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PRICE TWOPENCE

No god ever survived his worshipers.—WASHBURN.

Virgin Births.

DURING one of my old debates with Mr. Lee he more than once referred to Professor Huxley as saying that no man of science would ever think of denying virgin births. I had seen Professor Huxley's words cited in Christian journals before—with what degree of accuracy I was unable to determine. The object in all cases was to make it appear that the great Agnostic had nothing whatever to say against the *a priori* credibility of the birth of Jesus Christ in the manner recorded in the New Testament. Mr. Lee was good enough to mention that Professor Huxley's words might be found in the appendix to Canon Gore's "Bampton Lectures" on the Incarnation. I consulted that volume, the text of which I had previously read, though not the "Notes" which follow; and I found, as I suspected, that the Christians had made an unfair use of the passage in question. It has, indeed, been Professor Huxley's misfortune, and to some extent his fault, that his authority has been urged against his own opinions. His talk about the *possibility* of miracles, which he meant in the metaphysical sense that they are *conceivable*, was seized upon as an "infidel" testimony to the *practical* possibility of miracles. His eulogy of the Bible, written as far back as 1870, was quoted *ad nauseam* by the party of religious, as opposed to secular, education in public elementary schools. And his name is still being employed to give a scientific countenance to the absurd, and not over decent, story of the supernatural birth of Jesus Christ. I say *supernatural*, notwithstanding the fact that certain Christian apologists are trying to give the Incarnation a semi-natural appearance. And, indeed, if the birth of Jesus from a human mother, without the assistance of a human father, was *not* really supernatural, we may just as well believe in the similar births of Buddha and Plato, to say nothing of the legendary Saviors of antiquity. In that case, the Incarnation loses its special significance, and Christianity falls absolutely into line with the other great world-religions—a position which is entirely fatal to its divine pretensions.

This particular passage of Professor Huxley's on "virgin births" is quoted by (now) Bishop Gore, with permission, from a private letter to the late Dean of Wells, dated April 27, 1877. It runs as follows:—

"I have not the slightest objection to offer *a priori* to all the propositions in the three creeds. The mysteries of the Church are child's play compared with the mysteries of Nature. The doctrine of the Trinity is not more puzzling than the necessary antinomies of physical speculation; virgin procreation and resuscitation from apparent death are ordinary phenomena for the naturalist. It would be a great error, therefore, to suppose that the Agnostic rejects Theology because of its puzzles and wonders. He rejects it simply because in his judgment there would be no evidence sufficient to warrant the theological propositions, even if they related to the commonest and most obvious every-day propositions."

I think it a pity that Professor Huxley wrote this letter, and a still greater pity that he allowed Bishop Gore to print it after a lapse of fourteen years. The last sentence is scarcely intelligible as it stands;

apparently there is a misprint or an error in composition. And surely the value of the first sentence is precisely nothing; for in saying that he had no *a priori* objections to all the propositions in the three creeds, Huxley could only mean that he had no *a priori* objections to any proposition whatever. Does he not, also, fall into a confusion in his use of the word "mysteries"? A mystery in Science is merely ignorance; it is entirely negative; whereas a mystery in Theology is positive, being a flat contradiction between an admitted theory and an undisputed fact. When we say that life is a mystery, we mean that we are unable to explain its origin in the present state of our knowledge; but when we say that the existence of evil is a mystery, we simply mean that it cannot be reconciled with the theory of omnipotent benevolence. There is no more mystery about *the fact* of evil than about the fact of good. Pleasure and pain are equally natural. If a man catches a shark, or a shark catches a man, there is nothing to excite the bump of wonder. Astonishment only arises when we are told that God orders all things, and that he is infinitely wise and good and powerful. We are then puzzled to understand why this great ruler of the world, and indeed of the universe, allowed a shark to dine off his superior, in violation of etiquette and economy, to say nothing of still higher considerations. Until the theory is pressed upon us there is no mystery; in fact, the mystery is only the illogical aspect of the theory.

As for the "necessary antinomies of physical speculation," what are they but the necessary antinomies of metaphysics? If you work with infinities, you are bound at last to come to logical contradictions, as Mr. Herbert Spencer has well shown in his *First Principles*.

With regard to "resuscitation from apparent death," one can only wonder why Huxley took the trouble to pen such a sentence. Raising up from *apparent* death is not raising up from *real* death; and it is the latter which is taught by the Christian theologian. Certainly there is nothing extraordinary in the Resurrection if Jesus Christ was buried while in a swoon or in a state of catalepsy. But is that what the Creeds mean in declaring that "the third day he rose again from the dead"?

Lastly, we come to "virgin procreation"—observe that Huxley does not say "virgin births." Now what does this mean? Low down in the organic scale there are self-fertilising hermaphrodites. The differentiation of the sexes has not yet taken place. But when that differentiation is once established, the association of a male and a female organism is necessary to procreation. It is ridiculous to argue from a mollusc to a mammal, or from an oyster to Mary of Nazareth. Indeed, the very phrase "virgin procreation" is misleading, for the word "virgin" can only properly apply in the case of a perfectly differentiated female, capable of becoming in the fullest sense of the word a mother. The phrase will only be permissible when a case occurs of self-fertilisation on the part of a female mammal. Until then it is a misuse of language; and the Christians, in citing it as lending color to the scientific possibility of the Incarnation, are only betraying their ignorance of biology, or their recklessness in defending their faith.

G. W. FOOTE.

The Primitive Mind.—III.

(Concluded from p. 691.)

It has already been pointed out that one need not go back to the earliest stages of society in order to study the workings of the primitive type of mind. It can be seen around us, sometimes in a very aggressive form, at other times expressing itself in certain aspects of life only. Generally speaking, the world of science is fairly secure against the encroachments of primitive forms of thought, but not completely so. For even here one often meets with, if not exactly primitive thinking, at least a use of words and a play of ideas so pre-scientific as to be almost primitive. It is quite a common phenomenon to see a scientific authority, perfectly conversant with the latest discoveries, able to expound them clearly to a lay audience, and yet to have, at the back of his mind, so to speak, certain pre-scientific views that quite lead him astray when attempting to draw conclusions from the knowledge in his possession.

I have so recently dealt with various forms of this type of mind that I need only now note one or two of the more important aspects. The most persistent, and most pervasive, of these is the valuation of natural processes in terms of human feeling or requirements. In a sense, our doing so is inevitable. Whether we call a thing ugly or beautiful, pleasant or unpleasant, good or bad, simple or complex, it can only be the one or the other in relation to us. We are expressing our own emotional or intellectual relation to it. There is no escape from this position, and there is little or no harm done so long as we bear in mind that this method is of value in relation to human nature only. When we abolish this relationship, and talk as though our valuation of nature held good out of relation to human nature, we are hopelessly unscientific and reverting at once to a purely primitive view of things. This is the cardinal weakness of the apologetics of writers like Sir Oliver Lodge. There is no question whatever of their conversance with scientific facts or discoveries. Their description of the relations existing between man and nature may be unimpeachable. But the fatal flaw in their reasoning is that they mistake generalisations imposed upon us by the nature of the human animal, and describe a relation between him and his environment as holding good of nature when divorced from that relation.

The point is important enough to repay elaboration. The primitive savage is frankly and inevitably anthropomorphic. He reads himself into nature, because that is his only method of establishing a workable understanding. All the varying phases of natural happenings are to him the expressions of a nature similar to his own. He humanises the universe, and the result is primitive religion. The gaiety and the gloom, the kindness and the cruelty of nature, are not, then, figures of speech, but the plainest and most obvious of facts. And nature is, to the savage, the one or the other, because it is the expression of personalities similar to his own.

Now, we also humanise the universe, often legitimately so. We still speak of the love or callousness of nature, of the anger of a storm, or of the joy of sunlight. But while, in this respect, we are, and must remain, anthropomorphic, we are in other respects in a very different position to that of the savage. For we know the machinery of the process; the savage did not. We know that anger and joy, cruelty and kindness, pleasure and displeasure, are qualities of a sentient organism, and that without such an organism these psychological states are impossible. There are cases on record where mediæval ecclesiastical officials solemnly denounced inanimate objects for causing a man's death, thus illustrating the present practice of savages, who will pray the spirit of a spear to cause the death of an enemy. We have developed beyond that stage, but we carry the same principle of reasoning into nature at large.

Sir Oliver Lodge, Dr. Alfred Russel Wallace, and scores of others base an argument for religion upon the development that takes place in nature, culminating in man. But, if we remove the human spectator, in what sense can development be said to exist? There is change, true. But in what sense development? Development must be towards a given end; but what end is there observable in natural processes, apart from an end that we create for our own convenience? When we speak of the animal life of the present being more perfect or higher than that of the pre-glacial epoch, what do we mean—or, rather, what ought we to mean? Obviously, what we are doing is to make a standard of ourselves, and measure the importance and quality of things in terms of our own feelings and ideals. The world is more perfect because we are here; it is a good world because we can be happy. But can anybody say in what sense nature would be less complete if man was not here, or if the conditions became such that all life disappeared from the globe? If science is to be trusted, this will one day happen. And when it does happen, nature will be as self-contained and as complete then as it is now, or as it is at any single stage of the cosmic process.

There are processes in nature and there are results, but there are no intentions and there are no ends. There is a routine, but there is no plan. If we care to construct a scheme and measure things in relation as they agree with our ideals or harmonise with our feelings, there is no harm in our doing so, provided we bear in mind that we have no right whatever to assume that this method has any validity outside our own minds. If we act otherwise, no matter how great our scientific eminence may be, we are committing the blunder of the primitive savage without being able to offer so good an extenuation.

For—it is a point that most people find it, apparently, difficult to realise—modern and “scientific” apologies for religion really represent nothing but the persistence of the primitive view of nature. The other day a correspondent of the *New Age*, commenting on my recent articles dealing with that journal, opined that I was not aware that “thought has moved since Mr. Bradlaugh,” and declared that when the theological mist has cleared, the realities for which God and the soul stand will remain.* I am afraid that my indebtedness to Bradlaugh is of the slightest character; but in this case, and in connection with God and the soul, I am quite ready to champion the position that the only direction in which thought has moved since Bradlaugh's death has been to confirm his teachings. There are plenty of books written in defence of the belief in God and the soul, and many arguments served up in new dress, but there is no substantial alteration. Some people may emerge from a theological mist; but if they immediately plunge into a metaphysical one I am not sure that this can be reckoned a substantial gain. So long as one can't see, the kind of mist that obscures one's vision is of small importance.

