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There can be no consistence in feelings which are not supported by convictions.—AUGUSTE COMTE.

The Dismal Failure.

THE worst of Christianity is that it is such a dismal failure. Jesus is reputed to have said that the tree must be judged by its fruit. Apply that test to the religion which bears his name, and what is the result? We may settle the point by taking a single fact. Not a great many years ago the Japanese had an official report presented to them as to the advisability of their accepting the Christian religion—and the report was unfavorable. The social and moral state of Christian nations was such as to condemn Christianity. The commission recommended the Japanese not to plant a shoot in their own country from so rotten a tree. So they accepted Western science and declined Western religion.

What reader of Newman's *Apologia* does not remember the magnificent and pathetic passage in which he describes the contradiction between the idea of God within him and what he beheld when he looked into the world and human society? Amongst the miserable things he enumerated were "the disappointments of life, the defeat of good, the prevalence and intensity of sin, the pervading idolatries, the corruptions, the dreary hopeless irreligion." All which, apparently, ought to have been banished from the world, or hopelessly subdued, in the course of nearly two thousand years.

A very different writer from Newman preached a powerful sermon from the same text forty years afterwards. James Cotter Morison, the Positivist, in his *Service of Man*, had a chapter on "What Christianity Has Done." He argued that it had done very little for men in this world, whatever it had (or had not) done for them in the next world; and he quoted Spurgeon, the famous Baptist, as declaring that the world was a bad in his day as it was in the days of Sodom and Gomorrah.

Coventry Patmore, the poet, saw that Christianity could not be defended on the ground of its temporal benefit to mankind; so he took this difficulty by the horns and tried to turn it out of the way. Speaking as a Christian (he was a Roman Catholic), he admitted with regard to Christianity that "it is open to question whether the race, as a race, has been much affected by it, and whether the external and visible evil and good which have come of it do not pretty nearly balance one another." But what of that? Christianity was not meant to give people food and drink, comfortable houses, and easy work; nor to improve bad or even indifferently good people. Christ came for the sake of those who are called "the elect." He lived and died to give all a chance of salvation, but he knew and said that "the number of individuals to be actually benefited by his having done so would be few; so that it was practically for those few only that he lived and died." Judging Christianity, therefore, by the common standards of progress was judging it unfairly. It was asking whether it had done what it never professed to do. The real question was, had it done what it did profess to do? And the answer to that question could only be supplied by "the elect" themselves.

This was not meant to be clever. Coventry Patmore meant it seriously. But it *was* clever, all the same. His admission, however, remains; namely, that, as far as human reason and common evidence are concerned, Christianity is decidedly not a success.

The very reverse of this is maintained by the general crowd of Christian apologists, who pretend that all the good—even the *secular* good—in modern society is due to their religion. They are the salt of the earth, and they keep it from stinking. They do even more than that. They are gradually "curing" the whole mass. Such is their contention, and they satisfy the ignorant believers who listen to them; while those who are better informed smile at the latest arts of successful priestcraft, and recognise that a religion founded upon ignorance and credulity must preserve itself by a continuance of the same agencies.

Murder will out, and so will truth. The most plausible deceivers have their lucid intervals of sincerity. General William Booth let the cat out of the bag in one of his addresses to the Salvation Army Congress. This is what he said:—

"Those who followed the Master two thousand years ago turned the world upside down. Go and turn it upside down again. There is as much sin, as much wickedness, and as much devilry in the world as there was then—ay! and more."

Here we have a corroboration of Newman and Spurgeon. We were told by one who was supposed to know that the world is positively worse than it was nineteen hundred years ago. Not the *heathen* world, be it noticed, but the *Christian* world, for it is chiefly within Christendom that the Salvation Army operates, and General Booth had not then visited any heathen country in his circumnavigations of salvation.

Jesus Christ is said to have come from heaven to save the world. According to the New Testament there is no other name by which men *can* be saved. It is Jesus Christ or nobody. He lived a troubled life, died an ignominious death, rose from the dead, and ascended into heaven. But before leaving this world he commissioned his apostles (the first Salvation Army) to found his Church and preach his gospel to every creature. They did their best, though they did not quite "turn the world upside down." For three hundred years Christianity made its way by persuasion, and converted about a twentieth of the inhabitants of the Roman Empire. Then it secured the patronage of Constantine, and was made the State religion; and by means of bribery, ostracism, and bitter persecution it overcame all opposition in a century or so, and afterwards had the Western world to itself. From that time until quite recently it tolerated no rival, and wielded an absolute power. Its income runs into scores of millions, it has hundreds of thousands of churches and preachers, it has all the power of respectability on its side, and in some countries it still controls education. It does so in Great Britain, for instance; yet it was in the capital of Great Britain, the biggest Christian city on earth, and the birthplace of this very Salvation Army, that General Booth unhesitatingly declared that there is more sin, wickedness, and devilry in the world now than there was before Christianity was introduced.

Did any Freethinker ever frame a more terrible indictment of Christianity than this?

G. W. FOOTE.

Religion and Sex.—II.

(Continued from p. 147.)

THIS connection of the sexual life of woman, including childbirth, with supernatural powers, seems to lie at the root of the widespread religious belief in the "uncleanness" of women. Modern apologists have obscured the real significance of the meaning of "unclean" in religious ritual by giving the word a hygienic or sanitary significance. In reality it is no more than an example of the principle of "taboo." Thus, it is an universal rule that when a particular animal is the totem of a tribe it becomes, so far as that tribe is concerned, "sacred." Members of the tribe will neither eat its flesh nor kill it, except under pressure of necessity, and then only with due religious ceremony. A tribe of American Indians whose totem is the bear will not eat bear flesh except as a religious function, and, as far as is possible, will abstain altogether. Or, to take a more familiar example, swine's flesh was not eaten by the Jews—not because they thought it to be undesirable from the point of view of dietetics, but because, as Robertson Smith showed, the pig was a totem with many of the Semitic tribes. It was not an unclean animal in the modern sense of the word; it was a holy animal. So with the Syrians, the dove was so holy that to touch it made one unclean for a whole day. Even contact with avowedly "holy" things by unauthorised hands rendered one unclean, and demanded a special process of purification.*

The real significance of "unclean," when used in connection with religious ceremonies, is, then, "holy." Havelock Ellis properly ascribes non-recognition of this truth to "ignorance of primitive religious ideas."† And Robertson Smith says:—

"Holiness and uncleanness.....are in their origin indistinguishable.....The acts that cause uncleanness are exactly the same that among savage nations place a man under taboo, and these acts are often involuntary, and often innocent, or even necessary to society. The savage, accordingly, imposes a taboo on a woman in childbed or during her courses.....simply because birth and everything connected with the propagation of the species on the one hand, and disease and death on the other, seem to him to involve the action of superhuman agencies of a different kind. If he attempts to explain, he does so by supposing that on these occasions spirits of deadly power are present; at all events, the persons involved seem to him to be sources of mysterious danger, which has all the character of an infection, and may extend to other people unless due precautions are observed."‡

The sacramentally "unclean" nature of women is brought out very clearly in the regulations which debar women from religious ceremonies. Among the Australians, women are shut out from any part in the religious mysteries. In Fiji, women are excluded from the temples. In the Sandwich Isles, if a woman touches offerings to the gods they are made "unclean." The same regulation obtains in the Society Islands; and we have a parallel in the Church Council of Auxerre, which forbade a woman approaching the altar during the celebration of Mass, or to touch the Eucharist with bare hands. In Melanesia, women are excluded from religious ceremonies. The Ainos of Japan allow a woman to prepare the sacrifice, but not to offer it. In India, if a woman or a dog touch a consecrated image it is unclean. It will be remembered that in the Gospels, Jesus, after his resurrection, forbids the woman to touch him, while allowing Thomas to feel his flesh. Among the Jews, up to the present time, women have no part in the religious ritual. In the Christian Church the general exclusion of women from the priestly office had its roots in the same primitive view of the nature of women. During the

Middle Ages, the Church supplied itself with sopranos by providing eunuchs rather than employ women.* The "churching" of women not improbably had its origin in the desire to exorcise the supernatural influence contracted by childbirth.

The persistence of this primitive view of woman's nature is mainly responsible for the fierce invective against women by early Christian writers. In their case we are observing the play of primitive ideas expressed in forms determined by changed conditions. But it needs little study to show that animating their invective is the original conviction that has been described. The ruling idea was that woman was charged, so to speak, with a dangerous supernatural influence. In this connection it may be recorded that Westermarck, during his stay among the country people of Morocco, was often struck by the superstitious fear men had of women. They were believed to be much better versed in magic than were men, and were, consequently, more dangerous. In Dahomey, also, no man will interfere with his wife while her "fetish" is upon her. Here, also, the curses of women are greatly feared, being much more powerful than those of men. Again we have a parallel in the case of Christianity, which so frequently revived and strengthened the lower and more primitive religious beliefs. During the witch mania, the overwhelming proportion of those who were punished or put to death for intercourse with Satan, were women. As a matter of fact, more women than men did believe themselves capable of such intercourse. But the Christian's explanation was that it was due to the Devil having more power over women than men.

It would take me too far out of my course to dwell upon the influence that this belief in the relation of woman to dangerous supernatural powers has had in determining her social position. Whatever the nature of the subsequent social and economic forces that gave rise to the notion of female inferiority, it may be taken as certain that these rested upon the primitive ideas I have been describing. For with the savage, woman is not really thought of as inferior to man—she is different from him. And she is different in a sense that calls for regulations concerning her actions. Many things are "taboo" to her in her own interest and in the interest of society at large. She is spiritually infectious, very much so at certain times, but more or less so at all times. Later, when other forces begin to operate, the ground is prepared for the growth of a belief in the inferiority of women. And thus, upon the primitive basis of the greater spiritual malignancy of women, there is reared social and political regulations that seek justification by arguments more or less specious, and by methods more or less blameworthy. "Our resemblances to the savage," says Frazer, "are still more numerous than our differences from him," and it is certain that due comprehension of the workings of the savage mind is essential to the proper understanding of "civilised" society.

It is, perhaps, necessary to point out another way in which sexual matters have, in early times, a close connection with religious worship. This is the very widely spread worship of phallic objects. The worship of the generative powers in the form of stones, pillars, and carved representations of male and female organs plays an unquestionably important part in early religions, although it has naturally been too hardly pressed by some theorists. Still, it is met with practically all over the world. The stone set up by Jacob (Gen. xxviii. 18-19) is of this character. So were the stones set up in the Temple itself, and against which some of the prophets protested. Major-General Forlong has also argued that the God of the Jewish Ark was a sexual symbol. In India, phallic worship is widely scattered. In Mohammedanism, it is met with in the famous "Black Stone" of Mecca. In Greece, it was associated with the cult of Dionysius. In Egypt, the phallus was carried in religious processions by women,

* Dr. Robertson Smith has compiled an interesting list of animals that were sacred to various Semitic tribes, and which were forbidden as food. *Kinship and Marriage in Early Arabia*, pp. 194-201.

