

THE Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

VOL. XXXIII.—No. 39

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 1913

PRICE TWOPENCE

Why do these religions oppose and exterminate one another? Why has this been the case ever and everywhere. Because men are ever men; because priests have ever and everywhere introduced fraud and falsehood.

—NAPOLEON.

Is There a Hell?—II.

HELL has long been cooling off. It is said that nearly all the scientific men went there and they improved the place beyond recognition. The oldest inhabitant was puzzled to know where he was. A few of that venerable species were so discontented with the change, so disturbed in their habits of life, so wild at being robbed of their last consolation, that they made themselves a perfect nuisance. For the sake of the peace and quiet of the place, Satan had to put them outside, with some fuel and matches to start a hell of their own. The place, indeed, is so much altered that it has had to change its name. It is no longer called Hell; it is now called Hades, as may be seen by the Revised Version of the Bible. The new name is quite attractive. It would admirably suit the advertising placard of a seaside resort. Many a young fellow would like a girl with that name. It suggests another Maid of Athens. But it lacks force as a "swear word." It is hardly strong enough to move a cat from a garden wall.

The contributors to *Is There a Hell?* accept the renovated establishment. Their clerical predecessors preached the old Hell of brimstone and fire, and eternal darkness in spite of the flames, and everlasting torture of the hopelessly damned; and they burnt people alive in this world for doubting the orthodox view of the next. The fire and the flames are now given up. Yet the old Hell is proved from the Bible, and the new Hell is proved from the same book. And the same book has been used, and will continue to be used, to justify whatever changes of doctrine the Christian Churches deem necessary.

How does a change become necessary? The explanation may be given with reference to the biological law of natural selection operating through the struggle for existence. A changing environment means that a species must adjust itself to new conditions of existence or perish. An unchanging environment means that a species may continue to exist indefinitely without further adjustment. The change never originates in the organisms; it always originates in the environment. When it does originate in the environment the law for the organisms is "Change or die."

This is how the Christian Churches change. They never change of themselves. The motion of development never comes from within. It comes from outside. A change takes place in the environment; that is to say, in the intellectual, moral, and æsthetic condition of mankind. Science shows, for instance, that the universe was not made in six days—if it was made at all. When that fact was established beyond dispute, it was found that the word "day" meant period. Further advances of science compelled the clergy to find, as the most sagacious of them soon did, that the whole Creation Story was a

legendary narrative—embodying, of course, the sublimest truths. That is how the matter stands to-day. Further changes in the environment will compel further changes in the Churches' doctrine. We say *compel*, for that is always the process. Organisms will not change unless the environment does. Churches will not change unless the world does. And the world *does* move. Galileo muttered the truth when the Inquisition made him openly deny it; and Pascal said later on that if the world did move all the Cardinals at Rome could not prevent its moving, or themselves from going round with it.

Let there be no mistake on this point. It is idle for the Christian Churches to pretend that they have not really changed. They point to the Bible, and say "It still stands." They point to the words, and say "They are still there." But words have no intrinsic value. They are arbitrary symbols, differing in different languages. The English word "God" and the French word "*Dieu*" mean the same thing, though they have only a single letter in common. The words are nothing in themselves; it is their meaning that matters. If the meaning has changed the words have changed. And if the Bible does not mean what it did, it is not the same Bible, in spite of the unchanging words.

The Catholic Church is represented in this little book by Father Benson. He also gives up the old "literal"—that is, *honest*—Hell; and even argues that it is incompatible with our modern notions of the goodness of God. This is intended for the higher class of readers. The lower class of readers are supplied with something less refined and elevated. The Catholic Church still gives its imprimatur to Father Pinamonti's and Father Furness's little books on Hell. These little books are placed in the hands of the children of the lower classes. They give the most awful descriptions of the tortures of Hell. Older copies give pictures of these tortures. Such books are shocking, abominable, disgusting. They are calculated to terrify children. That is what they are meant for. Yet higher-class adult readers are assured that the flames and the serpents are all fancy. Even the Catholic Church has to consider the environment.

There is no end to the sleek audacity of the worst profession in the world. Some years ago the Free Churches, as they facetiously call themselves, drew up a new Catechism. The old stupidity was retained, but the old terrors were omitted. There was no mention of—no allusion to—the Devil. A friend of ours wrote to Dr. Agar Beet for an explanation. Dr. Beet was a member of the Catechism Committee. He had also been in trouble with the Wesleyan Methodist Conference over the question of everlasting punishment. This reverend gentleman replied to our friend's inquiry in the most simple manner. He said that he had no definite explanation to offer. The Devil appeared to have been "overlooked." Fancy overlooking the Devil! It was like *Hamlet* without the Prince of Denmark. The truth is, of course, that the Devil was not overlooked. The Devil was dropped.

Spurgeon, the famous Baptist preacher, did not overlook the Devil. Nor did he overlook Hell. He also took care that his congregation did not overlook them either. There was no painted fire in his Hell. It was all real. He insisted on this with the

emphasis of personal knowledge. One would think that, like Dante, he had been in Hell and out again. His sermons contain many graphic descriptions of the great "pit." Here is one of them:—

"When thou diest, thy soul will be tormented alone; that will be a hell for it; but at the day of judgment thy body will join thy soul, and then thou wilt have twin-hells, thy soul sweating drops of blood, and thy body suffused with agony. In fire exactly like that which we have on earth thy body will lie, asbestos-like, for ever unconsumed, all thy veins roads for the feet of pain to travel on, every nerve a string on which the Devil shall for ever play his diabolical tune of Hell's Unutterable Lament."

Spurgeon could speak of Hell like a commercial traveller who carried samples. But the time for that is gone—and gone for ever.

Dr. Isaac Watts, of famous memory, in Dissenting circles—and really a good writer if he had only kept to subjects on which it was possible to know something—was just as bad as Wesley and Whitefield. He did not "overlook" Hell in his *World to Come*. But the best idea of his notions of the abode of "damned sinners" (this is not our expression, but John Wesley's) is afforded by the following hymn, which used to be number 42, in the second book of Dr. Watts's old collection:

"With holy fear and humble song,
The dreadful God my soul adore;
Reverence and awe become the throng,
That speaks the greatness of his power.
Far in the deep where darkness dwells,
The land of horror and despair,
Justice hath built a dismal hell,
And laid her stores of vengeance there.
Eternal chains and heavy plagues,
Tormenting racks and fiery coals—
Darts to inflict immortal pains,
Dipt in the blood of damned souls.
There Satan, the first sinner, lies,
And roars and bites his iron bands;
In vain the rebel strives to rise,
Crushed with the weight of both thy hands.
These guilty souls of Adam's race
Shriek out and howl beneath thy rod;
Once they could scorn a Savior's grace;
But they incensed a dreadful God.
Tremble, my soul, and kiss the Son.
Sinners, obey your Savior's call,
Else your damnation hastens on,
And hell gapes wide to wait your fall."

There is a fluency and a vigor in this hymn which explains its being a great favorite in the days when the Devil was a haunting terror and Hell a dread reality. It could not be sung now in any church or chapel in England.

We will now consider the contents of *Is There a Hell?* a little more in detail. First we will take the anonymous editor's Introduction. This is how he opens:—

"Whether or not we confess it to our fellow creatures, we all cling desperately to the belief that there is another life beyond the confines of this one. Atheists tell us glibly enough that we die like dogs; that our souls perish with our bodies; that when the earth has swallowed us up, we become part and parcel of the clay from which we were originally made, and there is an end of the whole matter. But in our heart of hearts we do not believe the Atheists, and we do not even believe that the Atheists believe themselves."

"Die like dogs." What a vulgar expression! What have dogs done to be singled out for this insult? Dogs have been known to save drowning people who could get no help from their fellow human beings. Dogs are the most steadfast of friends. They are also the most unbribable. If every man has his price, it is not true of every dog. A millionaire could not get a dog away from a beggar. And what about the "die"? When our time comes we shall all have to die like dogs. There is nothing peculiar in a dog's death. All animals have to die alike. "Lower animals" involves "higher animals." Man is as much an animal as a dog. Shakespeare calls him "the paragon of animals." And what Shakespeare saw Darwin has confirmed.

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

Spiritual Blindness.

It is an incontestable fact that whatever objects one person can see are visible to all others who care to look at them. As long as you retain your sight you are capable of beholding every substance within your range. You need not pray to any supernatural being, "Open thou mine eyes that I may behold the beautiful things that surround me." Your eyes are your own, to open or close as you may desire. It is true that some people have a longer and stronger sight than others, which may have been inherited or acquired by training; but the fact remains that the total lack of vision is either the outcome of disease or accident, both of which are preventible. Blindness, which is a most terrible affliction, is always caused by a purely physical defect. The blind are fully aware of this; but the idea of denying the reality of vision never enters their heads. They know perfectly well that in temperate regions nine hundred and ninety-nine in every thousand do actually see. When a child is born its parents do not require to send up to heaven the prayer, "O Lord, be gracious unto us and grant that the eyes of our darling may be opened." The child opens its eyes automatically, and vision ensues. Now, the curious thing is that, while tacitly admitting the truth of all this, the divines aver that man has spiritual eyes also which never spontaneously open, but must, in every case, be opened by a supernatural being, who, however, scarcely ever opens them at all, or opens them most inadequately. The Rev. Dr. Selbie, Principal of Mansfield College, Oxford, says:—

"We are told that, with all its wonders, the human eye is but a very imperfect optical instrument at the best. If that is true, it is still more true that we are all more or less spiritually blind. Some of us have hardly had our eyes opened at all to the things of God. Some of us confess that clouds and darkness are round about us, and that we cannot see."

We are quoting from a sermon by the Principal which appears in the *British Congregationalist* for September 18. It was preached at Paddington Chapel, London, and its message is that we are all, including the preacher, more or less spiritually blind. It never occurred to him, that his discourse, from beginning to end, is a bill of indictment against God, presented to the Paddington Chapel congregation as grand jury, who, by listening to it with approbation, declared it to be a true bill. For countless ages the petition has been going up to the Throne of Grace, "Open thou mine eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law"; and yet, in this second decade of the twentieth century of our Lord, Dr. Selbie is obliged to acknowledge that "we are all more or less spiritually blind, which proves that God is a most unwilling, if not bungling, eye-opener.

