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PRICE TWOPENCE

Great privations ennoble man, petty privations degrade him.—GOETHE.

Cruel Christians.

"ARE Atheists Cruel?" was the title of our front-page article in the *Freethinker* of April 26, 1891. It was elicited by the Bishop of Chester's speech at the Town Hall meeting of the local Branch of the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. His lordship had stated, quite gratuitously as it appeared, that "the persons who were most liable to be guilty of cruelty to their children were those artisans who had taken up Secularist opinions, and who looked upon their children as a nuisance, and were glad to get them out of the way." This statement was grotesque in its absurdity. If Secular principles tended to make parents hate their own children, why was their evil influence confined to artisans? Why did they not produce the same result amongst the wealthier classes? The Bishop admitted that "poverty did not necessarily mean cruelty." What then did he mean? The answer was obvious. The Bishop of Chester was bent on libelling sceptics, and deeming it safer to libel the poorer ones, he tempered his valor with a convenient amount of discretion. He was not even a brave fanatic. His bigotry was cowardly, crawling, abject, and contemptible.

The Bishop rested his libel on the authority of the Rev. B. Waugh, general secretary of the N.S.P.C.C., who happened to be present at that Chester meeting. Mr. Waugh jumped up in the middle of the Bishop's speech and declared that "it was the case, that the class most guilty of cruelty to children were those who took materialistic, atheistic, selfish and wicked views of their own existence." This chaotic stuff passed readily at a Christian meeting, but it was not in itself worthy of the slightest reply. We condescended, however, to ask the Bishop of Chester and Mr. Waugh for some *evidence*. Partisan assertions were of very little value in such a controversy. "Where," we asked them, "are the statistics to justify your assertion? Men who are sent to gaol, for whatever reason, have their religions registered. Give us, then, the total number of convictions your Society has obtained, and the precise proportion of Secularists among the offenders? And be careful to give us their names and the date and place of their conviction."

The method of Christian libellers, when they are challenged, is to stand upon their dignity. They do not possess Jack Falstaff's wit, but they have all his impudence, and they decline to give a reason on compulsion. The Bishop of Chester and the Rev. Mr. Waugh vouchsafed no reply. We went down to Chester, hired a public hall, and challenged the Bishop in his own city, within earshot of his own cathedral. Our challenge was published in the local press, but his lordship made no sign. He was a confirmed Christian.

Years rolled by. Experience showed that this charge against Secularist parents was ridiculous. It happened, also, that in specially atrocious cases of cruelty to children the culprits were always particularly pious. This fact has now become a byword. Mr. Waugh could not resist such palpable proofs for ever. He retracted at Leeds what he had said at

Chester. He apologised for his blunder. He is dead now and "gone to his account." But the Bishop of Chester lives on. Dr. Jayne still stands upon his dignity—with the aid of £4,200 per annum as a preacher of the gospel of "blessed be ye poor."

Since that time we have frequently said that the great ill-users of children are not Freethinkers but Christians. It is only in Christian countries that societies for the prevention of cruelty to children are needed.

Some day or other we knew that our contention in this respect would receive "respectable" support. It has at last done so. Mr. G. R. Sims dealt with the subject in last week's *Referee*, and we have pleasure (in one way it is, of course, a *ghastly* pleasure) in quoting the following passage from his "Mustard and Cress":—

"This terrible cruelty to children is not confined to any one class, and it prevails in every town in the United Kingdom. The most painful investigation that it was ever my lot to make as a journalist was that which induced me to write "The Black Stain." I accompanied officers of that splendid organisation the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children on their visits to houses where terrible cruelty was practised in every part of London and a dozen of the principal provincial towns, and what I saw will remain in my memory as long as my memory lasts.

"We talk of the Congo and Patumayo. The horrors of the Congo and Patumayo are to be found in thousands of homes every day in this Christian country. It must be a form of insanity. I cannot bring myself to think that civilised men and women in full possession of their senses could systematically practise unthinkable barbarities on the bodies of helpless little children, often of their own flesh and blood. In the Official Report of the N.S.P.C.C. for last year it is stated that 156,637 children were involved in the cases of cruelty, and of this terrible total 154,387 were related to the offenders.

"For two months I wandered through an inferno of child torture. I only described half of what I had seen. The other half was too horrible for the columns of a daily newspaper. And yet it is only by the widest publicity that we can hope to arouse the conscience of the nation to the black shame of child suffering.

"When I had finished and had told the plain unvarnished truth I was assured by more than one journalistic friend that I had made a mistake in letting the light of day in upon the shameful deeds. 'The public don't want to read about such things,' I was told. No one *wants* to read about these things, but it is the duty of every man and woman with a conscience in this country to aid, at least with sympathy and encouragement, the great crusade of the N. S. P. C. C. against an infamy which in one way is even more infamous than the White Slave Traffic. The Society annually rescues thousands of little English children from homes where they are being starved and tortured by their own kith and kin. That this horror continues to flourish in our midst is a black reproach not only to our humanity but to our Christian Churches.

"In spite of the vast hordes of Jewish aliens who pour into this country every year, a case of cruelty to children is hardly ever found in a Jewish home. So far as I have been able to ascertain, child torture seems to be a form of barbarity entirely confined to Christian people. What is the answer of our churches and our chapels to this indictment? I should like to hear it."

Mr. Sims will not get that answer. But we welcome his honesty and courage in putting the question.

G. W. FOOTE.

A Look Round.

ON the principle that nothing but good should be spoken of the dead, it is usual to look back upon only the brighter aspects of a year just closed. The practice is inspiring, and so has much to say for itself. Moreover, it is the easiest thing possible to point out the rapid advance made by Freethought ideas during the past twelve months. In every direction superstitious ideas are becoming less assertive, and teachings from the pulpit that not so long ago would have provided a first-class heresy case now pass without comment. In literature also one sees Freethought ideas more and more freely expressed, with only a solitary voice here and there is raised in protest. Politics alone—the most backward and least scientific of all branches of human activity except theology itself—remains much about the same in relation to religious ideas. It is still extremely dangerous to make public avowal of unbelief. It may be even said that the recent growth of organised Nonconformity in political life has, so far as Freethought is concerned, worked for little but harm.

The growth of Freethought is unquestionable. Equally unquestionable is the decline of the belief in theology. One is, indeed, the reverse side of the other. So far, all is gain. But it is well to bear in mind that there is another side to the picture. It is well to avoid underestimating the strength of the enemy, or, what is equally important, to overestimate the value of the advantage gained. These are common mistakes for people to make, and there is no reason to believe that in this respect Freethought human nature is very different from human nature in general. During the course of the year, for example, I receive many letters from Freethinkers telling me of liberal utterances by the local clergy, and also many newspapers containing marked passages of a similar character. In addition, one is often told of certain clergymen whose sermons are mere lectures on social or ethical topics, theological doctrine being altogether excluded.

Apparently, this kind of thing is taken as something that is wholly to the good. A liberal clergyman, it is assumed, is better than an illiberal one; and a clergyman who adulterates his theology with a certain amount of Freethought is preferable to one who gives the theology pure and undefiled. With this position I entirely disagree. It may be more pleasant to a Freethinker to hear a liberal clergyman than it would be to listen to an illiberal one. But is there any reason why he should listen to either variety? In any case, how do these things affect the Freethought position? It is gratifying to find that a narrow theology offends so large a class of the people; but what Freethought propaganda is aiming at is the liberation of the public mind from theology of every kind—whether it be of the City Temple or of the Spurgeon's Tabernacle variety. And so far as this purpose is concerned, the tendency under consideration is almost wholly evil in its consequences. It is, in fact, keeping people inside religious organisations who might otherwise be definitely apart from them.

Let us take the most recent of all great controversies—that of the doctrine of Evolution—as an example. Rightly conceived, evolution means the death of all supernaturalistic ideas. And in the origin of the controversy between evolution and religion this was substantially the position accepted by religionists. They were not slow to emphasise the logic of the situation, and the triumph of evolution should have meant the defeat of religion. Putting on one side the mere handful who still see this point of view clearly, what is the actual position? The mass of educated religious people have no hesitation whatever in accepting the general principle of evolution, and are quite convinced that it is consonant with religious beliefs. Nothing is more amusing in this connection than those people who imagine that by popularising evolution they are delivering a serious attack on religion. They would

be doing so under certain conditions. As things are at present there would be no great difficulty in getting a clergyman to take the chair. So far as the majority of people are concerned, the impact of evolution on theology has been deadened by the liberalising theologian on the one side and by the theologising scientist on the other; with the result that evolutionary doctrines in the pulpit do not mean an aid to Freethought so much as keeping people away from a definitely Freethought position. Real Freethought work is not to be done to-day by a preaching of evolution or by the delivery of lectures on physical science. This can only be done to-day by the application of scientific principles to religious ideas, and by the demonstration of their essential incongruity.

What is true of evolution is true of many other things. Liberalism in the pulpit, a greater measure of rationalistic interpretation of religious beliefs among the people, is not necessarily pure gain. It may be only the religious method of weakening the Freethought attack. It is the method by which Protestantism held back the world for nearly two centuries; it is the method by which the eighteenth and early nineteenth century attack on the Bible was weakened, and it is the way by which the Churches have countered the attack on religious doctrines. Men like Dr. Campbell Morgan or Dr. Dixon threaten no danger to Freethought. The real danger is from the liberalising theologian who makes Christianity comfortable for those within the Church, and deceives a great many outside into believing that there is no longer need for so vigorous and so uncompromising an attack.

There is danger in still another direction. Many are inclined to take liberalism of thought, without any other qualification, as pure gain. This, however, is not the case. What is required is not merely liberal thinking, but, in addition, strong thinking and clear thinking. Now, I do not think it can be questioned that while there has been a growing want of interest in theology, while the number of non-believers have increased enormously, there has not been a corresponding growth of strong and vigorous thinking. While Christian doctrines were obviously barbarous, and Christian organisations openly oppressive, there existed plenty of incentive to keep Freethinkers active and thorough. But with Christian teaching covered with a spurious humanism, and a sham profession of toleration the fashion, and many non-Christians are lulled into quietude. Thousands who ought to be taking part in aggressive Freethought work are idle, they say, because the fight is really over. There was never a greater mistake than this. Religion is never so dangerous as when it covers itself with a veneer of civilised customs, and disguises its thoughts in civilised language. Religion to-day is purchasing a new lease of life by accommodating its teachings to its avowed supporters, and by imposing on the shortsightedness of many of its enemies. And that way lies all the possibility and all the danger of reaction.