And under whatever form they appear, “God” and the “soul” are primitive ideas. They persist in civilised times exactly as does fortune-telling, but they are not civilised products. They sprang from a conception of the world and of man that is now discredited by all, and to retain a conclusion drawn from admittedly false premises is the most hopeless of logical positions. The obviously magnified man of the savage may give way to the metaphysical abstraction of contemporary theologians and mentally hazy journalists; but the savage remains the real parent of the God-idea under whatever form it is expressed. This is not the mere prejudiced opinion of a belated follower of Bradlaugh. It is one of the

* The writer also invited the editor of the *New Age* to deal with the articles in question. I do not imagine for a moment that the editor will accept the invitation. The policy of ignoring the criticism of the *Freethinker* is a safe one for the religious press, and no doubt he will also realise that discretion is a most serviceable quality. Certainly the article of his to which I replied would not encourage his friends to advise his return on the subject.

plainest and least disputable of the results of anthropological research. It is as demonstrable as one can ever hope to demonstrate a truth of this character. Animism may be expressed in scientific language, just as a savage may be clothed by a West-end tailor. But the language no more robs the idea of its animistic character than a suit of clothes will convert a savage into a civilised man.

It is in connection with religion, in fact, that we see most clearly the persistence of primitive thinking. And this because animism is the form in which man's earliest efforts at philosophising is cast. Repulsed by subsequent developments though religion may be, it does not cease to exert an influence on life as a whole. And this influence is hardest to fight where it is least consciously exerted or experienced. At any rate, to anyone who intelligently observes life there can be no question of the presence and power of primitive thinking in the most civilised societies. In addition to the examples already given in sociology, in religion, and even in science, there is a vast mass of unorganised primitive thinking always at work. This is seen in the accounts of magic and witchcraft that every now and again reach us from all parts of Europe. It is seen in the vogue of charms, the craze for the occult, belief in lucky and unlucky days, and the like. And it is certain that all this cannot exist without having a powerful, even though unavowed and probably untraceable, effect on life. It must represent a vast reservoir on which the real reactionist will always be able to draw. It is the true obstruction to the genuine reformer. The day has gone by when civilisation stands in danger of being destroyed by an irruption of barbarians from without. One would like to feel that our civilisation, in its better aspects, stands equally safe against the assault of the savage within the gates.

C. COHEN.

Prayer and Science.

A FEW months ago I was engaged in a controversy in a local journal on the question of the efficacy of prayer. St. Paul says that "the prayer of the righteous man availeth much," but the question we were discussing was—how much? And whether, after all, the prayer of the unrighteous man did not avail just as much as those of the righteous—in other words, whether the prayers of either of them individually, or of any number of them collectively, were not equally useless.

When I declared, in the Council Chamber of Camberwell, that I did not believe in the efficacy of prayer, I aroused the anger of most of the clergy and dissenting ministers of South London; a considerable number of them thought my utterances so bold, so revolutionary, and so outrageous that they forthwith began to answer me in sermons from their pulpits, or in letters to the local papers. But now the controversy is over, and the clergy have had their say, the question arises as to whether they have advanced any evidence to establish their claim that God listens to and answers prayer, or put forward any fresh arguments to establish to the satisfaction of rational beings that prayer is a reasonable and useful exercise for man to engage in?

In my judgment, they have established neither of these points. One of these clerical gentlemen said that "Christians prayed" into a "Divine Father's ear," and that they did not judge the answer by the standard of £ s. d. To this gentleman I pointed out that he had not got beyond the anthropomorphic stage in his conception of Deity. His God evidently had ears, and if he had ears, he probably had a head, and if a head, he probably had a body and legs also. In short, that he was only a sort of big Man, who existed somewhere above the clouds, who listened to millions of prayers in all languages, in all dialects, offered by the various races of men, who did not, even according to Christians, answer them all, who had to discriminate between the wise and foolish prayers, and that such a God would be placed in a

most ridiculous position when he had to answer prayers of a contradictory character, and would become the sport and plaything of his myriad of worshipers. The same parson also said that though he believed in this anthropomorphic conception of Deity, he nevertheless believed in a God who had "neither body, parts, nor passions." But he was unable to say how a God who had these qualities could either hear or answer prayer. All prayer involves miracles. In primitive ages answer to prayer appeared a very easy matter. An all-powerful God could do exactly as he desired. At least, the priests told the people so; and the people saw no reason to doubt them. So, when the people wanted food, they prayed to their God, and forthwith he sent them manna from the skies. When they wanted to win a battle, Joshua commanded the sun to stand still, and Jahveh arranged the matter accordingly. The people in those days, knowing nothing of astronomy or physics, saw no reason to doubt these miraculous performances. In Monsieur Brieux's masterly play of *La Foi*, performed at His Majesty's Theatre under the title of *False Gods*, it will be remembered that in one scene the people pray to one of their gods that the river Nile shall overflow its banks, and if this god can only be induced to nod his head the miracle will happen, and when the priests know that the time has arrived for the overflow of the river, they consent to let the god nod his head, with the aid of some skilful stage machinery. And when I come to think of it, I am convinced that a good many of the alleged miraculous events recorded in various sacred books were managed on the same principle as the great scene of the famous play mentioned above, with the connivance and approval of the priesthood. But when we come to consider the question of prayer to-day, we naturally ask ourselves how many people offer up prayers with the expectation of getting any answer to them? Thousands of people pray every day to their Heavenly Father to "give us this day our daily bread," but they know perfectly well that they will not get it, unless they work for it. Thousands of dockers during the strike either offered up prayers on behalf of their wives and children, or had them offered up for them by the clergy, and yet we know that these poor women and children would have gone hungry if they had relied, like the children of Israel, for some assistance from above, instead of relying upon the help and sympathy of their fellow-creatures here below.

What, then, do believers pray for? As an old friend of mine, in the controversy referred to, very finely put it: "We pray for rain when the wind is in the wrong quarter; a loving parent prays that his dunce of a son shall pass the examination for which his qualifications do not befit him to succeed; we pray for the blessings of peace when groups of unscrupulous commercial interests in every country are rendering war or its costly preparations inevitable; the clergy pray for the conclusion of the coal strike when obviously the determining factor is not the will of God, but the rapacity of coal-owners, combined with the sullen objection on the part of the miners to work below a reasonable minimum wage; and in a heap of instances the prayer is preferred—as, for instance, in colossal calamities like earthquakes, in shipwreck, in burning mine, or amidst the horrors of tempest or tornado—where the element of risk makes sport of human life and the meanest, vilest wretch may emerge with safety, with or without prayer, and the holiest life may perish as though God were either deaf to the voice of pity and entreaty or stood aloof in unsympathetic indifference to human fate." But, assuming the existence of a God of some sort—whether an anthropomorphic kind of Deity or a Pure Spirit, whatever that may mean—how can such a God answer prayer without violating the fixed and unalterable laws of nature? If every effect follows cause in a never-ending succession, and there is no break in the ceaseless chain of causes and effects, how can you have answer to prayer? Such a thing would be a physical impossi-

bility. But Christians often allege that they have had quite a number of curious answers to prayer. A man leaves his overcoat in the train; he prays for its recovery, and lo! when he goes to the railway station, there it is, safe and sound. He loses his dog when he is out on a journey; he prays, and behold, in a few days later his dog providentially returns home. Of course, such things as these could not possibly be brought about by natural causes. Certainly not! But if prayer can restore lost property in this way, why not establish an Office of Prayer for the recovery of all lost property; and why not set up at Scotland Yard a Praying Department, so that pious police officers might be led to discover the culprits in cases of undiscovered crime through the aid of a prayerful spirit? In such cases promotion would come to those who prayed most successfully. Insurance companies might also engage some pious gentlemen to pray against destructive fires and accidental deaths, and thus save thousands in premiums.

At the present time there is raging a terrible war in the Far East. The Servians and the Bulgarians are fighting with all their strength and skill against the Terrible Turk. All of them are believers in the efficacy of prayer. They pray to their gods, but their gods are either deaf to their appeals or blind to the terrible scenes of slaughter, or—like the great civilised European Powers—remain neutral, and let these poor semi-civilised wretches fight to the bitter end, and shed their blood like water. At present the Servians, the Greeks, and the Bulgars appear to be getting the best of it, but whatever success they get will assuredly be due more to the superiority of their arms and the skill of their tacticians than to the fervor or sincerity of their prayers.

In all great calamities belief in the efficacy of prayer is sorely tested and discredited. When the *Titanic* struck the iceberg there must have been thousands on board who offered up prayer. Those who were fortunate enough to get into the boats were saved by the skill and endurance of the sailors, but those who could not get into the boats on account of the insufficient number of them had to swim, or sink, until they were rescued; and an unbeliever in prayer who could swim had a better chance of being saved than a believer who had never learnt the art of swimming. At least fifteen hundred human beings cried for help as the gigantic vessel suddenly sank beneath a tranquil sea, and their "Heavenly Father" was deaf to their appeals and blind to their sufferings. In such a moment could we not all feel with Miranda, in Shakespeare's great play *The Tempest*, who, when she beheld a good ship dashed to pieces, exclaimed:—

"If by your art, my dearest father, you have
Put the wild waters in this roar, allay them;
The sky it seems would pour down stinking pitch,
But that the sea, mounting to the welkin's cheek,
Dashed the fire out. Oh, I have suffered
With those that I saw suffer. A brave vessel,
Who had no doubt some noble creatures in her,
Dashed all to pieces. Oh, the cry did knock
Against my very heart. Poor souls, they perished!
Had I been any god of power, I would
Have sunk the sea within the earth or e'er
It should the good ship so have swallowed and
The freighting souls within her."

That is the cry of humanity. And those are the thoughts of every man and every woman who dares to think fearlessly of such a tragedy under such conditions. And where man would do his best to save a poor helpless creature from a premature and painful death in a sea of ice, surely any God of power and goodness would deserve the execration of mankind if, in such circumstances, he did less.

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

Ingersoll as an Apostle.

INGERSOLL was a most potent force of Progress in his day. For a whole generation he was one of the chief orators of the evangel of Free-thought, which is changing slowly the direction and

character of the world's ideas. For years he was discussed as no other man, except Bradlaugh, was discussed. Catholics and Protestants alike assailed and rent him, and he dealt out smilingly like measure to them. Ingersoll was the leader of an intellectual and ethical revolt, and he had all the courage which was needed in a revolutionary leader. True, he was only the inheritor of the Freethought tradition. The great French Freethinkers were his predecessors; but Ingersoll may be said to have taken the torch of Liberty from their dead hands and flamed it over a new world.

