

THE Freethinker

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The foremost in the race are those who have thrown off the load of superstition which still burdens the backs and clogs the footsteps of laggards.—PROF. J. G. FRAZER.

The Glorification of Sir Oliver Lodge.

It is not difficult for a scientist to earn the gratitude of the religious world nowadays. Investigators may risk their lives over and over again in dabbling with the culture of poisonous germs; they may give, as the result of long and patient study and experiment, a discovery such as that of radium to the world, or so fruitful a hypothesis as Natural Selection. These things leave the religious world unmoved; but let a scientific man come forward and pronounce himself in favor of some sort of a religion—that blessed word covers now almost anything—and preachers of all kinds write in his praise. He at once becomes one of the greatest, if not *the* greatest of living scientists. His utterances are stamped with the insignia of infallibility. His personal impressions are "the deliverances of modern science," the warfare between religion and science is at an end—or, at least, the fighting is only maintained by dwindling guerilla bands of discredited irreconcilables.

In connection with Sir Oliver Lodge's address before the British Association the course of events has been exactly what one might have predicted. Had its tone been non-religious it would have passed without comment. Had it been anti-religious it would have been pointed out that other scientific authorities disagreed with it. As it was pro-religious no mention has been made of the amusement it has caused amongst scientific men, and nothing, of course, of the fact that a very large body of scientists—the majority, probably—totally disagree with him. The *Church Times*, the *Guardian*, and the *Daily News*, form a trinity that sees a change in the attitude of science towards religion. Well, *science* is exactly where it was, and certainly there is no change in Sir Oliver Lodge. He has never been anything but religious. He has been for years trying to harmonise science with religion; and when a man gets that bee in his bonnet it is not easily dislodged. Everyone knew what Sir Oliver was, and those who laughed at his fantastic collection of reconciliations, quite appreciated the value of his genuinely scientific labors in other directions. On the other hand, those who accepted his reconciliations seriously, probably knew little and cared less about his scientific work. At any rate, Sir Oliver was always religious; his case is not that of a man brought to religion by scientific study, but that of one who has retained something of religion, despite his scientific attainments.

A perfect chorus of praise has gone up from everybody, except scientific men themselves. Dr. Clifford and Mr. Campbell have publicly expressed their "gratitude" for the address. The Bishop of Birmingham has returned his thanks. Even the *Catholic Universe* remarks that "The presidential address of Sir Oliver Lodge to the British Association marks an epoch in the history of experimental science." Well, beyond the fact that Sir Oliver said that he had conducted a number of experiments

which supported the belief in a future life, without disclosing either their nature or the method adopted, the address had about as much connection with experimental science as with the market price of cabbages. I am, of course, only referring to the religious portion of the address, which is the only part with which the *Universe*, and the gentleman mentioned above, are concerned. One would imagine that Sir Oliver had brought forward some entirely new discovery, produced some unknown facts, demonstrated some unsuspected truth. But he did nothing of the kind. All he said at the British Association he has said scores of times before, and there was nothing that scores of others might not have said for him.

Numbers of sermons have been preached on Sir Oliver's address, all striking the same key. There are two before me at present, one by the Bishop of Birmingham, the other by the Rev. Dr. Warschauer. The Bishop's address is chiefly remarkable for saying nothing in four columns, although, as it was a sermon before the members of the Association, his method was, perhaps, the wisest that could be adopted. He hoped that religion and science would henceforth live in harmony, and that both, confessing a "reverent Agnosticism," would work together for the common good. A pretty sentiment; only one wonders what would be the religious contribution to the common stock. The Bishop admitted that during the last hundred years our more correct knowledge of man, of living beings, and of the universe in general had come from science. It had shamed religious people out of their "self-importance." Quite so; it was the growth of science that gave people more correct views, not religion. What, then, is the religious contribution? The Churches did set out to teach us about man and the world, about disease, about life, about death—and afterwards. And what happened? Why, every message delivered in the name of religion that admitted of proof or disproof has been shown to be wrong. It taught astronomy, and blundered; it taught geology, and blundered; it taught biology, and blundered; it proved to be ignorant of every subject it claimed knowledge on—save one. The only subject on which the falsity of its teaching has not been demonstrated is that of a future life. And that because neither proof nor disproof is possible.

What is, then, the use of religion in the world? It has nothing to tell us that cannot be better told elsewhere. It has no knowledge of anything superior to the knowledge available elsewhere. If it is at its worst it can only obscure and obstruct; and at its best it can only re-echo what non-religious teachers have discovered. "You need us," says the Bishop of Birmingham, addressing the scientists. The impudence of it! Imagine a Laplace, a Lyell, a Darwin, a Pasteur, or a Metchnikoff needing the clergy to help them in their work. There is a fable which tells of the way in which a mouse helped a lion. I do not recall one of an elephant needing a donkey.

Dr. Warschauer's address is of a different order. For his own sake it would have been better had he adopted the Bishop of Birmingham's plan, and confined himself to amiable generalities. As it is, his remarks are definitely and uniformly stupid. He has the orthodox misunderstanding of Materialism, and

assumes that it claims to explain everything in terms of chemistry. As I pointed out last week, Materialism no more undertakes to explain everything in terms of chemistry than in terms of physics. It does not even tie itself down to any given conception of "matter." At most it is a plea in favor of unbroken continuity and invariable causation. Of course, in this Dr. Warschauer was following the lead of Sir Oliver Lodge; but Sir Oliver could have saved him from his favorite argument of the impossibility of getting anything out of a combination unless it has previously been placed there. He says that religious people need not be alarmed about Materialism, for "what but Divine Wisdom could have endowed.....chemical substances" with the capacity for producing life? "How could anything come out of them that was not first put into them?"

Now, Sir Oliver really would instruct Dr. Warschauer better than this. He is evidently under the impression that the qualities of a compound are secreted somewhere among its factors as a performer hides a card up his sleeve. Sir Oliver Lodge would be the first to tell him that what he says *cannot* be is of constant occurrence. Sir Oliver has, in his anxiety to reconcile religion and science, often played fast and loose with scientific conceptions, but his practical training as a scientist has always saved him from stupid blunders of this kind. What he would say is, not that a compound does not manifest qualities not previously there, but that at a certain stage of development a new power, life, adds its directive influence to what is taking place. There is nothing whatever to prove that this is so; but it is not open to the charge of ignorance. To put it quite plainly, Dr. Warschauer's statement is open to that charge. And it needs but little acquaintance with scientific methods and principles to prove it.

Two things Dr. Warschauer is specially thankful to Sir Oliver for. One is that he has helped to kill "the popular superstition" that while "men of religion are usually divided," men of science are "always at one." He says he remembers this "very superstition being brought out with great gusto by Mr. Foote of the *Freethinker*, in his debate with myself," and, of course, also remembers how very clearly he pricked the bubble. It is a pity to disturb such complacency, but Mr. Foote was never silly enough to assert that men of science were all in agreement. The contrary is so obvious that none but a fool would make such a statement. What Mr. Foote did point out was that scientific men had behind them a body of accepted facts upon which they all took their stand, from which they could reason upon new facts that presented themselves, and to which they could refer for verification or correction. And this body of accepted truth is steadily growing. In contrast to this there are no generally accepted facts in religion; there is no body of admitted truth to which all may appeal. The very data of religion is in question. The more scientific men discuss their differences, the greater becomes the measure of their disagreement. Sir Oliver killed no popular superstition—unless it is a superstition popular in Dr. Warschauer's own church.

Dr. Warschauer is also thankful to Sir Oliver because he taught "science its proper place," "pointing out its limitations." In other words, says the preacher, "there are large domains where the writs of science do not run." Again, the zeal of the preacher causes him to overreach himself. Sir Oliver Lodge did not put "science" in its proper place; he did not point out that there are regions where its writ will not run. On the contrary, he was appealing for the application of science to the very region where Dr. Warschauer says it will not apply. What Sir Oliver protested against was the methods of *physical science* being used as decisive. He said that you could not test beauty and happiness by the tests used in physical science. In this the Materialist may agree without the least injury to his position. And it is probably due to the fact that Sir Oliver is a physicist that he has come to identify, in thought, science with his own branch of study.

Dr. Warschauer is a true theologian. He loves science, but he says, "Thank God, there is somewhere where it doesn't apply! Thank God, there is a region where you cannot apply methods of exact observation, where our knowledge defies classification and co-ordination. Thank God, there is a region concerning which we can only guess, and about which verifiable knowledge is impossible. For so long as we believe in that land there is a haven of refuge for the preacher of religion." C. COHEN.

Echo of a Friendly Encounter.

IT was our good fortune, recently, to meet a young gentleman who, not long ago, came into fairly close touch with Freethought and Freethinkers. For twelve months the association continued, during which time he divested himself of every rag of supernatural belief he had ever possessed, becoming, in fact, a veritable Freethinker. But eventually he imagined that there was gradually taking place an appreciable softening of the moral fibre in many of his new friends. Sexual purity appeared to be on the decline amongst them, nor was honesty any longer universally held to be the best policy. Divorce proceedings and prosecutions for theft and other crimes were not unheard of in their ranks. The conclusion to which our friend found himself irresistibly driven was that Freethought robbed people of something ineffably valuable, for which it offered no adequate substitute. "If you take religion away from people," he said, "you ought to have something equally as valuable, or more valuable, to put in its place." This is a very old argument which has been, and is, a standing difficulty in the way of many minds. It is taken for granted by multitudes that when one thing is removed its place must be filled up by something else. This is a plausible fallacy, but before we discuss it there are two or three preliminary points to consider. In the first place, it by no means follows that, when a Freethinker falls into irregular habits, his Freethought principles are the cause of it. If those habits are really hurtful to the community, if they are in their very nature anti-social, they must be uncompromisingly condemned; but, surely, it cannot honestly be claimed that the responsibility for them lies at the door of Secularism, because Secularism denounces them in the name of reason. When a Freethinker happens to go wrong, which is very rarely, how apt his Christian judges are to exclaim, "What else could you expect from an Atheist?" or, "No wonder; he rejects Christ." As a matter of fact, however, departures from rectitude are not limited to Freethinkers. We are informed that there are some eighty thousand prostitutes in the city of London, and the question naturally arises: By whom are they supported? No one would dream of asserting that they are exclusively dependent for their living on the comparatively small number of Atheists in our midst. There is ample evidence that they are supported by priests, by clergymen, by Sunday-school teachers, by men who believe that the Bible is God's Word. Are Christians never prosecuted for all sorts of felonies? Do they never make an appearance in the Divorce Court, or are they altogether above committing suicide? By whom are our prisons crowded? Is it not a fact that Freethinkers are rarities within them? Now, are Christians prepared, for once, to be perfectly logical and fair? Will they be consistent enough to say openly that the crimes of Christians are the appropriate harvest of their Christian principles? If not, we call upon them, in the name of truth and fairplay to refrain from vilifying Freethought in that horribly unjust and wicked fashion.