It is no use underestimating the power of the enemy, and encouraging ourselves with false estimates of our own strength. We must recognise the plain fact that, in spite of all our progress, Christianity still exercises a powerful control—more or less disguised—over the direction of social life. Every now and then one gets an indication of the real thing that lies below the veneer of civilised phrase and pose. When the Balkan States went to war, it was noteworthy that the Turk, held up as the ideal religious fanatic, refrained from all appeals to religion. It was the Christian who did this. And more striking still was the extent to which the cry was taken up in this country. The press was full of sentimental slush over restoring Santa Sophia to Christendom, and a parade of clergy was arranged to take place in the West End of London. In a flash the civilised Christian of England had thrown off his pretence of culture, and was revealing the uncivilised religious fanatic of the Middle Ages.

Moreover, in any case where Christian organisa-

tions combine, it is the lower and less educated elements that exert commanding influence. This is indicated in two directions. First, in that of the control of education. In spite of all the advance that has been made, the schools are still under the influence of theology. Freethought has never been strong enough to keep the priest out of the elementary school, and very little help has been forthcoming from the religious world—despite professions of fair play—to secure this act of elementary justice. In face of a common danger, the Christian ranks are closed. Churchman, Roman Catholic, and Nonconformist are at one as to the necessity of keeping control of the child, and until Freethought is strong enough to keep the nation's schools free from all forms of priestcraft, we cannot be said to have made our first great advance really secure.

In the next place, Sabbatarianism still exerts considerable force in the country, and, next to the question of the child, this is an issue on which the Churches display the greatest unity. Recently, at Birmingham, a poll of the city was able to defeat a proposal for Sunday boats and bands in two of the public parks. In many other places successful opposition is offered towards Sunday entertainments. There is no question of the undesirable character of these entertainments. It is no longer profitable to play that card. It is even admitted that the entertainments are socially beneficial; that they provide a couple of hours clean, healthy entertainment for those who might otherwise spend their time in an undesirable manner. The opposition is frankly religious. It is the coercion of a section by a religious majority. And the fact that this can be done, the fact that one of the ugliest and most demoralising forms of English religious life is still so active and so strong, ought to give pause to those who regard the fight with theology as virtually over.

And in addition there are other things. The power of the religious boycott still exists although it may not be openly practised. It is still difficult to get a fair hearing for Freethought, and, in some cases, practically impossible. Free speech is threatened where it can be threatened, and prevented where it can be prevented. Recent prosecutions for obstruction, disorder, and profanity have no other meaning than this. Those in power would openly stop the advocacy of Freethought if they dared; that they proceed by a roundabout and often underhand method, is nothing more than a concession to unfavorable circumstances. But the old-time spirit of suppression and persecution is there, and, given favorable circumstances, would not be slow to express itself in the old-time drastic manner. And one ought not to omit to point out that while this spirit exists with any large number of people the extension of the powers of the State and of the police is a phenomenon full of menace to the future of Freethought.

Our work in the past has borne splendid results, but there is still much to be done before these results can be considered permanently secure. Such freedom as we have is, perhaps, of too recent growth for it to be taken as a matter of course by the mass of people. Until free speech is taken in this light, until it is accepted as something beyond even the scope of discussion, there is always danger. Old prejudices are still with us, primitive ideas are still powerful, religious interests and the interests that religion serves are still strong. Until these forces are robbed of their power for evil, we must always be on our guard. That we have won so much is only a reason for continued fighting—not for rest. Nineteen hundred and twelve has seen, as previous years saw, a great extension of Freethought ideas. But has it seen a corresponding growth in the number of men and women strong enough to defy all prejudice and let the world know their real opinions? On that point I have my doubts. And yet until and unless that kind of result is achieved, our successes provide occasion for but a limited measure of rejoicing.

C. COHEN.

Sabbatarianism.

HOWEVER great and numerous the faults of primitive Christians may have been Sabbatarianism was not one of them. The Gospel Jesus was a notorious Sabbath-breaker, and as such suffered persecution. Indeed, he is represented as denouncing Sabbatarianism in the strongest terms. To Paul also, all days were alike. He was exceedingly distressed to learn that his Galatian converts "observed days, and months, and seasons, and years." "I am afraid of you," he told them, "lest by any means I have bestowed labor upon you in vain." At best the Sabbath was to him but a shadow that had already served its purpose, and was no longer required (Col. ii. 16, 17). The duty of Sabbath observance is not once mentioned in the New Testament, and the fact of observance is spoken of with disfavor. There was a general conviction that Christ had abolished the Jewish law of the Sabbath, and the day of his alleged resurrection was believed to be of much greater importance than the last day of the creation week. Now, the curious thing is, that his alleged resurrection occurred on the day set apart by the Pagan world as the people's weekly holiday; but for three centuries the Christians treated all days practically alike. Whatever observance of Sunday there may have been was altogether voluntary. There were no Sunday restrictions of any kind. Origen held that "the perfect Christian is always keeping the Lord's Day," because "all his days are the Lord's." The first Sunday legislation, under Constantine, was of a mild character, forbidding only judges, town people, and tradesmen to pursue their avocations "on the venerable day of the Sun." Those engaged in agriculture were allowed to work as on other days. But in spite of that legislation the Church of the Middle Ages was anything but strictly Sabbatarian. Whenever she advised the people to rest from work, she was careful to add that Sunday work was in no sense a sin, and was discouraged simply because it prevented people from attending church.

Thus we see that, *in principle*, Christianity is absolutely opposed to Sunday observance. The so-called sanctity of the Lord's Day is repudiated in the New Testament, and, in the main, by the Catholic Church. Sunday was to be observed, not because of its superior holiness, but merely as the field-day of the Church. This principle was formally enunciated at the third Council of Orleans in the year 538; and when, in the thirteenth century, it was contended that a peculiar sanctity attached to the day, the object was to fortify the Church. In the main, however, the Church has always enjoined the observance of Sunday alone in her own interest. In his "Table Talk," Martin Luther says:—

"If anywhere the day is made holy for the mere day's sake, if anywhere one sets up its observance upon a Jewish foundation, then I order you to work on it, to dance on it, to ride on it, to feast on it, to do anything that shall reprove this encroachment on the Christian spirit of liberty."

Most of the Reformers spoke and wrote in the same strain. It is true that the Westminster Assembly of Divines regarded the observance of Sunday as a part of the moral law; but it is also true that Archbishop Whateley characterised such a dogma as "utterly unintelligible." But, although the leaders of the Reformation were the friends of liberty, it must be admitted that it was the Reformation that made the introduction of the Paritan Sunday possible in Great Britain. First of all, an attempt was made to restore the Hebrew Sabbath, but it miserably failed. Then the process of Hebraising the Christian Sunday began, and this met with considerable success, with the result that Sunday became, by Acts of Parliament, indescribably dull and dreary—an intolerable burden which the people were compelled to bear. But the object of the introduction of this Paritan "Sunday Sabbath," as Dr. Hardwicke aptly calls it, was to glorify the Church. Sunday work and Sunday

amusements were forbidden simply in order that the Church services might reign without a single rival. Church attendance was made compulsory, and non-attendance a crime against the State as well as a sin against God. A man was fined for kissing his wife, child, or sweetheart on Sunday in order that his mind should not be diverted from the contemplation of spiritual realities. Places of amusement were closed that places of worship might have the day to themselves.

At last, after centuries of passive endurance, the people of this country are beginning actively to rebel against the cruel tyranny of such a forbidding Sunday. They are throwing off the yoke of bondage to it. The astonishing popularity of the Sunday cinema has opened the eyes of Christian leaders to the fact that the British Christian Sunday is seriously threatened, and the Rev. Dr. Newton Marshall is afraid that it is doomed. Writing in the *Baptist Times and Freeman* for December 27, the reverend gentleman says:—

"There is to-day a mighty struggle going on as to whether theatres and music-halls should be opened on Sundays or not. How this struggle will end it is hard to say. One fears, however, that mammon will win. The actors and actresses and artistes may be bitterly opposed to Sunday performances (indeed they seem to be), but there is vast capital invested in the business of amusement, and capital is soulless, remorseless, inhuman. Unless other forces, more determined and potent, overcome it, the sheer weight of gold must have its way."

Dr. Marshall is "surely mistaken. There is more capital invested in the business of Divine worship than in that of amusement; and "if the sheer weight of gold must have its way," then the business of Divine worship is certain to be victorious. But the question will be settled, not by capital, but by the public taste. What is beyond all controversy is that the public taste is rapidly changing, and crying out with swelling insistence for Sunday amusement. Dr. Marshall is not blind to the issues at stake. He says:—

"If the theatres and music-halls and cinemas are generally opened on Sundays in our land, the Continental Sunday, to which we suppose ourselves so superior, is here. How fatal an evil this would be, let our own past utterances testify. Have we not traced our national greatness to our national Day of Rest? Have we not treated the quiet of the Lord's Day as the salt of our religious life? Have we not urged it as the bulwark of purity in the home and of a high ideal of conduct for each day's business? Have we not insisted that the Sunday is a day set apart by God for his purposes?"

Dr. Marshall is quite right. The theologians have made, and still make, all those high claims in behalf of Sunday; but they have never been able to establish the truth of one of them. What proof is there that Sunday is "a day set apart by God for his purposes"? None has ever been adduced. As Bishop Andrews, in his *History of the Sabbath*, well says:—

"The festival of Sunday is more ancient than the Christian religion; its origin being lost in remote antiquity. It did not originate from any Divine command, nor from piety towards God; on the contrary, it was set apart as a sacred day by the Heathen world in honor of their chief God, the Sun."

Again, it is utterly impossible to trace our vaunted "national greatness to our national Day of Rest." Our so-called "national greatness" is very largely mythical. We only fancy ourselves superior to other nations which have enjoyed a freer, more rational Sunday. An individual who continually calls attention to his superior qualities and attainments only succeeds in proving himself an unmitigated fool; and precisely the same thing is true of a boastful, vainglorious nation. We are usually set down abroad as a nation of hypocrites and braggarts. But whatever excellences we may possess, nothing is more certain than that we do not owe a single one of them to our strict Sabbatarianism. Indeed, Dr. Hardwicke informs us, in his interesting little work, *Sunday*, that when he "once asked an intelligent foreigner what, in his opinion, was the cause

of so much inebriety in our country, he replied at once, 'Your Sunday'"; and then added "that he had never seen so much hypocrisy as he had during his visit of two months in England." The claim that Sunday is "the bulwark of purity in the home and of a high ideal of conduct for each day's business" is so palpably false as to deserve no serious consideration. Are British homes, on an average, purer than the homes of countries wherein the Continental Sunday obtains? We challenge Dr. Marshall to produce any valid evidence of the truth of such a contention.