† *Studies in the Psychology of Sex*; 1901; pp. 208-9.

‡ *Religion of the Semites*, pp. 427-8.

* Westermarck, *Origin and Development of Moral Ideas*, vol. i., p. 666.

as also in Greece during the celebration of the Eleusinian mysteries. In Rome, the worship of Priapus was well established. It is met with even in America among the ancient Mexicans and Peruvians, and also among North American tribes. The sale of phalli was common in parts of Italy certainly as late as the early part of the nineteenth century. Phallic figures existed in some Christian churches down to the end of the eighteenth century, and women, to obtain children, either placed themselves on the figure of the saint, or scraped the appropriate part of the effigy, and drank the scrapings in water.

There is no need to multiply details.* Nor is there any necessity for dwelling at any length upon the origin of the practice. In all probability, it is originally a form of magic intended to have a productive influence upon the crops. It is at least significant that the periods of licentiousness allowed by many tribes have the nature of a religious ceremony, and usually takes place during the festival of sowing. And from this to the practice of religious prostitution would be an easy step. It only needs adding that, to the primitive intelligence, phalli are not symbols, but actualities. They are regarded as the dwelling-place of the power that causes reproduction. Thus, in India, "The lingam, issuing from the hands of the workman, is deemed an instrument without virtue; it acquires it only by consecration—that is, when a Brahmin has blessed it, and has rendered incarnate in it the Deity by religious ceremonies." †

A survey of the facts thus serves to make plain how, from the very earliest times, religious ideas have been closely interwoven with the sexual life. In this respect, sexual phenomena are on all fours with phenomena in general; for the primitive mind, as we have seen, associates supernatural or supernormal activities with practically everything. But this general attitude is accentuated and prolonged by the strange and unaccountable facts of sexual development; and there is, consequently, perpetuated a very close and intimate alliance between sexual and religious feelings. The connection is so intimate that it is not surprising to find the two sets of feelings to be frequently interchangeable, and for the association to have persisted down to the present day. In future articles I hope to show how outbursts of religious zeal have been almost invariably, if not invariably, accompanied by displays of sexual extravagance, and that very much of what is taken in modern times to be the expression of fervent belief is little more than normal or abnormal sexual feeling. It is not pretended that religion is no more than sexual feeling. The religious ideas has a quite independent origin. But once it exists, it lives by feeding upon aspects of life that are in no genuine sense of the word religious. And by studying religion along these lines, it is possible to make plain much that would otherwise be wrapped in obscurity.

(To be continued.) C. COHEN.

"The Godless Good."

THE Thirty-Nine Articles were agreed upon by the archbishops and bishops of both Provinces, and the whole clergy in the Convocation held in the year 1562, "for the avoiding of diversities of opinions, and for the establishing of consent touching true religion." They were adopted by the Irish Church in 1685, by the Episcopal Church in America in 1801, and in Scotland in 1804. These Articles of Religion contain the public standard of belief for all Episcopalians; and upon the whole clergy they are sup-

posed to be absolutely binding, although a large amount of liberty is generally allowed in their interpretation. It is to one of them only that we wish to draw attention on the present occasion, namely the Thirteenth, which is entitled "Of Works before Justification," and reads thus:—

"Works done before the grace of Christ and the Inspiration of his Spirit, are not pleasant to God, forasmuch as they spring not of faith in Jesus Christ, neither do they make men meet to receive grace, nor (as the School authors say) deserve grace of congruity; yea rather, for that they are not done as God hath willed and commanded them to be done, we doubt not but they have the nature of sin."

This Article is not more irrational than many of the others; and it must be frankly admitted that it expresses a conviction which the Christian Church has consistently held from the beginning, and which it must always hold or cease to be Christian. To say that salvation is by faith is tantamount to asserting that unbelievers in Christ cannot be good. Even so progressive a theologian as Professor Peake declares that faith implies a sense of guilt and the impossibility of self-salvation. The sinner must renounce all other grounds of salvation and cast himself upon Christ alone. No orthodox divine can hold the view that moral goodness is attainable except through faith in and reliance upon the Atonement.

We know how utterly ridiculous and how absolutely false such teaching is; but its being thoroughly Christian is beyond all doubt. Unbelievers may seem to have virtues, but in heaven's sight they have nothing but splendid vices. They may and often do appear to be good, but at heart they are desperately wicked and full of all vileness. The apparent goodness which many of them exhibit is "the effect of hereditary Christianity—of the impetus towards good given by a religious upbringing, which lasts on after belief has faded." Even Professor Sanday, of Oxford, "fails to see what solid foundation for any system of morals" there can be apart from the Christian religion. When a man parts with his faith he loses every substantial ground or motive for the least remnant of morality. Of course, a man may be better than his creed. "This is what constantly happens," Dr. Sanday continues; "a Christian upbringing tells, and the effects of it survive after it has been given up as theoretically untenable" (*A New Marcion*, p. 16). It is also maintained that many good people who imagine that they are Sceptics are in reality genuine believers. "To all intents and purposes they are convinced Christians.....Their doubts belong to the hour, or even to what we might call 'the accident of birth.' Had they lived a hundred years ago they would have been evangelicals."

Now, an interesting article appeared in the *Spectator* for February 22, entitled "The Problem of the Godless Good," in which it is frankly admitted that multitudes of even militant Secularists are capable of thoughts, words, and deeds of highest excellence. The writer believes that such excellence exists without being the effect of "hereditary Christianity," or of a definitely Christian upbringing. In thus thinking, he shows plainly that he is not a good Christian. The curious thing, however, is that he gives many godless people the credit of showing forth what he calls "the Christian virtues." Is he not aware that there are no "Christian virtues"? The alleged virtues Jesus is supposed to have insisted upon most firmly are never shown forth by anybody, while the virtues which many Christians do show forth are not Christian but common human virtues. But we sincerely thank him for his unequivocal acknowledgment of the actual existence of "a vast and increasing number of good people who are not religious." He says:—

"It may have been our privilege to have seen a man sacrifice his life for scientific research or for the deliverance of his neighbors from the cruel bondage of disease, and we may know that he professed to be a Materialist. We may have received such kindness and sympathy as we can never forget or repay from a man—and we

* Those who wish further information may consult General Forlong's great work *The Rivers of Life*; Brown's *Dionysiac Myth*; Forlong's *Short Studies in the Science of Comparative Religion*, pp. 339-40, 352-6, 538-42; Payne Knight's *Symbolical Language of Ancient Art and Mythology*, pp. 10-12, 142, and 172; Westropp's *Primitive Symbolism*; Wake's *Phallism in Early Religions*; Payne Knight's *Worship of Priapus*, etc.

† Delafosse, cited by Westropp, *Primitive Symbolism*, p. 52.

might even say nowadays, though the case is rarer, from a woman—in whom the ordinarily received doctrines of religion produced nothing but a bitter irritation. And more than this is true: we have not only seen such people produce what we call, and rightly call, 'the fruits of the spirit,' but we have seen them the recipients of such help and consolation as our fathers believed to be reserved for what old-fashioned people called 'the servants of God,' and reserved for them alone. For instance, who has not felt his heart sink on hearing of some misfortune which threatens a friend who has no belief in the sustaining power of God? The misfortune has fallen, and we dare hardly turn our eyes towards our friend. The blow, we feel, will distract, agonise, humiliate him. On the contrary, when we see him we are amazed. He is calm, self-possessed, anxious not to distress those near and dear to him. Such courage seems possible enough in one who can resign himself to the will of God, but almost miraculous in him who trusts to nothing outside himself."

That is very touchingly said, and one feels that it is so entirely true. The writer of it has no patience whatever with those religious people who will not look at the goodness of Sceptics, and who "in their terror of mental confusion declared first that such goodness was but self-interest, and then in their rage at being unable wholly to shut their eyes to the goodness of the godless, cursed such goodness and ventured to declare that 'works done before the grace of Christ.....have the nature of sin.'" We do not blame religious people for such an attitude to unbelievers. Being Christians, they cannot cherish any other attitude. Their religion renders any other attitude quite impossible. As an Article in the Christian Creed we can find no fault with the Thirteenth in the Book of Common Prayer. To improve such a creed is impracticable: the only thing it needs is annihilation, not expurgation. Our writer advocates the pruning of the credal tree, but we recommend its being completely uprooted from the soil of humanity. As long as Articles I, II, III, and IV remain, Article XIII. must be retained as an essential part of a whole that deserves nothing but unqualified condemnation.

At this point our agreement with the writer of the article under consideration comes to an end. His admission of the real goodness of many godless people is made, not in the interest of Freethought, but in that of his belief in what he calls the magnanimity of God. Magnanimity is a new attribute of God, discovered, we fancy, for the first time by the writer of the *Spectator* discourse. How does the Almighty use this his latest discovered attribute? By not repaying the godless good in their own coin. Whilst they deny him he graciously recognises them by conferring the gift of goodness upon them without their knowing it. "To believe—to have even a lurking suspicion—that God takes no thought for those who pay him no homage," we are told, "is to sacrifice the character of God in order to exalt the duty of godliness." The godless good, we are further assured, "are the recipients of the direct grace of God, a gift which he still bestows upon the unthankful who render him no service but the sweet-smelling odor of their good deeds." For ourselves, we must sadly confess our total inability to see how this unbiblical, untheological, and astounding idea reveals the magnanimity of God. In our judgment, it is an idea that lands its author in hopeless confusion. Why are some godless people the recipients of the direct grace of God while others are not? Why does he withhold his direct grace, the grace that bears the fruit of good deeds, from some of the godly, who acknowledge him in all their ways and sing his praises day and night, and grant it to others? Can it be a good God who is guilty of such shocking partiality? Then, again, if God exists, why are there good and bad people, and why are even the very best so far short of perfection? These are awkward questions which no believer in God can satisfactorily answer. On this writer's own showing, goodness yields no advantages. He represents the religious man as not unnaturally saying, "Why should I have borne the burden and heat of

the day, and tried all my life to honor God, and then get no more benefits than a man who has done so much less?" Our author meets that objection thus:—

"To say this, however, is only to insist that 'godliness' should be 'a way of gain.' As to the value of faith, it is not a thing which can be computed by adding up advantages. It is known to those who have faith and to those who desire to have it alike, it is a thing for which many men would sell all that they have, but it is not 'a way of gain.'"