Again; there is, no doubt, a sense in which our friend's allegations are more or less true. It is a fundamental contention of Christian teachers that it is impossible to observe what they call the moral law without supernatural help, which is supposed to

manifest itself in the form of grace, mercy, or redeeming love. This help must be diligently or passionately invoked on bended knees, and the suppliants must regard themselves as helpless until it comes. "By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God," is Paul's emphatic utterance. Seeing a man on the way to the gallows, a minister of the Gospel cries, "There go I were it not for the grace of God." "What would there be to prevent me from robbing or murdering you," asks a believer, "if there were no God?" Not much, we admit. Ever since the Edenic catastrophe, human nature is, in and of itself, utterly incapable of any good thought or action. God alone, by his grace, can make and keep us virtuous. Now, if a man persistently trained from earliest childhood to cherish that belief loses it, the first result is a sense of helplessness and despair which engenders moral recklessness and unconcern. In such a case the loss of supernatural belief not unnaturally proves damaging to the character. If a person abstains from doing wrong from dread of supernatural punishment in a world to come, what more reasonable than that the casting out of that fear should be accompanied and followed by a temporary demoralisation of the whole nature? To people brought up in so hideous a creed there can be nothing more dangerous than the sudden dropping of it. Having always been solemnly urged to distrust themselves, and put their entire trust in heaven's mercy, the disappearance of the supernatural object of faith and source of all human strength and virtue, disturbs their mental equilibrium and throws them into a state of moral disorder. Trust in self comes slowly and with difficulty to such folk, and while acquiring it they may slip into several moral quagmires and suffer harm.

Our friend persists in asking, "What are you going to put in the place of these supernatural hopes and fears?" One might as reasonably ask, What are you going to put in the place of disease? The answer is, Nothing. Disease is an intruder in the system, and all that the physician has got to do is to evict it as quickly as possible, and once it is gone the system automatically returns to its normal condition. So, likewise, supernatural belief is a disease of human nature. Nearly everybody takes it because everybody else is eager to impart it. It is a virus, a parasite or microbe which infects the whole system, and in many instances it has so entrenched itself in the system that it cannot be eradicated; that is, it has reached an incurable state. Our point, however, is that it is a foreigner, an intruder, who has no right to be present; an enemy, towards which our first duty is to dislodge and turn it out, bag and baggage, and that once it is outside we need put nothing in its place, but allow the system time and opportunity to recover its normality. Health is a condition; order after disorder; peace after the tumult of war; man in full command of himself and all his faculties. This is what Freethought is doing its utmost to bring to pass; and in proportion as it succeeds man's moral or social life will gain enormously in every respect. It is well known that the healthiest and happiest people in any community are those represented by the third or fourth generation of Freethinkers. They have had sufficient time to readjust their relationships both to themselves and the outside world.

On two important points our friend is radically mistaken. The first is the assumed adequacy of the Christian moral code. Nietzsche rendered magnificent service by pointing with such fine clearness that it represents a morality fit only for slaves. Will any unprejudiced person maintain that the Christian law of marriage is defensible? Does anybody imagine that the problems of sex are already solved? Has the last word been spoken on the subject of Capital and Labor? Morality ought to be progressive, but there is no room for progress in the Christian system. What may appear immoral to our friend may only be a higher form of morality, for which he is not yet sufficiently advanced. The other

point concerns the status of the reason in human thought and life. Our friend fears that it is not a reliable guide through the world. We agree with him. For convenience's sake we break the mind up into so many faculties; but the division is purely imaginary. Man is a unit, the whole of which is involved in every action. When we speak of the reason we are thinking of the whole man as working in a certain direction; but no action can be uninfluenced by a single faculty. The reason is specially engaged in the task of unravelling the various tangles into which social life has become enmeshed; but in all its operations the emotions are represented. In reality all that we contend for is that man is capable of managing his own affairs without assistance from any superhuman region. That he cannot do this solely by the exercise of the powers inhering within him is incapable of verification; but there is the most ample evidence that he has failed to do so with all the supernatural aid which the Church assured him was at his disposal. Faith has had an *innings* of many thousand years, and society still groans under heavy burdens of oppression and injustice. Let reason have an *innings*, and let it prove by the success or failure of the play what it can or cannot do. We confidently predict that once man is permitted to tackle his problems in his own way and strength he will in time solve them all satisfactorily and set the world right.

We are convinced that opposition to Freethought comes only from those who misunderstand and misrepresent it. The theologians do not wish to possess an accurate interpretation of it, and we cannot hope to lead them out of darkness into light, because they seem to love the former rather than the latter; but we are gradually getting a hearing from young men and maidens over whom their influence is decidedly on the wane. These are in process of discovering the truth for themselves, and the truth is making them free.

J. T. LLOYD.

A Talk With Mother.

"I sought to strike
Into that wondrous track of dreams."

—TENNYSON.

THEOLOGIANs have placed the Garden of Eden in Mesopotamia, travellers in Africa, ethnologists in Atlantis, mythologists in Lemuria, philosophers in Utopia, and imaginative journalists at the North and South Poles; the whole series constituting a real embarrassment of choice. Even so, it did not present difficulties to the *Freethinker* reporter. A few weeks before I had been despatched by the stern editor, who had instructed me definitely to obtain an interview with Eve, the mother of the human race.

The dangers of the journey, however manifold, paled beside the pleasures in store for the journalist. Fancy the sensation which the most satiated of reporters must experience on beholding a tree certified to be that of "Good and Evil." Fancy, too, the traveller's tales waiting to be written, unfolding possibilities almost too good to be true. The rewritten story of the Fall would have the force and flavor of the newest scandal. All conscientious editors would seize upon such an item for reproduction in their pages, and the glory of the *Freethinker's* journalistic "scoop" would resound throughout the world.

Perched upon a peak of the Pamirs, provided with flowers that never wither, with delights that never end, with songs that never cease, Eden surged above the barren plains, a mirage of terrestrial bliss. The perspiring reporter ascended the heights upon which it was set. It was a hard climb to the top, but Eve was to be found there; and the editor's definite instructions could not be ignored.

Eve was "at home," and at the reporter's approach she rose and greeted him.

"You are enterprising," she said, "and so I welcome you. One gets so tired of stay-at-home folk."

The reporter bowed, and gravely said, "Free-thinkers are always enterprising, madam; I came on a special errand."

"What is it?"

"An interview," I managed to stammer, being overcome at the spectacle of beauty unadorned. Eve appeared pleased. She brought out some apples. "Do you know," she said, "I have never been interviewed for the papers. I thank your editor for the compliment. Why did you wish to see me?"

"I really wanted to know whether you were ever married to Adam; because people are so straight-laced nowadays."

"Please to bear this in mind, sir," she replied with emphasis, "we were modest back in the old days."

"No offence, dear madam," I assured her. "Perhaps you can offer a kind word upon the present style of dress, inasmuch as we are slowly coming round to your fashions."

"Your women lack dignity and strength. Do you think we should have survived at all if we had been rigged out like that? Besides, think what we escaped. We had no washing to do on Mondays, nor did we have to sew buttons on our husbands' shirts, patch their pantaloons, get their overcoats out of pawn, or even argue about long hairs on their shirt fronts. We had much to be thankful for."

I gasped in astonishment.

"Yes," she continued, "I surprise you; but I am no ordinary woman. I was never a 'flapper,' and, indeed, started life at full age—and——"

When I recovered consciousness the clock was striking seven, and I found I was at home in my own room.

MIMNERMOS.

Napoleon's Religion.

"In spite of terrors of Napoleon, he is entitled to the gratitude of mankind. He pulled down the Pope, and the monks in Spain and Italy, and the Inquisition in those countries. He carried the light of liberal principles to dark and enslaved regions. It will be impossible for all the kings and priests in the world to make men as ignorant and submissive as they were before he marched over the Alps..... Napoleon—and that was his greatest fault—gave, in some sort, a sanction to falsehood, and hypocrisy, and imposture, by going to mass. His example was of evil tendency. The act was, besides, a compromise with fraud."—WILLIAM COBBETT, *Register*, vol. xxviii., p. 6.

THE time should be approaching when both Frenchmen and Englishmen will take an impartial view of the great personality who, a century ago, so rapidly rose to power in Europe. The harsh judgments of historians like Scott and Lanfrey may perhaps be somewhat modified by the conviction that Napoleon, like lesser men, often acted from necessity rather than from will. Lust of power grows by what it feeds on. The fabric of Napoleon's dominion ever needed new conquests to make the earlier ones secure. If ever a man could dominate circumstances and, by seizing the opportune moment, subordinate them to his purposes, it was Napoleon. Yet Napoleon believed in destiny, and would have said with Bismarck, "There is so much *I must* in my life that I rarely reach *I will*." He said himself, "My son cannot replace me; I could not replace myself. I am the creature of circumstances."

Napoleon came at the break-up of the old feudalism, and completed the work. France was fighting for very life against the allied monarchs of Europe, and he won his way to the top by dint of his inherent fighting qualities. Physically, he was different from other men. His head was abnormally large, his blood circulated abnormally slow. In this respect such a man was never known. His pulse beat only forty to the minute. This indicated great reserves of energy and callousness. He could easily stand work, troubles, and sleeplessness that would have killed other men. His habit was to get to bed at eleven and be up at three, and he had the "two o'clock in the morning courage." In war he could do everything for himself. *Il n'est rien à la guerre,*

que je ne puisse faire par moi-même." He said with the same frankness, "*J'aime le pouvoir comme un musicien aime son violon*" (I love power as a musician his violin). He went straight to his point unembarrassed by scruples.

Rarely has the "Will for Power" been more absolutely incarnate or more reckless of honor, truth, sympathy, affection, or human life. He said to Metternich he thought nothing of the lives of a million men. As a matter of fact, between 1804 and 1815, there were killed more than 1,700,000 Frenchmen, not to mention allies and enemies. The eternal Ego may be said to have been at bottom of his religion. On his beautiful bronze face was stamped, as Heine remarked, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." Woe to those who stood in his way!