Is not that a most humiliating confession to make, and exceptionally dishonoring to the Divine Being? The brightest and ripest saint on earth to-day has his spiritual eyes only less than half opened, so that, at the very best, he sees the things of God merely in a mirror, darkly. Even Dr. Clifford, who is nearly eighty years of age, and has been a preacher of the Gospel from early manhood, is reported to have characterised his own faith thus:—

"I cannot say I never have any doubt. I have doubts. I have knocked at the door again and again, and it has not been opened. Faith is a struggle, and faith in the perpetuity of a life that seems so brittle has to be fought for."

Tennyson, too, speaks in the same strain. All he can claim is:—

"A little hint to solace woe,
A hint, a whisper, breathing low,"

and even of this he "may not speak. In "The Vision of Sin," he says:—

"At last I heard a voice upon the slope
Cry to the summit, 'Is there any hope?'
To which an answer pealed from that high land,
But in a tongue no man could understand."

Sometimes highly emotional preachers indulge in absurdly extravagant language, speaking of God as if

they know him much better than they do their most intimate friend, and of the heavenly Jerusalem in terms of far greater intimacy than they would dare to employ in a description of the town in which they reside; but the generality of believers, however, are more accurately represented by Tennyson, Dr. Clifford, and Principal Selbie. They have doubts. They have knocked at the door innumerable times, and it has never once been opened. They are not sure; they only hope it is all true. Yes, says Dr. Selbie, we are all more or less spiritually blind, and have great need to pray the prayer, "Open thou mine eyes," but many there are of whom we must say that they are totally blind. These are his very words:—

"You wonder, sometimes, perhaps, that some men you know make so little of religion. You think of famous people who have been against religion, and have written against Christianity, and you think they are very clever, and you wonder why all the world does not think just as they do. But did it never occur to you that these people are blind? They are atrophied on one side of their nature, so to speak. There are certain things which they cannot see, just as color-blind people are unable to see certain things which you can see perfectly well. These men who leave God out of account, who say there is nothing in Jesus Christ beyond what is in any great human genius—these men cannot see. They are blind. Eyes they have, but they see not. Ears they have, but they hear not."

We frankly admit the blindness, but positively deny that it is caused by the atrophy of an existing organ of vision. What we maintain is that so-called spiritual blindness represents a normal condition of the human mind. We are spiritually blind because we have no eyes, and we have no spiritual eyes because there are no spiritual things to see. Once a man has seen the sun, shall he ever be troubled with any doubt as to its existence? To have seen is to know, and knowledge casteth out scepticism. To see an object, however dimly, is to know that it is there; and to know that it is there is to be incapable of doubt. The fact that Dr. Clifford has doubts proves that he has never really seen the things whereof he speaks. Had he seen them, doubt would have been an infinite absurdity, an impossibility. We hold that no one has ever seen them because they cannot be seen, and that they cannot be seen because they are not. What then? Are we to infer that all Christians are cunning hypocrites? By no means; multitudes of them being profoundly truthful and sincere. What we are necessitated to infer concerning them is that they are living in the Paradise of Fools, a region in which vanity and conceit hold sway. Dr. Selbie, humble, sincere, and conscientious though he be, takes for granted and emphatically affirms that unbelievers are the victims of spiritual atrophy, or that by neglect and wicked living they have drugged faculties which in him and his friends are doing their appointed work. How often has that been said of Charles Darwin, whereas Darwin himself assures us that he lost his Christian beliefs because he realised how utterly groundless they were. He became an Agnostic not because he starved his higher nature, but because he gave it its appropriate vent in the study of Nature round about him. The things of God ceased to exist for him because God himself had vanished. Because he expressed regret at having lost his love of poetry and music in consequence of his long absorption in biological research, Christians jumped to the idiotic conclusion that he lost his religion because he had so culpably neglected its exercises, which every honest reader of his *Life* knows to be absolutely false. In the same way, Dr. Selbie says of the opponents of religion generally that "they are atrophied on one side of their nature." We repudiate the insulting expression with scorn, and unhesitatingly declare that "the things of God," "the things of the spirit," and "spiritual vision" are theological assumptions, or inventions, of the objective reality of which there is absolutely not a single shred of evidence. They are simply dream-objects created by a restless and misguided imagination in times of

ignorance and credulity. And yet Dr. Selbie has the audacity to stand up in a pulpit before a believing assembly and, in effect, institute the following comparison between them and the unbelieving crowds outside: "We see; they are blind. We exercise the whole of our nature, all our faculties being at work; they are atrophied on the higher and nobler side of their being. We are right; they are wrong." This is what is called preaching the glorious Gospel of the blessed God, and they who do it boast that humility is the first and last Christian virtue, being, in fact, the essence of the Christian life.

Now, we boldly deny the moral right of Christians to sit in judgment upon the rest of mankind. It by no means follows, as they assume, that we are wrong because we differ from them. They form a minority of the human race. They have never been more than about one-third of the world's population. And yet they arrogate to themselves all the prerogatives of undoubted superiority. The world, they assert, will never be set right until it becomes Christianised, though nothing can be more conspicuous than the fact that Christendom, especially the most Christian portion of it, is as far from being set right to-day as it ever was. The truth is that, on the average, Christians are not better than other people, and in many cases not even as good. They have never succeeded in demonstrating that they possess and exercise faculties of which we are destitute, and until they do that their proud claims must fall to the ground. We are convinced that they are self-deceivers on a gigantic scale, consumed by their pride, warped in character by their devotion to "the things of God," hindered in their progress on earth by their glorification of heaven, and robbed of the true joys of time by their concentration upon the hypothetical bliss of eternity. We see only this world and this life, and we believe we are wise in restricting our attention and activities to their all-important interests.

J. T. LLOYD.

The Religion of Sir Oliver Lodge.—II.

(Concluded from p. 595.)

IN the opening of his speech, Sir Oliver Lodge made a parenthetic reference to the conflict between religion and science that is worthy of a word of comment. In leading to the conclusion that scepticism might be carried to too great lengths, and long accepted scientific generalisations rejected in the first flush of new discoveries, he said:—

"Let me hasten to explain that I do not mean the well-worn and almost antique theme of theological scepticism—that controversy is practically in abeyance just now. At any rate, the major conflict is suspended; the forts behind which the enemy has retreated do not invite attack; the territory now occupied by him is little more than his legitimate province."

Sir Oliver was, of course, speaking on behalf of the mass of scientists; and this sentence quite bears out what I said in the preceding article. The vast majority of scientific men have no interest in religion, save as a phase of anthropological study. Religious beliefs are not now the subjects of keen attack by them, because theologians have had their lesson, and no longer dare to estimate the value of scientific teaching in terms of religious belief. Their forts do not invite attack because they are really not worth attacking. And their "legitimate province" is the province that lies outside of all knowledge, actual or attainable. Sir Oliver could hardly have better expressed the scientific contempt for current theological doctrines.

Another point worth noting is that Sir Oliver specifically denied being a "vitalist" in the sense of believing in an "undefined vital force." And he added that "to attribute the rise of sap to vital force would be absurd. It would be giving up the problem and stating nothing at all." This is precisely what I have said over and over again. "Vital force" is no more intelligible or useful than "God."

It is, as Comte would have pointed out, the metaphysical form of the theological explanation, both of which have the quality of leaving the problem exactly where it was.

Having said this, it is difficult to find adequate justification for the claim immediately set up in the expressions: life "introduces something incalculable and purposeful into the laws of physics"; that "we see only its effects, we do not see life itself"; and "life appears necessary" to the conversion of the inorganic into the organic. As these statements are made in order to back up the theory that vital phenomena are dependent upon the existence of a power that cannot by analysis be reduced to a combination of other forces, but always remains true to itself, one fails to see in what way this differs from the "vital force" just discarded? So long as we claim the existence of a *separate* force, it matters little whether we call it life or vital force. It is really the old thing under a new name. The expression "we do not see life" is hopelessly unscientific. All we can mean by life is the phenomena which, when occurring, we call vital, as we call other phenomena chemical, and others physical. Might we not as reasonably say we do not see heat itself, nor chemical affinity itself, but only their effects? The reply would be that "heat," apart from any particular form of heat, is a pure abstraction. And so one may also say that life, apart from vital phenomena, is equally an abstraction. It is always wise to be on our guard against mistaking abstractions for concrete realities.

In order to avoid repetition, I leave for a moment certain aspects of the expressions cited. "Materialism," says Sir Oliver, "is appropriate to the material world; not as a philosophy, but as a working creed, as a proximate, an immediate formula for guiding research. Everything beyond that belongs to another region, and must be reached by other methods. To explain the psychical in terms of physics and chemistry is simply impossible." And, again, "the extreme school of biologists.....ought to say if they were consistent, there is nothing but physics and chemistry at work anywhere." Why so? The laws of physics are the generalised expression of the behavior of one group of phenomena; the laws of chemistry are the generalised expression of another group of movements. The chemist does not deny the laws of physics; he says they explain phenomena within certain limits. Beyond those limits we have to consider other modes of operation which he calls chemical. And the physicist quite agrees with him. And neither claim, so far as I am aware, that the laws of physics or of chemistry, or both in combination, explain biological phenomena. If they did, there would be no need of biology as a separate department. All that "the extreme school" really assert is that physical and chemical laws continue to operate in biological processes—which Sir Oliver Lodge fully admits—but that at a certain stage the interaction of chemical and physical forces produce new groupings and new complexities which are called by a new name—biological—because they represent a new set of phenomena. And this the biologist admits. The chemist no more denies the existence of the psychical than the biologist denies the existence of chemistry. He does deny the existence of the psychical as a separate and independent force which is merely brought to bear upon other forces; but that is an entirely different question. Nor need the chemist deny the existence of the psychical merely because he analyses a psychic state and furnishes reasons for believing that if our analysis were exact enough, and our synthesis equally complete, no separate "psyche" need be invoked. He is merely exhibiting the conditions which, when existent, he agrees with others in calling psychical, and which cannot be properly described under any other name.