That is bad exegesis and worse reasoning. Paul says that "godliness with contentment is great gain." If it is not a gain, if it yields no advantages, what in the name of wonder is the good of it? The object of the article under discussion is to show that godliness is not a gain, that the people who have it are no better, and many of them not as good, as many of those who have it not. We agree, and beg to submit that this admission furnishes an irrefutable argument not simply for the valuelessness of godliness, but for the non-existence of the God in whom the author of the article seems to believe. A play-acting Deity, such as we have here, is wholly unworthy of the allegiance of mankind.

Men are just exactly what heredity and environment have made them, and their power over either is extremely small, and works with exceeding slowness. Many ages of the best education could effect but slight changes. And yet it is in individual and collective effort that the only hope of real improvement lies. It is the godless good who will be the saviors of the world, while the godly good and bad alike are doomed to disappear.

J. T. LLOYD.

Dr. Saleeby on Materialism.

"The myth of a First Cause obviously originated in that confusion of ideas, common to past ignorance and perpetuated by present pedantry, which confounds the philosophical first cause with the scientific or cosmical first causes; the linear hypotheses of beginnings and ends with the true cyclic facts of unending evolution and devolution. What man is really anxious to ascertain is, not who the Causer of the laws of the universe is, for the Causer would have to explain his own origin and existence, but what the laws themselves are."—REDCOTE DEWAR, *From Matter to Man*, 1898, p. 12.

"Man is free when 'Man is to man the supreme being.' So it belongs to the completion of liberalism that every other supreme being be annulled, theology overturned by anthropology, God and his grace laughed down, 'Atheism' universal.....Therefore the individual's God, 'my God,' must be put an end to."—MAX STIRNER, *The Ego and his Own*, 1912, p. 189.

"When Zarathustra was alone, however, he spake thus unto his heart: 'Can it actually be possible! This old saint in his forest bath not heard aught of God being dead.'"—NITZSCHE, *Thus spake Zarathustra*, 1896, p. 4.

OUR readers will regret to learn, on the authority of Dr. Saleeby, that nemesis has at last overtaken Materialism.

When we opened our *Daily Chronicle* on Feb. 11, and read Dr. Saleeby's announcement, we shuddered at the gloomy prospect. A dreadful foreboding filled us with despair. Should we, indeed, have to return to the hideous chapel of our childhood? Must we seek out an official agent of religion—a Methodist parson, for instance—to make our peace with God?

But, upon second thoughts, we fancied we had heard similar reports before. In fact, now we come to think of it, there is scarcely a day passes but what some paper or parson reports Materialism as dead or discredited. When they are slack in the *Daily Mail* office, they put the office boy on to do a column on the death of Materialism; like Paul, it dies daily. Jesus Christ is said to have risen from the dead once; this is a trifle, for Materialism has risen from the dead thousands of times, and, like Hercules after his falls to mother earth, arises more vigorous than ever.

But let us see what Dr. Saleeby's nemesis consists of. He first calls attention to the fact that several years ago Sir William Ramsay made the sensational

discovery that the atom, so far from being indivisible, as its name implies, was really of a complex nature and could be split up into simpler atoms. Yes; and we can remember there was great jubilation over the splitting of "the mighty atom" in pious circles—Materialism being regarded as now doubly dead. Whereas the truth was, that the theory—expounded by Clerk Maxwell and endorsed by Professor Tait and Balfour Stewart—that the atoms were indivisible, indestructible, and all of exactly the same size, therefore they bore the stamp of the manufactured article, and so bore testimony to the existence of a manufacturer or creator of atoms—that is, to a God—was completely demolished by the new discovery. Strange to say, Dr. Saleeby overlooked—no doubt inadvertently—this phase of the discovery of the divisibility of the atom in his *Chronicle* article.

After telling us of the splitting of the atom, Dr. Saleeby goes on to report that Sir William Ramsay, Professor Collie, and Mr. Patterson have now succeeded, or claim to have succeeded, in manufacturing atoms themselves from energy. Upon this Dr. Saleeby remarks:—

"It is the very nemesis of Materialism to discover that the solid atoms on which it built are not material at all. If there should be no such thing as matter, Materialism would appear to be only the latest of many superstitions. That which we call energy is seen to be the ultimate reality of the physical universe, a reality which takes many forms, including those which we call the atoms of the elements. And what, then, is energy? the puzzled philosopher may ask; and I know no better answer than has been left us by all the honest and profound thinkers of the past—that they only know what energy does, not what it is; but that it makes manifest the Universal Being,—

'Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man;
A motion and a spirit, that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things.'

So Materialists like Buchner, Helmholtz, Berthelot, Clifford, and Sir Ray Lankester are the really superstitious people, while "all the honest and profound thinkers"—like Dr. Saleeby, for instance—believe in the "Universal Being" who dwells in the light of the setting suns, etc.

It would have been much more to the purpose if the honest and profound Doctor had condescended to explain *how* energy, any more than matter, "makes manifest the Universal Being," instead of discharging Wordsworth's poetry at us and leaving the field. Apparently, Dr. Saleeby keeps this quotation constantly by him, ready for his hour of need, for we find it quoted in his *Cycle of Life*; 1904; p. 260; where it is described as the belief of modern philosophy and of "the greatest minds of the past."

Now, let us consider the real facts upon which this diatribe against Materialism is founded—for Dr. Saleeby is in too great a hurry to reach his conclusions to give a clear statement of them—the facts are these: Sir William Ramsay, Professor Collie, and Mr. Patterson, during a series of experiments, came to the conclusion that when cathode rays are passed through pure hydrogen gas in a certain manner, there appears in the hydrogen tube considerable quantities of neon, one of the rarer elements of the atmosphere; and further, by some changes of conditions, the element helium is substituted for neon. There are, Sir William Ramsay observes, three explanations for this phenomena: (1) The gases may be derived from the aluminium cathode or from the numerous elements present in the glass. (2) Or, that hydrogen is converted into these gases. (3) Or, that electricity itself is responsible for the birth of these elements. Of these three explanations Sir William believes the last to be the correct one.

However, Professor J. J. Thompson and Mr. Frederick Soddy, who have themselves experimented in the same direction, deny that these gases are the result of transmutation of hydrogen, or the product of electricity.

Sir J. J. Thompson has himself observed that the gases neon and helium appear in the tube at the commencement of the experiment; but that, after the experiment had been in progress for four days and the apparatus pumped out, none of the gases neon and helium could be detected. But upon replacing the old iron electrodes with new ones, they reappeared; and he comes to the conclusion that the gases are present in the metal, and are liberated by the action of the cathode rays.*

Mr. Soddy also states that other investigators have also obtained exactly similar results when using aluminium electrodes. Sir Oliver Lodge is of a similar opinion.

So much for Dr. Saleeby's mare's-nest. But suppose that it could be proved that matter was a product of electricity, how would it affect the position of the opponents of Materialism? When it was thought that proof had been found of the indestructibility and conformity to size of the atom, that was a proof of a Creator and the downfall of Materialism. Now, when it has been demonstrated that the atoms are not indestructible, and it is claimed that atoms can be manufactured by man, that also proves—according to Dr. Saleeby—the existence of a Creator and the nemesis of Materialism. With Dr. Saleeby it is "heads I win, tails you lose." No doubt, if it were possible to prove that atoms were neither created, evolved, or indestructible, Dr. Saleeby would detect—with the help of Wordsworth—still stronger proof of creative power.

As for Dr. Saleeby's idea, that if matter is a product of energy that would prove the nemesis of Materialism, this only proves his incompetence to deal with the subject. He evidently looks upon matter as something distinct from energy. That energy is harnessed to matter something like a horse to a cart, or, rather, in the same manner that he believes the body is inhabited by a soul; which shows that he has never taken the trouble to find out what Materialism really means.

Buchner devotes the whole of the first chapter of his *Force and Matter* to the demonstration that matter and force are indivisible; that there is no matter without force, and no force without matter. And when Dr. Saleeby talks about the production of matter from electricity being the nemesis of Materialism, he merely demonstrates his utter lack of knowledge of the subject. For, look you! Sir William Ramsay himself has declared that "it is almost certain that negative electricity is a particular form of matter; and positive electricity is matter deprived of negative electricity—that is, minus this electric matter." And again:—

"Recent researches make it probable that what used to be called negative electricity is really a substance. Indeed, the relative weight of its particles has been measured; each is about one seven-hundredth of the mass of an atom of hydrogen; and the mass of an atom of hydrogen is the smallest of all masses of what we have been used to call matter." †

So that electricity itself is really a form of matter—not even a quotation from Wordsworth will alter that fact. No nemesis is required to deal with Dr. Saleeby; he rambles on to his own destruction. The *Athenaeum* (March 30, 1912), in noting his *Natural Ethics in Theory and Practice*, observes: "These three short lectures cannot be said to be enlightening. Dr. Saleeby touches great subjects lightly and without sufficient knowledge. The lectures sound like sermons which might have been delivered from a pulpit." His religiosity entitles him to be termed the Marie Corelli of science.

W. MANN.

It was no part of God's primitive design that the race should be continued by sexual union. Marriage is the outcome of sin.—*St. Gregory of Nyssa*.

* See *Nature*, February 20; and *English Mechanic and World of Science*, February 14 and 21.

† Sir William Ramsay, *Essays Biographical and Chemical*, 1908, pp. 176-196.

Acid Drops.

Lord Roberts appealed the other day to the Churches to help dissipate the view that there is anything unchristian in preparing for war. The *Guardian* readily responds to the appeal, and puts in a couple of columns of editorial in favor of conscription—under the name of compulsory service. For our part, we quite agree with Lord Roberts and the editor of the *Guardian* that there is nothing—certainly so far as historic Christianity is concerned—unchristian about war. Quite the contrary; for Christianity has done more to consecrate war, to foment war, and to perpetuate warfare than any other religion in the world. Look at the present situation. The peace of the world is not threatened by any non-Christian nation. Our huge armaments, and the armaments of other countries, are all piled up—to put the matter in its most favorable light—against the aggressive cupidity of Christian nations. And no one ever looks to the Churches to alter this state of things. They will continue to pipe the tune that is popular for the moment, whatever it may be. The *Guardian* says the one thing certain is that compulsory service will be imposed upon us by adversity if we do not adopt it voluntarily. Well, all things are possible with a people ready to go into hysteria over a few fire-balloons, mistaken for airships, and who are crazy enough to picture an enemy's airship secretly spying out the land with flaming searchlights hung fore and aft; but we hope that there are yet enough level-headed people in the country to prevent our taking that step.