Yet he believed in fate, which he identified with God. He was a Deist of the school of Voltaire, thinking with him, "*Si Dieu n'existait pas il faudrait l'inventer*" (If God did not exist it would be necessary to invent him)—exactly what has been done. He had a genuine belief in an overruling Power, but he was consistent throughout. He regarded religion as an instrument of policy, and utilised it to render others subservient to himself. Atheism he was suspicious of. Those who deny celestial rule are apt to question terrestrial rulers boldly. To Laplace he noticed that his great work, *La Mécanique Céleste* never once mentioned the name of God. "Sire," replied the astronomer, *je n'ai pas eu besoin de recourir à cette hypothèse.*" Laplace had no need to recur to that hypothesis, but Napoleon had. He had a strong sense of the mystery of existence, and he knew that God was among the magical words, as he called *liberté* and *égalité*; excellent to conjure with. His God or fate was an unknown one. He said, "The problems of Providence are insoluble." "All predictions are imposture, the result of fraud, folly, or fanaticism." Yet he would have repudiated Positivism had it been started in his time. "A religion," he remarked, "which relates to this life, without teaching man whence he comes and whither he goes, is not supportable [*scoutenable*]."

Napoleon did not believe in any special revelation. He said, "I once had faith. But when I came to know something, as soon as I began to reason, which occurred early in life, at the age of thirteen, I found my faith attacked, and that it staggered." He became, as he said, "no capauchin," but a man of the world, ready to utilise it for his own aggrandisement. Of the Christian religion, he said, "As far as I am concerned, I do not see in it the mystery of the Incarnation, but the mystery of social order, the association of religion with paradise, an idea of equality which keeps the rich from being massacred by the poor." Again he says, "Society could not exist without an inequality of fortunes, or an inequality of fortunes without religion." "A man dying of starvation alongside of one who is surfeited, would not yield to this difference, unless he had some authority which assured him that God so orders it, that there must be both poor and rich in the world, but that, in the future, and throughout eternity, the portion of each will be changed." Christianity was not true, but it was useful. He said frankly to his friends, "It is said that I am a Papist. I am nothing. In Egypt I was a Mussulman; here I shall be a Catholic, for the good of the people. I do not believe in religions; but the idea of a God! [then pointing upward] Who made all that?" (Thibaudeau, p. 152).

His sentiments were the same when at St. Helena. Mrs. Abell, in her *Recollections of the Emperor Napoleon* (p. 69), relates how she catechised him on the subject in Anglo-French. "*Pourquoi avez-vous tourné Turque?*" He did not at first understand me, and I was obliged to explain that "*ourné Turque*" meant changing his religion. He laughed and said, "What is that to you? Fighting is a soldier's religion; I never changed that. The other is the affair of women and priests; *quant à moi*, I always adopt the religion of the country I am in." He was much annoyed when accused of Atheism, though he confessed himself a

fatalist, saying, "I believe that whatever a man's destiny calls upon him to do, that he must fulfil." His belief in destiny was doubtless genuine, though it, too, had its utility in impressing others with the idea that he was the man destined to rule, and that the stars in their courses fought for Napoleon.

Napoleon's phenomenal intellectual capacity is admitted on all hands. His words often have the sharpness of a sword. "Half measures are always dangerous." "Hazard nothing, gain nothing." "Speeches pass, actions remain." Scorn dominates sometimes, as when he says, "No government so tyrannical as one calling itself paternal." "The kitchen is a fine accessory to government." "Men are rare." "People in general are but big children." "There are rattles for all ages." "We must laugh at men to avoid crying." "From the sublime to the ridiculous there is but one step." "Fortune is an arrant courtesan." "Wash your dirty linen at home." "We can march quicker when we march alone."

His utterances on religion are of this serious cynical turn: "In all countries," he said, "religion is useful to the Government; it should be used to control the people." Again he said: "Nothing more debases a nation than religious despotism." "The decadence of Italy dates from the moment when the priests would govern the finances, the police, and the army."

The intimate alliance of the Christian religion with political tyranny he noted in saying, "The French people, in order to obtain a constitution founded on reason, had to conquer eighteen centuries of prejudice" (*Moniteur*, vol. xxix., p. 90). In Egypt he told his soldiers to co-operate as cordially with believers in the Koran as with Jews and Christians, and to show the same respect to their muftis and imams as to archbishops and rabbis. He himself observed the feast of Ramazan, realising the verse of Voltaire on Zaire, that he is "a Christian in Italy, a Freethinker in Paris, and a Mussulman on the banks of the Nile."

When First Consul, Lafayette urged him to give equal liberty to all sects, placing them, as in the United States, outside the Government, he observed, "Lafayette is right in theory, but he always believes himself in America. The Catholic religion prevails here. Moreover, I have need of the Pope, and he will do whatever I wish." He disliked sects, and idealogues were his *bête noir*. "An established religion," he remarked, "is a kind of vaccination, which, in satisfying our love of the marvellous, guarantees us against quacks and sorcerers; the priests are worth more than the Cagliostros, Kants, and the rest of the German dreamers."

Speaking of his soldiers wearing the turban when in Egypt, he said, "Collectively, an army may well pretend to be of any description of worship, but it should in this obey the orders of a general-in-chief, who is as much the organ of his country as the flag is its symbol. Yet it would be odious for the soldiers individually each to deny the beliefs and faiths of their fathers, to improve their own position." He found his own policy confirmed, not by their words, but by the deeds of priests in all ages.

At St. Helena he said, "Theologians of all religions are the same; they spare neither ink nor words to enforce, according to their passions, their authority, or their caprice, a certain elasticity to the law of Moses, to that of Jesus Christ, or of Mohammed."

Napoleon sought to, and did, utilise religion in the matter of his coronation, his divorce, and the conscriptions. He considered it as a buttress of his own power, and at the time of the Concordat observed, "Mark the insolence of the priests who, in sharing authority with what they call the temporal power, reserve to themselves all action on the mind—the noblest part of man, and take it on themselves to reduce my part to physical action. They retain the soul and sling me the corpse." He wished to be head of the Church as well as of the State. "You will see," he said, while negotiating the Concordat, "how I will turn the priests to account, and, first of

all, the Pope." Parodying Voltaire, he said, "Had no Pope existed, it would have been necessary to create him"—viz., to give a spiritual sanction to his own authority. He let the clergy know they were servants of the State. When the curé of St. Roch refused to bury an opera dancer, he published in the *Moniteur*: "The Archbishop of Paris orders the curé of St. Roch in a retreat of three months, in order that he may bear in mind the injunction of Jesus Christ to pray for one's enemies." The Church was made the handmaiden of the State.

All Catholic children were taught to pray for and serve Napoleon. "For God has raised him up for us in times of peril, that he might restore public worship and the holy religion of our forefathers, and be its protector." M. Taine says:—

"Every boy and girl in each parish recite this to the vicar or curé after vespers in their tiny voices as a commandment of God, and of the Church, as a supplementary article of the creed. Meanwhile the officiating priest gravely comments on this article, already clear enough, at every morning and evening service; by order he preaches in behalf of the conscription, and declares that it is a sin to try to escape from it, to be refractory; by order, again, he reads the army bulletins, giving accounts of the latest victories; always by order he reads the pastoral of his bishop—a document authorised, inspired, and corrected by the police.....'You must praise the Emperor more in your pastoral letters,' said Réal, Prefect of Police, to a young bishop. 'Tell me in what measure.' 'I do not know,' was the reply. Since the measure cannot be prescribed, it must be ample enough."

Napoleon said, "Popes have committed too many absurdities to be believed infallible." Yet it was his own attempt to subjugate the Pope which led onwards to the claim for infallibility. He has left on record his plans to be head of the Christian Church. "If I had returned from Moscow victorious," he said, "I should have exalted the Pope beyond measure, surrounding him with pomp and deference.....I would have made him an idol. He should have dwelt beside me. Paris would have become the capital of the Christian world, and I would have governed the religious as well as the political world. I would have had my religious as well as my legislative sessions; my council would have represented Christianity; the Pope should have been only their president. I would have opened and closed these assemblies, approved and published their decrees, as was done by Constantine and Charlemagne." Here we see the quality by which Napoleon outshone the great generals of all ages—his imaginative daring. It may seem strange that a man of such soaring mind and dauntless ambition should never have questioned the great god-ghost bogie. But, in truth, with all his clear, direct view of the things before him, he was in matters of speculative philosophy but an uncultured Corsican. "Who made all that?" satisfied him as a complete answer to Atheism, just as it satisfies, for a time, the merest child. So he remained a Deist.

La Casas reports him as saying:—

"Everything proclaims the existence of a God—that cannot be questioned; but all religions are evidently the work of man. Why are there so many? Why has not ours always existed? Why does it consider itself exclusively the right one? What becomes, in that case, of all the virtuous men who have gone before us? 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."

He said that his incredulity did not proceed from perverseness or from licentiousness of mind, but from the strength of his reason. Yet, added he, "no man can answer for what will happen, particularly in his last moments. At present I certainly believe that I shall die without a confessor." His doubt on the subject was warranted by self-knowledge. But it was rather his desire to die with all the *éclat* which the Church ceremonies could give than the return of faith which, after his trying illness, led him to receive on his deathbed the sacrament from Père Vignali.

(The late) J. M. WHEELER.

Naked Woman Penitent.

CURATE AND POLICEMAN SHOCKED.

MELBOURNE, July 22.

THE sight of a naked woman kneeling before the altar of All Saints' Anglican Church at St. Kilda intensely shocked the curate on Sunday afternoon. The clergyman's attention was attracted by sounds of supplication from the direction of the chancel, and on investigating he was astonished to see an absolutely unclad woman kneeling before the altar. That was too much for the reverend gentleman, who promptly left the church and sent for the nearest policeman. Soon a young constable appeared, and drew near to the unknown penitent, who was certainly representing to the life the well-known story of Elizabeth of Hungary.

His urgent suggestion that she should clothe herself being unheeded, he was in a dilemma what to do and so left the church and prevailed on someone to summon some of the lady teachers from All Saints' Sunday-school to intercede with the penitent and get her to dress.

The first two young ladies who volunteered were scared by the "wild look" which they said the woman had in her eye; and they took to flight. But some of the older lady teachers were induced to go in. They at length got the woman apparelled. She proved to be between 35 and 40 years of age.

Her statement to the constable was that she had been making earnest intercession in great humility to be made a better woman. She added that she had been living at Nott-street, Melbourne, and at Fitzroy-street, Fitzroy, but she was uncommunicative on other points.

On being taken to the St. Kilda lock-up, Dr. Louis Henry, J.P., interrogated her, with but little more success. She, however, told him that she was in communion with God when she was found naked in the church, and had gone there because she was surrounded by a lot of devils. The doctor formed the opinion that she was a hard-working woman who was suffering from an acute form of religious mania. He certified accordingly, and the woman was taken to the receiving home at Royal Park.—*Taranki "Budget" (New Zealand).*

ON SEEING GHOSTS.