He had that distinguishing quality of the apostle of genius of seeing things largely, and nothing bigger, perhaps, than what we commonly call Secularism. For centuries Freethinkers had been working towards that end; but pioneers who do the work are seldom the men to live to see its further possibilities. Poets like Shelley had dreamed bright dreams; but the visions of a poet need the activity of an apostle to bring them to fruition. Years ago this noble American rose up and told with clarion tongue of the men who dreamed the dreams. He spoke of the Homeric struggles of Bruno and Servetus, of Paine and Voltaire, to free mankind from the chains of clericalism. People caught fire at once, and as the message developed in the orator's mind it developed in theirs too, filtered down from the people who had read to the people who had not, and grew constantly greater and yet greater under fresh impulse from the genius of the orator. How the audiences applauded and shouted; how many of them realised that the death knell of the Churches had begun to sound. More than anything else, Ingersoll stood to the English-speaking world as the orator of Freethought. He was not, of course, the first to bring the message. To go no further back, Bradlaugh was proclaiming the same truths; but it was Ingersoll who brought them home to the average man and woman in the United States. One thing especially is noticeable. Militant as Ingersoll was, he was so much more than iconoclast. No one has done more to bring home to the brain and bosom of the ordinary man the romance and the glory of family life. With glowing eyes and eager lips he poured forth his plea for the liberty of man, woman, and child.

Magnificent as Ingersoll's life work was, he, the man, was greater. To the world he presented the rare spectacle of a man of genius, passionate for truth, and unreservedly obedient to the right as he discerned it. He might have chosen to be merely a successful lawyer, a triumphant politician. But he thought continually of other matters of service to mankind. A friend, seeing in his library a finely-bound set of Voltaire's works, asked him how much he had paid for it. "That cost me the governorship of Illinois," was the answer. Indeed, a man of his ability might have successfully aspired to the Presidency of the United States, had he not been a Freethinker. What America lost in this strong man time alone will show. Thirteen years after his death his written words have a larger circulation than when he was alive. Ingersoll has gone; but the evils he fought are still with us. Priestcraft and tyranny have still to be fought by the Army of Progress, that army whose soldiers fight not to shed blood, but to prevent it being shed; not to murder their fellow-men, but to set them free. And on the banners carried by that army few prouder names are inscribed than that of Robert Ingersoll, one of the most splendid personalities in the grand roll of Freethought, fit to rank with those who—

"in old days
Moved earth and heaven,
One equal temper of heroic hearts,
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield."

MIMNERMUS.

Speech is to persuade, to convert, to compel—to bring another out of his bad sense into your good sense.—*Emerson.*

Cults, Myths, and Religions.

"The general cause of taboos, then, is the fear of danger. If man—civilised now, and with science perpetually at hand to steel him against the nightmares of childhood—still falls a constant prey to groundless terrors, what must have been his thralldom, when, science yet unborn, every act, no matter how innocent, was liable to be taken as the direct cause of the next chance mishap which befell him? Are we not to this day everlastingly tempted to confuse temporal sequence with causal connection? *Post hoc, ergo propter hoc*—B follows A, therefore A is the cause of B—the fallacy is daily committed by education and illiteracy alike. The savage, lacking the notion of cause and effect, but endowed with a memory, was certain to assign a given misadventure to some immediately preceding event, though nine times out of ten the two would be unconnected. Thus, in primitive communities, there grew up a vast oral tradition of leading cases: such or such an act has such or such a fatal consequence—on such or such a day I fell and hurt myself, because, when I went out in the morning, I saw a snake..... Thus taboos came into being..... The taboos correspond to fears, and the fears, in their turn, to rash generalisations from isolated facts."—M. SALOMON REINACH, *Cults, Myths, and Religions*, pp. 37, 38.

OVER two years ago—in writing to M. Salomon Reinach upon the occasion of introducing that writer's *Orpheus* to our readers—we expressed the wish to see an English edition of his work on *Cults, Myths, and Religions*. The wish has now been realised by the publication of a translation by Mr. Nutt.*

The *Athenæum* (Oct. 14)—a paper not over partial to heresy or heretics—in reviewing the work, observes, "M. Reinach is not only a distinguished scholar, but also has a gift of lucid, graceful, and even humorous exposition." And that "He is admittedly a master in the elucidation of mythology." As the reviewer says: "The Man in the Street" has seldom had the offer of so easy an initiation into a difficult branch of study.

Cults, Myths, and Religions is a collection of papers and addresses forming an easy introduction to mythology to those who are not acquainted with the voluminous and expensive works of Tylor, Spencer, Frazer, Lubbock, and Robertson Smith, the leaders of the "Anthropological School of Exegesis."

M. Reinach shows that, instead of religion being a divine institution, sent down from heaven by God for the benefit of mankind, or an invention of priestcraft for their enslavements, it is really older than gods or priest, for, as he points out, the most primitive religions know nothing of a personal God. Religion itself has been evolved, and M. Reinach shows that Animism, Totemism, and Taboo have been the deciding factors in this evolution.

If we wish to find out the origin of religion, we must search for it in the records of primitive men, the men who lived before civilisation. In his "Introduction," M. Reinach observes:—

"Of this man, anterior to all history, we have no direct knowledge, beyond what we glean from the implements and artistic products of the quaternary period. True, these teach us something, as I have striven to show on a later page; but, equally truly, they teach us far less than we could wish. To supplement our information, three other sources have to be tapped: the psychology of the present-day savage, the psychology of children, and the psychology of the higher animals" (p. 5).

Modern science neither laughs at, nor attacks, religion; it analyses, compares; it *explains* its origin and development, and when it is shown that religion came into existence by a natural process of evolution, it is like a conjuring illusion which has been explained, all the glamor and mystery has gone. Schopenhauer says that "Religions are like glow-worms; they shine only when it's dark. A certain amount of general ignorance is the condition of all religions, the element in which they can exist." †

* Salomon Reinach, *Cults, Myths, and Religions*, 1912; Nutt, 7s. 6d.

† Schopenhauer, *Religion and Other Essays*, 1890, p. 32.

Under the white light of science, religion withers and shrivels; its gods and spectres are resolved into man's own shadow, seen in the magnifying and distorting mirror of imagination, to which he has bowed down in fear and trembling. A French sceptic, upon being told that God created man, observed that man had returned the compliment. The true reading of the verse in the first chapter of Genesis should be: "Man created God in his own image, in the image of man created he him; male and female created he them."

M. Reinach has an interesting chapter dealing with the first chapters of Genesis and their relation to the much more ancient Babylonian myths of the Creation and Deluge.

Another chapter deals with the Sabbath. We should like to call the attention of the Nonconformist clergy—who pretend that God intended Sunday for a day of rest—to this chapter. Dealing with Morris Jastrow's work on the Sabbath, he observes:—

"The author, a distinguished Orientalist, definitely refutes the absurd belief which attributes to 'Moses' the institution of a day of obligatory rest designed to safeguard the Hebrew against overwork.* If the Sabbath—now changed to Sunday—has, in the course of centuries, become a day of rest, it simply proves that when a superstition allies itself with motives of social utility or hygiene, it stands, and often rightly, an excellent chance of longevity. But, originally, the seventh day of rest was only a gross superstition absolutely similar to that which, on the thirteenth day of every month, lightens the labor of the railways and steamboat companies. The Sabbath, like the thirteenth, was at first an unlucky day—a day when nothing should be undertaken, because the gods were in an ungracious mood" (p. 168).

Yet, as M. Reinach observes, "Times without number this text (Exodus xx. 10) has done duty in proving that Moses was inspired by the sentiments of a modern philanthropist," whereas the motive which governed the selection of the seventh day as an unlucky day was the succession of the phases of the moon. Says M. Reinach:—

"This venerable superstition explains why the 7th, 14, 21st, and 28th days of the lunar month were considered perilous; in other words, of unfavorable, or at least, uncertain, augury. When in doubt do nothing, says the old proverb. These days the Babylonians called *sabattu* or *sapatu*, a word said to correspond to the Hebrew *shabbáthôn*, in the sense of *cessation* (of the divine wrath?), *pacification*, and thence *rest*. The old Hebrew Sabbath was marked by expiatory rites meant to disarm or conciliate the deity; it was then celebrated every seven days, and coincided with the phases of the moon. Much later, the prescription of rest, which had been merely secondary and accessory in the primitive Sabbath, became its very essence, and was justified by the legend of God's rest on the seventh day" (p. 170).

So that we still wear fetters that were forged by the superstitions of the Babylonians five thousand years before Christ!

Another chapter deals with the "Origin of Prayers for the Dead," and another, entitled "The King Sacrificed," discusses Mr. Frazer's hypothesis—in his *Golden Bough*—that Jesus suffered death as the mock king in the festival of the Roman Saturnalia. Others chapters deal with the "Sentiment of Modesty," "The Morality of Mithraism," the concluding one being upon "The Progress of Humanity," from which we quote the following poignant cry from the heart:—

"I am firmly convinced that, in a six or seven years' course of study, I could teach an intelligent child what it has taken me thirty years to learn; and it is with bitter regret that I think of all the gropings in the dark—all the lost hours—to which I have been damned since childhood, simply because among my successive teachers—and some of them bore illustrious names—I failed to find that methodical and economical guidance of effort which should be the inspiring principle of modern education" (p. 199).

* In a note, the author observes: "Overwork might exist among industrial populations like our own, but not among pastoral or agricultural tribes" like the Hebrews, who lived by flocks and herds.

We—like many another Freethinker—can sympathise with M. Reinach here. We, too, have had, unaided except by books, to grope our way in the dark. We, too, have experienced that bitter regret for all the lost hours of childhood, when our defenceless mind was being stuffed with superstitions which it took years of toil and effort to emancipate ourselves from. We have had to unlearn nearly everything we were taught in those early years; and if our efforts, combined with those of other Freethinkers, tend to alter this state of things for the young of future generations, we shall feel fully rewarded. The translation of M. Reinach's book is the work of a lady, Miss Elizabeth Frost, and reads naturally and smoothly, the book, indeed, reflecting great credit upon both translator and publisher.

W. MANN.

"Profanity" at Leicester.

LEICESTER Town Council has done a wise thing. The New Bye-Laws and Regulations came up for discussion at a meeting in the Town Hall on October 29. One of these bye-laws (No. 5) ran as follows:—

"No person shall in any street or public place or in any place or building within view or hearing of any street or public place, use any profane, indecent, or obscene language or gesture," etc.

A debate arose on the word "profane." We take the following report from the *Leicester Daily Post* of October 30:—

"Councillor Kelly moved that the word 'Profane,' in Bye-law No. 5, be deleted.

The Mayor: You can move to delete Paragraph 5.

Councillor Kelly said he did not wish to delete the whole of the paragraph, but he resented the suggestion contained in the juxtaposition of the words. Personally, he was hideously profane in the eyes of people who held certain things as sacred, but he suggested it was an offence against good taste to couple profanity, indecency, and obscenity together. If they were to have an advance in their ideas, it was necessary for some people to utter shocking truths. (Hear, hear.) It was necessary for some people to say things that offended and gave pain to other quite sincerely good people. He wished to know if the word 'profane' were retained, and he were to say that Jehovah was obviously a mere tribal God or a bloodthirsty, cruel Deity of a barbarous people of a very low stage of development, whether such a bye-law would lay him open to prosecution for making a statement of that kind.