The Albanian Committee, writing under a full sense of responsibility, endorses the reports of the massacres by the Balkan Allies, and especially the Bulgars, in Albania—for whose freedom they pretend to be fighting. We take the following passage from the Committee's manifesto:—

"Behind the veil that hides so many Balkan truths, a desperate effort has been made from Belgrade to limit Albania's right by reducing the number of Albanians competent to urge it. Wholesale massacre of unarmed men, together with women and children, has been resorted to as a deliberate policy, especially in Prizrend, Uskub, Mitrovitza, Luma, Prishtina, and Djakova; a part of the terrible story has been told by the *Daily Telegraph*, but what has been told is insignificant in measure to what remains. Political massacre has been one of the most formidable weapons in the armory of the Allies and has been used with terrible effect against the Albanians, whose sole offence is that they exist, and being in existence, need a place on the earth."

The Turk massacres in hot blood. The Bulgar massacres on a cool calculation.

"Sunday is being lost," sadly says the *Church Times*, "and churchgoing is a decaying habit." This is only too true, in spite of the offer of a great reward—in heaven.

Canon Otley says that a telegram received from Harry Lauder, "With you safeguarding Sunday. Wish you all success," was "worth more than half-a-dozen messages from great ecclesiastics." How have the mighty fallen! Consider, a message from a music-hall singer of the mental calibre of Harry Lauder being worth more than half-a-dozen messages from great ecclesiastics! We have a poor opinion of great ecclesiastics of to-day, but we were inclined to think better of them than this. Even if Canon Otley means that it impresses the Christian portion of the populace more than would a message from leading Churchmen, it merely changes the issue without materially altering it. We are left wondering at the mental quality of the people affected by the message. Still, it is a sign of the times when a dignitary of the National Church finds the word of a singer of comic songs more powerful than half-a-dozen bishops.

At Middlesbrough, the other day, the County Magistrates granted a seven-day license to a new picture palace. Presumably, this means that the Bench did not extract from the proprietors a promise not to open on Sunday. The police superintendent supported the Sunday opening on the ground that they took young people off the streets, and kept others out of the publichouse. Since the halls had opened, he said, the streets were much quieter than they used to be. Clergymen, who are always protesting their desire to keep people moral and well-behaved, ought to have endorsed the police superintendent's support. What several ministers did was to object to the seven-day license. One of these clerical objectors said there was a rush from churches to the halls after evening service, which was unseemly. Well, if people only went to the picture palaces *after* going to church, most clergymen would think themselves very fortunate. Their trouble is that people go *before* the service, and stay during

the time that they are preaching the gospel to empty benches. This particular parson will be the envy of his brethren if his people only rush for the picture palace after they have had their dose of theology.

Rev. F. B. Meyer did his best to spoil the chance of the Progressives in the London County Council elections. On the eve of the poll this clerical busybody wrote a letter to the *Westminster Gazette* hoping that the London ratepayers would vote for the Progressives because they were opposed to the Sunday picture shows, which he regarded as "the all-important issue in the forthcoming election." So it may have been to Mr. Meyer and the profession he belongs to. But how much good that view of the matter is to the Progressives is shown by the result. They are seven fewer than they were. We strongly advise them to let Mr. Meyer and his fellow professionals go their own way. At present these gentlemen talk as if they *were* the Progressive party.

Rev. R. J. Campbell reminds us of the clerical gentlemen who always go to see anything very naughty at the theatre in order to be able to warn their congregations against it with all the power of knowledge and experience. Being in Spain, Mr. Campbell went to see a bull-fight. He says it was a cruel spectacle—but we believe that is generally known and needs no further testimony. The reverend gentleman says that he never wants to see another bull-fight. Our puzzle is, why did he see that one?

Rev. Gilbert Allen Grace, clergyman of the Almshouses, Waddington, Yorkshire, appears to be a good Bible Christian. He has been fined ten shillings and costs for beating a naked choir-boy with a stick, and leaving the marks of ten strokes on the lad's body. According to the evidence given in court the reverend gentleman has a taste for taking the law into his own hands in this way. It must be admitted that there is something clerical about it. But we dare say that this offender will be more careful in future.

The mad monk Innocentius has been arrested in Russia. He led a lot of people as mad as himself—mostly women and children—out into the snow to seek the New Zion somewhere. They were soon frostbitten and starving, and many of them died during the pilgrimage. It is alleged that Innocentius is not only mad but immoral. This may be a slander; but there has generally been a close connection between religious fanaticism and sensuality.

Rev. Dr. Orchard says, "You will find that the men who are sucking England lifeless to-day do not go to church." We do not know on what Dr. Orchard bases this statement, or how he can possibly know that it is true. We think that if an inquisition could be made it would be found that the vast majority of those referred to are upholders of some Church or other. Certainly great landowners like the Dukes of Westminster, Bedford, or Norfolk cannot be accused of being enemies of the Church. But the main point is that, whether they go to church or not, they believe in the people going to church. Funds are always forthcoming to build churches and to induce people to attend them. They believe in keeping the mass of the people religious because they know that in religion they have the most valuable instrument for keeping them in order—that is, for preventing improvements that would strike at their own privileged position.

The *Westminster Gazette* devoted a paragraph announcement to the Essex Hall meeting called by the Committee for the Repeal of the Blasphemy Laws. It gave a list of the speakers "expected"—including everybody but Mr. Foote. This is really *too* silly—even for Christians.

Professor Denny discovers two things that mark off the Jesus of the New Testament from such gods as Osiris, Attis, and Adonis. The first is that Jesus died once for all, and death had no more power over him. But, as a matter of fact, Osiris and Attis and Adonis also died once for all. The annual festival commemorated their death, exactly as the annual festival of Easter commemorated the death and resurrection of Jesus. The second point of difference is that Osiris and Attis and the rest of the nature-gods were ideas, while Jesus was a character. This is one of the distinctions that Christians are very fond of drawing, with complete indifference to the facts of the situation. The Christian Jesus is as much an idea—that is, a subjective creation—as any of the nature-gods named. It almost passes comprehension that sane men, at this time of day, should question the statement. Suppose Professor Denny had, for the first time in his life, come across the Christ

legend; would he have hesitated at dismissing it as pure myth? Years of religious training and apologising simply prevent him, with thousands of others, from facing the question in a sane manner. It almost passes comprehension that educated people, claiming to be called civilised, should be found seriously discussing whether the miraculously born, miracle-working, resurrected Savior of the New Testament is an historical character or not. Amongst really civilised people there should be no room for discussion on such a topic. The whole set of ideas belong to savagery, and one might as reasonably discuss whether the fairies and witches of mediæval Europe actually existed.

After all, the discussion concerning the New Testament is only following the usual lines. There are plenty of people old enough to remember when the discussion concerning the Old Testament was in the same stage as is the present discussion concerning the New Testament. First of all people were discussing whether Moses wrote the Pentateuch, and whether its stories were veritable history or not. Theologians were up in arms, and discovered many elaborate reasons for placing the Jewish religious legends in a class by themselves. Eventually criticism told. The Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch was exploded, Moses himself was reduced to a myth, and no scholar of repute would venture to champion the views that obtained in the Churches fifty or sixty years ago. So far as the Old Bible is concerned, the work has been done once for all. But the New Testament rests on no better foundation than the Old. Essentially, it is a product of the same type of mind—the mind that sees the supernatural everywhere, that finds miracles as a matter of course, and which moves on the level of sheer savagery so far as religious belief is concerned. And this, we repeat, leaves no room for discussion as to the veracity of the story. There is room only for discussion as to the nature of the conditions that create such legends and lead to their perpetuation.

A new religious journal, the *Constructive Quarterly*, has just made its appearance. The object is to bring together all sorts of religious views, Roman, Protestant, Greek Church, etc., etc., in order to discover and establish a common basis of agreement. It is a fool's dream, for the simple reason that there is no common ground on which religious people can meet, unless it be hatred of someone outside their ranks. There is no common ground in religion, because there is no common basis in fact to which each may appeal, irrespective of personal speculations. Religious people only agree together on the tacit understanding that little shall be said about their religious beliefs. A full and frank expression of personal religious opinions would break up every Church in Christendom. And when religious people appeal for unity of action, it will usually be found that what they agree upon is not the really religious items in their program, but the secular items that have been incorporated with it. It is the common social or secular life that provides the ground of unity; religion merely provides occasion for division. The proof of this is seen in the fact that when religious people of different sects are found working together it is always in connection with some social object that lies quite outside their creed.

A writer in the *Southend Telegraph* speaks of the "stock objections on pseudo-moral grounds to the story of Sisera and Jael." The journalist would have seen things in a different light had Jael caught him bending.

The Lord, we are told, counts the hairs of our heads and watches the tumbling of sparrows. If he had left those pleasing pastimes alone for a short time, and paid some attention to John Norton, of Grays, the newspapers would not now be telling of the man's terrible death by falling into a boiling vat.

A religious revival is being carried out at Johannesburg. The principal feature is street processions, with the clergy togged up professionally. The Bishop of Pretoria opened the ball in what is called "full fig." "Fellow citizens," he cried out at the corner of a street, "we are out to-night for God." But he did not produce his credentials, and the crowd doesn't appear to have taken him at his own valuation.

Dr. Mawson, another Antarctic explorer, has been in great straits. He lost his companions, his dogs, and most of the food on the way back to winter quarters. "I alone arrived at the hut," he says, "having travelled through snow and fogs, miraculously guided by Providence, through heavily crevassed areas." Providence allowed Lieutenant Ninnis to disappear down one of those crevasses, with a dog-team and

the bulk of the provisions. According to Dr. Mawson's logic, Providence was having a game with that expedition.

They can't sell the Jezreel Temple on the top of Chatham Hill. It was built for the 144,000 of the elect who are referred to in the book of Revelation, who were to be gathered together there, and, under the shelter of its massive walls, survive the ruin of the rest of the world. But the end of the world did not arrive; and the Jezreelite founder, John White, ex-Royal Marine, who was never to die, did die, and the Jezreelites mostly dispersed; but a remnant of them still stuck to the wonderful building—which is of no use for any other purpose, and is too solidly built to be demolished without great expense. So there it stands, and is likely to stand—one of the many monuments of human folly.

"With God's help" the King of Montenegro has made a fresh promise to capture Scutari. God hasn't helped him to capture it yet. The Montenegrin Deity may be sure; he certainly is slow.

Why does the Rev. E. J. Houghton, of St. Stephen's, Bristol, cry stinking fish so loudly? Instead of showing the moral influence of religion, he does his best to prove the opposite. He represents the ladies of his congregation as inveterate thieves. They will even steal a parish magazine or a powder-puff. And the poor parson suggests that he will be obliged to have plain-clothes detectives as well as church officials.

Rev. Sir William Macdonald Honyman, of Coton Hall, Whitechurch, Shropshire, left £80,571. Rev. Arthur Brinckman, Chaplain of St. Savior's Hospital, Osnaburgh-street, left £20,516. Rev. Prebendary Edmund Ironside Gregory, of Exmouth, Devon, left £9,731. Poor Christites!