Whenever a real ghost appears,—by which I mean some man or woman dressed up to frighten another,—if the supernatural character of the apparition has been for a moment believed, the effects on the spectator have always been most terrible,—convulsion, idiocy, madness, or even death on the spot.....But in our common ghost stories, you will always find that the seer, after a most appalling apparition, as you are to believe, is quite well the next day. Perhaps, he may have a headache; but that is the outside of the effect produced. Alston, a man of genius, and the best painter yet produced by America, when he was in England, told me an anecdote which confirms what I have been saying. It was, I think, in the University of Cambridge, near Boston, that a certain youth took it into his wise head to endeavor to convert a Tom-Painish companion of his by appearing as a ghost before him. He accordingly dressed himself up in the usual way, having previously extracted the ball from the pistol which always lay near the head of his friend's bed. Upon first awaking, and seeing the apparition, the youth who was to be frightened, A, very coolly looked his companion the ghost in the face, and said, "I know you. This is a good joke; but you see I am not frightened. Now you may vanish!" The ghost stood still. "Come," said A, "that is enough. I shall get angry. Away!" Still the ghost moved not. "By —," ejaculated A, "if you do not in three minutes go away, I'll shoot you." He waited the time, deliberately levelled the pistol, fired, and, with a scream at the immobility of the figure, became convulsed, and afterwards died. The very instant he believed it to be a ghost, his human nature fell before it.—*Coleridge, "Table Talk."*

MORE FLASHES FROM NIETZSCHE.

One should not go into churches if one wishes to breathe pure air.

The Christian faith from the beginning is sacrifice: the sacrifice of all freedom, all pride, all self-confidence of spirit; it is at the same time subjection, self-derision, and self-mutilation.

The tendency of a person to allow himself to be degraded, robbed, deceived, and exploited might be the diffidence of a God amongst men.

We are most dishonorable towards our God: he is not permitted to sin.

Not their love of humanity, but the impotence of their love, prevents the Christians of to-day—burning us.

It is a curious thing that God learned Greek when he wished to turn author—and that he did not learn it better.

Christianity gave Eros poison to drink; he did not die of it, certainly, but degenerated to vice.

Disguise it as we may, the government of mankind is always and everywhere essentially aristocratic. No juggling with political machinery can evade this law of nature. However it may seem to lead, the dull-witted majority in the end follows a keener-witted minority. That is its salvation and the secret of progress. The higher human intelligence sways the lower, just as the intelligence of man gives him the mastery over the brutes. I do not mean that the ultimate direction of society rests with its nominal governors, with its kings, its statesmen, its legislators. The true rulers of men are the thinkers who advance knowledge; for just as it is through his superior knowledge, not through his superior strength, that man bears rule over the rest of the animal creation, so among men themselves it is knowledge which in the long run directs and controls the forces of society. Thus the discoverers of new truths are the real though uncrowned and unaccepted kings of mankind; monarchs, statesmen, and law-givers are but their ministers, who sooner or later do their bidding by carrying out the ideas of these master-minds.—*Prof. J. G. Frazer, "Scope of Social Anthropology."*

RELIGIOUS PREJUDICES.

If your nurse has told you that Ceres presides over corn, or that Vishnu or Sakyamuni became men several times, or that Odin awaits you in his hall towards Jutland, or that Mohammed or some other travelled to heaven; if, moreover, your preceptor deepens in your brain what the nurse has engraved, you will hold it all your life. Should your judgment rise against these prejudices, your neighbors, above all your female neighbors, will cry out at the impiety and frighten you. Your dervish, fearing the diminution of his revenue, may accuse you before the Cadi, and this Cadi impale you if he can, since he desires to rule over fools, believing fools obey better than others; and this will endure till your neighbors, and the dervish, and the Cadi begin to understand that folly is good for nothing, and that persecution is abominable.—*Voltaire "Dictionnaire Philosophique."*

I would rather go to the forest, far away, and build me a little cabin—build it myself—and daub it with clay, and live there with my wife and children; and have a winding path leading down to the spring where the water bubbles out, day and night, whispering a poem to the white pebbles from the heart of the earth; a little hut with some hollyhocks at the corner, with their bannered bosoms open to the sun, and a thrush in the air like a winged joy. I would rather live there and have some lattice-work across the window, so that the sunlight would fall checkered on the babe in the cradle. I would rather live there, with my soul erect and free, than in a palace of gold, and wear a crown of imperial power, and feel that I was superstition's cringing slave, and dare not speak my honest thought.—*R. G. Ingersoll.*

THINK AND LET THINK.

Do you know that every man has a religious belief peculiar to himself? Smith is always a Smith. He takes in exactly Smith's worth of knowledge—Smith's worth of truth, of beauty, and divinity. And Brown has, from time immemorial, been trying to burn him, to excommunicate him, because he didn't take in Brown's worth of knowledge, truth, beauty, divinity. He cannot do it, any more than a pint-pot can hold a quart—or a quart be filled by a pint. Iron is essentially the same everywhere and always, but the sulphate of iron is never the same as the carbonate of iron. Truth is invariable, but the Smithate of truth must always differ from the Brownate of truth.—*Oliver Wendell Holmes.*

Mr. Dooley, the American humorist, has been describing women as angels. "But," he adds caustically, "I used to agree with Hogan when he said pollyticks was too rough for women, but after readin' what they've done in England I'm afraid they may be too rough for pollyticks."

Acid Drops.

The *Catholic Times* and the *Christian World* have been carrying on a controversy over the education question. A great deal of it has been an illustration of the pot commenting on the kettle's complexion, but in its last rejoinder the *Catholic Times* gets home a clean hit. The editor of the *Christian World* objects to religious dogmas being taught at the public expense. Very good, replies the Catholic editor, but what is the teaching "that the Bible is the Word of God, inspired, revealed, authentic, and that it has an authority for belief and conduct which is possessed by no other volume on earth," but a dogma? And he asks:—

"Why should the State pay teachers to teach that dogma, or to assume it when teaching the contents of the book, and not pay Catholic or Church teachers for teaching other dogmas? Why should Nonconformists, at the expense of the public purse, have their dogmas taught if we may not have ours? So long as Free Churchmen insist on Bible teaching or Cowper Templeism, they are insisting on a privilege for themselves."

There is really no adequate reply possible to these questions, and so long as Nonconformists stand for Bible teaching in their schools, Catholics and Churchmen have them, logically, at their mercy. The reply that the Bible is in the schools as literature, or as a manual of ethics, is sheer cant. It is there in a privileged position, except where teachers are better inclined, it is made the basis of religious instruction, and its teaching involves some of the greatest of dogmas. Some Nonconformists are straightforward enough to recognise this, and to stand forward as advocates of Secular Education. But the vast majority, led by men like Dr. Clifford, support the teaching by the State of dogmas in which they believe, and shriek themselves hoarse against the State teaching dogmas in which other people believe. Their attitude is only one of the many illustrations of the way in which Christianity blinds men to a sense of justice and fair play all round.

September 19 was the anniversary of the death of St. Januarius, and the miracle of the liquefaction of his blood duly occurred in the Cathedral at Naples. This "saint" is said to have been beheaded in 309, and his head was given to the Church by the Duke of Anjou some seven hundred years later. On the anniversary of his death, a priest approaches the head, holding in his hand a small bottle containing some of the congealed blood of the martyr. When the bottle is brought within sight of the head, the blood melts and runs down the side of the bottle. It is, of course, a mere chemical trick, and has been duplicated time after time. Any head will do, but asses' heads are necessary to a proper performance of the religious rite.

Once upon a time the blood refused to liquefy. This was when the French were at Naples, and Murat had been made king by Napoleon. The priests wanted to get rid of Murat, and the non-liquefaction of the blood was a means of stirring up ill-will among the people. Murat was, however, equal to the occasion. He planted some cannon opposite the Cathedral and threatened to blow the church to pieces unless the miracle occurred within a given time. The bishop held out as long as he dared, protesting that it could not be done. But Murat meant what he said, and the bishop knew it. The miracle, consequently, took place in good time. That was over a century ago, and the same piece of jugglery is still being performed by knaves for the benefit of fools. And yet some people talk of Christianity as a civilising force!

Very reluctantly the *Guardian* at length admits the impossibility of turning the Turk out of Europe—for the present. But it hopes for the best, barely hides its satisfaction that the peace just concluded will not last long—or, at least, only until Bulgaria is strong enough to have another try. We should have thought that by this time the most prejudiced would have come to the conclusion that the Turk was certainly not worse than any of the Christian nations whose cupidity and barbarity prevented them dividing fairly the spoils they had won. Evidently, however, the *Guardian* is unconvinced. It says: "The great work of turning the Turk out of Europe still remains to be accomplished." But why should the Turk be turned out of Europe? The only reasons that we can see is that he is not a Christian, and some people have convinced themselves, almost as an article of faith, that Europe must be entirely in the hands of Christians. Well, the most of it is, and look at the result! Could it have been much worse had there been no Christians at all in Europe? Would it, in that case, have been in as deplorable a condition as it is? We have our doubts con-

cerning the second query—but we have none at all about the first. Christianity as a civilising force is one of the greatest failures the world has ever known.

The Churches are beside themselves with joy over Sir Oliver Lodge's unscientific pronouncements from the Chair of the British Association. Even the staid and ecclesiastically orthodox *Church Times* is in rapture, and, in its issue for September 19, devotes an eloquent leading article to a discussion of "The Wane of Materialism." The writer falls into the usual error of asserting that the day of Materialism is past. "Darwinism," he solemnly assures us, "has gone by the board." Its advocates "have seen not merely subsidiary details, but the very foundations of their creed overthrown by later discoveries." "The Materialistic dogmas" of the mid-Victorian era "are utterly discredited to-day." Many other assertions of that wild, irresponsible character are made in the article; and one is tempted to infer that the writer himself must have known how entirely false they are. Leading biologists of the day have again and again given them the direct lie in the press. Everyone remembers that last year's meeting of the British Association gave a stronger and more enthusiastic support to the mechanistic interpretation of the Universe than any of its former sessions. By whom is it "utterly discredited"? By the clergy and about half-a-dozen scientists who happen to be also Spiritualists. As Sir Ray Lankester has repeatedly declared in letters to the *Times* and the *Telegraph*, Darwinism is the foundation upon which present-day biologists build. Will the *Church Times* be good enough to inform us by which discoveries Mechanism has been overthrown?

Sir Oliver Lodge was asked recently whether the inquiry into the constitution of matter and the origin of life had made it easier to believe in God? The question was not a very intelligent one, and we cannot say that Sir Oliver gave a very intelligible answer. He said that the belief had not been made easier, but it had been "made fuller and truer and more real." Now, we should dearly like to know how investigations of the kind named can make our knowledge of God fuller or more real. People know to-day as much about God as ever they did, and Sir Oliver Lodge knows just as much as anybody else. Whatever be the constitution of matter, its relation to the existence of God remains the same. And most certainly nothing has occurred in the world of science to make our knowledge of God more truthful—that is, more exact—than it was. "God" still remains what it always has been—a word that explains nothing, serves no useful purpose, and is positively harmful, inasmuch as it persuades many they have an explanation when all they have got hold of is a phrase.