Now, after writing so grandiloquently about our national greatness, the purity of our homes, and the righteous conduct of our business, all of which he traces to the beneficent influence of Sunday, the reverend gentleman proceeds to mourn over the fact that, in all probability, we shall not succeed in saving the institution to which we owe so much. And he makes the strange, almost incredible, confession that "in this struggle for the maintenance of the British Sunday the Church is taking no part. True, Dr. F. B. Meyer has had something to say—but then he has something to say about everything!" We agree with the reverend gentleman in the conviction that the Christian Sunday is a vanishing institution. Its secularisation has been steadily going on for many years. It is being gradually restored to what it was before the Church laid its mutilating hand upon it. What is so much needed just now, however, is liberty to spend the day according to one's predilection. Let the Christians realise, as John Stuart Mill perceived long ago, that "Sabbatarian legislation is an illegitimate interference with the rightful liberty of the individual"; but they are cowards. They foresee that unless they retain the unjust monopoly of Sunday they are sure to lose it altogether.

J. T. LLOYD.

Confitemini Domino.

THIS is not at all the Bay of Biscay I had been taught to believe in. The Biscay creed of my youth was full of visions of storm, and broken spars, and of drowned folk sinking "unknelled, uncoffined, and unknown." This blue water, spangled with morning light, might be the happy Bay of Bournemouth or the summer sea of Scarborough. Thus do the terrific gods of man's infancy dissolve into the purer and serener thoughts of his prime.

Folk-lorists say that some of the fairies of popular tales are the miniature survivals of older gods, no longer feared, and now reduced to amusing unimportance. I have heard, also, that the gay and painted clown of the Christmas pantomime is the representative of the Devil of the Middle Ages, who once performed pranks on the stage of Miracle-plays, and threw our ancestors into passions of terror and laughter. It is not the least interesting occupation of the sociologist to watch the dwindling of the gods, and to see how giant figures that formerly sat throned in cloudy majesty are now reduced to the small proportions of the puppet.

So, on Sunday morning, I attended Church Service in the saloon of the P. and O. steamer that was carrying me to the East. The gilt-buttoned captain led our devotions, and we were a thoroughly respectable congregation. I should have felt more comfortable if a few engineers from below had joined the assembly, and one or two red-capped and bare-brown-footed Lascars had mingled with our gentility; for these elements would have reminded us of the basis of labor upon which our Sabbatical ease rested. Yet, perhaps, the program was more logical as it stood. The genius of labor is massive, Herculean, and manly; and our Sunday morning gods were but frail and puny creatures, chiefly adapted for the adoration of the British middle-class intellect. When the psalm bade us "Confitemini Domino"—"Trust in the Lord"—we responded with a faint and

æsthetic suburban trust. Little gods, little faith. We and the captain recited together the Mariners' Psalm:—

"They that go down to the sea in ships, and occupy their business in the great waters;

"These men see the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep;

"They are carried up to the heaven, and down again to the deep; their soul melteth away because of the trouble;

"So when they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, he delivereth them out of their distress."

But our voices did not ring with the conviction that roared in the worship of our Puritan fathers. We were conscious all the time that, if this sunny Bay of Biscay changed its mood from smiles to tempest, our confidence would not be in the petty gods, but in the captain, the engineers, the Lascars, the boats, the Marconi messages, the chart, and the noble astronomy which the scientific patience of many generations has constructed for the law of times, seasons, and navigation. Gentle was the wheeze of the violin that formed our orchestra, and the bourgeois congregation so feebly sang the hymn:—

"Cast care aside, lean on thy Guide,
His boundless mercy will provide,"

that I felt obliged to answer the signal of distress, and, Agnostic as I was, to join in and strengthen the quavering choir. But, as I chanted the marvels of Divine Providence, my mind ran back to a conversation I had just held on deck with an invalid who was on his way to Ceylon in search of warmth and health.

"My intestines," he said to me, with a curious smile, "were entirely taken out."

This sudden insight into the manufacture of hollow ware fascinated my attention. I listened eagerly while my companion unfolded the story of his pains, his operations, his fears and hopes. He had lain under chloroform for the space of one hour and a half, and nine minutes; and he named a group of the most distinguished physicians in England as the examiners of his inner chambers and his friendly dissectors. The intestines were replaced, but with a junction on the left side of the stomach, instead of the right; and the orifice on the right side had been deftly sewn up and rendered "blind." And now, when the plaintive violin unenchantedly chanted,—

"Cast care aside, lean on thy Guide,
His boundless mercy will provide,"—

I thought of the cheerful invalid on deck, who, thanks to the providential wisdom of humanity, was endowed with fresh life, and was joyously expecting to breathe the spicy air of Ceylon.

If one must have gods at all, oh! let them be splendid! Let us have that magnificent Zeus who reigned, imperially and thunderously, among the glorious company on Mount Olympus. Or let us have mighty Siva, riding on a bull, and with the colossal stream of Ganges trickling down his shaggy hair and beard. Or let us have Odin, conqueror of giants of frost and blast, and honored by the valiant sea-kings of Scandinavia. Even Luther's piety had a worthy object,—“Our God's a sure stronghold” (“Ein' feste Burg ist unser Gott”). But to-day the master-forces of the globe are wielded by other hands. The weakened hands of the divinities have resigned the lightnings and the bolts, and the dominion and the empire, to the Man who was once so much lower than the angels. They have yielded the stars to Herschel and Leverrier; the secrets of electricity to Faraday and Edison; the arcana of physics to Clerk Maxwell and Hertz; the passwords of the realm of biology to Darwin and Haeckel; the power of healing to Lister and Ronald Ross; and the art of Scripture-writing to Shakespeare, Montaigne, Goethe, Emerson, Nietzsche.

Poetic William Blake once asked a lady, “Have you ever seen a fairy funeral?” And he went on to describe to her the details of the procession he had witnessed.

Such a funeral I seemed to assist at on that Sunday morning in the saloon of a P. and O. boat. Perfectly certain am I that nobody in the congrega-

tion effectively believed in the gods in the grand mediæval manner, or even in the seventeenth-century manner of Spinoza and Bunyan. The gods that presided over our service were shaped after the fashion of the little images one sees in the Egyptian galleries of the British Museum,—tiny pocket-deities and heavenly dolls. Just as to-day the really great structures of London are the docks, the electric power-stations, the tube-railways, and the thousand schools and colleges, while the Tower of London is a mere phantom of barbaric tyranny, so the genuine triumphs of the human genius of our age are visible in science, art, craft, literature, and an immense Labor Movement and Woman Movement, while the gods are diminished to puny ghosts and thin imaginations that prepare to leave the soul of man forever.

F. J. GOULD.

Gibraltar, Dec. 24, 1912.

Literary Gossip.

We have been looking again into that pious paper *Great Thoughts*. The first noticeable thing we came across was a half-page headed “George Meredith on Religion,” acknowledged as from *Scribner's Magazine*, and therefore indicating that the editor had not read the two volumes of *George Meredith's Letters*, but only the selection printed beforehand in the American periodical. Religious men like the editor think nothing of the lie by suggestion. They do not say, but they suggest, that a quotation arbitrarily picked from the pages of a great writer represents his ripest thought, whereas it may represent (as it does in this case) only one of his landmarks which he has passed on the road to his full mental development. Meredith's fatherly letter to his young son Arthur, from which the passage in question was taken, was written as far back as April 25, 1872. He lived thirty-seven years after that date and passed through many stages of intellectual growth until he reached the final stage of pure Humanism, which is so nobly expressed in his later letters as well as in his later poems. Even in the passage on religion in that far-off letter there are signs that Meredith could say a good deal more if he were not writing to the young son of his first (unhappy) marriage. And it is clear that the idea of a personal God was waning in his mind and becoming merely symbolic of Virtue and Truth,—in short, not a term of theology but a term of moral idealism. Certainly he did not decorate the pronouns of the Deity with capital letters as they are printed in the pious *Great Thoughts*.

* * *

Rather more than two years after the date of that letter to his young son, Meredith mentioned a famous American scandal in one of his delightfully open letters to Captain Maxse. “You have seen the papers,” he wrote, “and meditated upon the Beecher-Tilton scandal. Guilty or not, there is a sickly snuffiness about the religious fry that makes the tale of their fornications and adulteries absolutely repulsive to read of, and but for the feeding of the reptile sarcasm in our bosoms, it would disgust one more than a chronicle of the amors of costermongers.” “Religious fry” is a branding phrase. A little later Meredith was declaring to Maxse that the fight with priestcraft and priests was the fight of the immediate future.

* * *

The next noticeable thing in *Great Thoughts* was a reference to Meredith in a review of Frederic Harrison's *Among My Books*. We have not read this book, nor do we mean to. We have no taste for a writer who calls Lamb a “poor thing”; Lamb whose life was a daily heroism, and who wrote things as sure of immortality as any prose of his time. Amongst the gems of wisdom and wit fished out of Frederic Harrison's volume is this—that Meredith was a brilliant novelist rather than a poet; nature having denied him an ear for music in verse. Fancy saying this of the author of “Love in the Valley” which Tennyson said he would be proud to have written himself, and that Stevenson almost raved about. That poem gave a new music to English poetry.

* * *

And now for Apollo's revengo. The clerical editor of *Great Thoughts*, after endorsing Frederic Harrison's denunciation of the unrest and frivolity of the present age, quotes what he calls the “appropriate counsel of Sophocles.” Here it is:—

“Keep the young generation in hail,
And beneath them no tumbled house.”

“Sophocles!” The knowing reader will remember, the unknowing reader will be surprised to learn, that these two

lines are a spoilt quotation from one of the most Meredithian of Meredith's own poems. They are from "The Empty Purse," and should run thus:—

"Keep the young generations in hail,
And bequeath them no tumbled house!"

Excellent advice! No wonder Meredith called it "The cry of the conscience of Life."

* * *

"Sophocles!" Oh Downes!—Downes! No doubt thou meanest well. But thou art as wise as thou art accurate. In this very number of thy extravagantly named journal thou makest Samuel Johnson the author of "Hell is paved with good intentions." How could hell be paved? Hast thou not heard it is a bottomless pit? It is "the road to hell" that is "paved with good intentions." And there is some sense in that if we leave out the theology. Moreover, the saying is generations older than Samuel Johnson. It came from one of the old Puritan preachers—perhaps Richard Baxter, but we are not sure. But thou hast mangled it whatever its origin. Thou art a club-footed critic, and thou presumest too much in the company of thy betters.

* * *

We have been offered a big price for the George Meredith letters to ourselves, and still in our possession, as well as the presentation volume of verse he sent to us while we were in Holloway Prison under the Blasphemy Laws. But they are not for sale. Meredith prices are running high just now, and we do not think they are likely to drop. At Sotheby's last week the manuscripts of three of the four parts of *Odes In Contribution to the Song of French History* fetched nearly £300 ("The Revolution" £100—"Napoleon" £92—"Alsace-Lorraine" £95); and 44 letters to Dr. and Mrs. Jessopp £445—in round figures £10 each. The whole volume containing the three *Odes* and another entitled "France," extends to less than a hundred pages. What a change from the old days of unappreciation! One is reminded of the flippant reviewer who remarked that Shelley's masterpiece was well called "Prometheus Unbound"—for who would ever think of *binding* it? A copy of that very first edition would now fetch several times its weight in gold. Thus (in the case of real great genius) does the whirligig of time bring its revenges.