Councillor Gimson, in seconding, pointed out that in the north of England there had been prosecutions under what were known as the Blasphemy Laws, and, later, persons were charged with profanity who had been using arguments against the existence of a Deity or against the Christian religion, or described the Deity of the Old Testament in not very complimentary terms. If that were the meaning of profanity, such a clause as the one under discussion would be helping ignorant persons to do a great deal to destroy the freedom of speech and debate. He was certain that the chairman of the Watch Committee, the committee, or the officials had no such intention.

Ald. Royce, in reply, said they did not want to use the word 'profane' as a means of religious oppression and intolerance. If it could be shown to be used in that way, he would be the first to endeavor to get it struck out.

Councillor Sutton spoke in support of the deletion of the word.

Ald. Sawday asked what would be substituted if the word 'profane' were omitted.

Councillor Murby: Obscene covers it.

Ald. Sawday: Two different meanings altogether.

Councillor Salt: It is evident Alderman Sawday wishes to retain the word "blasphemy."

Ald. Sawday: You have no right to assume anything.

The amendment was carried by 21 votes to 17."

This is a triumph of common sense. We might even say of common decency. We are glad to note that the *Post* takes much the same view. It remarks that the bye-law "was judiciously amended by a majority of 21 against 17 by the deletion of 'profanity' as a subject for prosecution."

Acid Drops.

Talking about flogging—which is a moral and not a political question—we once heard a lady at a women's meeting in West London declare that flogging was a very good thing for some common soldiers. We asked her whether it was also a very good thing for some common officers, and we can see even now the indignant face of the lady as she remarked that this was "different altogether." Officers must not be degraded. Quite so. And the argument implies that flogging is degrading. If it degrades one human being it degrades another. If it degrades officers it degrades the rank and file. Moreover, if flogging is a good thing for male criminals, why is it not a good thing for female criminals? There need be no special indecency about it, for women could administer the flogging meted out to women. Yet everybody shrinks from flogging women. Why? Simply because it is brutal and degrading. Everybody sees it in relation to the sex of his own mother.

Flogging degrades the community which allows it, and which, in doing so, is giving way to the primitive, unchastened passions of the race. It is a pity that women themselves, who clamor for the flogging of offenders against their sex, don't see this. It appears that the majority of them do not. According to the newspapers, it is an open secret that certain reactionary features of the White Slave Bill are due to the pressure of the Women's Liberal Federation. Those reactionary features are: (1) flogging for male (not female) offenders under this Bill, even for a first offence; and (2) the empowering of any policeman to arrest, without a warrant, any man that he suspects of attempting procurement. This had been altered in committee. Only sergeants or higher officers were allowed to make such arrests, but the House of Commons restored the clause to its original form. This grave blunder was easier after the overwhelming vote in favor of the flogging clause. Having almost gaily entered the slope to the abyss, it was natural that the House should slide down further. The protests of Mr. George Greenwood, Mr. Arthur Lynch, and other rational humanitarians were of no avail. The flogging clause was carried by 297 to 44—a huge majority of 253. Some reactionists argued that all offences against women and children should be punished with flogging. Mr. McKenna naturally supported the reactionary policy. But the surprise of the debate and the division was Mr. Will Crooks. Everyone knows he is not a thinker. We are glad to know he is a Christian. His speech showed an utter misunderstanding of the argument against flogging. Mr. Crooks, in his brozy, slapdash manner, appeared to think that the opponents of flogging were animated by a friendly feeling towards the criminal, and were anxious to step between him and the penalty of his crime. This conception only shows how far Mr. Will Crooks is from being able to see the force of an argument based upon psychological, social, and ethical considerations. He is a good sort of man—in his way; but his way is that of the Sunday-school teacher and the Bible-class conductor.

It is no use beating about the bush. Flogging is torture—deliberately intended torture. And torture belongs to the jurisprudence of hell.

How easy it is to go with the stream! The morning after the House of Commons voted for the return of savagery in English law the dear *Daily News* hurried up with its applause. "We hate flogging," it said, "and have consistently opposed it. But the man [not a word about the woman!] who makes an industry of vice puts himself in a category of his own. He is outside the pale of humanity. And if flogging will rid us of his pestilent presence we consent to it." Exactly! "If" begs the whole question. And what an old form of hypocrisy is that same "We hate flogging, but—!" It is like saying "We hate theft, but—this time it is policy to steal!"

Mr. H. B. Irving has been giving his opinion as to the Sunday opening of theatres. He appears to be animated by the desire to please all parties, which, we fancy, will have the usual result of pleasing none. His method is "to face this Sunday question by a frank admission that if there are to be performances, some plays are more suited than others for production on that day." We dissent from this altogether. We do not believe in a one day a week morality, or in saying that a play which is permissible from Monday to Saturday suddenly becomes impermissible on Sunday. If a thing is bad on Sunday, it should be bad on Monday; and if good on Monday, it should be also good on Sunday. We are either labelling harmless things as vicious, or vicious things as harmless, and it is well to encourage clear and

definite ideas on this point. To refuse all plays on Sunday is logical, even though socially indefensible. To refuse some and permit others is a course that would commend itself only to the Harry Lauders of the pulpit world.

There is another point worthy of consideration in this connection. This has both a psychologic and a moral value. Comment has often been made upon the standard of conduct set up on Sunday and that practised during the week. On Sundays Christians confess themselves sinners, and during the rest of the week many of them live up to that character. Nearly every observer has been struck by this difference, and it is much more marked in Protestant than in Catholic countries. Indeed, one of the complaints against Catholicism is that it does not sufficiently encourage "Sunday observance." Now, it is a moot question how much unconscious encouragement is given to shady conduct by this separation of the week into a sacred and profane portion. Teach a man that it is wrong to do certain things on some days and there is an implied sanction to their being done on other days. It is like an arranged fast that is preceded and followed by a gluttonous debauch. Conduct is secured to an unnatural pitch on one day, and is correspondingly relaxed afterwards. And, unfortunately, the emphasis on rectitude is on the smaller portion of the week. From a social point of view, if a man has a certain amount of rascality in his nature it would be far more profitable for him to get rid of it on Sunday, and get it over, than distribute its expenditure over the remaining six days of the week. There is no question that the world would be vastly benefited if all Christians got rid of their inborn "cussedness" on Sunday and played the part of decent citizens the rest of the time. We have had one day of holiness for generations without any beneficial result, perhaps the suggestion of a day set apart for getting rid of "cussedness" is worth consideration. At any rate, there is no need to accentuate the evil by any such a method as that suggested by Mr. Irving.

From the *Christian World* we learn that a South Indian missionary writes complaining of a difficulty that faces missionaries in India. He says that young Indians come to England in increasing numbers for their education, and observe the difference here between the theory and practice of conduct. They do not find Englishmen any better than Indians in this respect. When missionaries plead that they must not judge the Christian religion by the practice of Christians, the natives retort that the missionaries ought to deal with the native religions in the same way. This South Indian missionary is much troubled at the position, probably feeling that to apply the same rule to both peoples would not greatly help Christianity. We suggest that if missionaries commenced by telling the truth the trouble would never arise. Instead of this, they go out telling the natives what a great people the English are, and intelligent Indians naturally think it means that they are truthful, honest, just, considerate, and fair in their dealings. When they come to England they discover that they are no better than other people, and disenchantment ensues. If the missionaries would only confess that Christians lie and steal and cheat and adulterate and oppress as capably as anyone else, they would not be afraid of Indians coming to England and observing the facts.

A returned missionary from New Guinea, the Rev. F. W. Walker, told an Ealing congregation the other day that Christianity and commercial advance must go hand in hand if the natives were to be benefited. Mr. Walker is in England for the express purpose of raising money for a commercial enterprise already established by the missionaries in New Guinea. This enterprise has already shown itself a source of profit to investors, and it is said that Mr. Walker's mission is meeting with "considerable success among keen and hard-headed business men." We do not doubt it. We wish we were equally sure that the natives are reaping as much benefit from the undertaking. As it is, it appears highly probable that this is only one of the many devices for exploiting helpless natives. And our industrial system can hardly be counted such a huge success at home that its transportation to New Guinea will confer unmixed blessings upon the natives.

The Bishop of London has been confessing that he once saved the Rev. Jesse Hewlitt, a former vicar of St. Luke's, Milwall Docks, from "being kissed by a very pretty woman." Just like the clergy. Always interfering with other people's business. By the way, did the Bishop take the kiss himself? We believe he is equal to any sacrifice in that direction.

They have put up a Shakespeare memorial in Southwark Cathedral. The deed was done on Monday. It was un-

veiled by Mr. Sidney Lee, who knows what Shakespeare's views on religion were, yet he listened humbly while the Bishop of Southwark mouthed the following nonsense:—

"We dedicate this memorial to the glory of God, and in honor of William Shakespeare, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen."

What had Shakespeare done to be forced into such company?

It is announced that Shakespeare's brother was buried there—which is true; and that Shakespeare himself "often attended the church"—whereas there is not the slightest evidence that he ever entered its doors. He might have done so, of course, on the occasion of his brother's funeral. He might even have stepped in out of the wet, but that is not "attending."

The Bishop of Durham has been speaking very hopefully of the religious outlook in his diocese. He admits that "Socialism of a non-religious and sometimes of an anti-religious type appears to be growing"; but, on the other hand, "crude and violent denials of God and immortality are rare." The poor man doesn't appear to know what to look for or where to find it. "Crude and violent" denials of God and immortality always were rare, and we do not believe they are more so now than at previous times. Mostly they emanated from the clerical mind, much in the manner that the famous watch story came into being. Parsons who knew nothing of Freethinkers told congregations no better informed than themselves of the crudeness and violence of Freethinkers, and so hoped to prevent contact with the faithful. They told these tales so often that at length they persuaded themselves they were true. And now, when they are forced by the logic of events to look facts in the face, they are puzzled to find the "crude and violent" Freethinker they have loved to depict. Not finding him, they assume that Freethought is less powerful than it was. This is really the actual situation—except that the Freethinker is now so common that no one, not even a parson, is surprised at his existence.

A report bearing on the above has just been issued by the University of Cambridge. In 1869 religious knowledge was taken as a subject by all the candidates in the higher local examinations. In 1879 the same subject was taken by just over 25 per cent. of the candidates. Ten years later the proportion fell to one-tenth, and in 1899 to one-eleventh. This may safely be taken as a fair index of the declining interest in religion by the world at large. Interest in religion to-day is very largely of an artificial character. A great deal of what is taken as such is really an interest in secular matters under the guise of religion, and still more a professed interest due to purely social considerations.

