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Sir, the State in choosing men to serve it, takes no notice of their opinions; if they be willing to serve it, that satisfies.—OLIVER CROMWELL.

A Vain Delusion.

EVERYBODY is acquainted with the fact that for the last ten years it has been the boast of the pulpit that the attitude of science to religion has become one of positive commendation. It is undeniable that a change has taken place in the relation between the two, but it is equally incontrovertible that the change has not been on the side of science. As we have repeatedly affirmed in these columns, science is farther away from religion to-day than it was in the 'sixties and 'seventies of last century. We might almost go to the length of saying that the attitude to religion of present-day scientists is one of utter unconcern. Into their various observations and experiments religion does not enter at all. Is it possible, for example, that any honest clergyman can rise from a careful perusal of *The Mechanistic Conception of Life* by Jacques Loeb, one of the most distinguished biologists of the day, and declare that science lends a helping hand to religion? Or is there a theologian of any note who, after reading *A Treatise on Zoology*, or *The Kingdom of Man* by Sir Edwin Ray Lankester, has the temerity to assert that scientific discoveries tend to confirm the dogmas of theology? The truth is that science is so far from supporting religion that it completely ignores it. Its observations and experiments are conducted on the assumption that natural law is everywhere supreme, and that there is "no room in the Universe for the working of a Divine power." This is the assumption that underlies the work of practically every biologist of to-day. The editor of the *Church Times* is radically mistaken when he tells us that "Darwinism, in its strict sense, has gone by the board," and we confidently challenge him to name five accredited biologists who hold such a view, the incontestable fact being that Darwinism is the foundation upon which all biologists build. Our conclusion, therefore, is that the science of the present is more materialistic than was the science of the mid-Victorian era.

Let us take Huxley, to whom the divines are so fond of alluding as an outstanding exponent of a materialistic interpretation of the Universe which is no longer scientifically tenable. We are proud to be numbered among the warmest admirers of Professor Huxley, but we cannot shut our eyes to the fact that he was but a lukewarm supporter of Free-thought. When appealed to for help in the well-known case of the Editor of this journal his reply was as follows:—

"I have not read the writings for which Mr. Foote has been prosecuted. But, unless their nature has been grossly misrepresented, I cannot say that I feel disposed to intervene on his behalf."

That utterance was wholly unworthy of Professor Huxley, and shows conclusively that he was not at heart a thoroughgoing Freethinker like George Meredith. As a matter of fact, he was a vigorous opponent of Materialism. He did not believe, as Darwin himself did, that Darwin's theories, rightly

understood, "abolished teleology and eviscerated the argument from design." It is a curious fact that, whilst he did more than anybody else to persuade the public that Darwinism was "an intelligible hypothesis good enough as a working basis," he was never himself a whole-hearted believer in it. As the late Sir W. T. Thiselton Dyer says of him, in his biographical sketch in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*:—

"With the transparent candor which was characteristic of him, he never to the end of his life concealed the fact that he thought it wanting in rigorous proof."

Indeed, so far was he from being a Materialist that he solemnly pronounced Athelism to be "on purely philosophical grounds untenable." While accepting the theory of the spontaneous generation of life, he did not dogmatise on the subject. He wrote:—

"To say, in the admitted absence of evidence, that I have any belief as to the mode in which the existing forms of life have originated, would be using words in a wrong sense. But expectation is permissible where belief is not; and if it were given me to look beyond the abyss of geologically recorded time to the still more remote period when the earth was passing through physical and chemical conditions which it can no more see again than a man can recall his infancy, I should expect to be a witness of the evolution of living protoplasm from non-living matter. I should expect to see it appear under forms of great simplicity, endowed, like existing fungi, with the power of determining the formation of new protoplasm from such matters as ammonium carbonates, oxalates and tartrates, alkaline and earthy phosphates, and water, without the aid of light. That is the expectation to which analogical reasoning leads me, but I beg you once more to recollect that I have no right to call my opinion anything but an act of philosophical faith."

If we compare that extract with Professor Schafer's Address from the chair of the British Association last year, it will be evident that the present age is much more materialistic than that of Huxley, and in the discussion that followed the Address the advocates of the mechanistic interpretation of the Universe were all-victorious.

With the above facts in mind, we respectfully invite the editor of the *Church Times* to specify "the crudely materialistic dogmas formerly presented as the final result of science which are utterly discredited to-day." We shall be surprised if he succeeds in naming even one on the testimony of half-a-dozen first-class scientists. Of course, a man who is ignorant or unscrupulous enough to say that "Darwinism, in its strict sense, has gone by the board," is capable of making any extravagant statement; but we shall insist on his adducing ample evidence of the truth of his assertion as to the abandonment of a single scientific dogma held by the majority of scientists thirty or forty years ago. His reliance on Sir Oliver Lodge is ridiculous in the extreme, because outside his own department Sir Oliver is the most unreliable witness living. In his recent Address he said that "in physiology the conflict ranges round vitalism"; but at Dundee last year, Dr. Benjamin Moore, Professor of Bio-Chemistry in the University of Liverpool, exclaimed, "Vitalism is dead." Ten years ago Sir Edwin Ray Lankester made precisely the same announcement. Writing to the *Times* for May 17, 1903, he said:—

"I do not myself know of anyone of admitted leadership among modern biologists who is showing signs of coming to a belief in the existence of a vital principle."