Sir Oliver Lodge's British Association Address has "encouraged" Dr. Clifford to anticipate a time when the world will witness the marriage of physical science to theology. In that case, we anticipate a speedy decree of nullity.

Eight children were burned to death in a tenement fire at Quebec, and the rest of the family were rescued in a shocking condition. "Providence" was too busy watching the sparrows, or counting the hairs on people's heads, to trouble about burning children.

The newspapers are making a fuss over the death of a Canning Town woman in her 103rd year. At that age Methuselah was still at school, and Noah was as green as a Boy Scout.

A lunatic sent to the Church Army's Senior Missioners a card of pansies for "thoughts." He knew what was wanted.

The future of China is on "the knees of God" says the editor of the *Christian Globe*. When Deity gets up there should be some breakages. Japan appears to be anticipating the event.

That brilliant artist, Mr. Will Dyson, who draws the cartoons for the *Daily Herald*, has a caustic wit with a profane flavor. A recent drawing of his, dealing with the library censorship, was entitled, "And a little child shall lead them," and depicted a procession of leading novelists preceded by a pert "flapper."

"God" is very cheap nowadays. "King Carson" himself assures his followers that he cannot fail because he trusts in God. We understand that the Nationalists are equally confident of the divine assistance. What on earth,

or in Ulster, will poor "God" do? One thing is certain. He is sure to be on the winning side.

We see by the report in a Leeds newspaper that Mr. E. Pack has had to bring an assaulter into the Police-court. Mr. Pack was annoyed at the persistent sale at his meetings of an anonymous, discreditable paper called —. But why should we give it a gratuitous advertisement? He felt obliged to denounce it, as it was sold by persons who should have known better, and to explain that it was not in any way associated with the Secular movement. One of the sellers jumped up on the plinth-platform and spat in Mr. Pack's face. This led to the Police-court appearance, and the assaulter's undertaking not to sell it again within a hundred yards of Mr. Pack's meetings. We understand that the Stipendiary Magistrate remarked that the publication in question was justly called "obscene," and that he passed it over to the Chief Constable in open court.

It is odd to see in the *Yorkshire Evening Post* a letter protesting against Atheist lectures in Victoria-square, Leeds, and dated from the Clarion Café. The writer, who signs himself Arthur Lister, and sneers at "these Secularists," does not appear to be acquainted with the *Clarion* editor's opinions.

We have received news of the arrest of Mr. W. T. Stewart for "blasphemy" at Wolverhampton. No further news of the case has reached us up to the time of our going to press. What are the Christian bigots doing? Are they trying to give a special advertisement to Mr. Foote's lecture in the Birmingham Town Hall? Or is it simply another specimen of their ill-conditioned zeal for the kingdom of God?

Last week's *Referee* gave prominence to the following letter:

"BLASPHEMY IN THE PARKS.

"TO THE EDITOR OF THE *Referee*."

"SIR,—The *Referee* is a powerful paper. Will it assist in putting down a notorious evil by giving the following matter publicity? I refer to the disgusting blasphemy indulged in by the Freethinkers in Hyde Park.

"I have lately listened for a while to the speakers, and their language is both horrible and disgusting. I hold no brief for any form of religion, believing that all are entitled to their opinions. But to all earnest and decent-minded persons the remarks indulged in by these filthy fiends are beyond all reason. The worst of it is, these men are applauded by the crowds of young men and women who surround them.

"The following are samples of the remarks which I have heard within the last few days: 'Your filthy Church,' 'Your dirty God,' 'Your God was born in a pub,' and even more horrible and blasphemous suggestions which I dare not even indicate.

"Now, educated and refined women are forbidden a hearing in a just cause, and yet these men are allowed to poison the air and people's minds with their obscene remarks. It is a great disgrace and a crying evil. I am sure you will recognise the importance of putting this down, and if the *Referee's* influence can be used it will, I am sure, earn the gratitude of all right-thinking men and women, I am, Sir, yours, etc.,

"SYDNEY E. RIST.

"Clapton, September 25, 1913."

"Right-thinking men and women," of course, are men and women who think like Sydney Rist—whoever he may be, for he is quite unknown to fame. We hope there are not as many of them as he imagines. The adjectives this correspondent is allowed to throw about are disgraceful to himself and discreditable to the *Referee*. Note how he leads up to the word "obscene." At first the Freethinkers' language is only "blasphemy," but it ends with being "obscenity" for the sake of "putting it down." Which is the Christian policy all over. "Give a dog a bad name and hang him." It is an old game, and is played by nobody as well as by the Christians.

The three samples of wicked language adduced by the *Referee's* correspondent are not obscene, whatever else they are. "Your filthy Church" is founded upon the newspaper reports of the clergymen who are so often found guilty of fetid offences. "Your dirty God" is justified by many Bible passages, including Ezekiel's dinner, which was made and cooked by the direct orders of Jehovah. "Your God was born in a pub." is not exactly elegant. But if "an inn" be substituted for "a pub." it is literally true. What does this impudent bigot want? Let him get the Churches and the Bible cleaned up a bit. Freethinkers won't be so able to speak such hard words about them then.

"Whiskers and religion have ever been associated," says the pious *Daily Chronicle*. "Imagine a priest of any of the

Greek churches without his flowing beard." Yes! And fancy the "Son of Man" with a clean shave and a close crop!

"M. C. L.," of the *Catholic Herald*, admits that in his private capacity the Pope is as fallible as ordinary mortals, that he is not sinless, or incapable of committing sin, as Christ is declared to have been, but firmly holds that when he "is speaking as head of the Church, exercising his office of pastor of all Christians, and of his supreme authority defining a doctrine to be held by the whole Church, he is infallible; that is, incapable of teaching error or false doctrine. Yes, "surely the distinction is clear"; but how does "M. C. L." account for the fact that different Popes have promulgated contrary dogmas? Is he not aware that there have been numerous papal schisms, for which the fourteenth century was notorious above all the others? Has he forgotten that for ages there was a bitter conflict between Augustinianism and Arianism, now the one and now the other being *ex cathedra* pronounced orthodox? Or can he tell us which, if either, of the two rival Popes was infallible? Facts are stubborn things—dare he face them?

We had no idea that Mr. Ramsay Macdonald was so religious. We knew he was a politician, and perhaps that may explain things. And the religion he favors is of the good old Presbyterian type. So, at least, we gather from his utterances at the ordination of a new minister at Lossiemouth Presbyterian Church. At the luncheon that followed the ordination, Mr. Macdonald protested strongly against the attempts that were made to brighten religious services. What was wanted, he said, "was the staid, solemn, impressiveness of the old-time minister." We confess we are astonished. Perhaps the new minister was very solemn, and Mr. Macdonald was trying to make him feel at home. Perhaps he was just poking fun at the whole thing. Perhaps there are some old-fashioned Presbyterian voters to be caught. We can't say. On the face of it, it looks as though Mr. Macdonald would sympathise with the minister who thanked God there had never been a Pleasant Sunday Afternoon in his church.

At a sale at Croydon of effects from Addington House, formerly a residence of many Archbishops of Canterbury, a massive solid brass bedstead was sold for thirty-one shillings. There is no room for tears, for the Founder of the Christian superstition was sold for about the same price.

Sir Thomas Lipton says that "few college-bred men are successful in business." That may be true of the provision trade; but they are sufficiently astute in the soul-saving department.

Rev. E. F. Borst Smith, author of *Caught in the Chinese Revolution*, says that when people meet with indications in China of missionary work, it is usually of medical rather than non-medical work. This we can well believe. Chinamen in need of medical attendance are not stupid enough to refuse aid from a doctor because he happens to be a Christian. The same is true of India and elsewhere. The truth is that these "medical missions" are so many bribes to the natives abroad, and so many blinds to the natives at home. The first are induced to attend the mission for the sake of non-Christian ministrations; the latter are led to believe that those who come are animated by a desire to hear the Gospel. If the missionaries abroad were to drop the purely secular baits held out, the results of missionary work would be such that none but the most incurable fanatics would support it.

Through a false report of his death, a stationmaster at Widnes has had the experience of reading his own obituary, and the newspapers are making the most of it. There is nothing novel in this, for many Biblical persons had two funerals. Imagine the return of Lazarus after the club-money had been spent.

Mr. Lloyd George has been praised by the Liberal press for using the word "lie," which they attribute to his Celtic directness. Mr. Foote used the word in the Price Hughes pamphlet years ago, and it was then thought offensive by the same Liberals. Mark Twain has a very neat definition: "A lie is an abomination unto the Lord, but a very present help in time of trouble."

A north country newsagent called one of our readers who buys the *Freethinker* of him weekly "a One-World man." "You should see," he added, "the curious people who come in for the *Two Worlds*."

Mr. Foote's Engagements

Sunday, October 5, Town Hall, Birmingham; at 7, "Sir Oliver Lodge's Theology."

October 19, Manchester; 26, Stratford Town Hall.

To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1913.—Previously acknowledged, £193 2s. 3d. Received since:—T. J. Thurlow, 5s.

D. DAWSON.—Glad you find the *Freethinker* an intellectual treat and do your best to promote its circulation. Thanks for the references. The frequency of illegitimate births in pious Wales is a byword. The same may be said of godly Scotland.

W. W. (Glasgow).—Determinism is well expounded and defended in Mr. Cohen's little book. There is no need for us to write at any length on the subject while that volume is in the field. It deals with Mr. Blatchford's great mistake with regard to Determinism without mentioning him. If that is not enough we will fulfil the old promise that you refer to. We were anxious to avoid what might look like personal antagonism, and the result was procrastination from a possibly mistaken motive. Your three questions cannot be answered in a few words. "Utilitarianism" needs a new definition before we could endorse or deny it. Evolution has thrown a fresh light on the whole question of morality.

J. MITCHINSON.—Sorry we are unable to use it. It would do more good in ordinary papers than in our columns.

G. SMITH (Montreal).—Thanks for the cuttings, also for your good wishes.

H. ROBERTS.—You are right; it is comic to see the Churches hanging on to Sir Oliver Lodge, who, so far as we know, doesn't belong to any of them.

JAMES CLARKE.—Glad you have derived so much advantage from reading the *Freethinker*. See "Acid Drops." We cannot open a space for general questions.

W. LUCAS.—You will see a paragraph on Mr. Foote's lectures at Manchester in this week's "Sugar Plums."

WELSH RATIONALIST.—Your "question" is an essay, and cannot be dealt with in this column.