A little truth is always welcome, and we are pleased to record the following remarks of the Rev. C. H. Watkins—Dr. Clifford's associate at Westbourne Park Chapel. Dealing with the horrors of the old English Factory System, Mr. Watkins said:—

"These cruelties existed at a time when the nation was very religious, when the Methodist revival had swept the country, and when consciences had been stirred on behalf of the negro slaves. The spectacle of England buying the freedom of slaves with money drawn from the slavery of white ones is a study for the cynical philosopher."

We have said the same thing scores of times in reply to the frothy statements made about the purifying effects of the Methodist revival. Its real influence was to narcotise men with religion whose minds ought to have been given to the righting of social wrongs. We should like to see Mr. Watkins go further and perform an act of justice to men like Paine, Owen, Francis Place, and other Freethinkers of the time in developing that keener social outlook which Christians are now busily exploiting.

The daffodil appears, in place of the leek, as the emblem of Wales on the National Insurance stamp. This seems to have excited the indignation of Lord Tullibardine, who asked a question about it in the House of Commons. Mr. Lloyd George declined to deal with the matter, but Mr. Llewelyn Williams, K.C., who was present, being an authority on Welsh history, gave his verdict for the daffodil. He said it was "due to a blunder of Shakespeare or Bacon, or some other equally ignorant Saxon (laughter) that the Welsh national emblem was changed from a fragrant flower to a stinking vegetable (loud laughter)." Poor Shakespeare! First turned into Bacon—and then dished up with Welsh leaks *ad infinitum* and *ad nauseam*.

We stated last week that the newspapers had ignored the late Viscount Peel's action, when he was Mr. Speaker Peel,

in the Bradlaugh case in 1886. We should have made one exception at least. The *Daily Chronicle* gave proper importance to the incident and dealt with it at some length.

Japan, says the Bishop of London, is waiting and listening for the Christian gospel. We have no doubt that the Japanese will listen. Neither they nor the Chinese are really intolerant in religious matters. And, doubtless, they will wait. Eastern people are said to be very patient, and their patience in this respect will doubtless outlast our extremely intellectual Bishop.

"Christianity and Mohammedanism," says Canon Masterman, "are exclusive creeds." Quite so; that is a characteristic of monotheistic religions. But it is only the pot calling the kettle black for a Christian to complain of a Mohammedan in this particular. Canon Masterman then says that the Turk's article of faith involves the extermination of Christians—which is simply untrue. In its day of power Mohammedan countries offered a degree of liberty and tolerance that existed nowhere in Christendom. At any rate, a representative of Christianity is the last person in the world who should accuse other religions of intolerance. And Canon Masterman is evidence that truth is still a rare jewel in Christian pulpits.

Rev. Tolfree Parr, addressing a Free Church Council meeting at Farnham on "The Church and Democracy," declared that they must not rest content with Sunday but get at the working man during his Saturday half-holiday. They must have lectures and concerts on Saturday evenings. Mr. Parr had already started a Saturday evening lecture, and he was good enough to add that by this means he "touched the very bottom of the population." We can quite believe it. No other section of the population would be likely to listen to the reverend gentleman's pious outpourings while the theatres, the concert halls, the picture shows, and other places of rational entertainment were open.

Superstition dies hard—even in England. How much more in South Africa! There has been a long and severe drought in that part of the world, and the Government felt bound to come to the rescue. So the following proclamation was published in the official *Gazette* at Pretoria on October 8:—

"Whereas for a prolonged period there has been great scarcity of rain throughout the greater portion of the Union, and whereas in consequence thereof great suffering and heavy damage have been and are being experienced by the people; now, therefore, I do hereby with the advice and consent of the Executive Council declare, proclaim and make known that Sunday, the 13th day of October, 1912, shall be a day of humiliation and prayer, in order that opportunity may be given to all who so desire to offer up their prayers together to the Throne of God. All Ministers of religion are invited more especially to devote the said day to humiliation and prayer for rain, and to lead their congregations in humble petitions for forgiveness and mercy."

This precious proclamation was signed by the Acting Governor-General, Lord Henry de Villiers, and countersigned by General Louis Botha. It would be interesting to know what these gentlemen really think of this document—under the rose. Of course it pleased the orthodox parties, especially the more old-fashioned Boers. But we don't hear that it had much influence with the Acting Governor-General of the universe.

Rev. Hensley Henson has been promoted to be Dean of Durham. We remember his opposing us at the Hall of Science some thirty years ago after a week-night lecture. He spoke with ability and courtesy. We judged he was not exactly orthodox. It does not surprise us, therefore, that he proposed in 1904 to leave out of the Church Lectionary such subjects as the Creation of Woman, the Fall of Man, the Flood, Balaam's Ass, and the Capture of Jericho, as "unedifying lessons." The titles seem reminiscent of our *Bible Romances*.

"We preach the doctrine of the golden rule," said Mr. Roosevelt at his Madison-square Gardens meeting, "and we are fighting to apply the principles of the Sermon on the Mount to the questions and the issues of our own day." We hope he won't win, then. For the late Bishop of Peterborough, who had his moments of candor, declared that any society which tried to carry out the Sermon on the Mount would go to pieces in a week.

The Bishop of Ripon denounces "limiting the size of families." He should address his remarks to the Catholic priests who have no families at all, and the High Church curates who so often follow suit. Naturally the Bishop also

denounced the "weak humanity" which objected to the flogging of men found engaged in the white slave traffic. We quite understand the Bishop's objection to "humanity"—even "weak humanity."

Father Vaughan, a Catholic (celibate) priest, who is always denouncing small families—the smallest of which are larger than his own—is reported to be *lost*. We mean physically, not intellectually—for the latter is an old story. He left Moosejaw (is that a synonym for Roosevelt?) on October 18 for Winnipeg, intending to go to Chicago, where he was due to lecture on the following Sunday night. Up to October 30 he had not been heard of. We hope he will turn up, for his utterances often furnish us with material for an "Acid Drop."

"I wake in the morning," said the Dean of Lincoln at a Kennington meeting on October 29—"I wake in the morning with a joy I have not known years to think that we may, in a few weeks, have the Cross over St. Sophia and Constantinople." Not a word about the human butchery that made this possible! What does *that* matter to the triumph of the Cross?

The following ironical letter appeared in the *Star* on Saturday evening, November 2:—

"Sir,—I have the information, from authority which can scarcely be doubted, that the Turkish authorities are in favor of partition of the whole Ottoman Empire amongst the various European States.

"It is proposed to give Armenia, Anatolia, and Syria to Russia; the Egean Islands to Greece, as well as Epirus, South Albania, and Southern Macedonia. Bulgaria would have Thrace, including Constantinople; Montenegro would have Scutari and other possessions; whilst Austria and Servia will be offered Macedonia, North, Central, East, and West, for them to divide between them as can be best arranged by conference. Mesopotamia and Arabia will, I understand, be offered to England and Germany for mutual arrangement, owing to the Euphrates Railway, in which both are interested and are cordially pushing; whilst Egypt will go to England, if willing to accept it.

"It is felt by the authorities in Turkey to-day that further resistance to Christian encroachment is virtually ended, and that Moslems will be happy under the beneficent rule of Christian States.

"Any prejudice that may hitherto have existed amongst the Ottoman peoples against European civilisation and dread of its governments is passing, in view of the prosperity and general well-being of the working classes in Western and Central Europe, under the wise legislation of Christian States, the proletariats of Protestant, Roman Catholic, and Russian Orthodox Christian lands being singularly satisfied with their congenial surroundings.

"My information is from one who has passed 45 years under the government of the Turk.

A CHRISTIAN."

It is good to see something in the newspapers different from the prevailing cant.

The Bishop of Birmingham is in favor of Sunday cinematograph shows, with the proviso that the subjects should be "properly selected"—apparently by the Bishop and his friends. Biblical subjects would doubtless figure conspicuously, and the Old Testament would be a rich mine for striking and spicy selections; in fact, the "supervision" of which the Bishop speaks would be imperatively needed.

"While discussion rages round the association of Scripture and the cinematograph, R. L. S.'s account of a magic-lantern exhibition in the Gilbert Islands is interesting. Those who had seen the Biblical slides might be heard telling those who had not, 'These things all happened; we have seen the pictures.' For, as the islanders were unacquainted with any other mode of representation than photography, the picture of an event appeared to them strong proof of its occurrence; and 'the exposure of those pious "phantoms" did, as a matter of fact, silence in all that part of the island the voice of the scoffer.'"—*Daily Chronicle* (Nov. 2)

Dr. Ruffini is Professor of Ecclesiastical Law at Turin. His book on *Religious Liberty* is translated by J. Parker Heyes and published by Williams & Norgate. "It is almost needless to add," he says in the course of it, "that none of the Churches will hear a word about any kind of liberty for atheists, or in general for Freethinkers." A comment upon this is made by the *Observer* reviewer, who calls it "a ridiculous exaggeration." "It would be far nearer the truth," the reviewer adds, "to say that none of the Churches, except in certain countries the Roman Catholics, desire anything but liberty for freethinkers." Politely, but plainly, this is not true. The reviewer does not seem to have heard of the late "blasphemy" and "profanity" cases.

Mr. Foote's Engagements

Sunday, November 10, Queen's (Minor) Hall, Langham-place, Regent-street, London, W. : at 7.30, "Did Jesus Christ Ever Live?"

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

To Correspondents.