G. W. F.

The Church's Motives.

TAKE Church colleges and schools. Are they founded in the interests of true education? On the contrary, they are for the purpose of maintaining a creed. A Catholic college has for its object just enough education to make a student a Catholic. Any further knowledge would be heresy. A Lutheran school has one purpose in view—to make Lutherans. Knowledge that might militate against this end must be excluded. Methodist, Presbyterian, and other denominational schools are conducted along the same lines. Real education does not consist in teaching the mind according to a certain system of belief or dogma, but in training it to think and to reason from facts. One-half of Christian education consists of burdening the brain with myths, miracles, and other unnaturalisms, which must be outgrown later in life. The Church has prostituted education to creed. In the public schools, not controlled by the Church, a boy or girl learns more, learns more thoroughly, is better mentally and morally prepared for the battle of life than in any Church school. Consider, again, higher education. Once this was entirely in the hands of the clergy. Sixty years ago, according to Andrew D. White, the great majority of the presidents of our colleges and universities were ministers. To-day, the majority are laymen, to the greater efficiency of education.

When we look upon hospitals and other organised charities founded by the Church, the same motives and methods exist. They are not primarily to help afflicted humanity, but to make *Christians* and to perpetuate the power of the priesthood. The Church has used bad methods to further its progress, and it has, when necessary, resorted to good ones. But, above all, its end has been priestly domination, putting out the lamp of liberty, stifling free speech and honest thought. It points its finger to heaven, as a reward for the faithful, while, had not the false teachings of the Church turned men's minds to this imaginary heaven, this world would have been a fitter place of abode, and we would not require so much charity. If the Church has relieved some human suffering it has caused more than it has abolished.

FRANKLIN STEINER.

—Truthseeker (New York).

Acid Drops.

"Providence" gave us a particularly "Merry Christmas" by way of winding up 1912. We hope it will settle down a bit for the new year. Storms, shipwrecks, and all sorts of incidents caused by too much wind and water, are not quite so "merry" to the sufferers as they appear to the party inflicting them. It would be a good thing, indeed, if the said party took a long rest—for "Providence" nearly always means ructions.

The range of "Providence's" Christmas benevolence was very wide. No less than sixty Russian fishing boats capsized during the storm in the Caspian Sea. The loss of life is reported to be "very great." "Providence" will note the fact with great pleasure.

With what unction the *Daily Chronicle*, in its Christmas Eve number, maundered over the blessings of British rule in India. Whether the ruling of India by Great Britain is right and just, to begin with, did not occur to our contemporary. John Bull's brain is never crossed by an idea of that kind. He is too pious and too self-righteous to consider the possibility of his not being chosen by God to keep other people in their proper places. It has always been the characteristic of Christian nations, and of Great Britain the most of all, to disdain the notion that their power should be limited by their own frontiers. They see a special wickedness in throwing a bomb at the Viceroy of India. Lord Hardinge is British, moreover he is a Christian; and these are two special marks of the divine favor; the bomb-thrower is therefore worse than a mere criminal, he is guilty of something like sacrilege, he tried to kill the deputy of the Lord's anointed. All this was involved in the *Chronicle's* article. The British are "a ruling and civilising race," they have a mandate from heaven, as the Jews had in the land of Canaan. It justifies them in crushing down all opposition, and to lay a heavy hand even on honest criticism. What is for the good of India, though India may not see it, must be forced upon its three hundred million inhabitants. "Our clear duty," the *Chronicle* concluded, "is to persevere in that course with resolute determination, and cool courage, for that alone will make India peaceful, prosperous, and happy, sustain our own credit, hold high our honor, and justify our rule and our presence in India." These compliments, paid by ourselves to ourselves, are delightful. They display the proverbial humility of the good earnest Christians.

The unction of the dear *Daily News* was displayed in another direction. Nearly all the newspapers at this time of the year are cadging in the name of Christ for some "charitable" object. People living in destitution and misery all the year round are provided with one day's decent eating and drinking; editorial bosoms swell with the pride of benevolence; and this is considered a highly satisfactory state of things; besides, it silences the Secularists who are always twitting the Christians with trying to do good in the next world instead of in this one. So the Christmas Eve special article in the *Daily News* carried on in this fashion:—

"Whatever else grows old and passes away, the spirit of Christmas will remain for ever fresh and vital. Its message of 'Peace on earth, good will among men' can never be exhausted. The reminder that, behind the struggles and controversies that embitter our relations, we are all—black and white, yellow and brown—members of one family, comrades for a little while in the great adventure of life, subject to like afflictions, exalted by like joys, enveloped equally by the mystery that will not yield its secret, needing equally the warmth of human friendship and human love—this can never grow stale or obsolete."

What a farce it is to read this little sermon and then turn to the facts. The "spirit of Christmas" has been prompting the Balkan States to demand "another slice of Turkey" for their Christmas dinner. The Christian States, in fact, have been presenting the Mohammedan enemy with terms of peace as hard, ungenerous, and humiliating as can well be conceived. We admit that this "spirit of Christmas" among Christians will "never be exhausted." It holds out to the bitter end.

The modern Christmas—what we may call the Dickens Christmas—is comparatively a thing of yesterday. It is really a recurrence to the old Pagan festival which Christmas supplanted. But the *Daily News* appears to think that human love and friendship are Christmas gifts to the world, and that without Christianity we should never have known of our common human nature and that at bottom all men are members of one family. This is claiming for Christianity what is no more due to it than it is to the religion of

Mumbo Jumbo. Love, friendship, and the recognition of human brotherhood, were ethical commonplaces before Christianity was heard of. The great master of human nature, William Shakespeare, stated the truth of natural human brotherhood, without any assistance from the Christian or other religion, between three and four hundred years before Charles Dickens. When the monarch in *Richard II.* is falling he addresses to his courtiers that piece of incomparable eloquence on the frailty and mortality of all men alike, whether prince or peasant; and then, addressing his courtiers still more directly, he says to them:—

“Cover your heads, and mock not flesh and blood
With solemn reverence; throw away respect,
Tradition, form, and ceremonious duty;
For you have but mistook me all this while:
I live with bread like you, feel want, taste grief,
Need friends:—subjected thus,
How can you say to me, I am a king.”

The holy anointing oil of kings went for nothing in the last extremities of fate. The common nature of King Richard and his lowest subject was proved finally by their common feelings, common wants, common desires, and common weaknesses. There we come to the bedrock of humanity.

Reports are continuing to arrive as to the truly Christian spirit that prevails between the Greek and Bulgarian allies, and also as to the treatment of Mohammedans and Jews by the allied armies. At Salonika whole detachments of Greeks and Bulgarians have been drawn up in fighting array, and only dispersed at the last moment. One Bulgarian chief is reported as pillaging and murdering Greeks and Mohammedans alike. At Lagavani this chief, one Dumboulakoff, ordered the priest to omit the name of the King of Greece from his prayers, and then took the Turkish inhabitants and used them as targets for the rifles of his men. Four men, two women, and one child—all Mohammedans—were also found murdered one morning just outside Salonika. The correspondent of the *Jewish Chronicle* also continues to forward accounts of the open murder of Jews by the soldiers of the Cross. Yet the *Church Times* remarks in its last issue that no excesses have followed the victorious march of the allied armies. Well, we have given accounts of a fair number during the past month, and we are convinced much is to be said when the whole truth becomes public property.

The *Catholic Times* has a cheerful kind of message for its devout readers. The religious outlook it finds to be very black indeed. There is a “mighty army” leagued against Christianity with an influence all-powerful in the offices of newspapers. When representatives of this army “meet in their lodges and clubs to discuss public affairs, they ask themselves how, in dealing with national and international questions, they can hurt Christianity.” All this has a very “raw-head-and-bloody-bones” air about it, and readers will take it for what it is worth. In some countries, we are told, this anti-Christian army has “captured the Governments and made them instruments for carrying out their own anti-Christian designs.” Protestants, who are “Christians only in name,” are powerless against this anti-Christian movement. “Their views can scarcely be distinguished from those of Freethinkers,” and amongst Protestants Freethinkers are winning an “immense number of disciples almost without effort.” The only bulwark is, of course, Roman Catholicism, and the moral of the article appears to be that unless all Christians become Roman Catholics, they will all turn into Freethinkers before they know where they are.

While we are on the *Catholic Times*, we may notice a curious defence of Catholic toleration offered by Bishop Keating. The Bishop said it was an ironical situation that Protestants should charge Catholics with intolerance, and, so far, we agree with him. Intolerance is as inherent in Protestantism as it is in Roman Catholicism. The wider latitude existing in countries where the majority are Protestants is due to the impossibility of union among them, not to any willingness to suffer differences of opinion. Bishop Keating, however, says that with Catholics toleration is determined “wholly and exclusively by considerations of right and wrong.” And, he added, “they believed there was only one true religion.” Well, if that means anything at all, it means that the Catholic will tolerate a difference of opinion so long as convenient. You may believe what you please so long as you don't disagree with the Church. In matters of practice that is really all that most Christians ever understand by toleration, but it is well to have something like an official declaration of the position. The only toleration we care about is that which allows every man to believe and teach what he pleases, whether it happens to be truth or error. It is enough that it is truth to him. And the

court that should determine whether an opinion is right or wrong is neither Church nor State, but the tribunal of public intelligence.

God's Plaything is the title of Marjorie Bowen's latest volume of tragic stories: The *Daily Chronicle* reviewer quarrels with the title as “rather unpleasing, implying, as it does, that the Almighty has a grim and cruel sense of humor.” But this is not a new implication. Has not the reviewer heard of Heine's “Aristophanes of the Universe”? And what of Thomas Hardy's reply to certain critics of *Tess*?

The newspapers give prominence to the statement that the authorities at Hereford Cathedral have decided to retain the Athanasian Creed. What a tenacious Creed that is! Many years ago the following riddle was propounded:—Why is the Athanasian Creed like a royal Bengal tiger? The answer being, Because it holds on by its damnation clause (claws).

Finding that they cannot legally close the Picture Shows on Sunday, the Brighton Town Council have decided to grant seven-days licenses, with the proviso that all employees shall have one full day's holiday every week. This is precisely what we have recommended all along. One stroke of the pen destroys the canting clerical objection to “Sunday labor.” Not that the Sunday license is in any strict sense of the word legal. It is not. The old Statute of George III. against Sunday entertainments is still in force. The Sunday license is, however, an assurance that the authorities will not seek to enforce the Statute; and the Brighton Aquarium Act, as it is briefly called, renders the action of private citizens in the same direction a risky proceeding, since it declares that the Attorney-General has power to remit the penalties on behalf of the Crown,—in which case the “common informer” might lose instead of gaining considerably.

