speak our language, and we do not speak theirs. It is only through an interpreter that we can understand what they have to say to us. The Bible, for instance, had to be translated before it could be read by Europeans and Americans. One great difference then between Paganism and Christianity is this: Paganism was a *native* product; Christianity is an importation.

This is Easter morning. But my audience does not have to be reminded that the word "Easter" is derived from the name of a heathen goddess—*Ostera*. The word "East" comes from the same root. *Ostera* was the East. The East is the home of the sun. Easter, then, takes us back to the times in which the sun was still a God.

In Christianity, too, the sun plays an important role. The high altar in the Catholic Church, with its flaming candles, is nothing but an attempt to reproduce the sun with its radiating beams. When Jesus was born, a new light or star appeared in the skies, which also points to the role the heavenly bodies played in the making of religions. Jesus rose from the grave on a *Sunday*, that is to say, on the day of the Sun, and was himself called "the Sun of Righteousness." It was not Jesus who gave us the sun, but the sun which, in the course of time, became the Son of God.

In the Spring the earth is awakened out of its sleep by the returning sun. All nature partakes of this rejuvenation—this quickening, with which land and water become pregnant. The annual revival of nature is as eternal as it is universal. It would be as absurd to say that we owe Spring to the resurrection of Jesus as to hold the American Revolution responsible for the flow of the seasons: Resurrections and revolutions are local events; the seasons are for all times and places. This morning the preachers are still trying to prove, after two thousand years, that Christ *did* rise from the dead; but we do not have to prove that the trees are budding, or that the soil is warm with virgin life because the sun is here. We did not see the grave open for Christ, but we have seen the earth burst with the urge of nature, and the clod break open with growing life. Our Easter is not in the past, but in the present. Nor do we have to go to Palestine to see the resurrection of life; we see it here and everywhere.

Theologians are calling special attention on this Easter morning to the Founder of Christianity. But what has he done that he should be remembered so long or that he should be referred to so often? "Why, he was a God, and he came to this world to teach us how to live." And how often has he been

here?" "Only once." When was that? "About two thousand years ago." And why has he not been here oftener, or at a more recent date? Nobody knows. To use a phrase of Robert Buchanan, "If I were a God," and it were easy for me to travel back and forth between the two worlds, I would come here not once, but as often as I was needed. Jesus never had any stronger reasons for wanting to visit us than he has at the present time. If Jesus has not come to our earth oftener, or if he is not here now, certainly it is not because *we* do not need or want him, but because he will not come.

It may be urged that Jesus can direct the affairs of the world from where he is without making a trip every now and then to our earth. Then why did he make the first trip? To this, the answer of the Churches is, that he had to come once to let the world see and hear him. But it was not the world that saw and heard him, but only a handful of people, and they are all dead. Besides, why should we be satisfied with a second-hand knowledge of Jesus, if it is just as easy for him to do for us what he did for the Jews two thousand years ago? Furthermore, the state of the Churches at the present time, with their endless divisions, their bitter, and, I regret to say, unbecoming quarrels,—quarrels which have made the centuries red with blood,—proves that there is urgent need for another visit from him. The Founder of a religion whose disciples will not agree, and who are destroying each other by their endless contentions, cannot very well afford to stay away so long. Besides, a God who comes to earth to make a revelation and then returns to heaven, leaving his disciples to fight to the death over the meaning of that revelation, had better not have come at all.

In this connection I have again an opportunity to compliment the Catholic Church. Appreciating the logic of their position, the Catholics have a Christ on earth—the Pope. Accordingly, from their point of view, Christ has never really left us, but is always present in the person of his vicar, to instruct and to guide his flock. A second advent of the Son of God is not needed, because in truth he has never been away from the world, according to the Catholics. If there is aught that we do not understand in the Bible, all we have to do is to ask the Pope, who is Christ on earth. If you will let me say it, the Catholics have established, as it were, a branch office of heaven in Rome. Well, they have the courage of their beliefs. The Protestants, on the other hand, are more or less tainted with Rationalism. Charles Lamb used to say that to mix wine with water was to spoil two good things; the Protestants, by mixing orthodoxy with Rationalism, have spoiled them both.