.....Modern biologists (I am glad to say) do not accept the hypothesis of 'telepathy' advocated by Sir Oliver Lodge, nor that of the intrusions of disembodied spirits pressed upon them by others of the same school."

Science, we are told, has completely failed to interpret the Universe on mechanistic lines. At present it is in a state of hopeless bankruptcy. Intellectualism has come to the end of its tether, and confesses itself defeated. Forty years ago the scientists fancied that they had found a key that would unlock all doors, and that the inevitable result would be the banishment of all mystery. The riddle of the Universe was about to be read for all time. Such, we are assured, was the fond dream of the mid-Victorian men of science. The only one among them whom the Materialists can claim was Tyndall, who, in reality, was the humblest and most unassuming of men. So far was he from pretending that science could answer all questions and solve all mysteries that we find him continually confessing and deploring his ignorance. At the close of his interesting address on "Scientific Materialism" he gives the following good advice: "Let us bow our heads and acknowledge our ignorance, priest and philosopher, one and all." What the scientists set out to do was to study Nature by means of observation and experiment, to discover what the facts of existence really were, to put them in order in the evolution of the Cosmos, and to understand our own relation to the whole of being. Is it true that now at last they confess themselves disappointed and defeated? On the contrary, they know that they have succeeded beyond their most sanguine expectations, and that their prospects are indescribably bright and encouraging. They have already made marvellous discoveries, all of which confirm them in the belief that the day is coming when the vast and orderly mechanism of Nature shall be an open book, clearly read and deeply enjoyed by all mankind. Even now, the working of that mechanism is sufficiently understood to enable us "to a large extent to perceive, foresee, and manipulate it so as to bring about certain results and avoid others."

Science is not bankrupt, has not failed, but is still pursuing with greater confidence than ever the objects it had in view forty years ago; nor is it one whit more friendly towards religion than it was then. Years ago the omniscient *Daily Mail* told the English-speaking world that science was completely discredited, and it has repeated the false assertion now; but the *Daily Mail* is wrong. Science has never attempted to demonstrate the existence of the soul, or the reality of the life to come. God, the soul, and immortality are outside its range altogether, to attempt the demonstration of which would be the height of folly. The dogmatic religion, to which the *Daily Mail* recommends its readers to look for safe guidance, is being gradually undermined by the very science for which it has so violent a contempt. The situation is comical in the extreme, and so impossible. The falling Church at once claims science as an ally and condemns it as an exploded fallacy. Our comfort lies in the fact that side by side with that of a sinking religion we have a rapidly rising science. Knowledge has arrived, and faith is under notice to quit.

J. T. LLOYD.

Brotherhood and Bunkum.

ONE does not need to be a centenarian to recall numerous movements that were, in the minds of their conductors, going to revolutionise religion, restore Christianity to its primitive purity, and conduct the world by a short cut to the millennium. At one time, it is the Christian Endeavor movement; at another, the Pleasant Sunday Afternoon epidemic, or some special interpretation of Christianity that despairing Churches clutch at like a drowning man at a straw. All these movements come and go, and they all pass through much the same phases. There is a rapid recruiting from various churches and

chapels, there are conferences and congresses, reports of the splendid progress made, and then—a gradual decay and practical disappearance. If they survive, they continue as part of the ordinary church or chapel machinery, and Christian preachers are left faced with the problem of dealing with a world that is steadily drifting away from all religious belief.

For some time past the boom has been connected with the Brotherhood movement. Its new president, the Rev. Silvester Horne, declares that it is not only going to revolutionise life, it is also going to reestablish Christianity—the latter is, indeed, the prelude to the former. For Mr. Horne is not one of those who believe "you can reform society by the simple process of leaving God out." Which is quite natural—in a parson. A society that had no place for God would not be reformed. It would be lacking—parsons. Moreover, the Brotherhood movement is democratic in principle; it has grasped the true principles of Christianity; it is "a return to what is primitive and fundamental"; it is "out to give to Christianity a more human interpretation and a more human application"; and Mr. Horne has "no fear that the working people of this country are going to surrender their Christian inheritance."