Middlesex County Council, by 43 to 17, have decided that Sunday cinematograph shows are not desirable, and have instructed the licensing committee to take proceedings against offenders. What on earth is meant by “not desirable”? Surely the shows are desirable to the crowds of orderly people who patronise them. They may not be desirable to those who do not patronise them, but it is not suggested that such be compelled to attend. They have all the rest of the world left them for recreation or edification. It is really a thing to be noted that the Sabbatarian bigots—in this like all bigots—regard “liberty” as meaning the right to do what they like and the right to prevent all their neighbors from doing anything else. The law of freedom is non-interference with the rights of others. You interfere with another man's rights when you prevent him doing what he wishes to do. He does not interfere with your rights in doing what he chooses and leaving you to do what you choose.

The following case is an item of Christmas news; we take it from the *Daily Chronicle* of December 27—its Milan correspondent having wired the news on Christmas Day:—

“The extraordinary trial of Monsignor Appeddu, Canon of Sassari Cathedral, Sardinia, pending since August, 1910, has just terminated in the Local Assize Court, in the condemnation of that famous pulpit orator to 15 years' penal servitude.

“As recounted in the *Daily Chronicle* at the time, Appeddu published a story according to which he and his valet had been waylaid by five brigands on the road between Pattada and Mamoiada, robbed of an enormous sum of money, beaten, and abandoned half-dead. The keys of his residence, he narrated, were also seized by the bandits, and when the police proceeded to the canonry, they found the place sacked from top to bottom.

“No sooner, however, had a searching inquiry begun than Appeddu fled to Corsica. Besides being bankrupt for £8,000, it was found that the canon had been for several years defrauding banks and misappropriating vast sums from his admirers, in order to bolster up reckless speculations in the sugar industry, and that together with his valet he had concocted the brigand ‘outrage’ as a last desperate resource.”

No doubt this case will soon be forgotten. Criminals are so frequently Christians; in fact, they are seldom anything else. Had the culprit been an eminent Freethinker his case would have figured constantly in pious “improving” literature as a frightful warning against the immoral influence of “infidelity.”

The Rev. Father Graham, of Motherwell, says that the “grand characteristic” of the Catholic faith is that it enables people to believe. A Catholic has no doubts. He says, “Ask a Catholic ‘Is there a hell? Is there an endless hell? Will people dying unsaved burn there for ever?’ He will reply without hesitation, ‘Yes, certainly.’ Ask a

Protestant, and he will answer, 'I do not know for certain. Some say Yes, and some say No.'" Therefore, Father Graham prefers Catholicism. He has a sincere pity for the poor souls who maybe die and are yet without the comforting reflection that there is a hell waiting where the unsaved will "burn eternally for ever." Father Graham knows there is a hell. He expects it in the next world. We are inclined to hope that he will not be disappointed.

In common, we suppose, with a large number of other people, we received a Christmas appeal for charity on behalf of a Christian organisation for the care of poor children. We were not surprised at this, nor, it being signed by the Bishop of London, at finding one or two silly statements in the course of the letter. And in this instance such statements were quite gratuitous. If people are not concerned to help poor children for the child's sake, it may well be doubted whether any other appeal is likely to move them. In this instance, however, the Bishop of London enforced the appeal by saying that Christianity had always made the care of the child its peculiar work. In a sinister sense this is true enough. In a broad, healthy, human sense it is altogether false. Religiously, Christianity has always aimed at capturing the child, because that was the only way to secure the adult. Religiously, too, the child has played a part in Christian writing and preaching as a symbol. But the child was held up as a symbol of innocence, helplessness, and dependence to the adult. We were to become as little children in order to gain the kingdom of heaven. We were to sacrifice the strength, the independence, the critical power of the adult mind, so that we might become the better believers. This is really what there is in the Christian exaltation of the child.

The study of the child, the care of the child, the social value of the child, as serious studies really belongs to the nineteenth century—a period that saw a more decisive weakening of Christianity than had ever before occurred. And the impetus to this came from two directions. First, from the development of a non-theological sociology; secondly, from the growth of the doctrine of Evolution. The extensive literature that has grown up around the child during the past thirty years owes nothing whatever to either Christian teaching or Christian influence. More than that, it should be remembered that the greatest brutalities ever practised against children occurred in this country, and in the full glow of the evangelistic revival. We do not think that in the whole history of humanity there is a more horrible chapter than that of child labor under the English factory system. Other people have occasionally practised infanticide; but killing a newly-born child is surely a harmless pastime compared with the systematic murdering of children of seven and eight years of age for the sake of making money out of their labor. And even to-day it may be questioned whether so large a number of neglected children exist anywhere in Europe as we have in Christian England. Travellers speak of Japan as the children's paradise. Little is heard of the ill-treatment of children in China or in the East. Nansen said the Esquimaux simply couldn't see why a child should be beaten. In England a Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children brings thousands of cases of the ill-treatment of children every year into court, and deals with a still larger number that never come before the public.

America—meaning the United States—is a Christian country. Nobody but a Christian, and a loudly professing one, would be elected President of that great and glorious and free (yes, don't forget *free*) country. President Hayes found out the full force of American bigotry when he was appointing Colonel Ingersoll to the Ambassadorship at Berlin. Such a Christian howl went up from New York to San Francisco, and from the Gulf of Mexico to the Great Lakes, that Ingersoll had to come to his friend President Hayes' relief by declining the appointment. Yes, America is a Christian country; and Anthony Comstock means to keep it so. American publications are mostly "mailed"; that is, they go from the publishers to the subscribers by post; and as the Post Office is really governed by Anthony Comstock, seeing that no publication gets through the mail without his approval,—and as he is prying piety and purient puritanism personified,—it is easy to see how "free" the public, and especially the advanced, press is over there. Religious journalists and blatant pulpitoers are even crying out that "Ingersoll is a back number." We will not discuss that statement. It is really *too* absurd. But there are other things in America that are certainly *not* back numbers. Some of them have lately been ventilated by Dr. Thomas D. Woods, Professor of Physical Education

at Columbia University, in an official report published by the Board of Education. Here are some of the up-to-date things in Christian America:—

"Between 50 and 98 per cent. of the children [in the schools] have defective teeth, 25 per cent. defective sight, and 30 per cent. suffer from adenoids or enlarged tonsils. Many millions of children have several ailments, and 25 per cent. suffer from mal-nutrition. Five per cent. of the country's children have, or have had, tubercular disease of the lungs, and an equal number suffer from curvature of the spine or flat-foot to a degree that is most detrimental to their general health. Organic heart disease claims nearly half a million children among its victims in American schools."

Does any man in his senses imagine that such a state of things would exist in an Ingersollite society? Godliness would take a back seat, and cleanliness would come to the front—cleanliness of eating and drinking, cleanliness of person, cleanliness of dwellings, cleanliness of habits, and cleanliness of thinking and feeling.

In commenting on the decline of church attendance one of the religious weeklies notes that people are not inclined to talk about religious things, and points out that this is in contrast with our forefathers, who made religion a topic of every-day conversation. We do not think the last part of the statement is strictly accurate, but all the same it contains a truth. In earlier times religious phrases and expressions formed a much larger part of ordinary conversation, and for very obvious reasons. When religious belief is really alive it is expressed in ordinary talk because it expresses a common conviction and is not in direct conflict with common knowledge. Under such conditions men could invoke the name of God and use religious terms in a way that nowadays would be thought little short of blasphemous. With a more complete development there is a more drastic division between the world of actual life and religion. Religious phraseology assumes a special character for the simple reason that it no longer has any application to life, and when it is introduced the only effect is to display its incongruity. The more religious people are, the more this is experienced. It is this feeling that lies at the root of the objection to exhibiting the life of Jesus in a picture show. The Middle Ages had its religious plays, depicting nearly all the main incidents in the New Testament, and there was no outcry from anybody. It was perfectly natural that what was believed should be depicted. To-day such representations jar on believers because they represent a number of beliefs that people have really outgrown. They merely objectify what is to nearly all an utterly incredible story.

Ex-Lieutenant Sutor seems to have developed into a first-rate crank. The doctor at Bow-street Police Station reported that he could not be certified as insane. "He held certain religious beliefs which he wished to promulgate, and he broke windows to keep his name before the public." Religious fanatics generally want to promulgate their religious beliefs at other people's expense; and they love being advertised.

Freethought teachings find their echo in unexpected places, as we have often pointed out. Take, as an example, the following:—

"The history of religion is largely the history of human cruelty and dread. In this respect I should think no single psychological force has ever equalled it. Whatever be the explanation of the fact—and it is not altogether without explanation—the religious instincts of mankind have, broadly speaking, been the direct cause of more misery, bloodshed, terrorism, and a'l manner of fendishness, than the ambition of conquerors, or greed, or lust, or any other form taken by man's inhumanity to man.....There has always been a peculiar ingredient in religious zealotry which has rendered men insensible to human feeling in a way that nothing else can approach; they have steeled their hearts against natural impulses and mercy at the supposed bidding of their gods to a degree that nothing else could compel. The very last thing associated with Deity as a rule has been anything approximating to love."

This is not from an avowed Freethinker. It is from a recent sermon by the Rev. R. J. Campbell. The Freethinkers' work has been to make it possible for Mr. Campbell to say this and still draw a large salary for preaching the Gospel.

HELLO IN THE PULPIT.

An admiring parishioner of a young divine in an Ohio town recently had a telephone installed in the clergyman's house. The good man was delighted with the convenience and used it immediately before going to church.

When the time came for him to announce the first hymn he read the first lines with his usual impressiveness and concluded with, "Let us all unite in hymn seven O three."

Mr. Foote's Engagements

January 12, 19, and 26, Queen's (Minor) Hall, London.

To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1912.—Previously acknowledged, £268 6s. 1d. Received since:—Col. B. L. Reilly (second sub.), £1 1s.; Mrs. A. Brooks, 5s.; W. R. Angell, 5s.; Pretoria Freethinker (second sub.), 5s.; E. Truelove, 5s.; J. Burns, 15s.; W. P. P., 5s.; "Warrington Saints," 8s.; T. O. T., 5s.; R. L. M., £2. *Bloemfontein (South Africa) per F. Rose*:—N. M., 10s. 6d.; Friend, 5s.; J. Berks, 5s.; H. M., 10s. 6d.; E. W., 10s. 6d.; L. L., 5s.; Irving, 10s. 6d.; L. N., 10s. 6d.; A. S., 10s. 6d.; F. Rose (second sub.), 10s. 6d.—Total £4 8s. 6d. This completes the subscription list to December 31, 1912.