B. GREENWOOD.—Pleased to hear you think so highly of this journal. Sir Hiram Maxim's book is, as you say, too costly for the bulk of the readers whom it would interest; but such works are expensive to produce and do not circulate like the newest novels.

J. PARTRIDGE.—Glad the Birmingham Branch began the new session so well last Sunday with a good audience to hear Mr. Clifford Williams's excellent lecture on "Charles Bradlaugh."

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

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

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

The *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office 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 has been placarded with big bills advertising Mr. Foote's lecture this evening (October 5) at the Birmingham Town Hall. His subject is one of special interest, "Sir Oliver Lodge's Theology"—that gentleman being the Principal of Birmingham University. The lecture begins at 7 o'clock, all seats are free, and there will be opportunity for questions when the lecture is over. Discussion is forbidden by the conditions under which the use of the Town Hall is granted.

The use of the Birmingham Town Hall is granted free of rent to the local Branch of the N. S. S., but there are the necessary expenses of lighting, cleaning, etc., to be borne, and the cost of advertising the meeting is considerable. The "saints" may therefore be asked to come prepared to contribute liberally to the collection.

Lancashire "saints" are reminded that Mr. Foote visits Manchester very shortly. He is to lecture in the Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, on Sunday, October 19. There will be two meetings, afternoon and evening, as usual. Mr. Foote's subjects will be announced in due course.

Mr. Cohen starts the new Glasgow Season on Sunday, October 19. The meetings will be held at the North Saloon, City Hall—which is a Corporation building. Unfortunately there are restrictions to which the Glasgow "saints" are unaccustomed. No charge can be made for

admission, for one thing; and this is rather a crippling condition unless the "saints" who can afford to do so put their hands more deeply into their pockets than there has been any necessity for in the past.

A mistaken idea seems to prevail in Freethought circles at Glasgow,—namely, that Mr. Foote refuses to visit the city for lecturing purposes again. All he did, when asked to open the new season's program of the Glasgow Branch, was to say that he did not deem it prudent to start platform work after his late severe illness with two lectures on one Sunday, sandwiched between two long railway journeys on Saturday and Monday. He has to leave home at 9.30 a.m. at the latest in order to get to Glasgow at 10.30 p.m. To begin lecturing again with such an effort would have been very unwise. Mr. Foote looks forward to meeting his Glasgow friends again at no very distant date.

The North London Branch of the N. S. S., having brought their successful outdoor season to a close on Sunday, and strengthened their position by the accession of several new members, have arranged a course of indoor lectures during October at the Foresters' Hall, 5 Highgate-road, Kentish Town, N.W. The Hall adjoins the "Bull and Gate," and is almost opposite to the Kentish Town Midland and Tube Railway Station. Mr. Cohen opens with a lecture on "What is Secularism?" Admission is free, and North London "saints" are particularly requested to help in advertising these meetings.

A discussion on religion in recent issues of the *Middlesex County Times* has been enlivened by a contributor who signs himself "Ah Loo Sing," who has a remarkable knowledge of the weaknesses of Christianity.

Mr. S. H. Swinny, editor of the *Positivist Review*, who has visited Portugal and investigated the alleged ill-treatment of Royalist prisoners by the Republican Government, will deliver a special lecture on "Portugal and its Prisons" at Essex Hall, Essex-street, Strand, this evening (Oct. 5). Admission free, and questions and discussion allowed after the lecture, which begins at 7.

"God Save the *New Age*." Thus concludes an editoria announcement in the last week's issue of our earnest and interesting contemporary. We hope, however, it has not come to that yet. The *New Age* is one of the papers that would be missed. We don't see eye to eye with it in several things, but the paper has brains,—which is precisely the thing most wanted (in both senses of the word) in English journalism. "More brains, O Lord, more brains" was George Meredith's prayer for the English nation generally; though it doesn't seem to have been answered to any appreciable extent up to the present. Yes, the *New Age* has brains. It also has courage. And these are not the road to fortune in philistine England.

Our gallant contemporary is raising its price from threepence to sixpence. We are afraid that this is not the way to cover the loss of over £1,000 a year which it lately stated it was sustaining.

We beg our readers' help in the following matter. There seems to be a dead set made against the *Freethinker* at present in certain trade quarters. The tale is going round that we do not accept "returns" at our publishing office, and this deters newsagents from ordering copies that may, as they think—unless they only pretend to think—be left upon their hands unsold. We beg to assure our readers that this is not true and never has been true. This journal has always been sent out "on sale or return." The complaint we are noticing has no foundation whatever. We hope our readers, when they happen to hear it, will inform their newsagents accordingly; and place their orders for other literature where they can get supplied with the *Freethinker*.

The conclusion of Mr. Foote's article on "Is There a Hell?" stands over till next week. Mr. Foote has just been so tremendously occupied with behind-the-scenes work that he has had very little time for anything else. His pen is represented in this number of the *Freethinker* but not in a special article.

We are reminded of a passage in Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner's "Life" of her father. "To be a real President of the National Secular Society," she says, "involved the performance of a vast amount of labor, the greater part of which was unrecognised and unseen." And the Secular Society, Ltd., which has come into existence since, by no means lessens the labor.

Huxley's Fight for Truth.—II.

(Concluded from p. 619.)

HUXLEY'S forecast was fully realised. The public, clerical and lay, was shocked and scandalised at the audacious supposition that man, proud man, created in the image of God, was, after all, dressed in nothing save a little brief authority. It soon became obvious that the paragon of animals was, through logical necessity, to be included with other evolved things.

"Carlyle himself, to whom many of the freest and noblest spirits in Europe were beginning to look as to an inspired prophet, could see in it nothing but a 'monkey damnification of mankind.' The dogmatic world saw in it nothing but a deliberate and mischievous assault upon religion. The Church of England in particular was beginning to recover from a long period of almost incredible supineness, and there was arising a large body of clergy full of faith and zeal and good works, but quite unacquainted with science, who frankly regarded Darwin as Antichrist, and Huxley and Tyndall as emissaries of the Devil. Against evolutionists there was left unused no weapon that ignorant prejudice could find, whether that prejudice was inspired by lofty zeal for what it conceived to be the highest interests of humanity, or by a crafty policy which saw in the new doctrine a blow to the coming renewed supremacy of the Church."*

Not only was the evolutionary teaching assailed with unrestrained ridicule, misrepresentation and hatred; the evolutionary teachers had also to defend themselves from the most shameful insinuations concerning their personal character. The sweet-natured Darwin was commonly compared with an ape, an animal he was popularly alleged to closely resemble. But this calm and patient student of nature's wonders philosophically ignored all that the sacerdotalists, and those whom they inspired, chose to say or think about him. He went serenely on in prosecuting those inquiries into natural history which won him the proud title of the Newton of biology. But with Huxley it was different. He was not content to champion the cause of evolution only, he was determined to smite the Philistines hip and thigh. An early opportunity was afforded him for displaying his prowess. Among the comparatively few favorable notices of the *Origin* was the now famous review which appeared in the *Times*.

"The *Origin* [writes Huxley] was sent to Mr. Lucas, one of the staff of the *Times* writers at that day, in what I suppose was the ordinary course of business. Mr. Lucas, though an excellent journalist.....was as ignorant of any knowledge of science as a babe, and bewailed himself to an acquaintance on having to deal with such a book, whereupon he was recommended to ask me to get him out of his difficulty, and he applied to me accordingly."

Thus, by a happy accident, Huxley was enabled to place a brilliant essay on Darwin's masterpiece before the educated section of the English reading world. Although Darwin was not in the secret he suspected the identity of the writer of the review. He immediately wrote to Huxley with reference to it, and in the course of his letter he says:—

"Certainly I should have said that there was only one man in England who could have written this essay, and that you were the man; but I suppose that I am wrong, and that there is some hidden genius of great calibre; for how could you influence Jupiter Olympus and make him give you three and a-half columns to pure science? The old fogies will think the world will come to an end. Well, whoever the man is, he has done great service to the cause."

In 1860, Huxley publicly proclaimed his evolutionary opinions in a brilliant lecture before a highly cultivated audience on "Species, Races, and their Origin."

In April, 1860, he contributed a long and weighty essay on Darwin's work to the pages of the *Westminster Review*. The same period witnessed the publication of two bitterly hostile articles, one of which appeared in the *Edinburgh* and the other in

the *Quarterly Review*. The *Edinburgh* essay came from the pen of Sir Richard Owen, who had hitherto been regarded as a worthy representative of the best traditions of science. He occupied an influential position in society, was unquestionably, at that time, our foremost anatomist, and his views were well known to his intimates as far from orthodox on the problem of species. But, with painful shortsightedness, and mean littlemindedness, he was prepared to sacrifice his reputation with posterity for the sake of ephemeral orthodox smiles. There is also some reason to believe that he was by no means unwilling to gratify his jealousy and dislike of those younger and more progressive scientists who seemed likely to thrust him from his proud position of supremacy. He now changed from his previously favorable attitude towards evolution to one of bitter antagonism. To his time-serving he added deceit, for he remained professedly friendly with the rising evolutionists at the very time that he was preparing his venomous attack in the *Edinburgh Review*. The style of the anonymous writer, coupled with his wide scientific knowledge, at once made plain his identity, although Owen long endeavored to conceal his connection with it. The nature of the article was such that even the passive Darwin was moved to say, "It is painful to be hated in the intense degree with which Owen hates me."

The *Quarterly* article was written by Wilberforce, Bishop of Oxford. It proved a splendid combination of ignorance and arrogance. After dwelling upon the circumstance that anything that a man of Darwin's calibre chose to say on a scientific subject was, to say the least of it, entitled to respect, Huxley, when reviewing the matter in 1887, went on to recall the deplorable fact that for years subsequent to the publication of the *Origin*, misstatement, buffoonery, and denunciation characterised the vast majority of press references to the theory of evolution. And, with reference to the Bishop of Oxford's *Quarterly* article, Huxley says:—

"Since Lord Brougham assailed Dr. Young, the world has seen no such specimen of the insolence of a shallow pretender to a Master in Science as this remarkable production, in which one of the most exact of observers, most cautious of reasoners, and most candid of expositors, of this or any other age, is held up to scorn as a 'flighty' person who endeavors to 'prop up his utterly rotten fabric of guess and speculation,' and 'whose mode of dealing with nature' is reprobated as 'utterly dishonorable to natural science.' And all this high and mighty talk, which would have been indecent in one of Mr. Darwin's equals, proceeds from a writer whose want of intelligence, or of conscience, or of both, is so great that, by way of objection to Mr. Darwin's views, he can ask, 'Is it credible that all favorable varieties of turnips are tending to become men?' who is so ignorant of paleontology that he can talk of the 'flowers and fruits' of the plants of the Carboniferous epoch; of comparative anatomy, that he can gravely affirm the poison apparatus of venomous snakes to be 'entirely separate from the ordinary laws of animal life, and peculiar to themselves.'"