To put the whole matter briefly, each group of phenomena—physical, chemical, biological, or mental—requires the framing of new "laws" to express their modes of operation. This is not because they

involve the appearance on the scene of an absolutely new force, but because the emergence of the conditions that give rise to the new group cannot be adequately expressed in the terms that apply with descriptive fullness to preceding groups. Thus, if we assume two bodies travelling in space in a line that will bring them together, we have a problem in dynamics. Allow them to collide with sufficient force, and the two may be converted into an incandescent mass. Our problem then becomes one of thermo-dynamics, and a new "law" must be framed. Follow the subsequent development of the mass, and still more "laws" must be framed to describe the chemical changes that take place. But there is no introduction of an independent force; there is only the framing of new "laws" to describe the emergence of new and more complex conditions.

I do not, therefore, follow Sir Oliver Lodge when he says the "extreme school" holds that "the laws of chemistry and physics are supreme,—and they are sufficient to account for everything"! No Materialist who understands his case says anything of the kind. You can no more adequately express mental phenomena in terms of physics or chemistry than you can express chemical phenomena in terms of psychology. Each set of laws are valid within their own legitimate sphere. Mental life is as real to the Materialist as to the Spiritualist. It is almost laughable the way in which Spiritualists of all schools avoid meeting what is really the essence of Materialism, and insist upon putting into his mind conceptions that none but a scientific lunatic could entertain.

I agree with Sir Oliver that life introduces something purposeful into nature. That it introduces something incalculable is highly disputable, since incalculable is only the equivalent of our inability to calculate under present conditions of knowledge. But purposeful, yes. It is part of the phenomena of life that it should exhibit purpose. This is really saying little more than that life introduces into nature living things. No one disputes so obvious a proposition. But that is really not what Sir Oliver Lodge implies. The implication of his position is that life is introduced in order to establish the governing fact of purpose. If he does not mean this, it is impossible to see what he does mean, and he is simply thrashing the air. For no one will deny the fact of purpose as a mere phenomenon of life. There was purpose in Sir Oliver delivering his address, just as there is purpose in my writing these articles. It is not really purpose as a fact in life that is in question. It is purpose as lying behind the introduction of life that Sir Oliver is trying to establish. If he can establish that, well and good. If he cannot, he has no case. And whether he can or cannot, the one solid fact is that he has not done so.

What Sir Oliver does, finally, is—first, to assert that thirty years' experience of psychical research has convinced him that "discarnate intelligence, under certain conditions, may interact with us on the material side, thus indirectly coming within our scientific ken." To this one may reply that other investigators have not been so convinced, and even though all the alleged facts of psychical research were admitted as genuine, there still remains the probability that a more complete knowledge of the forces at work may render the hypothesis of surviving disembodied intelligences quite superfluous. It is, at least, suggestive that assumed disembodied intelligences with whom communications have been set up are always those of the recently dead. And it is, therefore, permissible to assume that the minds of the living are the real sources of the revelations and communications. And one is naturally suspicious of an explanation that is essentially in terms of savage psychology modified to suit facts of recent discovery—if we admit all the stated facts to be absolutely genuine.

Secondly, Sir Oliver makes a quite unscientific appeal to our sense of the fitness of things. Surely, he says, referring to the ordinary scientific explanation, "Surely there must be a deeper meaning

involved in natural objects.....Why do things struggle to exist? Surely the effort must have some significance, the development some aim." But why? Why must there be some aim in natural processes? If science is to be trusted at all, life on the earth had a beginning, and it will have an end. What aim, outside of the process itself, can there be if lifelessness is to follow animate existence just as certainly as it preceded it? The only "must be" there is in the case is that supplied by human reason itself, which reads into nature aims and purposes that we only know as existing in conjunction with animal intelligence. But animal intelligence is only a fractional part of natural phenomena as a whole; it is, apparently, an evanescent part; and what warranty is there for saying that qualities characteristic of a small part of nature "must be" characteristic of nature as a whole? There is none at all, so far as I can see; and the "must be" and "must have" is not part of a scientific induction; it is an appeal to pure sentiment and traditional teaching. Anyway, it is not the task of science to say what must be, but to find out what is. Any "must be" that does exist in science can only appear as the rigorously logical deduction from admitted data. Above all, these appeals to popular feelings about the fitness of things are in the highest degree unscientific and misleading. For the popular mind has been developed in an anthropomorphic school. It has been in the habit of looking for reflections of its own moods in nature, and as a result it has usually managed to find them. It is precisely this frame of mind that for two hundred and fifty years science has been striving to correct. That its task is not yet complete there is evidence on every side. The address with which I have been dealing is only one more piece of evidence to the same end. Sir Oliver Lodge is not, as he seems to think, a soldier in an army advancing to the conquest of new territory. He is rather one of the rearguard of a retreating force that has fought its principal battles and experienced hopeless defeat.

C. COHEN.

A Clearing-Up.

SOCIAL or mental freedom from any tyranny never comes like a lightning flash; clouds never disappear suddenly. The blow may be startling in the rapidity of its action; the result becomes a process of growth.

Some time ago I lay on a hillside looking at heavenly things. The sky was black with an ominous accumulation of dense clouds. The atmosphere was heavy with the foreboding of a storm; and everything, in heaven and on earth, seemed possessed of the anticipation of doom; except myself; for I was busy with analogies. Just when I reached the stage of slavery corresponding to the blackness of the sky, and when it seemed time that something should happen, coincidence would have it that a sudden gust of wind should come from the west.

It was the blow. Then the forces of emancipation began. The wind came in hurried gusts, and the trees near by chattered excitedly. The grass and bracken swayed irresponsibly, and a rabbit poked out its head to see what was going on. Gradually the wind became a strong, steady breeze. The tree-voices ceased their chattering to sing the song of Nature. Movement took the place of stagnant solidity in the heavens; and the bright, clear place on the western horizon slowly extended its eastern boundary. In about an hour the last of the heavy clouds was climbing the mountain range on the east, to disappear somewhere out of sight beside its ungainly brethren. And the air was full of freshness, and bright with gladdening sunrays.

The process took some time to come to its consummation. Had the first gust of wind not been followed by many more, had these not grown into a steady breeze, the sky would not have been cleared

of its weight nor the air of its heaviness, and the doom *might* have been accomplished.

As it was with my picture of nature, so it is with the affairs of men. To cavil and complain that our labor's ideal is not realised within a lifetime seems to suggest an ignorance of the powers of mental conservatism. The man who sets out to free the mind from its dark clouds of prejudice and superstition must have a goodly amount of patience. A minute in the natural clearing of the sky might represent a decade in the clearing of the sky of man's mind. Pioneers cannot gauge the results of their work. That must remain to others. To complain is to retard. To continue fighting, regardless of apparent drawbacks, despite the tendencies of the mind for relief, for rest, is to prove the real pioneering spirit, to deserve all the praise one can bestow upon the possessor of it.

Religion has been the darkest cloud that ever cast its oppressiveness upon the life of humanity. The scope of religion has been illimitable, and its potentialities incomputable. It has sounded all the depths of human nature, and has ascended all the heights of genius, of love, of human grandeur. Not an attribute of Nature has it failed to steep in its gloom. It has gone with men to the fringes of the forest of thought, and, with them, for its own purposes, has penetrated to the hidden lakes of truth. From man's weakness and from man's strength it has drawn the food of its days. And even man's great desire for freedom has not been allowed to go unaccompanied. Religion has tracked it like a sleuthhound, keen on its scent, recognising that the grandest of man's desires was its deadliest of enemies. With an almost admirable tenacity has Religion stuck to the way of the print of the footsteps of Freedom; and when it saw an opportunity of attack, or an opportunity to steal ahead and proclaim the victory, it has neither hesitated to attack nor to steal. And so has it wormed its way into the heart of things, achieving a reflected power and a glory that it claims as its own birthright.

If these things be true, if the clouds be so heavy, if the atmosphere be so oppressive, the breeze must be strong and prolonged that would clear the air and the skies of man's mind. The mind of the average individual moves in a small space, and the national mind moves in a space not much, if any, larger. Within the limits of that space the influence of religion has been of tremendous import in the past, and is yet. Ideas of such venerable age are not subdued as easily as the inclination to break stones. They are not shattered at a blow. They are not blown away with the first gust of the winds of adverse criticism. Accustomed to the heaviness and heat of restriction, they chill and die slowly in the crisp fresh air. So slowly do they relinquish life that the gradual diminution of their vitality but proves their past power and strength.

Against habits of thought that have become characteristic of the national being, that are so well developed that the least return of medieval oppressiveness can give them resuscitation of life, those who would fight must possess a patience, a courage, a conviction, rarely, if ever before, found necessary. The hardest task ever undertaken by the mind of man has been to conquer and reject the religious habits of the mind of man. Mental warfare demands qualities, sterner qualities, than those requisitioned in the brutal slaughter of men; and we cannot say that Freethought has failed in the duties conviction imposes upon it.

The patience required from Freethought, the never-sleeping courage, the continual activity, the constant, steady breeze of truth, demanded from it, have not been found wanting. The conviction that the skies will yet be cleared of their dark, heavy clouds and the air relieved of its unhealthy oppressiveness by the strong ceaseless flow of criticism is Freethought's inspiration. It has taken up the task. It recognises the responsibilities. It will lay down neither until the impurities of superstition are swept from the

air and skies of man's mind. The blow has been struck; the gusts of wind have become a steady breeze; the process of emancipation goes on, its operations increasing in activity as the breeze quickens in velocity; and the little space on the western horizon gradually becomes bigger and brighter, telling us that Freethought's labors realise their reward surely, if slowly.

ROBERT MORELAND.

The Dear Bishops.

"The Archbishop of — and — have returned from town to — Palace, where they will entertain a house party during the session."—MORNING NEWSPAPER.