Correction: James Blamford in last week's list should have been James Blampied.

W. OWEN.—Thanks for long explanatory letter *re* Glasgow.
T. BAKER.—We do not rank Matthew Arnold as highly as some of his admirers do, but we should be very sorry to call him a "minor" poet.

T. ROBERTSON.—See the result. Thanks also for your new year's good wishes.

A. PRICE.—There is room for what may be called an artistic *Life of Thomas Paine*; something as full essentially, and as accurate, as Dr. Conway's voluminous work, but less diffuse and documented. Of the short sketches of Paine's career our own, published as an Introduction to the Twentieth Century Edition of the *Age of Reason*, was very carefully written. The late George Jacob Holyoake called it "masterly." We have thought of adding something to it and including it in the "Pioneer Pamphlets."

W. T. CLARK.—Why shouldn't the same publishers issue sporting papers and pious papers from the same office? Ordinary publishers are only out to make money. Didn't you know it?

J. BETTERIDGE.—Glad you are "a lover of the *Freethinker*" after reading it three years.

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

CONNIE BROOKS.—Pleased to hear that you and your mother both read the *Freethinker* eagerly. We recognise more than ever, if possible, the necessity of converting women to Freethought.

"VINCENT."—We have seen the brochure *Ma Vie*. It may be clever, in its way, but the discussion of the historicity of Jesus has gone far beyond that stage. Fresh "Lives of Christ," from any point of view, are only a waste of time. With regard to Mr. Mann's articles, we endorse your opinion that they are "fine."

PRETORIA FREETHINKER.—Glad you still "greatly enjoy" this journal and do your best to promote its circulation in your part of the world.

PETER GRAY.—Veterans of 77 are not numerous. We are glad to hear from one of them. Send us cuttings whenever you please.

T. H. PERKINS.—Good wishes reciprocated. It is pleasant to hear from readers who date from 1886.

W. CALLAGHAN.—Sent as desired. We note your "opinion that the *Freethinker* is the finest literary paper published."

JAMES NEEDHAM.—Why shouldn't a miner write? A miner is as good as anybody else. Not in our occupations, which are generally a matter of chance, but in ourselves lies our worth to the world. Glad to hear you reckon the night you heard Mr. Foote lecture at Manchester the best night in your life. We hope you will find more toleration in America.

CLYDEBANK.—An envelope with this postmark contains a 5s. Postal Order but no letter of instructions. What is it for?

J. BURNS.—Alloted as desired. Thanks. Shop manager will send you receipt for his portion.

E. B.—Thanks for useful matter.

L. GJEMRE.—Presumably for the new year. Kindly confirm or otherwise.

W. BAILEY.—We are writing you on the matter, which is certainly important.

JOSEPH ROSTOCK.—We hope the acknowledgment is correct. Thanks for the Warrington "saints" compliment and good wishes.

PHILIP VIVIAN.—Happy to renew acquaintance with your *Churches and Modern Thought* through your presentation copy of what we suppose is the new impression advertised.

T. O. T.—We note that you "have derived more intellectual light from the *Freethinker* than from any other paper."

BELFAST FACTORY LASS.—We have already given the "Manger to Cross" picture show as much attention as it deserves. It won't help Christianity,—quite the contrary. And why should we be angry when Christians blaspheme?

"BOLTON."—Your subscription was duly handed over, and should have been specially referred to. It dropped into the general account of the meetings. We propose to deal with your interesting letter next week—without disclosing your identity.

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.

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

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

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.

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, £76 10s. 9d. Received since:—W. R. Angell, 2s. 6d.; J. Burns, 10s.; R. L. M., 10s.

Sugar Plums.

The Queen's (Minor) Hall lectures will be resumed on Sunday evening, January 12. Mr. Foote is preparing special lectures for the new course. A full announcement will appear in our next issue.

Further Sunday lectures have been arranged for during January at the Public (Minor) Hall, George-street, Croydon. It is hoped that the local "saints" will do their best to make these meetings well known. Mr. Cohen leads off this evening (Jan. 5), his subject being "Christianity and Social Problems." Mr. J. T. Lloyd, Miss K. B. Kough, and Mr. A. B. Moss will occupy the platform on the following three Sundays. Admission is free, so it will cost inquiring Christians nothing to attend, unless they choose to drop something into the collection box. Questions and discussion are cordially invited as usual. It may be added that Miss Vance, at 2 Newcastle-street, E.C., will be happy to supply applicants with neat little printed announcements of this course of lectures for judicious distribution.

The London Freethinkers' Annual Dinner, under the auspices of the N. S. S. Executive takes place at the Holborn Restaurant on Tuesday evening, January 14. Mr. Foote will preside, and will be supported by most of the leading Freethought lecturers in London, including Mr. Cohen, Mr. Lloyd, Mr. Moss, and Mr. Heaford. There is sure to be a good dinner, some good music, and some good (brief) speeches. We hope to see a big rally of "saints" at the festive board, as a kind of send-off to a vigorous new year's work.

Mr. F. J. Gould's bright and (if he were not on the sea we might say) breezy article in this week's *Freethinker* was written in redemption of a promise he made us a few days before he set sail for India, where he has engaged to do some Ethical work in the interest of public education. Mr. Gould said that he must write an article for the *Freethinker* very shortly, or people would be saying that he was lost to the cause. This was a bit of our old friend's fun. He is as little likely to be lost to the cause, if the cause means Atheistic Secularism, as any man we know. But he has his own ideas of "constructive" work as a Positivist, which does not at all mean that he is nearer Christianity than he used to be, as some who read him misconceive.

At the dinner which was given to Mr. Gould (with £143) early in December, mainly though not officially by Ethicists

and Rationalists, but which we did not hear of till it was over, he did not hide his respect for the *Freethinker* and its editor. "In my speech of thanks," Mr. Gould wrote us, "I made special friendly reference to you; and I mention this now, as I do not know what, if any, report may appear." Mr. Gould sails for home from Bombay on February 22, and should be back in London about the middle of March.

There is some interesting matter (we think) about George Meredith in this week's "Literary Gossip." Our special articles on Meredith's Letters will not be started till next week. The delay is owing to some correspondence we have had with the editor of another periodical on the matter of Meredith's letters to ourselves.

We are sorry for it, though not surprised, but the Glasgow Branch, now its old meeting-place has been burnt down, is feeling the pinch of Christian intolerance. Few halls are obtainable at all for Sunday lectures, and those few are under the crippling conditions that there shall be no charge for admission, that no discussion shall be allowed, and that no literature shall be sold. It seems likely, therefore, that the fire has annihilated Freethought propaganda in Glasgow during the present winter. Some open-air work will probably be done locally during the summer, and there is a good prospect of the indoor work being resumed in the autumn.

The December number of *Concord*, the organ of the International Arbitration and Peace Society, reaches us belatedly. It contains, amongst other interesting matter, some "International Notes" by Mr. W. Heaford, written with his usual vigor and vividness. Also a wise article by Mr. G. H. Perris on "The Worth of Man." Mr. Perris quotes a paragraph from the *Times* to the effect that "The Bible Society has given away 100,000 Testaments or Gospels among the armies of Turkey and the Balkan States, and is printing 70,000 more in Bulgarian, Servian, and Croatian." Surely this is what Rabelais would have called *sanglante dérision*? We rejoice to see Mr. Perris's protest against the importation of the *odium theologicum* to the detriment of the Turks:—

"Give a dog a bad name,' and you may do what you like. The *odium theologicum* plays its part. A German firm made the guns of Mahomet, a French firm those fired in the name of Christ. There are pashas in St. Petersburg as well as Constantinople, and the Duma has effected no more than the Young Turks; but shallow minds have easily convinced themselves that all Turks are savages, and deserve the worst that can be done to them. It is a base temper, this, ignorant and unmanly; and it may cost us dear, if it be not soon checked. The misgovernment of the so-called Christian populations by Turkish pashas and their agents has been a frightful scandal, eclipsed in recent history only by the misdeeds of the Government of Russia and its Holy Synod. But who thinks of butchering the Russian people to avenge the wrongs of Finland? Pack the Turk off to Asia! it is said. The Armenians, I suppose, are to be ignored, because they have not been able to provide a throne for some unemployed member of the Houses of Hapsburg, Bourbon, Hohenzollern, or Romanoff, to borrow money in Paris, or to buy big guns in Essen."

These words are very pertinent and timely.

The Christians are giving Freethought another advertisement at Leeds. Mr. Thomas Jackson has been prosecuted again for "profanity" of which we have not particulars. His first communication on the matter only reached us on Tuesday morning. A few hours later we received his telegram: "Twenty shillings or fourteen days. Doing the time. Jackson." We are just going to press and can say no more at present.

Our attention has been drawn to an editorial paragraph in the *Literary Guide* complaining that the *Freethinker* had "refused" a Rationalist Press Association advertisement of some of its recent publications. The complaint comes to our notice too late for a reply in this week's *Freethinker*. Some falsehoods are disposed of by a flat denial; others, as Tennyson said, are a different matter to fight. Moreover, this one gives us an opportunity of stating some facts that may as well be known. For the moment we must be content with assuring our readers that the alleged "refusal" is entirely imaginary—and not exactly the dream of innocent simplicity.

An American friend sends a pretty Christmas card. It is in the form of a letter, and it runs as follows:—Dear Mr. Foote,—If the 'Honorarium' lacks any part of the £300 on December 31, I will consider it a privilege to contribute the part wanting. I will send cheque on receipt of advice from you. Yours faithfully ——" A generous intention gallantly expressed! We leave it to the writer to decide whether his name shall go with his donation.

The Superiority of Science to Revelation.

THE claims of science to human regard are universal. The term "science" embraces knowledge in all its multitudinous forms. Apart from science, theoretical and applied, man would have remained an untutored child of nature, little above the man-like apes. It is to the fairy wand of science that civilisation and culture are due. Early man, when he provided himself with stone implements and weapons, laid the first foundations of modern civilised society. From a rude hunter, dependent for his very existence on the spoils of the chase, he acquired the art of domesticating certain of the lower animals which ministered to his needs. The earlier hunting stage was for a time combined with the pastoral stage, and at a later period man developed a rude system of agriculture. Originally a dweller in caves and other natural shelters, man proceeded to erect pile-dwellings on the margins of lakes and to raise primitive huts on the firmer earth. Step by step, from prehistoric times onwards, the scientific spirit in man has ingeniously evolved the art of breeding animals and cultivating plants—apart from which we would starve; the most up-to-date systems of land and ocean transit; beautiful cities with all their contained treasures of art and invention; the innumerable textiles and fabrics which, originally the costly luxuries of the favored few, are now numbered among the necessities of civilised life; with the thousand and one additional devices which minister to the comfort, convenience, and prolongation of human existence.