It seems to me that Easter would indeed be a day of rejoicing if, for example, the preachers could announce this morning from their pulpits that Christ has come again to be the world's guest for as long as we shall need him. That would, indeed, be great news! And when the preachers are ready to announce that the Son of God is here to make plain the dark things in the Bible, to heal the divisions of the sects, to remove the heresies which have caused terrible persecutions—or that he has come to make all believers brothers and all Churches one!—we shall, indeed, go to the Church to hear the glad tidings. I would even return to the ministry if I could have such news to publish. But it is no inducement to go to church only to hear that two thousand years ago a God was somewhere on this planet, but that he has not been seen or heard from since. At any rate, that is not enough to tempt me to return to the pulpit. I have better news than that to publish to the world every Sunday, and it is this: *The only way we can have a God with us always is to be one ourselves!* Where is the Jehovah of the Jews, who, at one time, was constantly at their elbow? He has disappeared. Where is the Christ of the Christians who, at one time, walked this earth? He has not been seen for twenty hundred years. Well, that is the risk we take when our god is some

other than ourselves. I was explaining to the ladies of the Greek Philosophy Class the other day that the poor man is the dependent man, even if the being upon whom he is depending be a god. For what is he going to do should his god desert him or turn away from him? And gods are known to do that very thing. If the New Testament is reliable, God has turned away from the Jews, at one time his chosen people. What he has done to them he might do to us. In my ears ring this morning the words of Christ on the cross: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!" Yes, that is the risk we take when we are not gods ourselves. We lose them, or they forsake us. Be a god yourself, and you will not have to await his coming or to mourn his departure.

But such a thought as I am now suggesting is blasphemy to the believer. If I were to go to the Churches and say to the people assembled in them that they must not look at the skies, or out into space, for God, or expect him to come down to them from the nowhere, or seek for him between the pages of the Bible, but that they must make themselves the god they are seeking—they would be horrified. What a blasphemer! they would exclaim. On the other hand, if I were to say to these same people that man is a miserable sinner, that he is a fallen and totally depraved creature—in short, that he is a *devil*—I would be taken for a good Christian. They have no objection to hear man called a devil; but to say that a man ought to try to be a god in his own honest esteem, is blasphemy! You have now my reasons for fearing and fighting, with every ruddy drop that courses in my veins, a religion which will let me think myself a devil, but which will not let me think myself a god!

When Alfred de Musset, the French poet, was told the story of how a god became a man, he replied: "Tell me of a man who became a god." But neither Christianity, Judaism, nor Mohammedanism will allow that. You see, my good people, I am opposed to the supernatural on principle. It is not because I wish to parry words with the preachers; it is not because I am fond of controversy—for if I desired that I could have remained in the Presbyterian Church, and fought science and the progressive tendencies of the age, or the other sects—I am opposed to the supernatural because it lays the axe at the root of the most precious possession of man—his self-respect!

The Pagan Hercules climbed Mount Olympus and became a god. Prometheus fought his way into the ranks of the gods. Cæsar, who crossed the Rubicon, crossed the mortality line, and became a god. Marcus Aurelius made the Roman Empire a sanctuary, of which he was the god. And why not! To be a god was not beyond the reach of the Pagan. But let a Jew or a Christian entertain the thought of becoming a god, and he will be crucified as a blasphemer. I wish to borrow the words of Shakespeare to give expression to my indignation: "Oh, that my tongue were in the thunder's mouth, for then with a passion would I shake the world!" If I could live a thousand years, and if I had Carnegie's and Rockefeller's wealth combined, I would still want more time and more money to get even with a religion which will let a man slip and slide down until he strikes bottom and become as black as the devil, but which will not let him rise until he has reached the top and become the equal of the gods!