So much for the good bishop's effusion. But at the meeting of the British Association held at Oxford in the autumn of the same year, Huxley was destined to meet both Owen and Wilberforce face to face. In the home of lost causes and forsaken beliefs the new evolutionary teaching was assured of a warm reception. The special creationists were quite certain that they would now completely crush their antagonists. In the various sectional meetings, Huxley stood almost single-handed against a host of parsons and professors. But the two chief encounters were between Huxley and Owen on the one hand, and Huxley and Wilberforce on the other. Owen had the audacity to assert that differences of kind, and not merely differences of degree, distinguished the brains of apes from those of men, and this solemn pronouncement was joyously received by the majority of his listeners as a staggering blow to the theory of descent. Without the slightest hesitation, Huxley there and then gave Owen the lie direct, and "pledged his reputation to justify his contradiction with all due detail on a future occasion."

* Professor Chalmers Mitchell, *Huxley*, pp. 111, 112.

This undertaking, as every student knows, Huxley afterwards carried out. He demonstrated in detail the untruthfulness of Owen's allegations, and no contemporary anatomist would now for one moment support the position which Owen took up. In the words of the late Professor Weldon: "It is difficult to understand how an anatomist of Owen's experience could have made such statements; and his subsequent explanations are equally unintelligible."* In order to enjoy a temporary triumph, this eminent if unreliable man seems to have been prepared to sacrifice the respect of that posterity which was certain, sooner or later, to be placed in possession of the real facts of the case. Moreover, Owen must have had the mortification of knowing that, after Huxley's repudiation of his assertions, his authority as an anatomist had been severely shaken in the opinion of those best qualified to weigh the evidence each disputant had advanced.

This combat electrified the atmosphere, and two days later the Bishop of Oxford delivered an eloquent and impassioned address, in which he denounced evolution in general and Huxley in particular. Apparently carried away by the applause of his audience, to whose religious prejudices and emotions the Bishop made a powerful appeal, he concluded by asking Huxley whether he was descended from an ape on his grandfather's or grandmother's side of the family. This polished episcopal peroration provoked the following withering reply. Said Huxley:—

"I asserted, and I repeat, that a man has no reason to be ashamed of having an ape for his grandfather. If there were an ancestor whom I should feel shame in recalling, it would be a *man*, a man of restless and versatile intellect, who, not content with an equivocal success in his own sphere of activity, plunges into scientific questions with which he has no real acquaintance, only to obscure them with an aimless rhetoric, and distract the attention of his hearers from the real point at issue by eloquent digressions, and skilled appeals to religious prejudices."

Only too well did Huxley now realise that if the evolutionists were to unmask falsehood, and bring truth to light, with unequivocal success, they could afford to give the enemy no quarter. He therefore decided upon dedicating his life to the cause, and his writings, addresses, and discoveries proved invaluable in securing the ultimate triumph of the doctrine of descent. And so complete was this conquest that, when, thirty years after the celebrated gathering at Oxford in 1860, the British Association again met in the university city, the then President, Lord Salisbury, Conservative Premier, professed churchman, and bishop appointer, was compelled to admit, when referring to evolution, that Darwin,—

"has, as a matter of fact, disposed of the doctrine of the immutability of species.....Few now are found to doubt that animals, separated by differences far exceeding those that distinguish what we know as species, have yet descended from common ancestors."

But in the intervening years little transpired that reflected any credit on the sacerdotalists. At an earlier date, when Lyell was battling for the recognition of geological truth, that great man was subjected to the meanest annoyances. And that eminent physician, Sir William Lawrence, was driven to suppress his excellent *Lectures on Man* through the fury of the orthodox party. So fierce was the animosity aroused by this work that, acting on the theory that it constituted an attempt to undermine revealed truth, Lord Eldon refused an injunction to protect the rights of the author in his own property.

This theological bitterness was rearoused in the 'sixties. But the enemies of enlightenment had to meet a man of tougher fibre in Huxley. Backed by a few upper class intellectuals, scientists, and men of letters, and supported by that body of public opinion which the secular and other advanced movements had brought into being, Huxley had to fear no infringement of his personal liberty. The opposition to evolution now took the form which theological fanaticism always takes when its teeth have been

filed. Abuse, detraction, and vilification, Huxley philosophically took for granted.

When we reflect, that even to this hour, many thousands of broad-minded people regard their ancestral association with ape-like creatures as somewhat disconcerting to their dignity, we are bound to ungrudgingly admire the courage with which Huxley proclaimed man's kinship with lower animal forms. At this very period a Scotch university refused a professorship to a distinguished scholar merely because he had expressed views that were favorable to evolution. When so much bigotry stalked abroad, Huxley was evidently swimming against a powerful stream. At any suggestion of relationship between men and apes the respectable and religious were up in arms. And Huxley's "presumptuous blasphemies" were not whispered to an elect few. They took the form of a series of lectures to working men, in 1860, on the "Relation of Man to the Lower Animals"; and, two years later, these addresses were expanded into his celebrated work, *Man's Place in Nature*. The uproar was deafening at the time; but when, in the early 'seventies, Darwin published his *Descent of Man*, that even more advanced work was received with comparative calmness. It was now obvious that Huxley had fought and won.

In advanced circles, Huxley has been reproached for certain concessions to broken orthodoxy; but it is only the merest justice to remember that his services to Freethought and humanity were very great indeed. All his writings—even his scientific text-books—may still be read and re-read with pleasure and profit. He was a man of varied culture who, had he never become a famous scientist, would almost unquestionably have risen to a high place in the republic of letters. His hatred of humbug, his battles with the bishops, his overthrow of Gladstone, his sincere desire to render the general public familiar with those natural truths which many men in his position would selfishly restrict to a privileged class, all redound to his honor. In the judgment of the writer he was an outstanding modern humanist, and it may be fitly said of Huxley, the brave Freethought warrior, that,—

"The elements
So mixed in him, that Nature might stand up,
And say to all the world, *this was a man!*"

T. F. PALMER.

Man's Euthanasia.

A DREAM OF THE FINAL VICTORY.

THAT weird and awful condition of things, which astronomers and physicists had predicted as the inevitable fate of the solar system, had at length arrived. The days of life on the earth were drawing to an end. The human drama was closing amid slow-moving scenes of cosmic gloom.

The sun had smouldered down to a dull red glow of cheerless and sullen aspect. The tidal drag on the earth's rotation had done its work, and our planet now moved along its orbit in sluggish inertness, turning one face always towards the sun. There was neither dawn of morning light nor fall of evening shadows. Day and night had ceased. Time itself seemed to have come to an end. The sun had for ever disappeared from one hemisphere, and even where seen, it never rose nor set, but in response to the earth's annual motion seemed to swing slowly northward and southward, like a pendulum whose oscillations are about to cease. Now and again, at long intervals, a pale ghost of a moon stole across the twilight sky; while behind the wearily swinging sun, the stars—not the constellations of old, but stars in strange new groupings—pursued their bright processions through the circling year.

And the surface of the earth told the same story of lapsing energies—of approaching doom. The tideless seas were still as death. No tempests swept

* Weldon, "Huxley," *Dict. Nat. Biog.*

their waters, no billows broke upon their coasts, but, except where the ice sheets spread, the ocean lay stagnant as a marsh, and about its creeks and bays there luxuriated degenerate forms of fungoid and algal life. Save for plants and animals of man's cultivation, most of the higher flora and fauna had perished. Much invertebrate life, both terrestrial and aquatic, survived. Fish of lower types and aquatic reptiles still occupied the waters; but, except for a few arctic and sub-arctic forms, all mammalian and bird life, under natural conditions, had succumbed. In short, except for the persistence of man himself, and the forms of life under his protection, the classes of living things on the earth were approximately the same as they had been towards the close of the Mesozoic period. Evolution was retracing its steps.

The dark side of the earth, bound in fetters of relentless ice, was, of course, deserted by all forms of life. The central meridian of the sunward hemisphere passed through that region which used to be called Arabia, and by some curious freak of fate the scenes of man's earliest civilisations seemed likely to be also the scenes of his final doom. Those regions named in past ages Egypt, Syria, Mesopotamia, Hindostan, were the only regions peopled by the dying race. Here, man lived in close fellowship and communion, as though in response to that universal instinct whereby gregarious creatures crowd together for companionship and mutual aid when a common danger threatens.

But even thus, the population was not dense. Apart from the adverse conditions brought about by the cosmic and climatic changes, human fertility had declined, as that of all old and worn-out stocks must eventually decline. All over the yet extensive area in which human civilisation was still possible, scarce fifty million human beings were dwelling. But these were the heirs of all the ages—these were the elect of human kind—and amid all the gloom of nature there shone the clear and steady ray of man's indomitable spirit.

A group of these men of the latter days walked slowly across the sands of a gloomy desert absorbed in converse of high and solemn import, while a distant illumination of the sky seemed to indicate the position of some great city resplendent with light. As a pause fell over the discourse, they gazed at the dull red glow of the motionless sun, and then one spoke thus in a tone of quiet irony:—

"So this, then, is our end. This is the goal of man's career—the final purpose of all his efforts—the reward of all his labor. A century or two of deepening gloom may yet be his portion, and then the end. The end of all his intellectual splendor, of all his moral greatness, of all his physical energy. The achievements of science, the glories of art, the triumphs of mechanical power—all knowledge, all skill, all human endeavor shall sink to nothingness; and this dark orb will continue revolving for yet unnumbered ages through the black voids of space, the grave of man's vain and foolish hopes, the ghastly sepulchre of his bones."

Another pause ensued, during which the group, turning their eyes from the speaker, again quietly regarded the red orb of the sun hanging low down in the southern sky. Presently, a grave, firm voice took up the discourse:—

"This idea of a purpose in nature which still survives with a few of us is closely connected with the old god-idea which used to puzzle and vex the ancients, and which has long since been exploded. The teleological idea should, therefore, be no longer tenable by us—it should not even linger as the last shred of human superstition. Nor would it do so if all of us realised—what is surely indisputable—that the idea of a purpose, a design, a pre-appointed end, is merely a subjective notion having no reality apart from man himself. The ultimate substance of existence, functioning through its inherent energy—which process we call causality—involves an absolute and eternal necessity which leaves no room for design—indeed, it is the very negation of the idea of

design. If nature *must* take a certain course, what becomes of its "purpose"? And if there be no purpose or end outside of consciousness, it surely follows that consciousness must be an end to itself. The purpose of life is that very life itself in its varying degrees. A noble life achieves a noble purpose. A base life achieves but a base purpose. Man's physical end, therefore, which we all realise to be not far distant, has no connection whatever with an ethical purpose, for this will have been achieved to the full in man's own ethical progress and the high goal to which he has attained. The ethical end—happiness pursued along the path of virtue—is ours already. We have fought and conquered, we have striven and achieved, we have labored and loved. This, the only ethical purpose conceivable, we have attained, and be the physical end what it may, we can await it with calmness and fortitude. We read that one of the earliest philosophies which suggested themselves to the intellect of man was that called Stoicism. This sublime doctrine will also illuminate his end."