Now, all this is really intensely funny, although Mr. Horne is not a humorist—not intentionally, that is. But the finest strokes of humor are produced unconsciously, and Mr. Horne makes a bull's-eye. Consider all that it implies. Over nineteen centuries ago Jesus Christ of the New Testament came into the world with a definite mission before him. He founded a pure religion, one that brought health, hope, and deliverance to a dying world. The power of Christianity was such that it completely conquered the old Pagan civilisation, and it has been the source of inspiration for all that was good in life ever since. Centuries roll by, and then two remarkable discoveries are made. The first, is that Christianity is losing ground. It could conquer a civilisation already existing, but it cannot hold its own in a civilisation which, so they say, was founded by itself. The second discovery is that, except for a semi-mythical period known as primitive Christian times, the world has been on quite a wrong tack. All the great Christian writers—one might even include the New Testament itself—all the Churches, past and present, have made a colossal blunder. They have all assumed that the main purpose of Christianity was to secure man's salvation in the next world. But they were all wrong. Its great and central gospel was salvation in this world, to be secured by the principle of Brotherhood. Christianity must have a human—that is, a secular, application. Jesus Christ came and lived and died, not as generations of Christians have believed, for the salvation of man's soul, but to secure better wages, better houses, and a better social structure.

Now, if Mr. Horne's position and statements do not imply this, they are either meaningless or a sheer piece of bluff. When the Freethinker points to the reign of Christianity as one of the most colossal disasters that ever overtook a civilised people, men like Mr. Horne object, and proceed to indicate the immense benefits flowing from the Christian Churches. But on his own showing, all these Churches were built on error, taught error, and pointed human energies in the wrong direction. And no indictment that was ever framed by the most uncompromising Freethinker could be more sweeping than this. He says that for at least fifteen hundred years the Christian Churches have been leading men astray. They either did not know what genuine Christianity was, or they deliberately taught a false creed. In either case their influence has been bad. Whichever way you have it, Mr. Horne is endorsing the Freethought attack. It is Christianity that has been the great enemy to civilisation, and it must be swept on one side before genuine progress can be made.

Mr. Horne says that what the Brotherhood movement wants is "clean, healthy human homes, and

honest industry, and high civic responsibility." To announce this as a wonderful discovery in the Christian Church, and to indicate that there is great difficulty in convincing Christians of the desirability of these things, is, again, an emphatic condemnation of historic Christianity. In any case, Mr. Horne is late. Thomas Paine preached this gospel over a century ago. Freethinkers have been preaching it ever since; and Mr. Horne is only preaching it now because Freethought is making it impossible for the Churches to preach any other gospel with success. For Mr. Horne, like other parsons, stuck to the old gospel so long as it would stick to him. How much of this "social gospel" should we have heard if churches and chapels had continued to be filled with people who were willing to listen to the gospel of "other-worldism"? But churches must be filled somehow, preachers must secure audiences, and the discovery of a social gospel is no more than the last resource of a clergy who despair of retaining a hold on the people by any other means. The game is not a new one, in principle. Over and over again the Catholic Church has had a timely revelation that helped it to surmount a difficult situation. Mr. Horne is not a Catholic, and it would be hardly safe to claim a revelation. But he can fall back upon a re-discovery of primitive and fundamental Christianity. Where humbug is so common, a little more or less makes no great difference.

In what way does the Brotherhood movement indicate a revival of Christianity? It does not comprise the bulk of the working classes. It does not comprise those who were non-Christians before the movement began. They are not converted. The Brotherhood crowd is gathered just as other religious crowds are gathered—by vigorous recruiting among other churches and chapels, with a sprinkling of those who, led by sentiment more than reason, are attracted by the discussion of secular and social topics. Of course, the mass of people are more ready to listen to lectures on these subjects than to sermons on theology. But that does not prove the strength of religion; it only exhibits its weakness. The Brotherhood movement is there simply because it keeps religion in the background, or confines it to some innocuous and vague formula about the Fatherhood of God. Let religion take the first place, and a large part of the attendance would drop off. As it is, the *Christian Commonwealth*, which has had little but praise for the movement, says that the representatives at the Birmingham Conference "had to face the fact that the Brotherhood movement is showing signs of arrested development," and that individual societies are "preoccupied with the problem of declining membership." Naturally; there is only a certain number from which these bogus social movements can draw. So soon as the limit is reached, the reaction begins. Then a new movement has to be initiated, only to share the same fate. Luckily for the Churches, the crop of fools is constant. But outside the Churches and the mass of people available for religious exploitation, the number of people definitely severed from both Church and Chapel steadily increases.

I do not believe that any clear-sighted social reformer expects any great good to result from these religious movements. He may keep on speaking terms with them, he may use them as so many pawns in the game he is playing, but that is about all. He knows that the real aim of these preachers is not social improvement, but an increase in the strength of religious organisations. Their object is a successful Church, not a reorganised society. To that end all things are legitimate—brass bands, theatrical displays, sensational revivalism, or a semi-hysterical interest in social problems. Every European reformer knows—and the bulk of the leading ones say—that Christianity, as such, has no real interest in social progress. In every country in the world the churches and chapels act as the guards of vested interest. Even in England and America, where the growth of public opinion has forced some of the clergy to adopt different tactics, we are apt to

forget that these represent only a miserable minority. The majority of Christians are still following the old ruts and playing the old game.