What has Christianity done for the world? It has tried to strip it bare of everything save its sin and shame. What happens to a man who falls into the hands of highwaymen? They relieve him of all his valuables. Christianity has divested man of all his valuables. It has taken away from him his independence, his fearlessness, his defiance, his daring, his pride, his freedom, his self-respect. He has now nothing left which he can call his own, except his sins. According to the teaching of the Churches, if we have vices, they are our own; but if we have virtues, they belong to Christ. If there is any good in us, it comes from God; but the evil in

us—that is ours. The exhortation most frequently urged from the pulpits is that we must examine ourselves constantly. Self-examination is regarded as an imperative duty. The Christian must search his heart daily; he must penetrate into his inmost thoughts; he must scrutinise his motives. But, in searching himself, he is not permitted to find anything but sin in his heart. His self-examination must prove his utter worthlessness in God's sight. Thus, it will be seen that the self-inspection is not for the purpose of finding proofs of dignity in ourselves, but proofs of depravity. The self-examination recommended is a kind of a self-incrimination. Why, even the secular courts protect a man against incriminating himself. In the Christian pulpit, however, almost every prayer is a self-accusation. Is there a clergyman who would think of offering this prayer in public? "Oh, God, we believe we deserve thy respect and think ourselves worthy of thy society. We believe that our character, our struggles, our achievements, and our many sufferings through the ages entitle us to thy friendship!" Yet that was the prayer of the Pagan. But if we were in Church this morning, we would find the people on their knees, with their heads resting upon the backs of the pews, and saying this: "Good Lord, have mercy upon us miserable sinners."

They say that if you tell a child he is bad often enough, you are almost sure to make him believe he is bad. And it will not be long before he will live up to his belief. The same rule must hold true of men and women who are constantly calling themselves "miserable sinners." How expect brave things of a miserable race? The psychological effect of such self-incrimination is bound to be mischievous. We are apt to prove the truth of the charge against us by becoming miserable sinners in reality. The essential difference between Pagan self-respect and Christian self-disrespect is explained by the fact that in Asia, the birthplace of the supernatural, there has never been a republic or a democracy, and for the excellent reason that the Asiatics never thought highly enough of themselves to take matters into their own hands. They believed in God, but not in themselves. They really believed they were miserable sinners. Fortunately, while we use their phraseology, we are not as sincere in our self-depreciation as they were. We pray as the Asiatics prayed, but we think differently. We think better than we pray.

Another duty considered indispensable to a Christian is that of making a public confession. No one is supposed to be really converted who has not made such a confession. The constant refrain from the pulpit is, Confess! Confess! But as already intimated, you are not expected to get up in public to speak well of yourself; you are expected, on the contrary, to confess yourself guilty and deserving of damnation. You must get up and tell the people that there is not a sound spot in you, and that you are the worst of sinners. Then you must throw yourself upon the mercy of God, just as a criminal pleading guilty throws himself upon the mercy of the court. On the other hand, should you claim that you have tried to follow in all things your best thought, or that you have tried to be honest and deserving of the respect of others as well as of your own,—the preacher will tell you that what you admire in yourself is nothing but "filthy rags." Christianity will not permit you to have a good opinion of yourself. It calls self-respect pride of intellect, and—pride was the sin, we are told, by which fell even the angels.

But let us ask philosophy to analyse for us the motives behind these hurtful beliefs. What, for example, is the origin of the idea of self-abasement? What makes the idea so popular? To say that it came over from Asia is not really answering the question. How did it originate in Asia? It is important that we get at the root of the idea, to do which we must make a painstaking investigation. I am not quite sure that I can explain the origin of

all these theological ideas, but I am going to make the attempt.

Religion or theology is politics in disguise. In my lecture on St. Francis, I said that one of the reasons which influenced the Catholic Church to assume the role of poverty was to win over the masses. The Church realised that it must have the masses on its side if it was to have any future at all. During the Middle Ages, especially, the poor constituted the multitude. A great improvement has since taken place in the condition of the people, but in those times the submerged classes constituted by far the great majority. The Catholic Church, therefore, accommodated its teaching and practice to the tastes and habits of this majority, and became its mouthpiece, in order to command its support. The Church desired to be "big" if it could not be great.