"And though the physical end of any particular ethical process has no moral significance," pursued another speaker, "that is to say, though any stage which moral advance may have attained when the physical end overtakes it affords an equally logical justification for such advance—yet the recent researches of our scientists in the field of astro-physics lead us to believe that, in the vast majority of cases, organic and super-organic evolution run a complete course in each stellar system. Organic evolution, from the first inception of life to the highest form of intelligence possible in any case, forms but a passing incident in the vastly longer process of physical evolution, from the first inception of ponderable matter to its final return to the ether. Thus the ethical process, wherever it happens to be going on, must be regarded as but a passing incident of the cosmic process; and if physical evolution in any part of the universe may be likened to a wave on the ocean of existence, organic evolution may be likened to a momentary ripple on the surface of that wave. So the cosmic process would generally afford sufficient opportunity for the complete development of the ethical process. There would, no doubt, be exceptions, but owing to the inconceivable vastness of the spaces through which any particular process of material condensation must take place, every sidereal system would probably be isolated in a region of practically infinite extent, and thus the chance of any sudden catastrophic termination to the evolutionary progress of the system would be infinitesimally small."

During the pause of contemplation which followed, a brilliant meteor flashed out in the northern sky, lighting up the desert for a few seconds with a clear white radiance, and revealing a weird scene of far-spread desolation. Then another spoke.

"Nor does the gloom of our physical surroundings much affect us who are so familiar with its cause and progress; and even were we less used to these conditions, the time has long passed when natural phenomena could influence man's feelings and ideas. Indeed, it might be argued without extravagance that the physical conditions under which we live may, during their gradual development, have been of some intellectual advantage to the race. Our ancient records tell us of a time when the sun shone with a brilliance which the eye could not bear, and seemed to move across the sky with undying energy; when the moon shed a clear and silvery light; when the skies were blue; when green fields and woods decked the earth; and when fresh breezes flecked the ocean's surface with the foam of dancing waves. Perhaps it is not surprising that, under such conditions and during ages of intellectual darkness, the superstition about a beneficent ruler should have arisen and been maintained—indeed, we are told of cases where the sun and moon were actually worshiped—and such superstitions could not have failed seriously to retard man's intellectual and moral progress. The aspects of nature under which we live afford no

opportunity for such delusions, and may have played an important part in their destruction."

"This much is certain," said another voice with quiet decision, "we shall die as free beings—as masters of ourselves—not as the creatures and puppets of an irresponsible and capricious deity. Our destiny will be neither that of criminals nor of slaves—neither to suffer eternal and unmerited torments, nor to pour forth ceaseless adulations before a despot's throne. We shall pass, as all nature's manifestations pass, back to the eternal existence whence we arose; that existence which is neither kind nor cruel, neither just nor unjust, neither creator nor created; which contains within itself all the potentialities of being, and which is at once the origin and end of all things."

Thus the wonderful discourse went on, scaling the heights and sounding the depths of human speculation with the majestic calmness and detachment of brave men doomed to death. With such a spirit animating him, man's final victory was assured.

A. E. MADDOCK.

Correspondence.

ATHEISM AND ART.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—May I, as one of your least occasional contributors, congratulate Mr. H. George Farmer on his excellent article, "Salvator Rosa: Artist and Rebel." It is my humble opinion that there is an inclination of the trustees (who are often people of real influence in the religious world) to give the public just as much of genuine art as they think, and as little of any with the sublime Pagan touch as possible. For proof of this I would ask anyone to take a walk through our National Art Gallery. It is true that we have specimens of the richness of Rubens, and also examples of the beauties of Murillo and Titian; but the general conception of the whole exhibition makes one murmur of the artists, when leaving, "How truly Christian they all must have been!" Allowing for Turner and Hogarth and a few more, a tour of inspection makes one feel pleased to be alive in the twentieth century, even in spite of the Blasphemy Laws. To have lived in the time of those half-demented people, who painted the ghastly pictures of the fourteenth and fifteenth century, must have been an ordeal; yet we find writers in our daily press, especially at Christmas, going into journalistic adoration over credulities which could only have been painted in Bedlam. Is it not another example of nothing being too mean for the use of a religion which, when all other methods failed, could be safely used to terrify people into a state of religious devotion? The persecution and ostracism of Salvator Rosa can easily be understood; the majority of historians would have us believe that Atheists in Art were unknown. The principle is nicely applied, when we come to think of it; unless a painter believed in the Trinity, say, he was incapable of anything truly artistic. Once again thanking Mr. H. George Farmer and the *Freethinker* for an intellectual treat gathered from ground which I think, as a Freethinker, is rather neglected.

WILLIAM REPTON.

P.S.—As a matter of interest, I might say that in the National Portrait Gallery there is a portrait of Thomas Paine, but short-sighted people should make a rule of asking to see it.—W. R.

National Secular Society.

REPORT OF MONTHLY EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD ON SEPT. 25. The President, Mr. G. W. Foote, occupied the chair. There were also present:—Messrs. Baker, Barry, Bowman, Cohen, Cowell, Cunningham, Davey, Davidson, Leat, Moss, Nichols, Quinton, Roger, Rosetti, Samuels, Thurlow, Wood, and the Misses Kough and Stanley.

The minutes of the last meeting were read and confirmed. The monthly cash statement was presented and adopted.

New members were admitted for Leeds and Preston Branches and the Parent Society.

Mr. Thurlow reported on behalf of the Sub-Committee elected to consider and report upon certain literature circulated at Freethought meetings.

The Secretary reported upon the outdoor work at various stations, and further arrangements were made in regard to Edmonton.

Various minor details were discussed, and the meeting then closed.

E. M. VANCE, Secretary.

IS CHRISTIANITY PLAYED OUT?

"Hence, doubting spirit, cease thy troubled quest; Believe, have faith, and God will do the rest."

So speaks the wise apologist for that

Which seems to be at present falling flat.

"Our Christ," the parson cries, "our Christ played out?"

Away! 'tis hideous sin to raise a doubt.

If you suggest that such a thing is true,

In everlasting fires you're sure to stew.

We know the Church does not, and cannot, cope

With human ills; the parsons, clergy, Pope,

On earthly misery have naught to say,

But tune their harps to heaven's immortal lay.

'The earth's the Lord's,' the Bible tells us so;

He's thus responsible for earthly woe.

'Tis naught to us what ails the human scum,

If good subscriptions to our coffers come.

Our occupation 'tis to advertise,

And wealth amass as pilots to the skies.

With squabbles oft we draw the public eye,

And thus to 'draw' the public pocket try.

From suffering men our path is very wide;

We pass their troubles 'on the other side.'

The only matter that we care about

Is 'What's the richest crowd?'—with them we'll shout.

Distress in everything around we see;

Oh, Lord, may no distress abide in me!

Such is our pleasant, though p'rhaps selfish, song;

With happy hearts through life we jog along.

We preach the gospel, and to faith exhort;

And, though 'tis true salvation can't be bought,

Still all our worshipers we oft assure

The more they give, the Lord will bless the more."

Religion pays too well to be played out;

Whilst fools exist, so will the pious tout.

G. R.

HOPES AND HAPPINESS.

To destroy a groundless hope is not to destroy a man's happiness. The instantaneous effort may be painful; but it is the price which we have to pay for a cure of deep-seated complaints. The infidel's reply is substantially this: "I may destroy your hopes; but I do not destroy your power of hoping. I bid you no longer fix your mind on a chimera, but on tangible and realisable prospects. I warn you that efforts to soar above the atmosphere can only lead to disappointment, and that time spent in squaring the circle is simply time spent. Apply your strength and your intellect on matters which lie at hand, and on problems which admit of solution. The happiest man is not the man who has the grandest dreams, but the man whose aspirations are best fitted to guide his talents; the most efficient worker is not the one who mistakes his own fancies for an external support, but he who has most accurately gauged the conditions under which he is laboring."—*Leslie Stephen, "Essays on Freethinking and Plain Speaking,"* p. 356.

THE BIBLE AND TRUTH.

We have proof in the Bible that, apart from the lying which constituted false witness and was to the injury of a neighbor, there was among the Hebrews but little reprobation of lying. Indeed, it would be remarkable were it otherwise, considering that Jahveh set the example; as when, to ruin Ahab, he commissioned "a lying spirit" (1 Kings xxii. 22) to deceive his prophets; or as when, according to Ezekiel xiv. 9, he threatened to use deception as a means of vengeance. "If the prophet be deceived when he hath spoken a thing, I, the Lord, have deceived that prophet, and I will stretch out my hand upon him, and will destroy him from the midst of my people Israel." Evidently from a race-character, which evolved such a conception of a deity's principles, there naturally came no great regard for veracity.—*Herbert Spencer, "Principles of Ethics,"* sec. 158, vol. i., p. 402.

POPE'S EPITAPH ON GAY.

Of manners gentle, of affections mild;
In wit a man; in simplicity, a child:
With native humor tempering virtuous rage,
Form'd to delight at once and lash the age:
Above temptation in a low estate,
And uncorrupted, e'en among the great:
A safe companion, and an easy friend,
Unblamed through life, lamented in thy end.
These are thy honors! Not that here thy bust
Is mix'd with heroes, or with kings thy dust;
But that the worthy and the good shall say,
Striking their pensive bosoms—"Here lies Gay!"

Are all your Mosques, Episcopal Churches, Pagodas, Chapels of Ease, Tabernacles, and Pantheons, anything else but the Ethnic forecourt of the Invisible Temple and its Holy of Holies.—*Richter.*

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

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INDOOR.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Foresters' Hall, 5 Highgate-road, N.W., adjoining "The Bull and Gate"): 7.30, C. Cohen, "What is Secularism?"

OUTDOOR.

EDMONTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Edmonton Green): 7.45, "Beelzebub," "Creation or Evolution?"

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (corner of Ridley-road): 11.30, W. J. Ramsey, "How I Fell Among Thieves."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Parliament Hill): 3.15, Demonstration in aid of the National League of the Blind.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (outside Maryland Point Station, Stratford, E.): 7, W. Davidson, a Lecture.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Town Hall): 7, G. W. Foote, "Sir Oliver Lodge's Theology."

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