THIS interesting announcement is common enough. We do not refer to it on account of its novelty. Indeed, if it were less common it might excite more attention. If the average Christian were not used to such things he would "sit up," as the man in the street says, at the idea of a right reverend father in God figuring in "society" news like a sporting nobleman, a notorious actress, or a parasite-haunted millionaire. What an effort of imagination it involves to picture Jesus Christ giving a swell party, or Peter and Paul looking in at a fashionable at-home! Fancy the announcement that Jesus Christ had just left his town residence for his country seat, where he was going to entertain a number of distinguished guests! Fancy a newspaper paragraph to the effect that (say) John had just returned from a holiday at Ostend or Monte Carlo! The incongruity is quite staggering. But the case is altered since the infancy of the Salvation Army, of which General Booth's affair is only a small contingent. The religion of poverty became a road to riches. The religion of humility became a path to honors and dignities. The religion of the next world became the way to the best places in this world. It was a wonderful transformation change. Nothing like it was ever seen in a pantomime. And when the startling change was once effected it went on as a going concern. From the days of Constantine, the Christian emperor—though it is doubtful if he ever was a Christian—the representatives of Jesus Christ, the poor Carpenter of Nazareth, have affected wealth and display. Even now the Pope reckons himself above any Emperor, Czar, or Kaiser on earth. Cardinals count themselves as little less than Kings; in fact, they are Princes—of the Church. The Bishops of the Church of England sit in the House of Lords; that is, when they take the trouble to be present. They seldom attend unless the interests of their own order are at stake. Even the Nonconformist ministers play up to their position for all it is worth. Did not the late Rev. Hugh Price Hughes go to Court dressed in silk stockings and silver shoe-buckles? And did not General Booth travel like a patrician? We have seen him sailing up the platform to his private carriage, followed by a crowd of uniformed satellites, one carrying this and another that, and all crowding after him as though they were going to rush in after him through the gates of heaven.

But to return to the bishops. We call them the dear bishops. And are they not so? We pay the poorest of them some £4,000 a year, and the richest £15,000. Mr. Asquith receives £5,000 a year as Prime Minister of the British Empire. Dr. Davidson receives £15,000 a year as Archbishop of Canterbury. He is commercially worth perhaps a twentieth part of that figure. It would probably puzzle him to earn a thousand a year in the open labor market. As the chief apostle of Jesus Christ in England he ought to receive far less. A hundred a year should be the outside salary of a Christian preacher. In the case of a bishop fifty pounds a year should suffice. No doubt he would find it hard to live on that income if he did not trust a good deal in the Lord. But he ought to trust a good deal in the Lord. What is he a bishop for otherwise? He should show an example to

the flock. They are expected to have faith, and he should have it more abundantly; in fact, if he had faith enough, he would be able to live without any salary at all. Meat and drink and clothes would come supernaturally. "For the Lord knoweth that ye have need of such things."

John Stuart Mill said that a bishop might not be a hypocrite, but he certainly looked like one. Living up to a sunflower, or a piece of old blue china, is nothing to living up to a bishop's costume. No man has ever done it. An honest bishop is an impossibility. He may be all right as a man, but as a bishop he is an impostor. Good to his wife he may be, kind to his children, amiable to his friends, and considerate to his acquaintances; but in his public capacity he is always a fraud. "Blessed be ye poor," he says with his tongue. With his hand he rakes in the shekels. He talks of the Son of Man who had not where to lay his head, and can hardly tell offhand the number of bedrooms in his own palace. He professes to lead others in following one who was despised and rejected of men, and he insists on having a good place near the front in every earthly procession. He preaches "Labor not for the meat that perisheth," and lives on the fat of the land. Generally he reaches a good old age, sticks to the world with all his strength, keeps out of heaven as long as possible, and only goes "home" when he can no longer live abroad. The longevity of bishops is proverbial.

How curious that all this contrast, and all this hypocrisy, should be displayed in the cause of religion! It is like keeping drinkshops in the interest of temperance, and brothels in the interest of morality! But when you look into it more closely the curiousness disappears. Religion has been used, all over the world, to deceive and exploit the people. Those who speak in the name of God are eager after the "goods" of men. Those who preach felicity above make themselves as comfortable as they can below. Those who promise mansions in the sky get hold of good residences on the solid earth. It is really a wonder that the multitude do not see this. The fact is gross as a mountain, open, palpable. But the people (we suppose) are caught so young by the clerical tricksters, and are so thoroughly imposed upon in their childhood, that they seldom recover their common sense in adult life, but go down to their graves in the firm belief that the fellows who have told them lies and robbed them are the appointed teachers of a God of truth and justice.

G. W. FOOTE.

ABOUT THE HOLY BIBLE.

Is anything to be learned from Hosea and his wife? Is there anything of use in Joel, in Amos, in Obadiah? Can we get any good from Jonah and his gourd? Is it possible that God is the real author of Micah and Nahum, of Habakkuk and Zephaniah, of Haggai and Malachi and Zechariah, with his red horses, his four horns, his four carpenters, his flying roll, his mountains of brass, and the stone with four eyes? Is there anything in these "inspired" books that has been of benefit of man?

Have they taught us how to cultivate the earth, to build houses, to weave cloth, to prepare food? Have they taught us to paint pictures, to chisel statues, to build bridges, or ships, or anything of beauty or of use? Did we get our ideas of government, of religious freedom, of the liberty of thought, from the Old Testament? Did we get from any of these books a hint of any science? Is there in the "sacred volume" a word, a line, that has added to the wealth, the intelligence, and the happiness of mankind? Is there one of the books of the Old Testament as entertaining as *Robinson Crusoe*, the *Travels of Gulliver*, or *Peter Wilkins and his Flying Wife*? Did the author of Genesis know as much about nature as Humboldt, or Darwin, or Haeckel? Is what is called the Mosaic Code as wise or as merciful as the code of any civilised nation? Were the writers of Kings and Chronicles as great historians, as great writers, as Gibbon and Draper? Is Jeremiah or Habakkuk equal to Dickens or Thackeray? Can the authors of Job and the Psalms be compared with Shakespeare? Why should we attribute the best to man and the worst to God?—R. G. Ingersoll.

Acid Drops.

"Ought Christians to Die Rich?" is the title of an article in the *Methodist Times*. Well, we never heard of one who struggled to die poor, and all of them seem willing to run the risk of dying otherwise. The writer of the article thinks it "is the Lord who gives His servants power to get wealth," so it is, apparently, all right. And as things go, the Lord must thoughtfully withhold the power from others, since we cannot all be rich. We might all be comfortable, but it is simply impossible for us all to be rich.

The Established Church, said Karl Marx, "will more readily pardon an attack on thirty-eight of its thirty-nine Articles than on one-thirty-ninth of its income." It is a case of "The Law and the Profits."

Professor B. Moore, at the British Association meetings, did not delay in giving a reply to Sir Oliver Lodge. In an address before the joint sections of Zoology, Physiology, and Botany, he laughed at the transcendental speculations that some people are so fond of, and claimed that by actual experimentation evidence had already been obtained of the steps of organic evolution. As the result of eighteen months' experiments, it is now clear, he said, that by the continued action of the law of molecular complexity, life must originate, that forms of life were now originating, that the origin of life was no fortuitous accident, and that the same processes were guiding life onwards to a higher evolution in a progressive creation. This is a clear endorsement of Professor Schafer's declaration of a year ago.

A discussion followed the address, in which Sir Oliver Lodge took part. He, of course, admitted the facts, so far as the experiments were concerned; indeed, whether it had been done or not, he quite admitted that the manufacture of living material might be accomplished. But when they got "potential living matter," that was not what he regarded as life. He regarded life "as something not of that order, but of a higher and different order." It would only be the construction of a chemical or physical vehicle that life would make use of. Well, one can only say, quite plainly, that against that attitude all argument is impossible, and no proof would be adequate. We are not surprised that the *Daily Telegraph* special correspondent remarked that Sir Oliver "scarcely used the language of science" in his argument. It was the speech of a pulpiteer, one who cares nothing whatever for scientific method or results, and is anxious only to see a preconceived idea or belief established.

Consider what the attitude of Sir Oliver Lodge is. He says to the chemist and the biologist:—

"I admit that if you have not yet made, you may one day make, living matter from a combination of non-living matter. But when you have done this, you have not manufactured life. That is something quite different, and all you have done is to create a medium in which life may show itself."

Now that, we repeat, is not the language that one has a right to expect from a scientific man. Life is not something apart from its manifestations, life is the name given to certain properties or clusters of properties associated with a special kind of organisation. Life, by itself, is a sheer abstraction. It has no more existence than heat or light apart from undulatory phenomena. Life, as a name of certain groups of phenomena, is a plain, understandable term. But life, apart from these phenomena, is a conception as idle as it is absurd. Nay, it is not even a conception, it is a mere word, for no one, not even Sir Oliver Lodge, can have the ghost of an idea as to what can possibly be meant by it.

Two letters appeared the other morning in the *Daily Sketch*. One welcomed the announcement of Sir Oliver Lodge's "new continent" which the writer declared to be "far more real than the material earth," though he did not state how he found that out. He also welcomed the news of the "miracles" at Lourdes. The other correspondent suggested that the Church should gather together a lot of people with one leg or one eye, and send them to Lourdes. If only one of them returned with two legs or two eyes, it would "confound the agnostic for ever." We fancy this writer must have been reading the *Freethinker*. Anyhow, he was lucky to get his letter inserted.

In the recent "City Valuations" at Glasgow it was sought to get a house at 21 Burnbank-gardens reduced from £70 to £60. But the Assessor said there were no fewer than five

clergymen claiming lodger votes in that house, and each had sworn that the room he occupied was valued at £10 a year at least. That made £50 for the bedrooms alone! The Committee, however, benevolently fixed the value of this clerical warren at £65.

Rev. Alfred Francis Hall, aged 26, a curate at St. Peter's Church, Upton Manor, was put into the dock at the West Ham Police Court to answer a serious charge of indecent assault on a lad that he had prepared for confirmation. The following letter was subsequently written to the lad's father, and was produced and read in court:—

"Dear Mr. —,—From the depth of my heart may I say how truly sorry I am for all that has occurred. The feelings of my mother and father are a sufficient guide to me as to what you and Mrs. — must be feeling, and I know this only too well. I have by my own act blighted all my life, and I shall always have one thought searing my soul, and so my punishment is indeed terrible. Forgive me if you can, and know that I am dead to Forest Gate as far as the present and future are concerned. You had better show this to Mrs. —, and think as kindly as you can of one who has been sorely tempted, and in his weakness has fallen.—Yours in penitence, A. F. HALL."

The prisoner was sentenced to six months' hard labor. Three other cases against the "reverend" gentleman were not proceeded with.

"You have your own Christian names, and Christ knows them," writes Bishop Montgomery in *Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper*. What a busy person he is supposed to be! It must be exhausting work, too, after counting the hairs of all our heads, and watching the sparrows fall.