The "Blessed are the poor" in the Gospels, and the "Unto the poor the gospel is preached," as also the frequent intimations that the poor are the special favorites of God,—that they are "God's poor," which, by the way, is a very clever phrase,—and the further suggestion that it is very much easier for the poor to enter heaven than for the rich,—all this is nothing but politics. If the poor had been in the minority such a text as "Blessed are the poor" would never have found its way into the Bible. If the great majority of the people had been in comfortable circumstances, living in large and decent quarters and enjoying the good things of the world, no one would ever have thought of blessing poverty. When, therefore, the priest declares that poverty is enviable, or that it is a good thing to be maltreated in this world, he is trying to show that God is for the poor and against the rich, which is just what the people want him to say. In other words, the priest is playing politics. What, then, was the origin of the doctrine of the blessedness of poverty? It was dictated by policy. It was a concession to the majority. It was a campaign document. We flatter ourselves that our religion came down to us from above; the truth is that our religion was dictated to us word by word by the majority. The crowds made the creeds. Why should God, who has everything himself, and who lives in a golden city and sits on a jewelled throne, and has innumerable servants to wait upon his comfort—why should he bless poverty? The doctrine that the poor are preferred people was dictated by the poor themselves as the price for which they would vote the Church ticket, so to speak. It was a recognition demanded by the majority, and conceded by the clergy for political reasons. Had Christianity started with the doctrine of "Blessed are the rich," it would never have conquered the masses. The preachers, or makers of religions, in order to increase their following and thereby add to their power, were compelled to give to the people the doctrines which the majority would accept. This is another way of saying that the people themselves dictated the doctrines which are supposed to come down from above. What is religion? The thought of the majority.

(To be continued.)

Our Fighting Fund.

[The object of this Fund is to provide the sinews of war in the National Secular Society's fight against the London County Council, which is seeking to stop all collections at the Society's open-air meetings in London, and thus to abolish a practically immemorial right; this step being but one in a calculated policy which is clearly intended to suppress the right of free speech in all parks and other open spaces under the Council's control. This Fund is being raised by the Editor of the *Freethinker* by request of the N. S. S. Executive. Subscriptions should therefore be sent direct to G. W. Foote, 2 Newcastle-street, London, E.C. Cheques, etc., should be made payable to him.]

Previously acknowledged, £44 10s. 3d. Received since:—Edward Oliver, £5; Colonel H. H. Hart, £1; H. Good, 5s.; Manchester, 2s. 6d.; Miss M. D. (Birmingham), 2s. 6d.; J. G. Dobson, 5s.; T. Matthews, 5s.; Bishop Auckland Branch, 7s. 6d.; R. W., 5s.; A. Bramley-Moore, £10; Leicester (per J. Ainge): W. Leeson, 5s.; D. Winterton, 2s. 6d.; J. Ainge, 2s. 6d.; W. Wilber, 2s.; — Waite, 1s.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

INDOOR.

QUEEN'S (MINOR) HALL (Langham-place, Regent-street, W.): 7.30, G. W. Foote, "The War in the East and the Failure of Christian Civilisation."

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Workmen's Hall, Romford-road, Stratford, E.): 7.30, C. Cohen, "The Challenge of Unbelief."

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N. S. S. (King's Hall, Corporation-street): 7, J. T. Lloyd, "All Things Die: There is No Death."

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): Dudley Wright, 12 noon, "Buddhism Superior to Christianity"; 6.30, "The Impossibility of Agreement between Theology and Science."

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, E. Egerton Stafford, "The Ethics of Atheism."

PRESTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Stanley Chambers, Lancaster-road, near Tram Terminus): 3, Meeting of new Branch to elect Officers. All Freethinkers welcome.

OUTDOOR.

LANCASHIRE AND YORKSHIRE: THOS. A. JACKSON—Leeds (Town Hall Square): Oct. 27, at 11, "The Bible and Beer"; at 3, "The Latest Prosecution for Profanity"; at 6.30, "What must we do to be saved?" *Sheffield* (Monolith): 28, at 7.30, "The Latest Thing in Gods"; 29, at 7.30, "The Philosophy of Secularism"; 30, at 7.30, "The Latest Prosecution for Profanity"; 31, at 7.30, "The Bible and Beer"; Nov. 1, at 7.30, "What must we do to be saved?" 2, at 7.30, "The Bible and Beer."

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Secretary—MISS E. M. VANCE.

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

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

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