- J. T. LLOYD'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—November 10, Manchester; 17, West Ham; 24, Leicester. December 15, West Ham.
- PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1912.—Previously acknowledged, £238 18s. 7d. Received since :—G. Brittain, 2s. 6d; D. D. B., £2 2s.; R. Stirton and Friends—Dundee (quarterly), £1 10s.; Kingsland N. S. S. Branch, £1 1s.; J. W. O'Leary, 10s.
- M. E. PEGG.—The Manchester "saints" should lay themselves out to secure Mr. Lloyd big meetings to-day (Nov. 10).
- B. MEYERSON (S. Africa).—See "Acid Drops." Thanks.
- E. B.—Many thanks for cuttings.
- MARCUS.—Freethought lectures at Birkenhead were organised last winter by the Liverpool N. S. S. Branch. Perhaps the work will be resumed.
- W. J. SOUTH.—Glad you have found out that you can buy the *Freethinker* at Melbourne and are now happy again. This journal seems to be secure in the affection of so many of its readers, in a very unusual way.
- A. M.—Whether our own writing merits your praise or not, the Swinburne stanza does. The whole poem is simply magnificent. The verse is a great measure superbly handled.
- C. ORUM.—A Cardiff Branch might be formed if Messrs. Jackson and Gott could be sent on a week's Freethought mission in South Wales. We shall see.
- W. P. BALL.—Your cuttings are always welcome.
- H. CLIFTON.—See paragraph. Thanks for your helpfulness at Croydon.
- HARRY BOULTER.—So you have got into the Shoreditch Borough Council and the vicar of the parish has lost his seat. Receive our congratulations. The vicar has our sympathy.
- J. STIRLING.—Too late for this week. Next. Surely a report of a funeral on Wednesday might be arranged to reach us before the following Tuesday morning.
- H. BLAKY.—Your questions are conundrums. That is because you don't understand. If you read the *Freethinker* you will gradually get information and enlightenment.
- W. DAVEY.—Thanks to the Kingsland Branch, which we are sure is not burdened with superfluous wealth.
- JAS. ROBERTSON.—Not forgotten. Will write you when this week's paper is off our hands.
- THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED, office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street E.C.
- THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.
- WHEN the services of the National Secular Society in connection with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the secretary, Miss E. M. Vance.
- LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.
- LECTURE NOTICES must reach 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.
- FRIENDS who send us newspapers would enhance the favor by marking the passages to which they wish us to call attention.
- ORDERS for literature should be sent to the Shop Manager of the Pioneer Press, 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., and not to the Edit
- REASONS remitting for literature by stamps are specially requested to send *halfpenny stamps*
- THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months, 2s. 8d.

Sugar Plums.

The unpleasant weather in London on Sunday evening somewhat diminished Mr. Foote's audience at Queen's (Minor) Hall, and a little of the colored mist got into his throat. But the lecture was highly appreciated and very warmly applauded. Mr. Foote's subject to-night (Nov. 10) —unless otherwise announced—will be "Did Jesus Christ Ever Live?"

No doubt the weather had something to do with the not too satisfactory audience at the Public Hall, Croydon, on

Sunday evening. A good deal of advertising had been done, but the public was slow in coming forward to hear the gospel of Freethought preached—though it was done so admirably by Mr. J. T. Lloyd, whose lecture was heartily applauded. After all, the first night is only a beginning, and we hope the meetings will grow with the progress of the course. We hope the local saints will do all they can to secure that disederatum.

Mr. Lloyd delivers two lectures at the Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, Manchester, to-day (Nov. 10). His subjects are attractive, and his eloquence is well known. Both together should draw large audiences.

Considering the tremendous rout of the Progressives at the Camberwell Borough Elections, it is a matter for wonder as well as congratulation that the Freethought veteran, Mr. A. B. Moss, has retained his seat, by an increased majority, being actually second, with 629 votes, on the list of successful candidates. This is the seventh time that Mr. Moss has been elected, and when he has completed his new term of office he will have sat uninterruptedly for twenty-one years; which, in the special circumstances, is something to be proud of,—for Mr. Moss has not concealed his Freethought; on the contrary, he has made it conspicuous. Our readers will remember the gallant fight he has made for the placing of the *Freethinker* on the Free Library reading-room tables. We fear Mr. Moss will have a very poor chance of doing much for that object now. The Moderates are already 45 to the Progressives' 15, and they will be 55 when they have elected the whole ten aldermen, as they probably will. Mr. Moss, however, will do his best. He is not easily cast down.

Mr. Moss is the lecturer at the Croydon Public Hall this evening (Nov. 10), and his subject is, "Why is Christianity Dying Out?" He should have a good audience.

A deputation from several of the organisations affected by the London County Council's new policy with regard to collections at open-air meetings waited upon the Parks Committee on Friday afternoon, November 1, and Mr. Ben Cooper stated the case of the deputation in a moderately worded but thorough and effective manner. Mr. Cooper was eminently fitted for the task. He had formerly been a member of the Parks Committee himself for eighteen years, and this fact induced some, and compelled others, to give him a respectful hearing. The deputation included Mr. Foote and Mr. Cohen, representing the N. S. S., but it was best for them to remain in the background, for the object of the deputation was to prevail upon the Committee to rescind its recent resolution and leave the matter of collections as it was beforehand; and there did seem some sort of chance that this might be done, though it will not do to be over sanguine. Should the Committee take this course, at least substantially, the battle will be over. Should it not do so, there will have to be a fresh move, for which our "Fighting Fund" is designed. That will mean a fight in the law courts—of which more when the Parks Committee's decision is announced.

Owing to a mishap Mr. Lloyd's article does not appear as usual this week. No blame is attached to Mr. Lloyd himself. The article he wrote, which the mishap in transit made too late for this number of the *Freethinker*, will appear in our next.

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, £65 15s. 9d. Received since :—Sydney A. Gimson, £1 1s.; G. Smith, 5s.; John Sumner, £1 1s.; Alfred Potts, 1s.; Two Friends (per R. Stirton), 7s. 6d.; R. Young, 10s.; J. W. O'Leary, 2s.

The Rationalist Education of Children.

[This article has a singular history. It was originally published for me in Spanish in several journals in the Old and New World, being translated from the French in which I wrote it. A few months ago I was asked to write an article on this subject for a Roumanian Freethought publication (*Ratiunea*, published at Bucharest), and having lost the original French, as I wrote it first, I accordingly retranslated myself from the Spanish into French in order that our devoted and enthusiastic friends at Bucharest might translate my article into Roumanian, to form the first of two articles on the same subject. After publication in Roumanian, the article was issued in French by our Lausanne contemporary, *La Libre Pensée Internationale*, and subsequently my article was again translated into Portuguese and published in *O Livre Pensamento* (Lisbon). The last (shall I say the final Avatar?) of this article is the present translation into English, which I now submit to the gentle reader as a curious case of the transmigration and reincarnation of a writer's soul.—W. H.]

FOR a long while people have been talking about the Rights of Man—of the rights first of all denied by the authorities, then torn away from their reluctant hands by the indignant justice of the people, only to become inevitably, by means of the bad intentions of governments or by the indifference of the governed, so many lifeless fossils, without the vigor and without the efficacy to guarantee to us the social and political benefits once expected from the laws which were supposed to enshrine and safeguard our rights even as the Jahveh of the ancient Jews was enshrined and safeguarded in the Ark of the Temple. The rights of man and the rights of the citizen will always need to be claimed and striven after. And the surest means of winning them in the future is to refresh and renew our conceptions of right, to enlarge the content and social significance of our ideas of right; to claim and hold our rights, not as the appanage of the individual or as the unassailable fortress of the privileged favorites of fortune, but as the inheritance of Humanity as a whole. Solidarity and reciprocity are the fundamental laws of human existence. And the point on which it is essential that we should always lay stress is this, that the preliminary condition and the *sine quâ non* for the ultimate respect of the rights of man is the due respect of the rights of children.

It is a matter of utmost urgency for the welfare of humanity as a whole that we should demand the recognition of the rights of children and young people—of the natural inprescriptible and necessary rights that are anterior to all others, and higher than everything beside. The child is essentially the father of the man and, as a consequence of our evil systems of education, it is the child that spoils the man even more than the man spoils the child. The child, essentially perverse—*gamin*, if you will—thus takes his revenge upon the folly of his parents and teachers. Because we are stupid enough to treat the child as a negligible moral quantity, we dare to infiltrate into his mind, having captured it in the school, in the church, or at the knees of his mother, or by means of his reading books or through his games and sport, all sorts of lies and stupidities, evidently in order to inspire him with a greater love of truth and inflame him with a deeper passion for wisdom. Some people are so struck by that mysterious psychology of those *enfants terribles*, our "naughty boys," that "drives" them forward to the commission of wrong, that we have not the audacity to contradict the theologian who proclaims that the child is born in sin and shapen in iniquity. The holy man's ridiculous doctrine appears to us merely as a sort of satire upon our superannuated methods of moulding the intelligence of children, and as the inevitable explanation of the *causa causans* of the barbarism which, in spite of all our progress, rises up incessantly from the heart of our civilisations as the resultant of the evil conditions that determine the formation of fresh generations and propagate the errors which are allowed to persist in our wrong systems of education.

If we look closely at these evil conditions, one is tempted to say that for the most part our children

are not born into the world, that they are damned into it, so much of injustice is there in society, and so much superstition do we find rotting in the heart of our Christian institutions.

Are we, then, to say that we have to despair of the future, or believe that the human race is stricken with the implacable anger of the gods, or that it is condemned through its incurable ignorance to tread an endless round of ever-increasing misery? By no means! The bankruptcy of our civilisation does not spring from the helplessness of the human mind, which is ever striving for triumph over evil—over all evils; it arises from the fact that society commits and perpetuates three great sins; that is to say, that it is always striving to deny the rights of man, the rights of woman, and the rights of the child.

Strong men and cultivated women have their champions and their political cavaliers to defend them, and to these we may safely leave the field open, so that they may do battle in defence of their adult clients. For the moment, I only wish to say a few words on behalf of our young friends the children—for the infants who, as their name etymologically means, are unable to speak for themselves.

To what claims, then, are our children and young people entitled? In other words, what are their rights? I propose to make a rapid sketch of these long-forgotten rights; to trace their filiation and supreme importance, and to invite the reader to apply the principle of these rights to our systems of education in order that we may be able the better to guide our course towards the ideal of the true, the just, and the beautiful for our children both in the school and throughout life.

First of all, according to all the laws of hospitality, the child has a right from the moment of his birth to a generous welcome. We have invited him to come amongst us; in the name of courtesy he is entitled to a hearty reception.

He is innocent of all crime. In the echo of his cries, one can almost hear the music of love: laughter is as natural to him as tears. How can we refuse the tribute of our pity to this little angel who is as hungry for our carresses as for the nourishing milk from his mother's breast? As our invited guest at the banquet of life, he is well within his right in treating with us as an equal amongst equals.

He grows up amongst us, and learns bit by bit the mechanism of language. All his elders are his teachers; the universe is his school. That he may properly learn his lesson, he has need in large measure of our love, of our sympathy, of our perfect good will in smoothing, as far as it may be possible to us, the difficulties that may be likely to bring sorrow to him during life.

The child is small and weak, and we can mould his mind and make him a crétin, or we can endow him with intellectual and moral qualities by the influence of external conditions. What shall we make of him? At his birth, the character of the child is virgin soil; and it rests with us to sow the good seed of instruction or to leave the weeds and poisonous plants of ignorance to spring up and flourish.

The child is frankness personified: he laughs when he is happy, he utters doleful cries and sheds torrents of tears when he is unhappy. He is sincere, without fear and without reproach. Sincerity deserves the truth, and quite equitably he claims it as his right. Is it certain that we yield him this measure of justice?