There is no doubt whatever that conservative interests view these religious developments with anything but dread. Of course, they would rather not have them. They would prefer that the old preaching of humility, and suffering, and patience, and submission should continue. But if it cannot continue, if something must be done to please people and to satisfy the desire for social reform, it is far better that what is done should be under the auspices of religion. If it does nothing better, it will guarantee the minimum of change. How else is one to account for the way in which large employers of labor, great landowners, etc., patronise these religious developments? They know that exactly what Mr. Horne accuses, by implication, other churches of doing, he is doing himself. He is heading forces that might be dangerous into a comparatively innocuous channel—a place where social aspiration evaporates in religious sentiment.

The position is really simple. The demand for social justice is either well-based or it is not. If it is sound, theology cannot endow it with extra strength. Justice to man for the sake of man, is a plain principle, and one that appeals to all. Justice to man for the sake of God, is an appeal that has never yet secured decency and fair play, and never will. Those who are trying to-day to weld together the demand for social justice and theology, are not primarily interested in reform. Their dominant interest lies elsewhere, and they will sell the social cause whenever the two interests conflict. All history proves the truth of this; and although present day tactics may delude some—may even delude preachers themselves—others will not fail to see behind the mask of the social reformer the face of the religious evangelist. And behind him they will catch a glimpse of those sinister vested interests that form the life-blood of the Churches, and for which they will continue to fight so long as they stand to gain by the advocacy.

C. COHEN.

Cancer and Roses.

OUTSIDE there was a blue-black sky, glittering with starlight; inside there was an imagined heavenly canopy glowing with God's love. Outside roses and honeysuckle slept on the walls of the house, but not so soundly as to forget to breathe their perfumes into the air; inside the atmosphere was heavy with the taint of sickness, a death sickness that was made, to me, all the more tragical by the dreams of the sufferers.

They thought God was with them in the little room. His love, they imagined, was easing the pains of the one and soothing the grief of the other. They saw the Paradise they had been taught to long for; and now that it was time for one of the sisters to go, all the beauty of God's love, and all the strength and comfort of his everlasting arms, had been required to soften the blow.

The one who would remain was praying by the bedside of her sister. She was picturing the delights of heaven; and in her intensity it seemed to both that their spirits had already forsaken the clay, and were soaring together through the ineffable bliss.

Outside, in the old garden, the white roses seemed to gleam, with a strange fascinating beauty, in the darkness. It was as if their white petals reflected the star-rays, illuming the air with a soft mysterious light, weirdly beautiful. You could nearly feel the gleam. It seemed to seek you; it seemed to go stealing through your body like the warm glow of some old and dim memory suddenly revitalised. A curtain of quietness closed about your mind, shutting out everything but the loveliness before your eyes. There was something uncanny about it; for the gleam seemed to be purifying you in its own beauty. You felt conscious of the process.

I suppose this feeling is more or less similar to the religious awe we read of and never see in operation. There is a considerable difference, of course, even granting the effects are somewhat alike. The roses were facts; the gods the sisters were worshipping were ideas. So were the glow of God's love and his loving-kindness; but the gleam that seemed to come from the roses was caused by the keen contrast between the white petals and the darkness, giving the sharp atmosphere the appearance of luminosity. You forgot those things when the spell enwrapped your mind; and if you had continued to overlook them when the beauty vanished, and had you sought some cause outside nature, you would very probably have blocked the truth by the obstacle named God.

While the night air had been purifying my body and mind, the sisters were bathing their minds in the fancy-lit mists of the supernatural. Thanking God for the many joys he had given them, and would give them, they forgot for a brief moment the cancer that had robbed one of them of her beauty, and was now robbing her of her life. Praising the great giver of all things for his wonderful loving-kindness, they forgot, for a little moment, the physical pain one had suffered, and the mental anguish the other had endured. Anticipating the happiness of each other's company in the heaven of their dreams, they had forgotten all about that other sister, whose nature, made by the God they worshiped, had led her "astray," and whom they had banished because of her iniquity.

A few minutes under the influence of a mental anæsthetic is poor balancing for years of misery; the selfish happiness of it bitter when it freezes human sympathy.

The religious emotionalism of the sisters would not last long, I knew; for there is little room in the mind for religion when acute pain racks the body. Human needs and human attention come before religion in point of experience. Religious bigotry may harden the heart against the weakness of those nearest to us; but when it comes right down to personal requirements, the same religious bigotry evacuates its position: human needs force it out. What suffering Christians refuse to others is gratefully taken by themselves; their religion gets the slip in the interests of their bodies.

When everything has been said for the strength of religion, the depths of its roots, and the heights of its topmost leaves, and all that, and however true these things may be, it is still wonderful how easily and how quickly religion does the disappearing trick, particularly when its presence is most important to the individual. The supposed good attributes of religion might have remained beside the sisters during their suffering just as easily as the bad attributes remained when they sent the other girl about her lonely business. Religion is a funny thing! The good of it seems to slide away in a moment or two, while the bad lasts for ever, approximately. It is full of irrationalities; and naturally enough, being but an agglomeration of them, when you come to analyse it.