One of the London halfpenny papers recently organised a doll show. We wonder if it included the dolls used in Catholic churches.

The newspapers have published a lot of delirious nonsense concerning foreign aircraft. It would be better if they devoted their columns to the more deadly dangers of priestcraft.

The Kaiser follows the footsteps of his pious grandfather, who praised God so lustily for the crowning victory of Sedan. A parodist of the time represented the old monarch as singing to his wife:—

"My dear Augusta,
We've been and gone a regular buster:
Ten thousand Frenchmen sent below!
Praise God from whom all blessings flow."

The new William has just been reminding the inhabitants of Bremen of the "Divine Providence" of 1870. He prophesies that God will enable them to be at the French again. But the divine assistance will have to be supplemented by £50,000,000 fresh war taxation. The divine assistance generally works out in that way.

The German Emperor has been harking back to 1813 again. What on earth does he think the world cares for 1813 now? Who wants to live backward—in ancient history? The forward view is wanted to-day. We are all sick of the constant cries of "Back to this" and "Back to that." Prussia won back her independence in 1813. What on earth is it she, and the rest of Germany, want to win back in the twentieth century? The whole of Europe was overrun by Napoleon. There was no peculiarity in the case of Germany. He would have overrun Great Britain, too, if it had not been for that strip of silver sea (with Nelson on it) that kept him back. And the Kaiser may take it that if another Napoleon were to turn up, at the head of victorious armies, all the military pedantry and bloated armaments of Germany would go down before his genius. On the whole it is about time that the Kaiser stopped his annual heroics. But if he must "keep on doing it" he might go back further than Napoleon and come to Frederick the Great of Prussia, who was as much a conqueror, in his own degree, as Napoleon was. Somehow or other, the Kaiser never gets beyond the wicked French. How about the wicked Germans—the Germans of Frederick's conquests, the Germans of Bismarck and Moltke, the Germans of the attack on Denmark, the Germans of the attack on Austria, the Germans of the attack on France—for although Napoleon the Little declared war it was Bismarck who manœuvred him into doing it, and by all sorts of means, including a forged telegram? Emperor William might lay to heart a

text from the Bible he is always praising. "All have sinned"—it says—Germany included as well as France.

The Kaiser was bound to end his "patriotic" speech by appealing to God. "God be with us," he prays. But it is easy to see he has no doubt about it. He is unable to conceive the possibility of God having any other favorite.

Some imaginative person invented the story of Queen Victoria having styled the Bible "the source of England's greatness." So far as we know, the only reference to the English in the sacred volume is the text, "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." Mark Twain identified that text.

Christians do not like too much religion. Even the ladies get tired carrying complete church services, and abbreviated editions are much in favor. A few more years and the dear creatures will feel too tired to carry books at all.

How they love one another! It was thought necessary to announce that the Bishop of Newcastle would extend a welcome to the Free Church Council Conference. Good fellowship of that sort couldn't be taken for granted—amongst Christians.

Some of the *Daily Citizen's* readers, we fear, must have squirmed on Tuesday when they saw a letter from Mr. H. B. Dodds, of Newcastle, calling attention to Mr. Foote's article in the *English Review* on "George Meredith—Freethinker." Fancy being told that the article was "written with all the vigor and ability of that arch-enemy of Christianity," and that Meredith not only believed that the cause Mr. Foote was fighting for was "the best of causes" and "destined to victory," but actually had more sympathy with the *Freethinker* methods than with the methods of the more "respectable" heretics.

We invite special attention to the following extract from Monday's *Daily Chronicle* :—

"After spending three years interned in the Ghebbi, the Empress Taitu, Menelik's Consort, has been granted her freedom, says a telegram from Addis Abeba. Lidj Jeassu, the heir to the throne, has also restored her domains in the vicinity of Addis Abeba.

"It is just three years since the Empress was deprived of all authority and made a prisoner. It was stated at the time that she was suspected of having plotted to prevent the young prince Lidj Jeassu from coming to the throne.

"The Empress Taitu is in many respects a remarkable woman. She is without fear, as she showed by leading a regiment of cavalry against Italian infantry at Adowa.

"She has had more than her share of husbands. Born in 1853, she was married at an early age to a General in Theodore's army, but the couple were caught conspiring against the Emperor John. As a punishment Taitu was given a common soldier as her husband. After Theodore's death she married another fighting man, whom she divorced in order to wed the governor of a province.

"When the governor died she entered a convent, but tiring of this seclusion she left to marry the chief Zekargatcho. In 1883 she won the affections of Menelik, who, after repudiating his first wife, and ordering the assassination of the husband of his enchantress, raised her to the throne. The goal of her ambition was in sight, and in order to secure the succession of her own family, she married her widowed daughter to Ras Michael, a scion of the house of the late Emperor John. She also secured high appointments for her relatives, and built up a political machine, selecting with great astuteness those ras who represented the old dynasty.

"Since Menelik, owing to ill-health, receded to the background, the Empress schemed to secure full control of Abyssinia's destinies, and plotted against Menelik's grandson, Lidj Jeassu (but no relation of the Empress), whom the Emperor had designated as his successor."

The country referred to is Abyssinia. Most readers would regard it as a "heathen" country. It is, however, one of the oldest—perhaps the oldest—Christian countries in the world. Its kings boast of being descended from Menelik, the son of the Queen of Sheba in co-operation with Solomon. Abyssinia has no literature and no education. But it has a superabundance of the most orthodox Christianity. Which shows that Christianity is not the secret of civilisation, which is due to other influences of a purely secular character.

Parsons don't like losing their trade perquisites. We cannot be angry with the Rev. H. W. Bradley, vicar of Wenbury, for resenting the provision, through the will of the late Mr. A. Starkey, of a burial-ground near the parish churchyard, to be under the control of no clerical authority but only that of the local Parish Council. The reverend

gentleman pities the dead who will not be buried "in the time-honored and consecrated burying-place of their forefathers" (good old forefathers!) but "buried in a Parish Council back garden." Not even a *front* garden, observe! All this means, of course, that a rival cemetery means the loss of burial fees to the vicar of the churchyard. Still, we can't be angry—as we said. Clergymen, as well as other men, must be expected to fight for their livings.

Lieutenant Clark and Mrs. Fulham, the Agra murderers, have been sentenced, the former to death, and the latter to penal servitude for life. They were equally guilty, but the woman is about to become a mother. They were also equally religious. Pious expressions abounded in the letters they wrote to each other while they were poisoning the woman's unhappy husband. "God," said the woman, "is bringing us together." Such is the way in which religion and criminality can get on very amicably together.

A new piece of music bears the title, "Always Gay." Evidently not "sacred music."

A contortionist at Glamorgan Assizes stated that his antics affected his memory. This may account for the clergy being such slow-witted folk.

RIBALD SOCIALIST.

Capitalist: "Well, Parson, have you spoken to the brethren about supporting me at the next election?"

Parson: "Kind and glorious sir, but there are a lot of Socialists among my congregation now."

Capitalist: "What! Don't you tell 'em regularly about 'Blessed be ye poor,' and about obeying those who have rule over you?"

Parson: "Yes, I told them that, and a lot more. I told them about envying not the rich their great estate, and about the perishable nature of gold, and about the virtues of contentment, and about the meek inheriting the earth, and about Lazarus getting to heaven!"

Capitalist: "Yes!"

Parson: "But they only laughed."

Capitalist: "Great snakes! Then am I undone."

"THE YUKONER."

He burned a hole in the frozen muck,
He scratched the icy mould,
And there in six-foot dirt he struck
A sack or so of gold.

He burned a hole in the Decalogue,
And then it came about—
Fortune's only a lousy rogue—
His "pocket" petered out.

And lo! it was but a year all told,
When there in the shadow grim,
But six foot deep in the icy mould,
They burned a hole for him.

REASONS FOR NOT IMBIBING.

The Rev. John K. Sawyer met abroad an acquaintance who said to him: "Wouldn't you like to join me in a little drink?"

"No," answered Sawyer; "I'm sorry, but there are two good reasons why I cannot take a drink with you. The first one is that I don't drink. The second reason is that I have signed the pledge. A third and most important reason is that I have just had one."

ON ROOSEVELT.

Another true story has been told about "Ananias Ted."

He approached the heavenly gate.

George Washington asked admission.

Saint Peter said: "What have you done to earn heaven?"

"I freed America from English rule. I am the father of my country."

"You may enter," was the immediate command.

Abraham Lincoln stepped up, and upon stating that he had freed the negro, secured admission.

"Ananias Ted" then pushed his way up.

The saint again said: "Who are you, and what have you done to earn a heavenly reward?"

"None of your damned business! Where is God?"

Mr. Foote's Engagements

(Lectures suspended till the Autumn.)

To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1913.—Previously acknowledged, £72 10s. 4d. Received since:—Dr. Martin, £3 3s.; A. H. Smith, 10s.; S. Hudson, £1; Mr. and Mrs. Riglin, 2s. 6d.; R. Taylor, 5s.; M. P., 5s.; J. P., 5s.

A. H. SMITH.—Pleased to have your good wishes and your "congratulations on the fine Captain Scott article."

EDWARD LINDLEY.—We wish you success at the antipodes. Glad to hear that the *Freethinker* has influenced your mind "more than we could imagine," and that you are grateful to Mr. B. H. Tubbs, of Sheffield, who introduced it to you. Our shop manager is writing you about obtaining this journal at Melbourne.

S. L. PACE.—We have read your appreciative letter with much interest. It is always pleasant to us to hear from lady readers.

J. H. GARTRELL.—Glad to see the letters in the *Cornishman* against the stoppage of Sunday concerts at Penzance. Your own letter is a model one. We wish Freethinkers would make use of the press in this way in all parts of the country.

S. HUDSON, subscribing to the President's Honorarium Fund, "sincerely hopes it will grow larger than ever."

H. DE BIRKETT.—May be useful when the subject crops up again. The Christian public is too busy just now in discussing war and armaments. Delighted to hear of "the pleasure and profit" you and your wife "derive from the *Freethinker* week by week."

G. CROOKSON.—We are too busy to deal with the "Baconian Heresy," as Mr. J. M. Robertson calls it, again at present. It will be dealt with in our book on Shakespeare, which we shall try to finish this summer. Suffice it to say, at present, that every Baconian argument is founded on ignorance. For instance, the argument so labored by G. E. Sternbridge in the *Sheffield Telegraph*, that Shakespeare was illiterate because he signed his name in different ways, could be extended to Sir Walter Raleigh, who wrote his name at least twelve different ways, though he was a scholar and a gentleman. The fact is that the idea of regular spelling had not entered men's minds then. The same word was often printed in different ways on the same page even in learned volumes. The American millionaire who set the office safe to "door" and spelt it "dore," so that the chief clerk couldn't open it, wouldn't have suggested any fun whatever to the most learned men of Shakespeare's age. That one Baconian argument is typical of the whole lot.