The Salvation Army Home does not appear to be such a heaven upon earth as some people suppose. Recently, a poor woman, charged with stealing at Rochford Session, was asked if she would go to the Army home, and she said she preferred going to prison. She was sentenced to a month's hard labor. Comment is superfluous.

Principal Forsyth, Principal Selbie, Rev. Dr. Horton, Rev. Silvester Horne, and other men of God, have signed an appeal to every Congregational church in Great Britain to make up a big collection for the London Missionary Society, which is short of funds and has an increasing deficit in its balance-sheet. The appeal suggests the setting apart of a special Sunday for "considering the need of the non-Christian world and the obligation of members of the churches in the matter of giving." We venture to say that the need of the non-Christian world does not include anything that these reverend gentlemen, and their colleagues, are able to give. Most people, except those who live by it, or have friends living by it, recognise that the missionary game is pretty nearly played out. What answer is made to Sir Hiram Maxim's damaging book? They know better than to make one.

A small boy of eight, on his return from school the other day, exclaimed, in a state of great excitement, "O mother, my teacher is a liar." Startled by so bold and emphatic an assertion, his mother reproved him for speaking in so disrespectful a manner of his teacher. Unabashed, the little chap retorted, "But, mother, she did tell us a lie to-day." "What did she say?" came the maternal inquiry. "She told us that Jesus walked on the sea, and I am sure no one ever did or ever can walk on the sea." Then the mother added, "I suppose she got it out of some book or other." "I don't care a rap where she got it from," replied this youthful Freethinker; "all I know is that it is impossible to walk on the sea without getting drowned." This child of eight has got brains, which many adults either lack, or do not use.

The editor of the *Church Times* remarks that "Darwinism in its strict sense has gone by the board." Of course, the editor of the *Church Times* need not trouble to find out either what Darwinism is, or what living scientists think about it. But, on the other hand, he is not specially called on to exhibit his ignorance on the subject. We can assure him that Darwinism, in its strict sense, is not called into question by any scientific man worth talking about. How far Darwinism is operative in the fixation of variations is another question altogether. But, as a matter of fact, the biological world of to-day is probably more Darwinian than Darwin himself. The editor of the *Church Times* had better consult Dr. Alfred Russel Wallace, who is still with us. Or, if he is "suspect," let him ask Sir Oliver Lodge. Sir Oliver is not a biologist, but he is well able to give the needful correction.

A Lambeth woman was committed for trial the other day (Sept. 18) for ill-treating her children. She is said to

have forced her little boy to his knees, and compelled him to sing hymns and say prayers. Then she dragged him to his feet and beat him. She is evidently a firm believer in religious education, and would doubtless resist the exclusion of the Bible from the schools.

Pious food reformers have a hymn-book of their own with which to serenade the "Lord." We can sympathise with any vegetarian who might be asked to join in the singing of "There is a fountain filled with blood."

If he is not careful, Mr. Hall Caine will be getting into trouble with some of his Christian friends. He is writing a series of articles in the *Daily Telegraph* on "Woman," and, after describing the manner in which the marriage of Isaac and Rebecca is narrated in the Bible, adds:—

"It is a shocking story—shocking in its picture of the degradation of womanhood.....Not a hint of any higher impulse; any concurrence of the soul; any spiritual compulsion; any physical attraction; anything we call love; any exercise of nature's selective instinct. It is mere sale and barter, in which the woman, the thing bought and sold, is made to acquiesce in her own auction."

The rows we have got into for saying exactly the same thing of the position of woman in the Bible! Mr. Hall Caine says it as though it were almost an original discovery. He might have learned as much any time he pleased from the writings and speeches of Freethinkers. All the same, he will not please his religious backers by pointing out that amongst God's chosen people women were regarded as articles of merchandise. And he might have gone further still. He might have pointed to the Ten Commandments, in which the wife is lumped in with the husband's horse and ass and other articles of property. And she doesn't even head the list.

Nevertheless, Mr. Hall Caine needs be more careful, and more catholic, in his studies. He says, "Such, apparently, was man's earliest conception of woman's place and use in the world." We hope that Mr. Caine is not under the chapel-like impression that the Bible is, in an anthropological sense, an early record of human history. No serious student to-day would ever dream of going to the Bible for man's earliest conception of anything. Marriage by purchase is not by any means the earliest mode of contracting unions. It is obviously a peaceful refinement of marriage by capture. And there were earlier stages still. Mr. Caine makes the mistake of taking the Christian world too seriously. It might also do his Christian friends some good if he pointed out to them that contemporary conceptions of woman among many of the nations "who knew not God" were really much higher than those of the Bible.

It is related in a recent number of the *Catholic Herald* how a confirmed Freethinker became a Catholic. As usual, the name of the convert is conveniently withheld; but whoever he was, if at all historical, his intellectual calibre was such that Freethinkers generally will not mourn his loss. He had evidently been discussing the claims of Christianity to credence and trust with a Catholic who, declining to enter into controversy with him, said: "Look here, my friend; either Christ rose from the dead, glorious and immortal, or he did not. If the resurrection is true, a convent scandal would not make it untrue." This argument, thus stated, floored the Freethinker, and he immediately rose and blossomed into a Catholic. We have never met such a Freethinker in our lives; and even if we had, we would have been glad of the opportunity to make a present of him to any Church. As a matter of fact, a person endowed with such a slender intellect cannot be a genuine Freethinker.

More religion and brotherhood! The secretary of the St. Asaph branch of the British and Foreign Bible Society invited the bishop of the diocese to attend a meeting of that body. But the secretary is a Calvinistic Methodist, and a great many of the society's members also belong to that cheerful sect, with Baptists and other odds and ends of the Dissenting world. So the bishop wrote back declining the invitation on the ground that Churchmen have been subjected to a "campaign of slander and falsehood" in order to get the Welsh Church Bill through Parliament, and that to co-operate with the people responsible for this would be "nothing less than hypocrisy." The bishop does not say with David, "All men are liars," but he does say that Non-conformists are. And the latter will doubtless reply with "You're another." So the pious rail, and the ungodly laugh. Both have used slander and falsehood against Freethinkers, and its use has served as a means of cementing friendship. And religious people, having found this weapon serviceable

for so long, can hardly be expected to drop it directly they fall out amongst themselves.

"How we may secure literary quarantine is agitating many minds," says *Current Literature*. These pure-minded censors might start by prohibiting the Bible from being placed in the hands of children, for if it were published for the first time to-day it would very probably land its producer in gaol.

Rev. R. R. Roberts, in vacating the presidency of the Presbyterian Church of Wales, asked the Conference to consider a number of things, and this was one of them. "Think," he said, "of the dragons that devoured our youth and made them first rogues and then atheists." We wonder who the dragons are. We also wonder how the young people who are devoured by these monsters have such a lively development afterwards. Mr. Roberts's view that roguery leads to Atheism is an instance of what Herbert Spencer would have called professional bias. It could easily be corrected by application to the nearest prison. Ninety-nine per cent., at least, of the inmates would be found to belong to some Christian Church or other. It would probably be difficult to find one Atheist in the whole establishment.

Rev. P. Watchnest, of Huddersfield, says, as prison chaplain, that every man he had visited in prison had passed through a Sunday-school. That is one of the outward and visible signs of a religious education, we presume.

Professor T. M. Kettle has some quaint ideas concerning Freethought. Writing in *Public Opinion*, he says, "The world sets me the conundrum: Christianity or the other thing? I am, as they say, at heart a Christian. But I read a twelve and sixpenny book blowing it sky-high." Even a professor might learn that the deadliest Freethought explosive can be had for twopence.

Rev. Dr. Clifford wants Passive Resistance to go on. "We want no tests for teachers but capacity and character; the Catechisms and creeds of the Churches should be kept out." Dr. Clifford discreetly omits to add that the Bible should be kept in. He is an opponent of Secular Education. He objects to the Church Catechism in a school that a Non-conformist contributes to support. He has no objection to "simple Bible teaching" in a school that an Atheist helps to pay for.

Prayers were offered, nearly a couple of months ago, for rain in the Newcastle district. When it came it was a devastating flood. The water was from ten to twelve feet deep in some parts of the town, and the Vicar of Jesmond (Rev. J. T. Inskip) is lauded in one of the local papers for helping "distressed" people "across the flooded channel and placing them in safety on the pavement." We should have thought this deserved no particular praise, considering that the reverend gentleman (whose God sent the deluge) was one of the main agents in bringing about the mischief.

"Providence" often fails to recognise its own buildings. That is why lightning conductors are attached to churches. But that precaution does not always ensure safety. In the recent heavy storm the parish church of Bothenhampton, near Bridport, was struck by lightning. A large portion of the bell turret, and the stone cross, were cut away, and fell smashing through the roof.

There doesn't seem very much to choose between any of the Balkan Allies when it comes to a question of dealing with non-Christians. Miss Durham is a lady journalist who wrote very warmly in praise of the Montenegrins at the beginning of the war. She has now written with equal warmth against them, and in consequence of evidence seen or collected by herself. She says that in Albania the Montenegrins closed the mosques, arrested the Moham-medans, and in batches of twenty to fifty gave them the choice of baptism or death. At Chorem all the males were killed, and the houses, with the women and children inside, burned. Other evidences of cruelty are given by Miss Durham, and she says she has been most careful in getting at the facts. The *Catholic Times* says that "how people professing any form of Christianity could perpetrate such outrages is almost inconceivable." We appreciate the editor's indignation, but we think he will find if he turns to the records of his own religion, that there is in all this nothing new in the history of Christianity. It is just Christian belief that has always given brutality a keener edge and cruelty a sharper zest.

Mr. Foote's Engagements

October 5, Birmingham Town Hall; 19, Manchester; 26, Stratford Town Hall.

To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1913.—Previously acknowledged £185 0s. 3d. Received since:—Per J. Ainge (Leicester)—S. Leeson, £1 1s.; W. Leeson, 5s.; D. Winterton, 2s. 6d.; — Bartlett, 2s.; A. Wade, 2s. 6d.; A Friend, 3s.; J. Ainge, 3s. G. B. Taylor, £1; W. R. Munton, £2; E. Pinder and Friends (Leicester), £1 1s.; T. Raff (W. Australia), £2 2s.

G. B. TAYLOR.—Glad to hear from you on the rolling deep. When will your voyages bring you to London again? Your good wishes are cordially reciprocated.