My thoughts were becoming slightly tinged with sarcasm, when a shriek of pain cut the silence like a lightning flash. Hastily I went indoors, reaching the bedside in time to see the last twitchings of the lips of a lamb of God, killed by a loathsome disease.

We Atheists are supposed to be spiritually blind; but what kind of a blindness is it that transforms a terrible yell of agony into a jubilant shout of praise? My companion told me, some time later, that her sister had gone home on the wings of a prayer, that her entrance into Paradise had been heralded by her shout of joy.

I went out from the death-room, with that idea in my mind. Into the darkness I went; and the stars were still gloriously brilliant in the sky, and the air was still sharp and fragrant, and the weird gleam still shone from the white roses in the old garden. Sitting down on a chair, I let the loveliness of my surroundings quieten the mingled sorrow and wrath that I felt. And then I put the old questions to my

pipe again, the questions that make me seem callous in the estimation of my Christian friends, the simple questions that make God ludicrous when not completely impossible, the questions that undermine the foundations of religion, the questions that blow it up.

And inside there was a sister, who had refused to be comforted, whose idea had given rise to my invisible wrath, and whose beliefs, despite their roots and heights, were so badly made that they were valueless; for she was weeping her eyes out upon the covered bosom of her dead sister.

ROBERT MORELAND.

Is There a Hell?—III.

WE left off, at the end of our last article, with some remarks on the anonymous editor's statement about Atheists teaching that "we die like dogs." We put in a good word for the dog as being more faithful than the majority of human beings. We will only add, on this point, in the first place that this pious gentleman should read Byron's epitaph on his dog "Boatswain," and, in the second place, that reading the Bible is pretty sure to induce a false notion of man's canine friend. "Holy Writ," especially in the Old Testament, uses the word "dog" to indicate a practitioner of unnatural vice. Which, by the way, is a piece of very vulgar insolence; for it is impossible to estimate man's indebtedness to the dog in the course of his evolution, and man's virtues, far more surely than his vices, are to be found amongst the lower animals.

After all men do die like dogs. Shakespeare calls man "the paragon of animals" and all animals die alike, just as they are all born alike—at least as regards the various mammalian species. "Yea, they have all one breath," as the wisest book in the Bible says. And there is nothing but man's vanity to support the idea that his "soul" is less perishable than theirs. "Dust thou art and unto dust thou shalt return" is said of man in the Bible itself; and the "breath of life" infused into man in Genesis is precisely the same "breath of life" that was infused into the rest of the animal creation.

"In our heart of hearts," this writer says, "we do not believe the Atheists, and we do not even believe that the Atheists believe themselves." This is a fair sample of Christian manners in controversy. In ordinary disputes such an attitude commonly provokes a "you're another" reply. But it is hardly worth while descending to that level of discussion. Atheists may very well leave the Christians in full possession of that kind of argumentation.

We pass on to another part of the Introduction to *Is There a Hell?* There is truth, and more of something else, in the following passage:—

"Of recent years there has been more talk in the pulpit of heaven than of hell, and not a few people have endeavored to persuade themselves that there is no hell. This is a very natural reaction from the terrifying notions of a material hell which were inflicted for many generations upon our forefathers..... The Dantesque picture of this hell as a penal place of flames, and smoke, and physical torture, appalled the people of yesterday and sent children to bed in agonies of terror. But that was an absurd picture. One can burn one's hand in a furnace, but one cannot burn one's soul there. Only a spiritual fire can be felt by a spirit."

It is perfectly true that civilised people have revolted against the descriptions of hell that terrified little children, and were meant to terrify them. But it is no less true that those descriptions were based upon the plain language of the Bible. Such expressions as "everlasting fire," "the lake that burneth with brimstone and fire," and "the smoke of their torment ascendeth for ever and ever," are not to be explained away as merely symbolical without bringing the Bible into contempt. To call the orthodox picture of hell "Dantesque" is simply an evasion. Dante's conceptions of hell were first of all derived

from the Christian Scriptures. Huxley practised a similar evasion, but for a very different object,—namely, to disarm prejudice and obtain a peaceful hearing. In his American lectures on Evolution he criticised the "Miltonic" theory of creation severely; but all the time he meant the "Mosaic" theory—that is, the Biblical theory. When the discussion opened between Huxley and Gladstone the "Miltonic" had soon to be dropped for the "Mosaic." For the old parliamentary hand wanted his adversary to suffer as much odium as possible; and in this particular instance he was not entirely without justification.

It may be observed, also, that the "absurd picture" was not so absurd in view of the doctrine of the resurrection of the body, which this writer completely overlooks, although it is still taught by the Catholic and Anglican Churches, and is included in the Syllabus of Religious Instruction in elementary schools, of which Dr. Clifford, one of the leading Free Church divines, is so amazingly proud. We have already quoted Spurgeon's eloquence on this very point. When the risen body had joined the immortal soul they were to be tortured together for ever; and the fire in which the body was to be burnt without being consumed was "exactly like that which we have on earth." That was a wicked hell, but it was an honest hell. And if Spurgeon believed in it, as he probably or possibly did, he was right in warning people against it.