W. J. KING writes: "I much enjoyed your *English Review* article. It is to be hoped it is only the beginning of a wider ventilation of much-needed truth on such matters."

J. A. GREENWOOD thanks us for thirteen years' *Freethinkers*. "I ceased to be a Christian," he writes, "at seventeen years of age, when I had endeavored to qualify myself for a defender of the faith; but it was not until I met with the *Freethinker* some twelve years later that I realised that I was an Atheist. I have taken it ever since; and while I have been unable to help much financially I have secured several new readers."

A. THORNTON HEATHEN.—Your useful letter in the *Star* nails down another Bradlaugh fable. There is something unspeakably funny, to anyone who knew Bradlaugh, in the idea of his "climbing Snowdon" and calling upon his companion in the ascent to "hold on, Jack" to the idea of God. According to these fables Bradlaugh spent most of his time in opposing his own opinions. But the Christians were always deficient in humor.

W. M. HARDIE.—Thanks for the reference.

E. A. WYKES.—Pleased to hear that your father, your brother, and yourself enjoyed our speech at the Leicester Secular Hall. It is interesting to know that your father attended the opening meetings thirty-two years ago.

W. P. BALL.—Your cuttings are always welcome.

VAUGHAN GREY.—No more colds up to now. Thanks for the picture postcard of "Galileo's lamp" which stands for more than "Dreadnoughts" and Creusot guns.

J. B.—Your generous offer to pay for fifty copies of the *English Review* is appreciated, but the magazine was sold out within a few days of publication.

RATIONALIST (Johannesburg).—Your advice is very good, but why not tender it to the assailant instead of the self-defender? We never pretended to the Christian virtue of answering a gratuitous blow by inviting another to keep it company. Insults and injuries behind the scenes we disdain to notice, but when they pass the curtain and face the footlights they must be dealt with. Some good things may be found even in the Bible, and there is a great deal of truth in Matthew xviii. 7 and Luke xvii. 1. We can't throw any light on the pamphlet you send us. It reads as if it ought to be dated from a lunatic asylum.

E. B., to whom we are obliged for cuttings, etc., writes: "Your George Meredith article is excellent, and ought to be the means of removing much misapprehension regarding his real views; for it seems to be a point of honor with the ordinary reviewer and journalist to burke any and every incident which goes to show that a man of note was a Freethinker. I congratulate you upon your triumph in breaking down, by the help of the *English Review*, the contemptible and malicious boycott which has existed so long against your courageous and outspoken demands that we must have the truth, and nothing but the truth, when dealing either with public men or public matters."

S. E. BEARDALE.—Both your cuttings have been dealt with already in our columns.

THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED, office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

WHEN the services of the National Secular Society in connection with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the secretary, Miss E. M. Vance.

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

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

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

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

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

Sugar Plums.

This number of the *Freethinker* will be in the hands of most of our London readers before Friday evening (March 14), when the public meeting, convened by the Committee for the Repeal of the Blasphemy Laws, will be held at Essex Hall, Essex-street, Strand. The chair will be taken at 8 o'clock by the Rev. Copeland Bowie, and the list of speakers includes Sir W. P. Byles, M.P., Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner, Mr. H. G. Chancellor, M.P., Mr. G. W. Foote, Lord Harberton, Mr. A. L. Atherley Jones, K.C., M.P., Sir Hiram Maxim, and Mr. G. Bernard Shaw. We appeal to our London readers to make this meeting a great success in point of numbers. We should like to see the Hall crowded.

Mr. Cohen pays Liverpool another visit to-day (March 16), delivering two lectures, afternoon and evening, at the Alexandra Hall, Islington-square. District "saints" will please note.

Mr. Lloyd closes the winter season at the Manchester Secular Hall to-day (March 16) with two lectures, afternoon and evening, on subjects that should prove attractive.

Mr. F. J. Gould is expected back in London a few days after this number of the *Freethinker* goes to press. We hope he has had a good time in India. We know he has been busy during his absence from home, and we are pleased at his finding (or making) time to contribute three articles to our columns during that comparatively brief period.

The March number of the *Positivist Review* contains some interesting articles, including some well-written contributions by the editor, Mr. S. H. Swinny. There is an important note by Professor Beesly on "The Situation in Mexico." We hope this little magazine has an improving circulation.

Mr. H. S. Salt has added to the list of useful publications issued by the Humanitarian League. *Fallacies of Flagellants* is a brilliantly written and unanswerable reply to the champions of flogging as a remedy for social evil. Mr. Salt has no difficulty in showing that flogging is a social evil in itself. It is not a deterrent from crime; if it were it should be extended to women, for procuresses are even worse than procurers, and the bawd is indispensable to the whole business in what is called the White Slave traffic. We wish this powerful pamphlet (it is only a penny) could be circulated by the myriad—or the million.

A devoted admirer of George Meredith, a scholar, and a powerful writer himself, says:—"Your Meredith article is a

perfect gem, nothing so good on the subject having appeared before."

Occasional extracts from correspondents' letters have appeared in this department of the *Freethinker* with much acceptance on the part of our readers. We venture to make the following extract from a recent letter:—

"Though a stranger to you, I feel I have known you since boyhood in the columns of the *Freethinker* and on public platforms. In my teens (1883 and onwards) what delightful Sunday evenings the old Hall of Science furnished! I recall (if I may) a debate of yours with (I believe) the Rev. Fleming Williams, in which you traversed the idea of man's duality—body and soul—in an extraordinarily vivid and scholarly way. The effect of that debate has been ineffaceable. Then, too, the stirring days of 'The Lie in Five Chapters,' when the alleged Atheist's family appeared to refute the West London Missioner's fibbing. That grand evening after the opening of the Shelley museum remains in my memory—when Shaw spoke, and when (thanks to you) I heard 'The Ode to the West Wind' as I have never heard it since. I mention these recollections to indicate what a large part you and your message have played in my life, and I feel that my case must be one of many hundreds."

"Finally," this correspondent adds, "let me thank you for your outspoken article on George Meredith. It was badly needed. I read with delight your further evidences of the nobility of one of my heroes." This interesting letter closes with a reference to Frank Cole, who was Meredith's "man" for thirty years and who "has many a relic and many a reminiscence of the Master."

"M. M. Mangasarian, the lecturer of the Independent Religious Society of Chicago, is a man of remarkable character and power. He passed from the orthodox pulpit through the liberal churches and Ethical Culture to complete Rationalism, growing in influence and popularity as he progressed. His success in Chicago is unprecedented in the history of the Rationalist platform. For many years he has crowded a theatre every Sunday, and interest in his lectures has never ceased to grow. And to us the gratifying feature of this is that he has adhered to Rationalism, to Free-thought, made no other appeal, and conducted no mixed propaganda. Not that mixed propaganda is necessarily to be discouraged, but Mr. Mangasarian's success is proof of the vitality of the cause of Free-thought."—*Truthseeker* (New York).

We beg to call attention to the N. S. S. scholarship scheme, of which an announcement appears on another page. It should specially concern the younger lecturers in the Free-thought movement.

The Transformation of Matter.

THE most refined methods of inquiry utilised by modern science render imperative the conclusion that ponderable matter and the attenuated ether represent the extreme limits of the phenomena which constitute the universe. These limits are connected by intermediate modes of matter which have been recently studied with almost incredible patience by our leading physicists. As yet, we possess no positive evidence of the evolution of matter out of ether, but the converse transformation of matter into ether is regarded as a highly probable phenomenon by a steadily increasing number of men of science. The discovery of the cathode rays, in the first instance, and of the X rays in the second, led the way to the eagerly prosecuted research work which is now proceeding in innumerable laboratories in connection with radio-activity.

That bold and incisive philosopher, Gustave Le Bon, conducted an elaborate and extensive series of experiments which he unhesitatingly claims as clearly establishing the dissociation of ponderable matter. It is undeniably difficult to escape the main conclusions of Le Bon when the facts are carefully considered. The phenomena of radio-activity can no longer be confined to the generally recognised radio-active substances, such as radium, thorium, actinium, etc. These substances merely manifest in a high degree a power which all matter possesses in a minor degree. Professor J. J. Thomson, a physicist of world-wide fame, has demonstrated that water, clay, brick, sand, and numerous other substances are all capable of radio-activity.

The atom is, of course, the unit of matter, and when, writes Le Bon,—

"We study the structure of the atom, we shall arrive at the conclusion that it is an immense reservoir of energy solely constituted by a system of imponderable elements maintained in equilibrium by the rotations, attractions, and repulsions of its component parts. From this equilibrium results the material properties of bodies, such as weight, form, and apparent permanence. Matter also represents movement, but the movements of its component elements are confined within a very restricted sphere."*

Viewed from this standpoint, matter must be interpreted in terms of energy. To the recognised modes of energy—heat, light, etc.—another must be added—material, or intra-atomic energy. This is distinguished by its immense force power; by the emission by all material bodies of particles endowed with an enormous velocity, and these particles are capable of making the air a conductor of electricity, and possess the power to pass through material obstacles, but are deflected from their paths by a magnetic field.

If the foregoing be regarded as established scientific truths, then matter must be pictured as one, or many, modes of energy which manifest themselves under certain conditions in the form of electricity, light, or other semi-material states. All aspects of existence are in constant process of transformation. When these changes proceed slowly, they appeal to our senses as material bodies which present the attributes of weight and mass. When rapid transformation is in progress, the existences which display this rapid change stamp themselves upon our consciousness as light, heat, or electricity. In each and every instance we become conscious of the existence of natural phenomena in terms of force or energy. It is a necessity of thought that the multitudinous sensations of which our waking lives are made up have an answering reality in the objective universe. The material universe builds up the consciousness, the consciousness does not create the material universe.