He who utters lies to his child is guilty of odious deception. In falsifying the facts, we are false to ourselves at the same time that we corrupt the naïve innocence of our victim. As soon as our lying becomes conventional, and is considered as "adapted" to the intellectual and moral necessities of the child, we have abdicated our claim to be treated as honest men in order to fill our rôle as the poisoners of the intelligence of future generations.

Sincerity, solidarity, and sympathy: such are the principles which we must establish as the basis of

the school, of social life, and of our enthusiasms and ideals as individuals.

Solidarity and sincerity are twin sisters. When the parents and the teachers shall have become sincere towards the children, the new generations will become co-partners in sentiment and love with their elders. It is as stupid to distribute lies amongst the children, and impart truths only to grown-up men, as it is to maintain women in a state of ignorance and enslavement, whilst the man gains education and dictates the laws which govern all the members of the community. Lying is not the milky way of human progress.

If only we had the courage in the family, in the church, in the school, to tell the truth to the children, without reticence, without disguise, and without fear, concerning all questions of religion, of morality, and practical life, we should like to see that in two generations our modern schools would give birth to a new humanity, more beautiful than the old because it would be more rich, and richer because it would be a nobler humanity.

WILLIAM HEAFORD.

Knowledge and Faith.

JUST as science has created an entirely new view of the world in us, so it also has given us a different conception of man. We know to-day that there can be no such thing as a soul independent of the body. That which is called soul is nothing but a function of the brain. At the moment that the brain ceases its activity, there is an end of the so-called soul. We know that the "creation" of man, as such, is a fairy tale; that, in fact, the human species has quite gradually developed from lower animal states; that man, as well as the rest of Nature, is in a state of constant further development. We therefore know that there is no formal, but only a gradual, difference between man and animals; that we are no more justified in speaking of the human soul than of the soul of a dog or a horse. Science has taught us that there is no such thing as freedom of human volition, in a metaphysical sense; that, on the contrary, all human actions are the result of the condition of the brain at the time, and the circumstances that influence it. But the condition of the brain is dependent on heredity, congenital and accidental circumstances, for which the individual concerned certainly cannot be held responsible. It is just as little to the credit of a genius that he has been born such, as it can be made a reproach to the idiot that he came into the world with a defective brain. The same is true of all other psychical qualities.

In forming our judgment of the world in which we live, it is of great importance to appreciate the fact that our perception of the same is altogether dependent on the function of our weak organs of sense. Because we happen to have organs of sight, hearing, smell, and touch, our environments appear to us as sight-sound-smell and tactile images. If we imagine creatures having an entirely different sensory apparatus, those creatures would perceive the world as something totally different. It is far more probable that beings existing on the other celestial bodies differ in this way from us, than that they should bear an absolute resemblance to ourselves. Whoever finds it difficult to follow this chain of thought, might imagine creatures having only organs of sight and touch, and others equipped only with those of sight and sound. How totally different the same things would appear to these two classes of creatures. The former, for example, would perceive a thunderstorm as lightning; the latter, on the contrary, as thunder; and yet exactly the same phenomenon is the cause of both perceptions. We have this dual sensation because we are in possession of both senses. Other beings, if provided with the corresponding senses, may have a sixfold sensation of the same phenomenon.

As our perceptions depend upon our organs of sense, so our conceptions are only a product of our physical mechanism. The conception, for example, that everything must have a cause, an effect, and a purpose is, therefore, like our whole perceptive apparatus, of a purely subjective nature. We are inclined to see a law of causality and a principle of utility everywhere, even where there can be no surety of the existence of such. We are inclined to think that we have eyes and ears "for the purpose" of seeing and hearing; while, as a matter of fact, we see because we happen to have eyes, and hear because we are in possession of ears.

Whoever has arrived at a clear understanding of this subject will easily comprehend that it is highly unscientific to ask for the cause and purpose of the world; for Nature does not know these concepts, which exist only in our brain.

The sum of all those scientific facts which we have briefly put together is what we call our modern scientific view of the world. How, in view of this, is it possible, we are compelled to ask ourselves, that these two views, the scientific and the Christian-religious, can exist side by side? Greater contradictions cannot be imagined! Everything that the one teaches is made impossible by the other. And still they do exist, placid and undisturbed, side by side. Students in schools and colleges are taught these gross contradictions. In churches the Christian doctrine of faith is preached, and in public libraries modern scientific works are offered which prove the impossibility of this very doctrine. How is the co-existence of these diametrically opposed views of the world to be explained?

The great mass of the people thoughtlessly accept the contradiction of the two views of the world without troubling their brains about the matter. From early childhood they have been taught that the one is called "religion" and the other "science," and with this they are satisfied. They think it must be so. They go to church on Sunday, listen to a pleasant sermon on some quotation from the Bible, sing a psalm, and as a result are thoroughly at peace with themselves. In the afternoon they possibly read an article in the newspaper about some subject of natural science which is in direct contradiction to the religious dogmas. But this does not disturb them; they do not even notice it, for the one is religion and the other science.

Thousands of persons do not bother themselves about either the one or the other. They do not go to church, nor do they read scientific books. They pursue their work, are busy from morning till night, spend their evenings in pleasant intercourse with their families, go walking on Sundays, amuse themselves, and in this way live their lives without troubling themselves about a "view of the world."

On the other hand, there are many people who even to-day hold fast to religion, to whom the Christian doctrine of faith is as sacred as it was to their forefathers. Among the lower classes, among people who have not had a higher education, this is not astonishing. On the contrary, since the people are brought up religiously, it is natural that they retain their faith so long as it is not shattered by scientific knowledge. But we also find scientifically educated people, even men who themselves are occupied with natural sciences, who have, nevertheless, remained strictly religious. It is this phenomenon which is so astonishing, and which requires a particular psychological explanation.

Above all, let us clearly understand what we mean, in a psychological sense, by "faith." The sum of all our conceptions which directly or indirectly are founded on our sensory perceptions, is that which is called "knowledge." Everything which I directly see or hear or feel, I "know." Likewise, everything which I am aware of by logical deductions from this sensory perception is a matter of knowledge. On the other hand, we designate the sum of those conceptions which are based neither directly nor indirectly on our perception as "faith." I "know," for example, that the sun, moon, and stars exist,

because I have perceived them with my own senses. I also "know" that the earth moves about the sun, because this idea is the logical deduction from sensory impressions. Furthermore, I "know" that Julius Cæsar lived, though I never perceived him with my own senses. My idea, however, of his existence is based on a logical chain of conceptions which ultimately can be traced back to direct sensory perceptions. But with the ideas of "God," "Heaven," "Hell," "Satan," "salvation," etc., it is quite different. These ideas are based on neither direct nor indirect sensory perceptions; and if I, nevertheless, have a conception of the actual existence of these things, they are matters of faith. According to this, we mean by faith the assumption of the actual existence of a subject or an event, without the possibility of proving such existence by actual perception of the senses, or by logical deductions from such perceptions.

An even finer distinction may be made between two different forms of faith. The first form would be the one we have just described—that is, an assumption of something the actual existence of which cannot be proven. A second form would comply with those cases in which we would likewise assume the actual existence of a thing, although it can be proven with certainty that such existence is a matter of impossibility. The first form might be called "faith," the second "superstition."

If, by direct sense-perceptions or by logical deductions from them, it could be proven that Satan exists, we would "know" of his existence. If we, on the other hand, assume his existence as a fact, without being able to prove or disprove it, we "believe" in Satan. Finally, if we could logically prove that his existence is an impossibility, and still maintain the conception of his existence, this would be a "superstition."

Since our knowledge is only a matter of perception and reproduction, we can enlarge it at will, so far as the capacity of our psychical factors permit. The more we perceive with our senses and firmly establish what we have perceived, so that it can be reproduced upon demand—in other words, the more we "learn" the more we will "know." But in the matter of faith this is different. Faith is not dependent on the power of perception, and cannot, therefore, be influenced by the will. I cannot acquire faith at will, as I can knowledge. It would be impossible to create a belief within myself, in spite of the most zealous efforts to do so, if the necessary conditions are not present. There is, therefore, still another psychical factor necessary to create a belief—emotion. Without emotion, no real faith can be produced. It is not a question of any special kind of emotion which can be described by words, but may be a mixture of feelings, like love, fear, remorse, hope, etc. Our feelings cannot be expressed in words any way; and here it is not the nature of the feeling that is important, but its intensity. Those conceptions intended to constitute faith must be accompanied by a high degree of feeling in order to appear as realities in spite of the absence of logical cognition. In other words, feeling must take the place of logic.

Since religious faith is usually established in earliest youth, they are, as a rule, the tender and manifold emotions of childhood which take part in the foundations of faith. What generally makes it so easy to produce faith in children is the circumstance that the greatest enemies of faith have not yet put in an appearance—logical thinking and scientific cognition. After faith has once gained a firm foothold, new emotions continually arise to nourish and strengthen it. The recollections of youth are, in themselves, always accompanied by strong emotions which make all the conceptions and feelings of that time appear in a particular light.

Realising the importance of this psychological fact, the emotions have always been stimulated to the highest degree in the performance of religious rites and ceremonies. The elaborate service of the Catholic Church, which enthralled all the senses, is

based on this fact. By the huge structures of the gigantic cathedrals, through whose beautiful stained glass windows a soft light penetrates into the mysterious interior, illuminating the majestic columns and magnificent marble altars; by the thrilling harmonies of the powerful resounding organ and the choir of boys with their appealing voices; by the fragrant perfume of incense wafted through the holy place, all the senses are really enthralled and wrought upon to a positive ecstasy of delight. Anyone who has been accustomed to such impressions from his youth up, who associates every important event of life with religious ceremonies, who maintains his religious disposition by devout prayers, is in possession of an unshakable faith which nothing can disturb.

Just as with every other emotion, so faith also is entirely independent of our will. One can as little create faith in one's self as one can love or hate to order. But, on the other hand, one cannot shake off at will a faith that has once been engendered. The emotion of faith may be so strong that all the intellectual reasoning and logical arguments in the world cannot destroy it. This accounts for the strange fact, which is not so very rare, that even scientific men cling with incredible tenacity to an orthodox faith, or retain some other kind of superstition. This can, perhaps, best be explained by comparing it with love. It is not a rare occurrence that a man loves to distraction a person whom he knows to be utterly unworthy of his devotion; that she is depraved, and untrue to him. He knows all this; he is furious with himself about his love; he struggles against it with all his reason and intelligence, and tries in every possible way to eradicate this unfortunate passion, but in vain; he loves, and cannot stop loving. It is the same with faith.