The various writers of this volume do not give up hell altogether. There is a certain terrible vigor in the word, which is utterly lost in the "Hades" of the Revised Version. Hell is cooled down, but not abandoned. It is still serviceable. Listen to the anonymous editor again:—

"Hell may not be a place; it may be a state. Heaven may not be a place; it may be a state. But if heaven is the reward of the righteous, there must be a negative of non-reward, if not an antithesis of direct punishment, and the negative or antithesis of heaven *must* be hell."

There *must* be a hell! Of course there must. The clergy will not discard it while it is of the least worth to them. When it is nothing but a sheer loss, they will get rid of it altogether, without the slightest compunction.

For the present hell is indispensable. All the contributors to this volume—Catholic priest, Anglican clergyman, Nonconformist minister, and Jewish rabbi—are agreed upon this one point. Listen to the editor again:—

"In the succeeding pages of this book a number of well-known religious authorities give their own views upon the subject—views which in many particulars are dissimilar from one another. But it will be found that every one of these authorities gives an unqualified 'Yes' to the vital question—'Is There a Hell?'"

These "authorities," as the editor calls them, are no authorities at all. They dismiss as false what their predecessors taught as truth. What *they* now teach as truth will be dismissed as false by *their* successors. "Authorities" indeed! Their agreement is confined to the one point,—that there *is* a hell. Where it is, what it is, and who will have to go to it, and whether they will have to live in it for ever—these are points on which these "authorities" are in open disagreement.

Some of them argue, and justly enough, in our opinion, that heaven and hell are parts of the same view of the "beyond." If you give up the latter, you have no logical ground for retaining the former. They stand or fall together. Listen to the Rev. Dr. R. F. Horton on this point:—

"If we are to be logical we must, when we give up hell, give up heaven also. It is the feeblest form of sentimentality to profess a belief in heaven—and especially to accept heaven for ourselves—when we have no fear of hell and have given up believing in it. And to do the modern mind justice it does, as a rule, frankly surrender both. The disbelief of to-day in hell is equally a disbelief in heaven. The vast bulk of the indifferent have no expectations of any future life, and if they genially declare that God is too kind to send them to hell, they practically believe that he is not kind

enough, or, at any rate, has not the power, to send them to heaven. They have dismissed the whole idea of a future life for themselves and for their friends, and they live practically in the present and for things that can be gained and enjoyed here in this life."

This is quite true. Heaven and hell are *falling* together. No one that we know of was ever anxious to go to heaven. It was only the alternative to hell. There was no other place of refuge. A man who rushes out of a house on fire is in no hurry to decide where he will eat his next meal and take his next night's sleep. Ask him where he is going and he replies, "Out of *this*." Christian Churches traded chiefly on the fear of hell. The hope of heaven was but an afterthought. We cannot see that it is any more attractive now. What has happened is that hell has become less terrifying. Dr. Horton himself does not paint it in very lurid colors:—

"We are obliged to revise the geography, if we may so call it, of the spiritual world. We do not say that heaven is above and hell is beneath, for such expressions have lost their meaning for us with the fuller knowledge of the solar system. What do we say? We say, in the light of Christian revelation, that heaven is a state of permanent reconciliation with God, and that hell is a state of permanent enmity to God. To be reconciled with God is to be in heaven, even here, and to be at enmity with God is similarly to be in hell."

Rev. Silas Hocking goes farther than this. "Heaven and hell," he says, "may be in the same place; and heaven will be hell to the man who loves evil things." Mr. Hocking appears to be a universalist. He denounces the old idea of hell most severely:—

"To talk of a hell so horrible that no man with a heart in him would throw a dog into it, and yet to preach that the Almighty Father cast the bulk of the human family into it to burn for ever and ever, is to insult the very name of the Being whom we are taught to love."

After this it is easy to understand that Mr. Hocking believes that in course of time "all men will grow to see the good" and that "all lost souls will be reclaimed."

Rev. Dr. Charles Brown writes on "the Absurdity of a Material Hell." Still, the sinner must look out:—

"I preach that there will be a terrible awakening for people who have trifled with duty and conscience, and who have rejected the light. I preach that there must be something unutterably awful under the figures which our Lord used of the outer darkness, the undying worm, the unquenchable fire. I preach, and I sincerely believe, that there is some experience that is more terrible than we conceive in store for the wilful and unrepentant sinner."

This gentleman is very insistent with his "I preach." But how does it matter *what* he preaches? The only important thing is what he *knows*, and he knows *nothing*—just like his colleagues.

One idea possesses all these clerical gentlemen. They follow Jesus in dividing people into sheep and goats—good and bad; and there is heaven for one lot and hell for the other. But what a childish philosophy is this! Few of us are angels; few of us are devils. Most of us are neither black nor white, but various shades of grey. The best of us have our defects; the worst of us have our redeeming qualities. Bad men and good men are a very unphilosophical division of the human race. Things are not so simple as that. If they were the world would have few problems to trouble it. With all the "good" men on one side and all the "bad" men on the other we should soon come to a settlement of human affairs. Pascal said that man never has the choice between good and evil—he has only the choice between various mixtures of both. Just in the same way are goodness and badness mixed in mankind. Consequently the doctrine of heaven for one set of people, and hell for another set of people, is puerile, and can only be dismissed with the contempt it deserves by intelligent people.