The atoms, so long pictured as the immutable corner stones of the material universe, are now more and more realised as the seat of activities previously unsuspected. Whatever the precise architectural arrangement of the atom may turn out to be, no physicist doubts that its structure is marvellously complex. The structural unit of biology—the cell—from which all plants and animals are developed was, in the early days of cytological science, regarded as a comparatively simple phenomenon. But, with the progress of microscopical research, the vastly increased power of the microscope itself, and with the employment of various chemical re-agents in cytological inquiry, it is now quite obvious that the biological cell is a structure of profound complexity. And with the unit of inorganic existence it is the same. Physicists differ widely in opinion concerning the precise structure of the atom, but all are agreed that its architecture is almost inconceivably complex. Scientists, gifted in a high degree with the noble power of disciplined imagination, picture the atom as a miniature solar system, made up of, and moving with immense velocity around, a centre of force. According to the theory of Le Bon, and of those who are reluctantly following him, the elements, which in their aggregate constitute the atom, continue to revolve in their appointed paths until their courses are stayed by the retarding influences of antagonistic forces. At this point, radio-activity, or intra-atomic energy is manifested, and the atom proceeds to radiate its particles into space. It is also inferred that when highly radio-active bodies, for reasons so far unexplained,—

"have reached a certain degree of instability, or artificiality, as in ordinary bodies when brought under the influence of various excitants—heat, light, etc.—excitants act in such cases like a spark on a mass of powder—that is to say, by freeing quantities of energy greatly in excess of the very slight cause which has determined their liberation. And as the energy con-

* *Evolution of Matter*, p. 10.

densed in the atom is immense in quantity, it results from this that to an extremely slight loss in matter there corresponds the creation of an enormous quantity of energy."

Although all forms of matter appear to some extent radio-active, the particles they discharge make no appreciable difference to the weight of the bodies in question. In almost all instances, no differences can be detected by the most delicate chemical balance in the periods over which the observations extend. Nevertheless, it must be realised that under these conditions ponderable matter slowly dematerialises, and, therefore, must ultimately cease to exist in that special form. The atoms, as atoms, are not eternal, and the spirit of inquiry craves an understanding of the processes which led to their evolution, and which are also involved in their dissolution. What, for instance, were the former states of what are now lead, silver, or gold? In our quest for a solution of this imposing problem, we instinctively turn to astronomy for guidance. The spectroscope has strongly corroborated the conclusions of the supporters of the nebular hypotheses of Kant and Laplace. Those nebulae which present the spectra of permanent gases, such as hydrogen, or the products of carbon, are regarded by many eminent astronomers as representing the initial stage in the evolution of celestial matter. Through condensation these pass into more complex conditions of matter, which give rise to the evolution of stars. The starry orbs themselves vary in age and constitution. The dazzlingly white stars are the hottest, and spectrum analysis proves that they are composed of chemical elements, small in number. The less youthful red and yellow stars betray a lower temperature, and in them other chemical elements appear. In the still older stars, which have radiated the larger part of their initial heat into surrounding space, bodies may be detected which are absent in the white, red, and yellow stars. Heat and pressure probably suffice to account for these phenomena. In any case, the observations of astrophysicists have made clear the evolution of the "atoms" and the genesis of numerous simple bodies as a consequence of this evolution. Le Bon writes:—

"Our nebula, like all those shining by night, must perforce have come from something. In the present state of science there is only, as far as we can see, the ether which can have constituted this starting point; and this is why all investigators always bring us back to consider it as the fundamental element of the universe. Worlds are born there and return thither to die."

But, surely, the theory of the collision of two dead or dying suns in space furnishes a more reasonable explanation of the origin of the present phase of nebulous masses, from which celestial systems are born, than the one above set forth.

One of Le Bon's leading contentions is that all ponderable matter is constantly dematerialising, and that the products of this dissociation are intermediate in character to solid matter at one end of the series of natural phenomena, and to that most attenuated of all existences, the ether, at the other end of the series.

What are the modes of this dissolution of ponderable substances? When inquiring into the evolution of electricity, Le Bon conjectured that this was probably one of the most usual forms of the disintegration of matter. This surmise was supported by the fact "that the final products of the dissociation of the radio-active bodies were formed of atoms of electricity." It is thought that these disengaged electrical atoms are ephemeral in their nature:—

"If the existence of those elements [the electrical atoms] had persisted, since their formation, under the influence of the various causes which produce the slow dissociation of matter, they would finally have accumulated to the extent of forming a new universe, or, at least, a kind of nebula."

It is therefore argued that the electric atom gradually parts with all its energy, and when this stage is reached it vanishes into the ether. It seems

established that electrical atoms in motion are invariably accompanied by ethereal vibrations. These vibrations—the inseparable companions of the electric atoms—very probably "represent the form under which they vanish by the radiation of all their energy." Thus it is that these vibrations constitute the final stages of matter before it plunges into the ether. When the vibrations cease, matter has been re-absorbed into the bosom of its ethereal mother,—

"from which, hundreds of millions of ages, and forces unknown to us can alone cause it to emerge, as it emerged in the far-off ages when the first traces of our universe were outlined on the chaos. The beginning of things was, doubtless, nothing else than a re-beginning. Nothing leads to the belief that they had a real beginning, or that they can have an end."*

The evolution of the starry systems, of which the material universe is made up, presents two widely dissimilar phases. Giant energies are condensed to form atomic existences in the first phase, which are broken down through the expenditure of these energies in the second. It is sometimes said that the new physical concepts which contemporary investigation is forcing upon us, have overthrown the doctrine of the indestructibility of matter. This, superfluous to say, is ridiculously untrue. That mode of existence which we term matter, even if it slowly change—first, into radiations of an electrical nature, and ultimately into ether—does not, on that account, cease to exist. All modes of existence may undergo slow, but certain, transformations; but the hidden energies, which in static or dynamic states are presented by ponderable matter, imponderable matter, or by ether, abide for ever. These forces or energies, whether active or in repose, constitute the ultimate reality from which every aspect of the constantly changing, but never-ceasing, universe is evolved.

T. F. PALMER.

Hush!

RELIGION frequently has the effect of making people maudlin. We have had several instances of this in the press over the Antarctic disaster. The dear old *Times* marvels that in an age of "depressing materialism" men can be found to prove themselves heroes—the inference being that heroism is confined to the supernaturalists. The Christians are, of course, always thorough-paced heroes; though, so far as the accredited exponents of and apologists for Christianity are concerned, we usually find from experience that they are in the mass the veriest cravens. Orthodox speakers and writers speak and write sadly of the growing influence of "materialism" and "paganism," though they have very nebulous ideas as to the meaning of these terms. But their testimony to the decay of religion is something which Freethinkers must welcome as proving the growth in the minds of many of an atheistic instead of a theistic conception of the universe.

It is a pity that a man like Mr. Blatchford should make any concession to the enemies of free speech. Almost concurrently with his ill-advised counsel to Freethought speakers, we have an effusion from "Claudius Clear" in the *British Weekly*, commenting upon Freethought propaganda. In effect his observations amount to this: that the great bulk of anti-Christian propaganda is conducted by writing, and if there be any public speaking against religion, one hears very little of it. Still, however "Claudius Clear" may choose to blink the fact, there is a good deal of public speaking every week against Christianity and all forms of supernaturalism. But how is "Claudius Clear" or any other obscure citizen to hear of it—publicly announced, that is to say? Everybody knows that the whole orthodox press—and how small a part of it is heterodox!—is in league to boycott the utterances of all those who are hostile to religion. You don't find the *Times* or

* *Evolution of Matter*, p. 314.

Standard or Daily News giving four or five columns of a verbatim report of an atheistic lecture at the Queen's Hall. And nobody would expect these eminent organs to be such "mugs." How would it pay them to alienate the sympathies—and subscriptions—of the mass of their constituents?

Militant Freethinkers know perfectly well that for one man that you can reach with the pen, you can reach ten with the tongue. Does Mr. Blatchford suggest that the great majority of speaking advocates of Freethought are other than tolerant, courteous, and calm? Surely a good many of us have listened to socialistic tirades that could not well be dignified with either of these adjectives. Street oratory, according to the *Clarion* oracle, is useless to the cause of truth. Mr. Blatchford, like a certain Dickens character, is a great stickler for "ter-ewth." But there is something antecedently more important even to the attainment of truth itself, and that is freedom of speech. Street speakers need all the latitude they can get in view of organised attempts on the part of local authorities to suppress free speech.

Yes, religion has a lot to do in making people maudlin. It makes no heroic appeal to men and women. A great many people are cowed and bullied into identification with religious organisations.

SIMPLE SANDY.

National Secular Society.

REPORT OF HALF-YEARLY MEETING OF LONDON MEMBERS.

In accordance with the resolution passed at the last Conference, the first half-yearly meeting of the London members of the N. S. S. took place on Tuesday, March 4, at Chandos Hall, Strand.

The attendance was fair, though it was somewhat disappointing to find that very few members of the Branch originally responsible for the resolution were present.

The President, Mr. G. W. Foote, in opening the meeting, remarked that personally he was not quite clear as to the object of this meeting, but he was willing to learn, and hoped that some ultimate good to the Society might result.

Mr. Rosetti, in moving the following resolution,—

"That the attention of Branches be called to the feeble efforts employed in taking up collections, in order that the financial burden of Branches may be lessened by a more thorough canvass of audiences at outdoor meetings,"—

called attention to the half-hearted methods usually employed by collectors, resulting, in some cases, in nearly half the audience being passed over, and suggested a more thorough canvass of audiences. He somewhat deprecated the system of "throwing in" the collection practised in some of the Parks, and thought a personal and polite request more effective.

Miss Pankhurst, who seconded, related the experiences of herself and her sister as collectors, stating that she found the audience invariably polite and responsive.

Mr. Neate explained that the system of "throwing in" had been practised by his Branch for many years, where, unfortunately, there was a dearth of lady collectors.

Mr. Wood thought that the success of a collection depended largely upon the appeal from the lecturer.

Mr. Hecht considered that in poor districts the pushing of the sale of literature, which was in the nature of a *quid pro quo*, was perhaps more important.

After further discussion, in which Messrs. Barry, Davey, and Lawrence took part, the resolution was carried.

Mr. Stewart inquired if the meeting had been properly convened, seeing that members had not received individual notices, and was informed that adequate notice had appeared in the *Freethinker* and in the Guide Notice, and that each Branch delegate had been specially written to, requesting him to advise his Branch of the meeting, and that it would be necessary to show membership cards. Those present agreed that due notice had been given.

Mr. W. Davidson suggested a method of extending the outdoor propaganda and finding fresh material by existing Branches widening the present area of their work by trial meetings held in such places as Hackney, Kingsland, Enfield Chase, Walthamstow, Watford, Ealing Broadway, etc., and finally moved the following resolution:—

"That, with a view to extending the Society's work, Branches be asked to break new ground by holding public meetings at least once during the coming outdoor season in likely places adjacent to their present stations."

Mr. Heaford, seconding this resolution, suggested that this work might be greatly helped by the formation of a cycling corps whose members, on their rides for pleasure, might hold impromptu meetings and distribute tracts, old numbers of the *Freethinker*, and other literature. Assistance in this matter could also be given by Sunday League and other excursionists leaving literature in waiting-rooms, trams, trains, etc.

Mr. Lawrence and Mr. Samuels also offered suggestions as to sale of literature, and the resolution was finally carried unanimously.