Others, who have also attained eminence in modern science, and nevertheless are convinced of the absolute truth of the religious doctrine, consider it the foremost duty of true science to reconcile those apparently contradictory views with each other. This is the sentiment from which in a great measure the manifold philosophical doctrines of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries emanated. These were a mixture of the newly awakened Greek philosophy, of the Monotheistical doctrine, and of modern natural science. The more contradictory and irreconcilable these doctrines were, the more fascinating seemed the problem to be solved; for, starting from the premise that both doctrines—that is, religious faith and the conclusions of natural science—were true, one could attribute it only to the defectiveness of human cognition that the solution of this problem appears so difficult. Although the most prominent minds made it, at the time, their life-work to try to solve this problem, still we, to-day, after all, arrive at the conclusion that behind the mystical darkness of their systems are hidden nothing but the hollowness and impotence of their doctrines.

WILLIAM HIRSCH, M.D., *Religion and Civilisation.*

ROUGH ON MR. GLADSTONE.

The following reference to the "Grand Old Man" savors of the improbable, but, if true, it affords an interesting sidelight on Mr. Gladstone's attitude of mind to the "distressful country," and gives point to the question of the universality of his popularity there.

The subject of Home Rule always reminds me of the day when old Gladstone sat down and Mrs. Gladstone made a speech on the hustings. Said she, addressing the throng, "My friends, I found it very hard to convince my dear husband about the claims of Ireland for Home Rule, but one day when he came into the breakfast-room, he remarked to me, 'My dear wife, you've over-persuaded me about that down-trodden country. You have at last converted me in favor of Home Rule.'

"I got up from my chair, put my arms round his neck, and gave him a loving wifely kiss." She paused to see what effect her words had produced, and an irrepressible Irishman called out, "And it served the owl begger perfectly right."—Lord Rossmore, "Things I Can Tell."

What Holy Church had to Swallow under the French Monarchy.

(Translated from "La Pensée," by J. L.)

THE clerical journals cannot speak too ill of the French Republic, but never has the latter evinced for the Church such utter contempt as was shown by the Monarchy. This is what we read in *Le Pays*, a Canadian Liberal journal:—

"If, for instance, M. Faillières were to make an archbishop of the son of his nurse, if he were to distribute the bishoprics and abbeys among his favorites, if he were to place four-year-old children in the episcopal chairs and create cardinals of nineteen, if he were to give to his mistresses ecclesiastical benefices to take as a dowry to complaisant husbands, what would supporters of the clergy think of it?"

That, however, is what was openly done before the French Revolution, as the history recounted by Monsignor Baudrillat, Rector of the Catholic Institute of Paris, proves. Only just read it!

"In the hands of despotic kings with very slight traces of conscience, the Concordat was a source of many abuses; a state of affairs much to be regretted, but not to be denied. Carried out to the letter, the Concordat would have given excellent results; but it was not. The conditions demanded were by no means complied with; Rome shut her eyes, or even consented.

"Now the kings, only too often, saw nothing in an episcopal chair or in an abbey but the benefice (*i.e.*, profit), and never the function; by the benefice they rewarded services or bought useful support. We find Louis de Bourbon, cardinal at the age of nineteen, in possession of the archbishopric of Sens, the sees of Laon, Mans, Luçon, and Treguier, with the abbeys of St. Corneille, Compiègne, Ferrières, St. Denis, St. Faron, Meaux, etc.; a Cardinal di Trivulce, an Italian, rejoiced in the two bishoprics of Bayeux (in Normandy) and Toulon, at the opposite extremity of France; a Cardinal de Tournon was Archbishop of Embrun, of Lyons, and of Auch; a Jean de Lorraine, cardinal at twenty, but appointed Bishop of Metz when only four years old, and then of Toul and Théroutanne; Archbishop of Narbonne, Rheims, and of Lyon; Bishop of [eight more sees], and Abbot of [six abbeys]. Ten prelates like him would have absorbed all the dignities of the Church of France. He himself was ashamed of such a scandalous number of benefices, for eventually he only retained [the archbishopric of] Narbonne, [the bishoprics of] Albi, Toul, Metz, and his abbeys."

To the very end of the religious wars the king dealt out the ecclesiastical benefits to his favorite ladies, who carried them as their marriage portions to the husbands who were given to them. Families (*ménages*) were installed in the episcopal palaces, and even in the abbeys, to the great scandal of the people. Pierre de Bourdeille, captain and wit, was Abbot of Brantôme; Bussy d'Amboise, the most successful duellist of his time, styled himself the Abbot of Bourgeuil; the savage Blairo de Montluc rejoiced in an abbey at Sens. Du Guast, a captain from Dauphigny, for whom Henri III. had a special infatuation, received of his Majesty the sees of Grenoble and Amiens, left vacant by the death of the Cardinal de Créquy; "he sold the bishopric of Amiens to a girl [l'Estoile employs a cruder term] of the Court, who had long been asking for a bid of thirty thousand livres." The revenue of the see of Cournoailles, when it went a-begging, was given as a marriage portion to Louise de l'Isle Rouet, so that she might marry Robert de Combaud, head steward of the king.

Other bishoprics were conferred on children of fifteen; others on politicians; on powerful nobles who were amiable and literary. Do we not find a Bishop of Paris, the Cardinal Jean de Bellay, openly protecting Rabelais, and briefly and plainly referring to the romance of Gargantua and Pantagruel as "the Book"?

[Rabelais himself was vicar of Meudon and Le Mans.]

National Secular Society.

REPORT OF MONTHLY EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD ON OCT. 31.

The President, Mr. G. W. Foote in the chair. There were also present:—Messrs. Barry, Bowman, Brandes, Cohen, Davidson, Davies, Heaford, Leat, Lazarnick, Neate, Nichols, Roger, Rosetti, Samuels, Silverstein, Thurlow, Wood, Miss Kough, and Miss Stanley.

The Minutes of the last meeting were read and confirmed.

The Monthly Balance-sheet was presented and adopted.

New members were admitted from the Birmingham and Bolton Branches and the Parent Society; applications for

the formation of new Branches at Bury and Preston were granted.

The President reported the attendance of himself and Mr. Cohen at the meetings of the representatives of the various societies who were to form the deputation to the L. C. C., and that the deputation was to be received by the Council on Friday, November 1.

The applications from London Branches for grants to clear the deficits incurred by their outdoor work were received and ordered to be paid as soon as funds permit.

Questions were asked concerning the Northern Tour of Messrs. Gott and Jackson, and it was suggested that the South might receive some attention.

Mr. W. Heaford was elected as the Society's representative to the Bureau of the International Federation of Freethinkers.

The meeting then adjourned.

E. M. VANCE, *General Secretary.*

Official Notes.

THE NORTHERN TOUR.

AFTER the police-court trial for profanity, already reported in these columns, Mr. Jackson decided to abandon his previously booked engagements and spend the remainder of the week in Leeds, where he lectured nightly to good audiences until Jupiter Pluvius intervened.

On Friday evening another detachment of the hooligan students visited the Square and attempted to renew the disorderly interruptions of the previous occasion, but the appearance of a strong force of police, who made representations to their ringleaders, resulted in their exit, and Mr. Jackson was enabled to address an interested audience at some length.

On Monday last the Sheffield week's mission opened with a lecture to a large audience on "Bible and Beer" and a brisk demand for the new pamphlet on that subject as well as for the *Freethinker*.

Later in the week Mr. Jackson succeeded in drawing a local clergyman, who publicly challenged the speaker to debate in a hall to be hired by him, the Rev. — Woods. The challenge was immediately accepted; for further developments we must abide by the political axiom, "Wait and See."

At the recent Executive meeting, permission was granted for the formation of new Branches at Bury and Preston as a result of the visits of our missionaries.

Arrangements are pending for some Sunday meetings to be addressed by Messrs. Lloyd and Cohen to strengthen these newly formed Branches and also for a descent on Manchester.

Individual Freethinkers, resident in Lancashire and Yorkshire towns not yet visited by our friends, where there is a probability of arousing interest in our propaganda, and who would be willing to render a little personal assistance, are invited to communicate with me, it being the desire of the Executive to extend the area of propaganda as much as possible.

The financial responsibility of these visits is undertaken by the Secular Society, Ltd., but cheques and postal orders sent by those unable to give personal support will not be framed for office decorations!

E. M. VANCE, *General Secretary.*

Epigrams.

KANT AND THE DEITY.

By legerdemain ingenious, though odd,
The philosophic Kant abolished God;
But then, affrighted, by a *coup de main*
To please the mob set up dear God again.
Thus ever does a German's courage quail,
And all his thinking nothing doth avail,
For when he gets at last of truth a peep,
Back, like the Scotchman, he at once doth creep.

GOETHE'S FOUR AVERSIONS.

Bugs, garlic, tobacco, mortally I hate,
Said Goethe—and with these the Cross I rate.

ON THE CHINESE RISING, 1911.

Rending the fetters of the past,
The Chinese are awake at last.
Perhaps, some centuries hence, even we
May shake ourselves from priestcraft free.

B. D.

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, "Did Jesus Christ Ever Live?"

CROYDON PUBLIC HALL (George-street, Croydon): 7.30, A. B. Moss, "Why Christianity is Dying Out."

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Workmen's Hall, Romford-road, Stratford, E.): 7.30, C. Cohen, "A Search for the Soul."

OUTDOOR.

ISLINGTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Highbury Corner): Wednesday at 8.30, Saturday at 8.30, Sunday at 12 noon and 8.30, Mr. Lieberman, Lectures.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): Mrs. H. Bradlaugh Bonner, 12 noon, "Prosecution for Blasphemy"; 6.30, "The Life and Times of Charles Bradlaugh."

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, All Saints): J. T. Lloyd, 3, "New Light on the Origin of Life"; 6.30, "Our Descent from Heaven." Tea at 5.

OUTDOOR.

LANCASHIRE AND YORKSHIRE: Thos. A. Jackson—Bolton (Town Hall Square): Nov. 10, at 3, "The Bible and Beer"; at 7, "Deity and Design." Manchester (Stevenson-square). at 7.30: —Monday, "Why I Reject Christianity"; Tuesday, "The Faith of an Infidel"; Wednesday, "Bible and Beer"; Thursday, "Deity and Design"; Friday, "The Salvation Army"; Saturday, "Blasphemy Prosecutions."

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

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Secretary—MISS E. M. VANCE.

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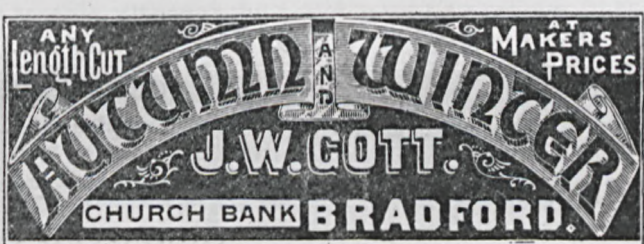
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