G. W. FOOTE.

Acid Drops.

The Church Congress has provided the usual cartload of words to a very few grains of sense. All sorts of problems have been discussed, without anyone being much the wiser or better. And, as usual, the speakers were most definite where knowledge was impossible, and least certain where courage and industry could have supplied them with positive information. The relation of the sexes, for instance, all the speakers agreed, ought to be governed by the Christian ideal. But, as no one proceeded to say just what the Christian ideal was, peace was maintained. Otherwise, the Congress might have witnessed some lively scenes. Canon Grane, speaking on War, said it was a wonder that the saving grace of humor had not shown us "the *reductio ad absurdum* to which civilisation, minus Christianity, had brought the leading Christian States." If Canon Grane had not been a clergyman, one might have expected him to realise that the fault is not that civilisation has been deficient in Christianity, but that it has had too much. Sir Ernest Sutour, who really ought to have known better, touched the limit by declaring it incontestable that "Christianity had done much to mitigate the horrors of war and to promote good feeling among nations." Examples: England and Germany; Germany and France; Bulgaria, Servia, and Greece.

Some spirited comments on Sir Oliver Lodge's presidential address are contributed by Sir Ray Lankester to the *Daily Telegraph*. He says, as we said in the *Freethinker*, that Sir Oliver's profession of "belief" is a very interesting piece of autobiography, but "singularly out of place at a meeting for the advancement of science." Sir Ray (these titles seem sadly out of place, somehow, in connection with scientific work) points out that the business of science is not to discuss "possibilities," but to verify facts, however wildly improbable they may appear at first sight. Had scientific men adopted the plan of Sir Oliver Lodge and discussed mere speculative possibilities, they would still have been quarrelling over ghosts and goblins and vampires and witches. Instead, they insisted that "the vampire and the dragon should be placed 'on the table,' that angels should be brought before them and their power of dancing on a needle's point exhibited, before they would discuss these things at all." And the result of the adoption of this attitude was the rapid disappearance of the superstitions for which so many worthy men have stood sponsors.

Sir Oliver Lodge, says Sir Ray Lankester,—

"Seeks to prepare the way for the reception of his hypothetical as plausible and needful conceptions by conjuring up select specimens of scientific investigators who are so blinded by their occupation in special branches of science that they are unable to do what he is able to do—namely, to take a large view of existence. He seems to think that there are biologists and others ignorant enough to maintain that all existence and 'the nature of things' can be explained by physics and chemistry. He supposes such persons to deny the existence of ghosts on the ground that they cannot be accounted for by physics and chemistry. There may be such persons, and we leave Sir Oliver to deal with them when found. There are others (of whom I am one) who—in common with Huxley—admit that science does not explain existence nor the ultimate nature of things at all. Sir Oliver makes an urgent appeal in favor of the plausibility of ghosts. He omits to state or consider the real objection which all reasonable men entertain to a belief in the existence of ghosts—namely, that the President of the British Association has not, any more than have other such believers, brought forward a particle of experimental evidence in favor of it. The best evidence forthcoming is not sufficient to induce a normal man to bet five pounds on the successful demonstration of a ghost's existence against five thousand offered on the other side."

This is a well-deserved rebuke, and it was necessary that someone should administer it. When ill-informed people are told in scores of sermons and religious journals that science has altered its attitude towards religion, etc., etc., it is well that someone in authority should point out how much alone in the world of science Sir Oliver Lodge stands. It may be that the acceptance by people of Sir Oliver's speculations as the verdicts of modern science may lead others beside Sir Ray Lankester to speak out. In that case it will be Freethinkers who will have to thank Sir Oliver for his presidential address.

While the Church Congress was discussing the elevating influence of Christianity on the fair sex, Albanian women were fighting the Servians with rifles and hatchets. There is often a contrast between theory and practice.

The Balkan Christians have three gods. The Turks have only one. There is about the same ratio in their cruelties.

It gives one the creeps to see a paper like the *Westminster Gazette* playing to the gallery just as badly as journals of far less intellectual calibre. On the opening day of the Church Congress our contemporary had a front-page article on "The Church and the World." It was very well written, and in some respects very able. This passage, for instance, was as sound as it was pungent:—

"The Church of England is very militant about Disestablishment and Church schools, but it seems to a great many observers to be strangely pacific and quiescent about a great many other things of at least equal importance; and by some unfortunate chance, whenever it has to give a vote, it gives one which history almost invariably judges to have been on the wrong side."