Mr. Horace Dawson then moved the following resolution:—

"That this meeting of London members of the N. S. S. considers it imperative that the Executive appoint an Organiser to visit London Branches, and gather information and report to the Executive proposals for bringing the rank and file into closer touch with the Society; and further to suggest plans for the better development of the London organisation. For the experiment, the organiser to be engaged for whole or spare time, as circumstances suggest"—

entering fully into the reasons prompting it.

It was seconded by Mr. Greyton.

After some discussion, showing that the feeling of the meeting was somewhat against it, the President summarised some of the points raised, and remarked that the present environment was different from that of thirty or forty years ago. Though man was a social animal, he had only time for a limited number of societies and meetings. A large and continuous membership could scarcely be expected. He thought Mr. Dawson rather underestimated the progress made, and he was proud to know that vital propagandists in nearly all progressive bodies had passed through the ranks of the N. S. S., and retained their Freethought principles though now working in other channels of activity.

Mr. W. Davey supported this view, and remembered many leading Trade Unionist, Club, and Municipal officials who had graduated in the N. S. S. Many years ago work of this description was far more effective than a large and silent membership.

Messrs. Thurlow, Heaford, and Moss also spoke in support of the President's remarks, the latter indicating the lines upon which he hoped to see the propaganda of the future conducted.

The resolution was then put to the meeting, and lost, only six voting in favor of it.

Mr. Samuels suggested that the General Secretary should call, at an early date, a meeting of the London secretaries to discuss and arrange for a more equal distribution of the lectures for the season; and the Chairman promised that the suggestion should receive attention.

Other questions as to the action of the L. C. C. re permits for collections, and also outdoor demonstrations, were discussed, and the President, after giving the fullest opportunity for the discussion of all questions, closed the meeting, promising that the result of their deliberations should be placed before the Executive.

E. M. VANCE, *General Secretary.*

N.B.—If the foregoing suggestions as to the giving of lectures at new stations and the distribution of literature, as suggested by Mr. Heaford, commend themselves to any individual members who were not present, and they could offer any assistance, I shall be pleased to hear from them.—E. M. V.

Inspiration.

THERE is a silence that is more eloquent than words. There is a lull in the noise of life when the mechanical heart-beats of the clock sound forth with solemn accuracy and distinctness. There is a turning point—if we will but wait for it—at the end of doubt, despondency, despair, when a man rises above common thought and common feeling. It is that moment when hope returns like the first faint flush of dawn. In a great sentence, in a great book, by a great man, perhaps, he catches that first sublime ray. Care is scattered to the winds. Real human greatness bursts upon his vision, to illumine like the sun, to lift his breast, and brace him for what may come. Life is full of joy and hope, unshaded by a future fear, and the wellsprings of truth sparkle in the risen orb of reason's day.

AVON DALE.

THE REMEDY.

An old lady, leaving church after a service which had been attended by a crowded congregation, was heard to say: "If everybody else would only do as I do, and stay quietly in their seats till everyone else has gone out, there would not be such a crush at the doors."

An Emotional Orgy in Ohio.

As a silent swat at the advocates of Woman Suffrage who have been heard through the *Truthseeker*, Mrs. Helen M. Lucas, of Ohio, who is not a Suffragist, puts this clipping in an open envelope and addresses it to the editor:—

"Columbus, O., Feb. 1.—Columbus women went the limit of wild frenzy in their desire to hear Rev. Billy Sunday, evangelist. They stormed about the tabernacle throughout most of the day and evening. It is estimated that 36 000 women heard him. He delivered the sermon for women only, 'Is It Well With Thee?' three times. At the first meeting the women, in their wild desire to gain entrance to the tabernacle, fought with hatpins, trampled upon one another, overran a cordon of police and 100 ushers, and rushed the doors."

We hear Mrs. Lucas say: "Imagine a lot of silly geese like these voting." But we can't imagine it. Women so brainless as to swarm about the "Rev. Bill Sunday" or any other preacher in that way do not know enough to want to vote.

The worst does not appear in the dispatch above quoted, which is from a Marietta paper. The *State Journal*, of Columbus, the home paper of the hysteriacs who debased themselves before the blackguard evangelist, thus describes the deplorable exhibition:—

"Pushing, mauling, kicking, jostling, fussing and fuming, 20,000 women tried to fight their way into the Sunday tabernacle on Goodale-street, Friday morning. They beat upon the doors, they screamed, they yelled, they fainted, revived and fainted again. They put aside all those attributes that commonly clothe the sex—they were a fighting, howling mob, a riot of femininity, a crowd of 'Bashi Bazoukesses,' gathered there determined to hear Sunday's famous sermon to women only.

"Hatpins flashed, were driven home in pressing elbows, furs were ripped from heaving shoulders and trampled in the mud, hats snatched off and flung wide of the crowd. A London Suffragette demonstration was as a Chautauqua salute, compared with this feminine gathering. Meanwhile thirteen thousand were crowded inside the building, occupying every available seat, hundreds squatted in the sawdust, pre-empted even the pulpit, and huddled under the choir platform where, if they couldn't see, they could at least hear. The women had begun to assemble at daylight, and the tabernacle was filled to overflowing shortly after 10 o'clock."

We should not think of connecting this degrading spectacle with Suffragism, for it does not show woman in the attitude in which she approaches the question of votes for her sex.

The orgy that took place at Columbus is altogether a religious manifestation, and one of the sort that only religious emotion produces. The occasion was unusual in its strength of appeal to the emotional females of Columbus. They tell us that woman is religious with the same faculties that she falls in love with; so that the call of the evangelist was of double force when it brought those faculties into exercise first by the religious touch and again by the erotic suggestion that inheres in a talk "for women only." Surrendering to these feelings, with their primitive curiosity rendered upon by the notoriety of the evangelist, the Columbus women were all in. There was no fencing them out of the tabernacle where Parson Sunday was yarded. Still, the fact that the Rev. Sunday professes to be a woman's rights advocate makes this exhibition in one view a serious blow to the cause.—*George Macdonald*, "*Truthseeker*" (New York).

NEITZSCHE ON CHRISTIANITY.

I condemn Christianity. I bring against it the most terrible accusations that ever an accuser put into words. It is to me the greatest of all imaginable corruptions. It has left nothing untouched by its depravity. It has made worthless of every value, a lie out of every truth, a sin out of everything straightforward, healthy, and honest. Let no man dare to speak to me of its humanitarian blessings. To do away with pain and woe is contrary to its principles. It lives by pain and woe, it has created pain and woe in order to perpetuate itself. It invented the idea of original sin. It has bred the art of self-violation—repugnance and contempt for all good and cleanly instincts. Parasitism is its praxis. It combats all good red blood, all love and all hope for life, with its anæmic ideal of holiness. It sets up "the other world" as a negation of every reality. The cross is the rallying post for a conspiracy against health, beauty, well-being, courage, intellect, benevolence—against life itself.

This eternal accusation I shall write on all walls. I call Christianity the one great curse, the one great intrinsic depravity, for which no expedient is sufficiently poisonous, secret, subterranean, mean. I call it the one immortal blemish upon the human race.

"After Life's Fitful Fever."

I ASK no other boon of you that love me
When comes the hour that Life and I must part;
But that, sometimes, a thought of me you'll cherish
Within some secret corner of your heart.

Grieve, if you must, yet grieve not you unduly;
The dead, who sleep in peace, need no lament
Their joys and pangs for evermore are over;
Their wealth of time is then forever spent.

Death has no terrors of itself to frighten;
Priests' lies no more need agonise men's hearts.
No hell awaits the erring sons of Nature,
When that, which brought to life, from Life departs.

Rest, perfect rest, within the grave awaits us:
Pain, envy, hatred, sorrow, come there not:
Back go we to the source whence came our being;
Forgetting, and, save by our works, forgot.

Meanwhile, oh friends, e'er sleep eternal claim us,
Something remains as debt all freed minds owe:—
The fruitful lies that brand Death's brow with horror,
We must refute where'er their reapers sow.

Then, when our end at length full time approaches,
Tho' we, maybe, would still prolong the fight;
We shall have left, as great hearts have before us,
The world more free and happy for Truth's light.

W. J. KING.

Correspondence.

ONE WAY TO HELP.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Will you kindly allow me to make an earnest appeal in the *Freethinker* to all lovers of truth and intellectual honesty? This seems to be the season of the year for special self-denial on the part of the Churches in order to furnish the means for the perpetuation of the old superstitions. Cannot we Freethinkers make a special effort to show our love for "the best of causes"? I think we can, and we ought; so I suggest to all subscribers that the best way of showing their enthusiasm at this particular time is to forward a few pence for the purchase of one dozen copies of your pamphlet, *The Passing of Jesus*, and judiciously place same in the hands of Christians, who know absolutely nothing of the origin of the great superstition which forms the basis of their belief. The pamphlet is so *apropos* to the coming farce of the Churches, and is such an eye-opener, that I feel compelled to ask all the "saints" not to neglect this opportunity of sowing the good seed of OUR GOSPEL. As you know, I have started the ball rolling with an order for several dozen, and I sincerely hope that all Freethinkers who read this will respond to my appeal, and clear out every copy of *The Passing of Jesus*.

I feel I must most heartily congratulate you on at last having your talent recognised, and by a periodical of such standing as the *English Review*. I say Bravo! to the Editor for his pluck, and I sincerely hope it will prove the beginning of a new order of things—the breaking down of the shameful press boycott from which you have suffered so long

J. B

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Candidates will be duly advised of the date and place of the Examination.

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

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INDOOR.

ESSEX HALL (Essex-street, Strand): Friday, March 14, at 8, Public Meeting for the Repeal of the Blasphemy Laws.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Workmen's Hall, Romford-road, Stratford, E.): 7.30, J. Rowney, "Bible Prophecies."

COUNTRY.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N. S. S. (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): C. Cohen, 3, "Primitive Beliefs and the Subjection of Women"; 7, "The Cradle, the Altar, and the Grave."

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, All Saints): J. T. Lloyd, 3, "Religion and Morals"; 6.30, "The Lying Gospel." Tea at 5.

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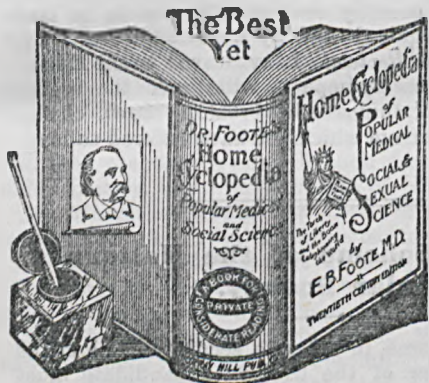
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