DISGUSTED.—Many non-believers do go to church to please their womenfolk or to court respectability. "'Tis true, 'tis pity, and pity 'tis 'tis true."

A. W. HUTTY.—Is it not possible to accept the good in Nietzsche without troubling so much about what you regard as evil? It is only on the side of religion and ethics that he can be dealt with in the *Freethinker*. We may add that satirists should never be taken quite literally.

W. R. MUNTON.—Thanks for subscription; also for good wishes. We hope to do plenty of work for Freethought yet.

E. B.—Much obliged for cuttings.

E. SCHMITZ.—We quite agree that "Abracadabra's" recent series of articles on "The Fabrication of the Gospel History" would be very useful if reprinted in a permanent form; but we cannot afford to risk our slender resources until Freethinkers show more alacrity in pushing the circulation of such publications.

C. M.—"Be ye fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth" occurs in Genesis i. 28.

B. EVANS.—See paragraph. Thanks.

W. GREGORY.—The date of the "Bradlaugh Sunday"—if we may call it so—has to be fixed by the N. S. S. Executive, not by the President personally. We are glad to hear that Mr. Davidson gave the Kingsland Branch so good a lecture on Bradlaugh last Sunday. Pleased to learn that the Branch's outdoor work is successful generally.

W. P. BALL.—Many thanks for cuttings.

J. PARTRIDGE.—Your letter and ours must have crossed in the post.

J. W. O'LEARY.—Cecil Chesterton may have been on "the ship" that he says Mr. Shaw torpedoed, but we were not aware of the fact, and should not believe it if he did not state it himself. As it was so long ago (Bradlaugh died in January, 1891), Cecil Chesterton must have been very young then; and it could hardly have been a matter of great importance what opinions had the honor of his adherence. We are often puzzled by zealous Christians, emerging into some notoriety, who claim to have been Freethinkers in "the long ago."

S. G. MASON.—Thanks for the reference. But the periodical you mention is not sent to us, and we cannot buy everything.

E. F. REMINGTON.—We cannot tell you where Huxley said "he knew of no other religion save the Christian one that will keep a woman pure and virtuous." Nor can anyone else tell you.

W. REPTON.—Next week.

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.

Birmingham "saints" expect a big audience next Sunday evening (Oct. 5) in the great Town Hall. Mr. Foote's subject will be "Sir Oliver Lodge's Theology"—with reference to his recent much-talked-of address to the British Association. Most of our readers will recollect that Sir Oliver Lodge is the Principal of Birmingham University.

Mr. Foote resumed his platform work at Leicester on Sunday evening. "Foote's weather" used to be a byword amongst the "saints" at Leicester; it meant fog, rain, snow or some other sample of English weather at its worst. Fortunately it was very fine on Sunday, and Mr. Foote managed to get through his task all right. The Secular Hall was filled with a most appreciative audience, gathered not only from the town but also from the surrounding districts, some "saints" walking a good many miles to hear the N. S. S. President. The lecture on "Shakespeare's Humanism in the *Merchant of Venice*" was followed with deep attention, and was evidently much relished. Mr. Sydney Gimson, who presided, stated how glad they all were to see Mr. Foote recovered from his late severe illness and back in the lecturing field again; and how much the "splendid" lecture they had listened to would make them look forward to his next visit.

Mr. Gimson's announcement of various Committee meetings in this, that, and the other room after the lecture, fell gratefully on Mr. Foote's ears. It showed that active work was going on, and that the Leicester Secular Society was facing the future with hopeful energy. Mr. Foote is sorry to say that he forgot to note the name of the young lady member who sang a solo (in the absence of the quartette) with such acceptance after the lecture.

Mr. Foote is none the worse for his Leicester visit; it rather did him good. The pleasurable excitement was a beneficial change from the very quiet life he has been leading lately. He still adheres to his declared intention of not lecturing every Sunday, especially as he wants time this coming winter for a larger output of literary work; but he can now step on the platform again without a shadow of apprehension.

Mdlle. Carmelita Ferrer, the dancer, who is appearing in London, is a niece of Francisco Ferrer, the "intellectual," and at the time of his sentence she made several appeals to King Alfonso for a reprieve.

A discussion on "Beyond the Grave" has been published in recent issues of the *Walsall Observer*, and the Freethought position has been ably stated by several correspondents.

A course of Freethought lectures, under the auspices of the Secular Society, Ltd., will take place at the Stratford Town Hall on Sunday evenings, October 12, 19, and 26. Mr. Cohen starts the series, Mr. Lloyd continues it, and Mr. Foote winds it up. There will be ample local advertisements. But the "saints" are asked to give the enterprise all the publicity they can. It is a thing we can never have too much of.

The Birmingham Branch opens its winter session to-day (Sept. 28) at the King's Hall, Corporation-street. Mr. E. Clifford Williams lectures at 7 p.m. on "Lessons from the Life of Charles Bradlaugh."

A MODEL KING.

In St. Ferdinand, King of Castile (d. 1252), the virtues of a king shone out brightly—magnanimity, clemency, love of justice, and, above all, zeal for the Catholic faith and a burning desire to protect and propagate its religious worship. He showed this especially by the vigor with which he pursued heretics. He never allowed them to exist in any part whatever of his dominions. When they were discovered, he himself with his own hands carried the faggots to burn them.—*Breviarium Romanum, Feast of St. Ferdinand, June 5.*

Grant us grace so to follow thy blessed saints in all virtuous and godly living, that we may come to those unspeakable joys, etc.—*Col. for All Saints.*

CARLYLE AND THE CHURCH.

His (Carlyle's) destination was "the ministry," and for this, knowing how much his father and mother wished it, he tried to prepare himself. He was already conscious, however, "that he had not the least enthusiasm for that business; that even grave prohibitory doubts were gradually rising ahead." It has been supposed that he disliked the formalism of the Scotch Church; but formalism, he says, was not the pinching point, had there been the preliminary of belief forthcoming. "No church or speaking entity whatever can do without formulas; but it must believe them first if it would be honest."—*J. A. Proude, "The Early Life of T. Carlyle."*

Huxley's Fight for Truth.

THE average member of the broader-minded section of the public, in our comparatively calm and tolerant generation, can form no conception of the bitter battle which secured us the modicum of freedom we now enjoy. That circumstance alone more than justifies those who insist on recalling the invaluable services rendered to science and Freethought by such heroes as Bruno, Galileo, Copernicus, Darwin, Spencer, Haeckel, Huxley, and Tyndall. And in fighting for the liberty of the platform and the press, the names of Richard Carlile, Charles Bradlaugh, and George William Foote will ever endure as outstanding examples of men whose courage was never shaken in the struggle for liberty and truth. It is occasionally insinuated, or alleged, that the present recognised standing of Rationalism as a legitimate instrument of thought and expression is due exclusively to the titanic labors of the great Freethinking scientists, historians, and philosophers alone. Although the writer can never think without emotion of the benefits which these men have conferred on the human race, he nevertheless realises that their paths were made easier—in any case in nineteenth-century England—by the iconoclastic labors of the aggressive Secular movement.

This movement very materially assisted in weakening the barriers of religious bigotry, and in accustoming the community to the more or less unpalatable fact that honest and able men were prepared to challenge, and debate on an open platform, the received religion of their country.

Moreover, these bold men paid the penalty which all uncompromising reformers right down the ages have had to pay for courage and sincerity. The scientists and men of letters were thus enabled to write and teach with an ampler freedom than would have been granted them in an age in which those who spoke more plainly than themselves were wanting. The men who were prepared to face political and social ostracism, and, if need be, go to prison for their opinions; the men who were willing to brave the insolence of office, and the law's injustices and delays, in vindicating personal and public rights, played a part in the stern fight for English liberty which some future Buckle or Gibbon will adequately recognise and record.

Despite such mitigating influences, the opposition encountered by the gentle Darwin, when he submitted his discovery to the world, was by no means devoid of bitterness. The year 1859 saw the publication of the *Origin of Species*, a work which, directly and indirectly, has probably done more to revolutionise modern thought than any other. As is well known, evolution is older than Darwin, but that great naturalist enunciated the law of selection, which placed evolution on a firm theoretical basis. But before that doctrine triumphed, there were many fierce conflicts. And in winning over the scientific world to evolution, Darwin's doughty lieutenant, Huxley, played a similar part in England to that performed by Haeckel in Germany:—

"The idea that all the varied structures in the world, the divergent forms of rocks and minerals and crystals, the innumerable herbs that cover the face of the earth like a mantle, and all the animal host of creatures great and small that dwell on the land or dart through the air or people the waters,—that all these had arisen by natural laws from a primitive, unformed material was known to the Greeks, was developed by the Romans, and even received the approval of early Christian Fathers, who wrote long before the idea had been invented that the naïve legends of the old Testament were an authoritative and literal account of the origin of the world. After a long interval, in which scientific thought was stifled by theological dogmatism, the theory of evolution, particularly in its application to animals, began to reappear, long before Darwin published the *Origin of Species*."*

Buffon, the famous eighteenth-century naturalist; Erasmus Darwin, the poet and botanist, and ancestor

of the immortal Charles; the unfortunate, misunderstood, and still immensely underrated Lamarck, were, among others, evolutionists before Darwin. When we remember the disadvantages under which Lamarck labored, his contributions to evolutionary philosophy appear very remarkable. He regarded the doctrine of descent as the real basis of the science of life. He traced the highest living things to the simplest beginnings, and he urged that man's progenitors were ape-like animals. But this great pioneer was before his time, and his message passed unheeded. Nor did Herbert Spencer—another pre-Darwinian evolutionist—make much impression on his earlier contemporaries. Both in conversation and from reading, Huxley was rendered familiar with Spencer's views. But, although he had already abandoned his orthodox beliefs, he remained quite unconvinced. That Spencer's position was clearly and cogently put, is abundantly proved by the following passage, which formed part of one of his articles in the *Leader of March*, 1852:—

"Those who cavalierly reject the theory of evolution, as not adequately supported by facts, seem quite to forget that their own theory is not supported by facts at all. Like the majority of men who are born to a given belief, they demand the most rigorous proof of any adverse belief, but assume that their own needs none.....We may safely estimate the number of species that have existed, and are existing on the earth, at no less than ten millions. Well, which is the most rational theory about these ten millions of species? Is it most likely that there have been ten millions of special creations; or is it most likely that by continual modifications, due to change of circumstances, ten millions of varieties have been produced, as varieties are being produced still?.....Even could the supporters of the development hypothesis merely show that the origination of species by the process of modification is conceivable, they would be in a better position than their opponents. But they can do much more than this. They can show that the process of modification has effected, and is effecting, decided changes in all organisms subject to modifying influences.....They can show that in successive generations those changes continue, until ultimately the new conditions become the natural ones. They can show that in cultivated plants, domesticated animals, and in the several races of men, such alterations have taken place. They can show that the degrees of difference so produced, are often, as in dogs, greater than those on which distinctions of species have been founded. They can show, too, that the changes daily taking place in ourselves—the facility which attends long practice, and the loss of aptitude which begins when practice ceases,—the strengthening of the passions habitually gratified, and the weakening of those habitually curbed,—the development of every faculty, bodily, moral, intellectual, according to the use made of it—are all explicable on this principle."