It would appear almost superfluous to enter upon a detailed disquisition concerning the benefits rendered by science to humanity were it not for the fact that the blessings of civilisation are so familiar that their secular creator is very frequently forgotten.

Science, then, is the result of the critical observations and experiments of the entire human race. But, irrational as it may seem, the "revelations of devout and learned," which date from a far-distant, ignorant, and uncritical past, have been blindly accepted by the majority of mankind. Other faiths besides the Christian vaunt their sacred scriptures. Vast value was in ancient Rome attached to the Sibylline verses. Homer and Hesiod were in Greece regarded as semi-sacred exponents of the Greek religion; but as civilisation advanced "the human element in their compositions was sifted from what was still considered as divine; all that was repugnant to reason, conscience, or taste was explained away either as an allegory or a corruption of the text." In our own day and generation, as many are aware, our own divine documents have been subjected to similar treatment.

The Zend-Avesta of ancient Persia and the Vedas of early India were likewise adored as revelations from God. In a later age the Mohammedan Bible, the Koran, occupied a kindred position among the faithful. The Hebrew records were similarly exalted, and, according to Protestant theology, our salvation depends upon our acceptance of the divine veracities revealed in the New Testament Scriptures.

Curiously enough, with the triumph of the Christian religion, the civilisation of Pagan Rome sank into chaos and old night. For centuries the then known world was convulsed by the persecutions, squabbles, and wholesale butcheries which were the outstanding episodes of the time. With all the advantages which flow from a revealed religion at their command, the nations steadily refused to progress. It was with the decline of the sacred and the rise of the secular spirit that the scientific field was reoccupied. Instead of trusting uncritically to the fading legends of a musty past, men began to shake themselves free from the trammels of sacerdotalism, and proceeded to face the problems presented by the real world in which their lot was cast. Continents unknown to the ancients began to

be opened up. Columbus discovered America; Magellan circumnavigated the globe. Copernicus, Galileo, and Bruno declared that our earth was not the centre of the universe, and prepared the way for the subsequent triumphs of astronomy. Newton weighed the universe in his balance. Kant and Laplace traced the genesis and evolution of the solar system. Hutton, Lyell, and their successors placed geology, the science of the earth, on a sound basis of orderly development. Astronomy, geology, and physics thus prepared the path for the doctrine of organic evolution.

With Herbert Spencer as its philosopher, and with Darwin and Haeckel as its two most powerful scientific expositors, the doctrine of the evolution of life and mind from the simplest beginnings became the accepted philosophy of all the younger searchers into nature's secrets. The Mosaic cosmogony was regarded as a product of the world's infancy. It became obvious that man had not fallen from a high condition, but had risen from a low one. The general history of man, considered as a whole, despite occasional relapses here and there, was discovered to have been one of advance towards the better and the best. Instead of a shadowy vale of sorrows and tears, our earthly home began to be looked upon as the main centre of man's healthful and beneficent activities. Human duties were to be performed while the day lasted. Man might repose in eternal sleep within the grave.

There was more material progress in the nineteenth century—which was essentially the age of scientific achievement—than all the others that went before. The standard of comfort was vastly raised, and the death-rate materially fell. The old lumbering sailing vessel gave way to the fast travelling steamship; the antiquated coach was replaced by the railway; the horse-drawn vehicle is being rapidly superseded by the motor. The dirty disease-engendering and ill-lit streets of the past are now being transformed into clean, healthy, and clearly illuminated thoroughfares. The means of transit have been so cheapened that countless people who in past ages never left their native homes may now visit celebrated cities which were previously unvisited save by a privileged few. As a result, the insular prejudices of centuries tend to disappear. All the world over, to study and understand foreigners is to appreciate their good qualities, and to sympathise with their particular point of view.

Among the notable characteristics of science is its tendency to liberate the human mind. Science, as Huxley says, commits suicide when it binds itself to a creed. On the other hand, as Shakespeare says, "In religion, what damned error but some sober brow will bless it, and approve it, with a text?" Theology is essentially stationary and stagnant. Those of its blots and blemishes which have been eliminated have been removed by the criticisms and discoveries of science. Wherever religion has come into collision with science, it has always been ignominiously defeated. For its present comparatively purified state, theology is heavily indebted to science. In every branch of secular knowledge progress is taken for granted. But the religious reformer is invariably ostracised by his clerical brethren. While the opener-up of new knowledge is accorded a respectful, if critical, scientific hearing, the progressive religionist is vilified or subjected to a conspiracy of silence. The case of Colenso in the Church of England and the more recent instance of Father Tyrrel in the Church of Rome bear abundant evidence of this melancholy truth, and these things were possible in an age of enlightenment. In more remote days, before science had humanised men's deeds, the rack, the thumbscrew, the gibbet, and the flames were the customary rewards of the heroes and martyrs of philosophical inquiry. But all clerical animosity and antagonism were unavailing. Science has, in the long run, rendered her enemy powerless.

One notable instance of the superiority of science to revelation is presented by her attitude towards the insane. Her conduct in connection with those

who claim our most unstinted pity redounds to her honor and glory. In the bad old times of sacerdotal supremacy, the mentally diseased were regarded as victims or colleagues of the Devil. The doctrine of demoniacal possession was derived, according to the Church, from revelation itself. As a consequence of this, all lunatics were regarded as the temporary abodes of evil spirits. The devils were beaten out of their bodies; they were confined in pestilential prisons, and treated as enemies to the human race. Thanks to the growth of Rationalism, the medical man was ultimately permitted to minister to their disease.

In every branch of her multifarious activities, science represents the sun of righteousness. She carries on an untiring war against all the diseases which afflict mankind. The plague, leprosy, small-pox, and other dire diseases have almost disappeared from civilised Europe. Consumption, cancer, epilepsy, dipsomania, scrofula, and other maladies must ultimately succumb to her treatment. And if the people are to secure more rational social and economic conditions, sociology, the science of society, must render assistance in bringing into being this consummation devoutly to be wished.

The hall of science, said Buckle, is the temple of democracy. Science is essentially democratic, as her gifts are showered upon high and low alike. And we stand sadly in need of a more scientific system of education. It is of supreme importance that the children of this generation, who will be the parents of the one that is to follow, should be made acquainted with the actualities of the universe. There is nothing better fitted to broaden the mental horizon than a knowledge of the marvels and wonders of great evolving nature. No grain of sand but moves a brightly millioned peopled land. In a star-mist scattered through countless miles of space are resident the promise and the potency of worlds yet unborn. The flower in the crannied wall, the ivy clinging to a moonlit ruin, the clouds as they cast their moving shadows on a sunlit plain, the still waters when they reflect the orbs of heaven on a calm, cold winter's night, the laws that govern life in childhood, adolescence, maturity, and decay, all lie within the province of scientific inquiry and explanation.

The devotees of revelation demand acquiescence in their dogmas. The student of nature, on the contrary, counsels the fullest inquiry. The only scientific dogmas are those facts and principles which have been demonstrated beyond dispute. It is sometimes objected that science robs men of the poetry of life. If by poetry, falsehood is meant, it does. The mission of science is to unmask falsehood and bring truth to light. But there is nothing in science which dwarfs or deadens the imaginative faculty. On the contrary, science by bringing us into closer contact with realities promotes the growth of the imaginative and æsthetic powers. A drop of water is not less wonderful, but more so, when the microscope reveals its true condition. What appears as a transparent liquid to the unaided eye becomes a world of wonder and beauty when examined under a magnifying glass. As Carlyle once put it, what a vast difference existed between the picture presented to Newton's dog Diamond and to that of the natural philosopher when the two gazed in company upon the starry sky! The heavens revealed no more to the dog than to a lowly savage, but to the mind of Newton a glimpse was afforded of the unspeakable vastness of the universe.

Science, then, is superior to any form of alleged revelation. It has ever ministered to the mental, moral, and social well-being of the human race. It teaches us to realise our kinship with the lower animals and deepens our sympathies with them. It lessens man's pride and arrogance; it proves that he is not a special creation fashioned in the image of God, but a product, in company with countless others, of the forces of nature. Science affords no evidence of a future life, but it assures us that our good and evil deeds live after us in the thoughts and

actions of succeeding generations. She forces the truth upon us that our duty lies in the present, and that sin is never washed away by any form of vicarious atonement. In the light of science, man's position in nature is precisely that which was accorded it by the greatest of poets and of men: "What a piece of work is man! how noble in reason! how infinite in faculty! in form and moving how express and admirable! in action how like an angel! in apprehension how like a god! the beauty of the world! the paragon of animals!"

T. F. PALMER.

Lyman Abbott on Immortality.—II.

A Lecture delivered before the Independent Religious Society (Rationalist), Chicago.

BY M. M. MANGASARIAN.

THOUGHT is no more independent of the body than is life. When I was still in the Church, one of my arguments in proof of the immateriality of thought was that the body consisted of oxygen, carbon, nitrogen, etc., and that these could not think. Can oxygen think? I would ask. If we were to place carbon or nitrogen into a glass tube, would the combination produce thought? Would the tube begin to think? But all I had to do to perceive the fallacy of my reasoning was to turn my question around and ask: Can there be thought without oxygen or nitrogen? Do we know of a single instance of the existence of mind apart from an organized body? If thought is not dependent on carbon and oxygen, why is it that there is no thought where these are not present?

Theologians make the mistake of assuming that before a given combination or organism can have a certain quality, that quality must be in each or any of the parts that make up the combination. That is to say, if oxygen, carbon, and nitrogen combined produce thought, then these elements should contain in their separate state what they produce when combined. But the reverse of this is the affirmation of both experience and science. Sugar, for instance, is a combination of so much of carbon, so much of oxygen, and so much of hydrogen, yet separately neither of these elements is sweet to the taste. Yet united they produce a new substance. Thought is the new substance which the combinations of the vibrating cells in the brain when flooded with blood from the heart produce.

The thought ability of any organism is always in precise proportion to the delicacy and perfection of the organism. As the brain develops, it thinks more and better. When the brain is shrunk or pinched, or injured by accident, its thinking becomes defective. A bullet in the head stops all mental activity, and thought does not return until the material damage is repaired. If thought or the soul is not a product of the organism, why is not the infant as good a reasoner as its grown-up parents, or if the soul is independent of the convolutions of the brain, why is not the savage as resourceful as a Shakespeare?

Again, we believe in the love, the hope, and the courage of mother because we can reasonably prove that she possessed these noble qualities. We cannot only convince ourselves, but convince also others, of the beauty of her character. When a man says his mother had the gentlest disposition he is not speculating; he can prove it. If he has any doubts of his mother's love he would be disconsolate all his life. But if I question the love and tender mercies of God it is because I cannot prove them. How a God could be infinite in power, in love, and in wisdom, and yet fail to enforce his will on earth—on this tiny atom of dust that floats in the air—as he is supposed to enforce it in heaven, is beyond my comprehension. "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." Goodness! If God does not have to ask anybody's permission to have his will done in heaven, why does

he ask us to let him have his way on earth? I believe in my mother's love and devotion because there is nothing contradictory or mysterious about it. I cannot say I believe in the love of God, because a thousand things disprove it.