These powerful arguments apparently made no appeal to Huxley. He was almost destitute of that faculty of scientific imaginativeness which was so pronounced in his friend, the brilliant Tyndall. As a consequence, he was condemned to wait until Darwin's great work appeared before he could see the light. In the law of natural selection—Darwin's most important contribution to evolutionary philosophy—Huxley at once recognised an agency which obviously would account for those transformations in the animal and vegetable kingdoms to which the fossils preserved in the rocks so unmistakably point. The imposing array of evidence of variation which Darwin presented in the *Origin* also carried great weight. No unprejudiced naturalist could any longer dispute that a never-ceasing struggle for existence went on in the world of life. And it was equally undeniable that the successful competitors in this struggle were precisely those plants and animals which displayed variations which favored them in the contest. Still, although never wavering in his evolutionary beliefs after 1859, Huxley was at no time an adherent of the doctrine of the all-sufficiency of natural selection. Like Darwin himself, particularly towards the close of his life, Huxley regarded natural selection as an extremely important, but by no means exclusive factor in organic change. But the fact remains that the conversion of Huxley

* Professor Chalmers Mitchell, *Huxley*, pp. 89, 90.

and other eminent contemporary scientists was more largely due to the theory of selection expounded in the *Origin of Species* than to all the wealth of evidence in favor of evolution, which that extraordinary work contains.

The principle of selection supplied the key which solved the riddle of organic transmutation. MacGillivray, Dr. Wells, and Patrick Matthew, among others, to some extent anticipated Darwin and Wallace in recognising the power of the selective principle. But there the matter ended, so far as they were concerned. Chalmers Mitchell has noted the further interesting fact that in classic Greece, the philosopher Aristotle had asked:—

"Why are not the things which seem the result of design, merely spontaneous variations, which, being useful, have been preserved, while others are continually eliminated as unsuitable?"

Darwin forwarded a copy of the *Origin* to Huxley some weeks before the work was in the hands of the public. He appears to have entertained some anxiety as to Huxley's conversion to his views. But, to Darwin's intense delight, Huxley, on the eve of the book's publication, wrote to inform its author that its careful perusal had made him an evolutionist, and that he had become convinced that natural selection constituted a true cause for the production of species. As Huxley himself put it:—

"My reflection, when I first made myself master of the central idea of the *Origin* was 'how exceedingly stupid not to have thought of that.' I suppose Columbus's companions said much the same when he made the egg to stand on end. The facts of variability, of the struggle for existence, of adaptation to conditions, were notorious enough; but none of us had suspected that the road to the heart of the species problem lay through them, until Darwin and Wallace dispelled the darkness, and the beacon-fire of the *Origin* guided the benighted."

To the mind of Huxley, as also to the minds of a few other progressive thinkers, previously enigmatical phenomena were now perfectly clear. Facts utterly at variance with the theological dogma of special creation, but obviously explicable in the light of evolution, now appeared in multitudinous variety. The arid bones of classification became pregnant with the spirit of life. All the boundless enthusiasm of Huxley's nature was set on fire by Darwin's revelation, and he was fully alive to the sternness of the impending conflict. The leading anatomist of his day, Richard Owen, an evolutionist at heart, soon made his peace with the obscurantists. Within the world of science itself, those who were against evolution in any form, constituted a formidable body. The waverers had to be convinced before the battle could be won.

The clericals were made furious by this damnable doctrine, and evidently meant mischief. Huxley entertained the shrewd suspicion that all those who were constitutionally impatient with "new-fangled notions" would curse rather than bless. All this he seized an early opportunity of intimating to Darwin, as the following characteristic letter proves:—

"I trust you will not allow yourself to be in any way disgusted or annoyed by the considerable abuse and misrepresentation which, unless I am greatly mistaken, is in store for you. Depend upon it, you have earned the lasting gratitude of all thoughtful men; and as to the curs which will bark and yelp, you must recollect that some of your friends, at any rate, are endowed with an amount of combativeness which (though you have often and justly rebuked it) may stand you in good stead.

"I am sharpening my claws and beak in readiness."

T. F. PALMER.

(To be concluded.)

Back to the Devil.

STUDENTS of early religions and the superstitions of savages tell us that the primitive form of religion consists in a propitiation of malignant spirits, and it is quite an accepted generalisation of sociology that as knowledge and culture increase, religions exhibit less of the elements of fear and acquire a stronger element of morality. Devils were believed in before gods.

This might almost have been anticipated from first principles. In the presence of the unknown man's dominant feeling is suspicion—apprehensiveness. Fear is born of ignorance, and as ignorance is the normal and prevailing condition of primitive man, fear forms the normal and prevailing characteristic of his beliefs. The unknown is feared and suspected by the savage simply because it is *unknown*, as the child dreads and suspects the darkness because it knows not what that darkness may contain. To form some notion of the state induced in the primitive mind by natural phenomena of menacing aspect, we need only imagine what form our own feelings and ideas might probably take in the presence of, say, a terrific thunderstorm or earthquake, if we were without any conception of natural causation, in complete ignorance not only of the properties but of the very existence of the atmosphere and of electricity, and knew nothing of the physical condition of the earth's crust and of the subterranean forces.

Fear of the unknown is, then, the fundamental element of primitive religion, and hence it follows that, as knowledge increases and the domain of the unknown diminishes, this element of fear also diminishes, and the religious feeling of which it is the mainspring and cause grows weaker. The moralising of religion which the increase of knowledge and the growth of intelligence bring about is thus necessarily accompanied by a diminution of absolute belief—of that blind, intense faith with which the older religions were held. No enlightened votary of a modern religion holds his faith with that intensity and absolute conviction which a savage shows in his beliefs; for the savage's beliefs, based as they are on a fear of mysteriously powerful and malignant beings, are to him matters of supreme importance—things of life or death immediately affecting his welfare. Religion, in short, is based on fear of evil, morality on love of good; and while the one depends on ignorance, the other depends on knowledge. We cannot love the unseen and unknown, but we may well fear it. The child's suspicious fear of the darkness is the basis of religion. The child's sure and confiding love for its mother is the basis of morality.

Thus we reach the conclusion that belief in and fear of the powers of evil form the root elements of religion, and that the weakening of such belief and fear would accordingly be accompanied by a decadence of religion. Our modern clergy who sometimes bewail the growing indifference to religion and the diminishing attendance at their churches would probably resent with some emphasis the suggestion that the decadence of religion is intimately connected with the decadence of the Devil, but this shows gross ingratitude for all that the Prince of Darkness has done for religion in the past. What would they not give for the prevalence now of that intense and invincible faith which peopled the earth with demons and foul fiends constantly on the watch for the souls of men; which lived under a perpetual dread of satanic influences; which attributed epilepsy and insanity to demoniacal possession; and which believed in the devil-scaring potency of charms, amulets, and relics? What would they not give for the revival of the child-like faith we find in such stories as that of Satan making love to a lady in the semblance of a saintly bishop, or of a nun swallowing a devil in a lettuce by imprudently eating that vegetable without previously making the sign of the cross? How many glorious truths of science would

In synagogue and cloister, mosque and school,
Hell's terrors and heaven's lures men's bosoms rule;
But they who pierce the secrets of "The Truth"
Sow not such empty chaff their hearts to fool.

—Omar Khayyam; E. H. Whinfield, Trans.

they not barter for some of that holy zeal which made the anchorites of the early Church scourge and torture themselves in the deserts in their struggles against diabolic promptings, or which induced Martin Luther, with a more human and robust pugnacity, to fling his inkstand at the Devil?

The decadence of the belief in his Satanic Majesty has indeed been going on apace, and the process seems now wellnigh complete. He has ceased to exist in serious literature, and one of his latest appearances in fiction seems to have been in a novel published some years ago, wherein he is made to figure as a cultured modern gentleman attending social functions in evening dress. This is surely the lowest depth of degradation we can imagine for the Prince of Darkness, and the substitution of "swallow-tails" for the orthodox caudal appendage must have been enough to make all the unfallen angels weep. If there be any "mute, inglorious Miltons" still among us they must either remain inglorious or choose other themes for epic verse than the speechifying of devils in hell, the serpentine wiles of Satan in the matter of Eve's choice of fruit, or Raphael's long-winded accounts of military campaigns in heaven. It must indeed be a sad reflection for the clergy that almost the only work now extant and widely read in which the Devil is treated with the fullest respect and seriousness is the "Word of God." Here he survives in all his original glory, from his earliest escapades in Genesis to his final consignment to the lake of fire in Revelation; for that quaint collection of fables and fallacies called the Bible still illustrates a few useful truths, and one of them is that a Devil must be inevitably associated with a God, and that no religion can get on without one.

A theological system which tries to uphold the existence of a principle of good without equally emphasising the existence of a principle of evil is an unbalanced and lop-sided affair which can neither carry conviction to the intellect nor persuasion to the conscience. On the one hand, the profoundest problem of existence to the theologian—the problem of evil—is left unsolved; and, on the other hand, the moral motive is left incomplete, for—from the theological point of view—the theory of punishment is no less justifiable as affording a moral motive than the theory of reward, and the one should be as strongly invoked as the other to afford a complete and logical scheme for the moral government of the universe. The love of God is to the fear of the Devil as the sun's light is to its heat, and the first is as closely dependent on the second in the one case as in the other. This is why modern Christianity is such a feeble, cold affair—a pale, phosphorescent gleam, only shining with any brightness in very dark corners. To brighten up the lights of heaven it will be necessary to fan afresh the fires of hell.