The Doctor's next argument is this: "My grounds of belief in God and immortality are based upon the comforts that I get in sorrow. I am sure there is an invisible being who talks to me." Not for all the world would I take away from anyone a single comfort he may possess, but is a doctrine true because it is comforting? Even as it is by accommodating ourselves to nature that we can live at all, it is by obeying the truth instead of commanding it that truth will bless us. We would not have to go to school to learn mathematics, or chemistry, or history, if we could command these sciences to mind us. To study them means to learn how to obey them. If the Bible is true, we do not need any education because we can reverse the process and command the laws of matter and force to study us, and to suit themselves to our needs and desires. The sea must learn how to step aside for us, the iron must learn how to float when we command it; fire must not burn, and sun or moon must not move, when we so order it. It is not we, it is nature that must go to school, if the Bible is true. That is why the Jews in the Old Testament, and the Christians in the New, say not a word about schools or education. When you can work miracles education is superfluous.

The real difference between theology and science, or between the supernatural and Rationalism, is that, while the former flatters us into the belief that we may command the truth, Rationalism teaches that we must obey the truth. Sooner or later, we must learn to square our desires, our beliefs, and our hopes with the facts, if we are to live at all. The child cannot go on for ever believing that the dolls it plays with are real. If we suppress the truth from the child, we will only be postponing the day of awakening. Not to tell the truth about dolls to children does not make them real, it only hides their unreality. That is what theology does, it hides the truth. It cannot do more. Rationalism arms us for the battle of life by opening our eyes to the difficulties and dangers which confront us; theology, on the other hand, puts us off our guard by raising false hopes.

Moreover, if comforting beliefs are true, why does the missionary attack or expose the idols of the heathen? Are not wooden gods comforting to some people? Why does the missionary denounce them? But if it is to give in its place something more comforting that he takes away the wooden gods, for the same reason we take away a far-away heaven to help make this earth a heaven. What would be more consoling than the conviction that if there is another life we cannot possibly miss it, if we have made the best of this, and if there be no other life we may still have the satisfaction that we have not lost this one by throwing it away for another. Nothing could be more comforting than to try to make the present life yield all that we expect of a future life. It is the only way to deserve another life. The Rationalist has this additional comfort, that he does not let the future, with its worries and fears, spoil the present. Nor is he driven to the verge of despair by the terrible prospect of an eternity of suffering for practically the majority of the human race. Is it comforting to look forward to a time when half of humanity will be in heaven and the other half in hell, and the two worlds side by side within view of each other? What great-minded man or woman would derive any comfort from such an outlook? Who would be so callous as to congratulate himself upon such a *finale* for the universe? How pinched in heart and brain is orthodoxy! It wants a hell alongside of its heaven, as a comfort! "How could anyone live," people ask, "without the Christian hope?" But what is this hope? A heaven and a hell! Real suffering in the one place, and unreal pleasures in the other. Let not the anxieties about such a future destroy the peace and tranquillity of

the present life. If we are mortal, all the crying and fretting will not make us immortal. If, on the other hand, we are immortal, we cannot escape it. Peace to our troubled minds! One life at a time.

Furthermore, lack of anxiety about the unexplored future will help us to be more appreciative of our present opportunities. When an Italian or a Frenchman comes to America to tarry here only until he has saved enough to return to his old country, he cannot become very much interested in this country, or be sincerely attached to its institutions. It is not likely that he will even become naturalised, nor will he endeavor to assimilate our civilisation. He will remain a stranger during all the years he spends here, and America will occupy second place in his affections. In the same way, if we looked forward to a world beyond, and were always preparing to emigrate to it, we would be apt to care less and less for this world. The Christians are always talking about the next world: "I am a pilgrim, I am a stranger, and I can tarry but a night," is one of their hymns. "Here we have no abiding city," is one of the favorite texts of the pulpit. No wonder that during the Middle Ages, when faith in the next world was very much stronger, ignorance, disease, poverty, and misery played havoc with this world.

The Rationalist, not knowing anything about a future world, nor caring to speculate about it, devotes all his time to the service of the world he lives in. Oh! that the time, the money, and the energy employed to prove and preach another world had been devoted toward making this one habitable, happy, clean, and sweet! Instead of trying to get ready to migrate into some unknown world, let us do our best to make life in this world so beautiful, so exalted, so free, and so attractive as to make the people in the next world, if there is such a world, long to come and live with us!

Quieting a Maudlin Myth.

It will be remembered that when, last spring, the ill-fated *Titanic* went down the story of the heroic band playing "Nearer, My God, to Thee," until swept from the deck by the angry waves, was sent broadcast throughout the world.

This alleged incident was a fruitful theme of discourse by the thousands of pulpitours while Sunday-school teachers everywhere grew maudlin recounting to their youthful charges the alleged Christian zeal and fortitude displayed by that band as they calmly awaited death as only Christians could. But alas! this myth, like thousands of others before it, must also vanish before the light of truth.

Among the survivors of that memorable ocean tragedy was one Colonel Archibald Gracie, of Washington, D.C.

It was Colonel Gracie who, soon after his arrival here from his harrowing experience, distinguished himself by announcing in church one evening that God had saved him from the wreck in answer to his prayers. Just why God had not heard and "answered" the prayers of the 1,600 or more who perished, this special favorite of God's mercy was, perhaps, too modest to explain. It may, however, be added parenthetically that some of his more irreverent hearers declared that as it was a characteristic trait of the Colonel's to always look out for number one, it might at least be a matter of doubt whether God had had a hand in "saving" him or not.

Be that as it may, Colonel Gracie, after a long silence, in an address before the University Club, in describing some of the scenes of that fearful night, declared that not only did the band not play "Nearer, My God, to Thee," but intimated that had they attempted to do so, the men among the passengers who were doing all they could to cheer and encourage the women and children would have prevented them, forcibly, if necessary.

Furthermore, Colonel Gracie declared that these bandsmen, who have been given a place in history for their fortitude in continuing to play as the tragedy was being enacted, and who were said to have gone to their deaths in the performance of their duty, so that they might cheer others with their music, in fact ceased to play some time before the ship went down. He added that he himself saw the men throw away their instruments, showing that the natural instinct of self-preservation outweighed the weaker side of human nature, mere sentiment.

What the band really did play was "ragtime" music, which was, of course, the sensible thing to do. This the Colonel himself admits when he said, "If the band had played that familiar hymn, panic would have resulted. Fixing the minds of the passengers on the possibility of their being nearer to God, and I say it seriously, would have been the last thing wanted."

He further declared that no music was played for fully half an hour before the *Titanic* finally sank, and that the men must have realised that their time could be much better employed in helping to load the boats, and this they probably did.

Two facts, then, stand out prominently in Colonel Gracie's narrative, and they are, that the band did not play "Nearer, My God, to Thee," nor any other hymn, and that they ceased playing altogether fully half an hour before the sinking of the ship.

Thus is shattered by an unimpeachable witness the "Nearer, My God, to Thee" myth, but this will not prevent our clerical friends from repeating this exploded yarn for generations to come. But now that the truth is out, all *Truthseeker* readers can in the future refute the statement by quoting as their authority Colonel Archibald Gracie, an eye and ear witness, who, on the evening of November 23, 1912, in a speech before the University Club of Washington, D.C., publicly denied that the band on the *Titanic* on the night she went down played "Nearer, My God, to Thee" or any other hymn; but, on the contrary, played ragtime music until within a half hour before she was engulfed by the waves, after which no music was played at all.

—*Truthseeker* (New York).

J. J. SHIRLEY, M.D.

The belief in a God has hitherto been the seed of all the bloody dissensions among men. The various ways of worshipping an imaginary being have caused more wars and ruin than all the varieties of other interests. With the disappearance of belief in God disappears the foundation of all religious hostility, and in its place arises the foundation of human equality and universal peace. All wars have sprung from two grounds: on the political field, the monarchical subjects fight for their earthly despots; on the religious, the godly subjects fight for their heavenly ones; and as on the political field the abolition of Royal Majesty and its subjects lays the foundation for a union of the nations, so on the religious domain the abolition of the Divine Majesty and its believers lays the foundation for the solidarity of humanity.—*Karl Heinzen*.

As I stood behind the coffin of my little son the other day, with my mind bent on anything but disputation, the officiating minister read, as a part of his duty, the words, "If the dead rise not again, let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." I cannot tell you how inexpressibly they shocked me. Paul had neither wife nor child, or he must have known that his alternative involved a blasphemy against all that was best and noblest in human nature. I could have laughed with scorn. What! because I am face to face with irreparable loss, because I have given back to the source from whence it came the cause of great happiness—still retaining through all my life the blessings that have sprung, and will spring, from that cause—am I to renounce my manhood and, howling, grovel in bestiality? Why, the very apes know better, and, if you shoot their young, the poor brutes grieve their grief out, and do not immediately seek distraction in a gorge.—*Thomas Henry Huxley*.

Obituary.

We have to record the death of David Turnbull, of 140 Raobery-street, Glasgow, on Friday, December 20, at the age of twenty-seven. For ten years he had been helpless from paralysis, during which time he had been attended with a mother's sublime devotion. "Mrs. Turnbull," a Glasgow correspondent writes, "nursed him through all those years with a devotion that never slackened. Her case shows how a rational view of things may mitigate the worst evils. Her son was only seventeen years of age when he was stricken down, and she recognised that his only salvation from the dreadful calamity of physical helplessness lay in stimulating the activities of his mind. She read to him day after day, she interested him in politics and Free-thought, he looked forward to his weekly *Freethinker*, and was as interested as any of the family in the progress of the movement." We desire to associate ourselves personally with this tribute to a nobly affectionate woman. The Turnbills all ring true, but the mother is one of nature's exceptional products. Her son's death is, in one sense, a happy relief; but the blow of bereavement is felt when it falls, and we beg to assure her of our sincere sympathy.

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.

CROYDON PUBLIC (SMALL) HALL (George-street): 7.15, C. Cohen, "Christianity and Social Problems."

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (Mr. Cowell's, 44 Jenner-road, Stoke Newington): 7.30, Business Meeting—Lecturers' List and Dinner, etc.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Workmen's Hall, Romford-road, Stratford, E.): 7.30, R. H. Rosetti, "Christianity Before Christ."

COUNTRY.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N. S. S. (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 7, E. W. Alderson, "Cremation."

OUTDOOR.

LEIGH (Market Place): Robert Mearns, 3, "Thought the Great Want of the Age"; 3, "Is the Bible the Word of God?"

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