This brings us to a consideration of the remedy. A restatement of religion is obviously required. The Devil must be restored to his pride of place, and that with even greater powers than before. We want a new John Knox to preach the gospel of the Prince of Darkness; a new Jonathan Edwards to proclaim the evangel of hell-fire. Nothing so revolutionary is, of course, to be expected from the quiet sheepfolds of the Anglican or Roman Churches, so the new prophet must be looked for among the ranks of Dissent. At first sight, it would seem that the Salvationists, with their thoroughgoing doctrines of Blood and Fire, might be the section of Christendom best fitted for this great task, but any religious movement in modern times must be of an intellectual character, and it must be confessed that, whatever may be their merits, the Salvationists scarcely exhibit the qualities which would be required of pioneers in an intellectual movement. At the other extreme of British Nonconformity the New Theologians certainly put forward some pretensions to scientific thinking, and favor a moderate use of the reasoning faculties—chiefly in the direction of trying to prove that black is the same thing as white

by calling them both grey. But the path along which they seem to be moving leads in a diametrically opposite direction to the one here indicated. They seem to be devoting themselves to explaining away those very elements of religion the necessity of which I have been trying to point out, and instead of insisting on the supreme importance of the Devil to the religious theory of the universe, they seem to be engaged in a mistaken attempt to get rid of him altogether.

But there will have to be no greyness about the regenerated Devil. He will have to be far blacker than the most terrified imaginations of past ages have painted him, for he will have to be as powerful for evil as the Deity is powerful for good. Zoroastrianism furnishes the only parallel for the theological system here proposed, and the Devil will have to be raised from the subordinate position of a fallen angel to the dignity of an Ahriman—a primal principle of evil, coeval with the Deity and equal to him in power. Zoroastrianism is, indeed, the most logical religion that has obtained credence among men, but even here a slight inconsistency is apparent, for the system of Zoroaster seems to admit a final conquest of good over evil as the fore-ordained and certain end of the moral order. This inconsistency will have to be carefully avoided in the new system, and the result will be an immense strengthening of the moral motive.

The principles of good and evil being exactly balanced, neither is supreme in power. But the moral element in man co-operates with the principle of good, the immoral element with the principle of evil. Thus, as equal quantities on the opposite sides of an equation cancel each other and leave the solution of the problem to be determined by the values of the other terms, so man's moral nature becomes the determining factor in the moral process, and *man himself is the arbiter of the moral fate of the universe*. If man advances ethically; if the good in him increases and the evil diminishes as his evolution proceeds (and this appears, on the whole, to be the case), the final triumph of good will be assured, and each individual human being, by his good or evil conduct, either aids or opposes this result. Moreover, it might be arranged that at the final settlement of affairs the defeated power will have to relinquish to the conquering power all the human souls in its possession, somewhat as prisoners of war are handed back at the close of a campaign. Hence it would follow that, as the probabilities are so much in favor of the final triumph of the good principle, the prospect of eternal punishment will become very remote, and there will be a very strong probability that all human souls will eventually be "saved." And, as every human being's conduct contributes to the final result, it would also follow that the virtues of the good man would prove efficacious, not only for the saving of his own soul, but for the final rescue of the souls of all men, good and bad alike. Surely, no religion has ever offered a grander moral motive to mankind.

And how would the existing religions fare under such a system? They would all fall into their due places as tentative, imperfect, but more or less praiseworthy efforts made by man in the course of his advance to aid the principle of good in the great moral contest. The new religious system would unify and reconcile all the various religions, as a complete and true philosophy (if we could find one) would unify all the sciences, and reconcile any apparent discrepancies they may now exhibit. All religions would then be regarded as equally deserving of support, religious animosities would cease, and universal tolerance would prevail—for the first time in human history. For every religion would then be fighting a common enemy for the achievement of a common good, and when men are confronted by a powerful, fierce, and implacable foe, they do not wait to dispute over the rival advantages of the weapons they are using.

We recapitulate the points in which such a religious system would prove superior to existing systems.

The problem of the origin of evil would be solved. The evil principle would be without origin, and coeval with the good principle.

The problem of the persistence of evil would be solved. We should no longer have to reconcile the occurrence of famines and pestilences, of earthquakes, floods, and conflagrations, and all the misery they cause, with the existence of an all-powerful and beneficent Deity.

The terrible doctrine of eternal punishment would fade away.

A sublime and moral motive would be furnished.

Universal toleration and charity among the various existing religions would be brought about.

Here, then, we have a logical and consistent theology, built on rational methods. Its only drawback is that the stones of its foundations are purely imaginary, but that is a defect inseparable from every theological system that ever has been or ever will be invented.

A. E. MADDOCK.

Ingersoll on "Blasphemy."

I DENY the right of any man, of any number of men, of any Church, of any State, to put a padlock on the lips, to make the tongue a convict. I passionately deny the right of the Herod of authority to kill the children of the brain.

A man has a right to work with his hands, to plough the earth, to sow the seed, and that man has a right to reap the harvest. If we have not that right, then all are slaves except those who take these rights from their fellow-men. If you have the right to work with your hands and to gather the harvest for yourself and your children, have you not a right to cultivate your brain? Have you not the right to read, to observe, to investigate—and when you have so read and so investigated, have you not the right to reap that field? And what is it to reap that field? It is simply to express what you have ascertained—simply to give your thoughts to your fellow-men.

If there is one subject in this world worthy of being discussed, worthy of being understood, it is the question of intellectual liberty. Without that, we are simply painted clay; without that, we are poor, miserable serfs and slaves. If you have not the right to express your opinions, if the defendant has not this right, then no man ever walked beneath the blue of heaven that had the right to express his thought. If others claim the right, where did they get it? How did they happen to have it, and how did you happen to be deprived of it? Where did a church or nation get that right?

Are we not all children of the same Mother? Are we not all compelled to think, whether we wish to or not? Can you help thinking as you do? When you look out upon the woods, the fields—when you look at the solemn splendor of the night—these things produce certain thoughts in your mind, and they produce them necessarily. No man can think as he desires. No man controls the action of his brain any more than he controls the action of his heart. The blood pursues its old accustomed ways in spite of you. The eyes see, if you open them, in spite of you. The ears hear, if they are unstopped, without asking your permission. And the brain thinks in spite of you. Should you express that thought? Certainly you should, if others express theirs. You have exactly the same right. He who takes it from you is a robber.

For thousands of years, people have been trying to force other people to think their way. Did they succeed? No. Will they succeed? No. Why? Because brute force is not an argument. You can stand with the lash over a man, or you can stand by the prison door, or beneath the gallows, or by the stake, and say to this man: "Recant or the lash descends, the prison door is locked upon you, the rope is put about your neck, or the torch is given to

the fagot." And so the man recants. Is he convinced? Not at all. Have you produced a new argument? Not the slightest. And yet the ignorant bigots of this world have been trying for thousands of years to rule the minds of men by brute force. They have endeavored to improve the mind by torturing the flesh—to spread religion with the sword and torch. They have tried to convince their brothers by putting their feet in iron boots, by putting fathers, mothers, patriots, philosophers, and philanthropists in dungeons. And what has been the result? Are we any nearer thinking alike to-day than we were then?

No orthodox Church ever had power that it did not endeavor to make people think its way by force and flame. And yet every Church that ever was established commenced in the minority, and while it was in the minority, advocated free speech—every one. John Calvin, the founder of the Presbyterian Church, while he lived in France, wrote a book on religious toleration in order to show that all men had an equal right to think; and yet that man afterward, clothed in a little authority, forgot all his sentiments about religious liberty, and had poor Servetus burned at the stake for differing with him on a question that neither of them knew anything about. In the minority, Calvin advocated toleration; in the majority, he practised murder.

I want you to understand what has been done in the world to force men to think alike. It seems to me that if there is some infinite being who wants us to think alike, he would have made us alike. Why did he not do so? Why did he make your brain so that you could not by any possibility be a Methodist? Why did he make yours so that you could not be a Catholic? And why did he make the brain of another so that he is an unbeliever—why the brain of another so that he became a Mohammedan—if he wanted us all to believe alike?

After all, may be Nature is good enough and grand enough and broad enough to give us the diversity born of liberty. May be, after all, it would not be best for us all to be just the same. What a stupid world if everybody said yes to everything that everybody else might say.

The most important thing in this world is liberty. More important than food or clothes, more important than gold or houses or lands, more important than art or science, more important than all religions, is the liberty of man.

If civilisation tends to do away with liberty, then I agree with Mr. Buckle that civilisation is a curse. Gladly would I give up the splendors of the nineteenth century—gladly would I forget every invention that has leaped from the brain of man—gladly would I see all books ashes, all works of art destroyed, all statues broken, and all the triumphs of the world lost—gladly, joyously would I go back to the abodes and dens of savagery, if that were necessary to preserve the inestimable gem of human liberty. So would every man who has a heart and brain.

How has the Church in every age, when in authority, defended itself? Always by a statute against blasphemy, against argument, against free speech. And there never was such a statute that did not stain the book that it was in, and that did not certify to the savagery of the men who passed it. Never. By making a statute and by defining blasphemy, the Church sought to prevent discussion—sought to prevent argument—sought to prevent a man giving his honest opinion. Certainly a tenet, a dogma, a doctrine, is safe when hedged about by a statute that prevents your speaking against it. In the silence of slavery it exists. It lives because lips are locked. It lives because men are slaves.

To be able to discern that what is true is true, and that what is false is false—that is the mark and character of intelligence.—R. W. Emerson.

The moral amelioration of man is the principal mission of woman.—Auguste Comte.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 3.15, Miss Kough, "Charles Bradlaugh, Iconoclast."
CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): 3.30, a Lecture.

EDMONTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Edmonton Green): 7.45, Mr. Rosetti, a Lecture.

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (corner of Ridley-road): 11.30, Miss Kough, "Charles Bradlaugh, Iconoclast."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Parliament Hill Fields): 3.15, Mr. Davidson, "Life and Work of Charles Bradlaugh."
FINSBURY PARK: 5.45, Mr. Davidson, "Life and Work of Charles Bradlaugh."

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