But at that point our contemporary seems to have felt that discretion was by far the better part of valor. Severe criticism of the Anglican Church in particular would have to be balanced by compliments to Christianity as a whole; so it began to call attention to some comforting "facts which concern all the Churches." "We see many signs," it went on, "that the modern world is becoming in a general way more religious. There is a marked reaction from the materialism of forty years ago. Our scientific men are beginning to tell us that all things are possible, and the President of the British Association delivers a religious address from his chair." We should like to think this was sarcasm, but we are unable to do so. The writer deliberately abases himself, and grows maudlin in putting his neck into the Philistines' yoke for the sake of his salary. Otherwise we might ask him what he means by "the materialism of forty years ago"—who are the scientific men who teach the nonsense that "all things are possible"—and why President Lodge's address is any more important than President Schafer's from the chair of the British Association? Above all, we should invite him to indicate some of those "signs" of the world's growing more religious. We wonder if he refers to the rivalry in armaments between Christian nations or the meek and mild virtues of the Christian Balkan States?

There were several reports of the Wolverhampton "blasphemy" case in the local papers. We have reproduced (on another page) the longest from the *Express and Star*. Any other choice might have been misrepresented. But we add the following extract from the *Birmingham Daily Mail* of October 1, giving some of the alleged "blasphemies":—

"There never was a man called Jesus at all."

"What did he teach?"

"I could train a parrot in three weeks to say Jesus was a great teacher."

"Nobody outside a lunatic asylum would believe that Jesus lived."

"We have splendid history books and a dozen eminent men who have never heard of Jesus."

"Josephus is the only reliable historian, and there is no mention of Jesus in his books."

"If a man believes Jesus lives he is in error, and if he says he does live he tells a deliberate untruth."

"Jesus was not a teetotaler."

"I could name you a hundred Christs all born of Virgins."

Such are the expressions that expose a man to a criminal prosecution in this "land of freedom." Here and there a sentence may be marked by what some people would regard as bad taste. But bad taste is not a crime. If it were, the bulk of the population of England would be in prison—if those outside were numerous enough to keep them there.

We quite understand that what is *sub judice* is not open to public discussion. Mr. Stewart's case is *sub judice*, but his statements are not. The statement that "There never was a man called Jesus at all" is *sub judice* in the court of historical controversy, but not in any police-court or at any court of assize. Without being responsible for Mr. Stewart's literary composition, we take the fullest responsibility for the substance of his statement. We are prepared to repeat it as often as may be necessary. To put it forward as "blasphemy" is a disgrace to the police, and to listen to it is not very creditable to the Stipendiary. Why, there is a member of the present Government, Mr. J. M. Robertson, who has written a big book to prove what the Wolverhampton "blasphemer" alleges in the first and last of his "criminal" utterances. One man is prosecuted for making a statement, and another man who proves it enjoys a place in the Government and £1,200 a year. Shaw himself couldn't do justice to this tragi-comical discrepancy. One would have to leave it to Swift.

We prefer to say nothing at present about the complications in Mr. Stewart's case. We may have something to say about the matter when the case is over.

Knowing the Blasphemy Laws as well as we do, we are often astonished at the nonsense that is written and spoken

about them. Complaint is made, for instance, that "blasphemers" are arrested instead of being summoned; in fact, the recent arrest at Wolverhampton is treated as something entirely new. It is really nothing of the sort. George Jacob Holyoake was arrested in 1842 and several of his colleagues were arrested afterwards. Harry Boulter was arrested in 1908. The young Sheffielder, S. E. Bullock, was arrested in 1911. We have not kept a detailed record of the Nottingham case, but we fancy there was an arrest in that also. There was no arrest, of course, in the prosecution of the *Freethinker* in 1882. Mr. Foote's was a press offence, and the prosecution had to proceed under the Newspaper Libel Act.

"Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven," says the Lord's Prayer. But somehow or other it doesn't get done. A speaker at the Church Congress—the Rev. H. Dunnico, of Liverpool—pleaded that working men should have "a chance to become the creatures that God intended them to be." Poor God! His wishes are always being frustrated. Clerical land-nationalisers are always declaring that God meant the land for the people,—only the landlords have been too many for him. When Jesus Christ said that the meek should inherit the earth he must have meant in coffins.

One Lord God Almighty (that sounds well!) is to be besieged by praying ladies, and all the friends they can induce to join them, during the week from November 1 to November 8. A call to prayer for that period is issued by the Catholic Women's Suffrage Society, the Church League for Women's Suffrage, the Free Church League for Women's Suffrage, the Friends' League for Women's Suffrage, the Jewish League for Women's Suffrage, and the Scottish Churches' League for Women's Suffrage. The "call" states that "the enfranchisement of women is in accordance with the will of God." Here we have the will of the poor Deity frustrated again. It is pitiable.

Where do the ladies find what is, or is not, in accordance with the will of God? They certainly cannot find anything like woman suffrage in the Bible. If they followed Paul's directions they would keep silence in public and talk all they wanted to at home. But the time has gone by for that—and gone by for ever.

The "militants" don't join in this week of prayer. They prefer arson. Yet Mrs. Pankhurst is a pious lady, and takes the name of God in vain as well as the other suffragists.

"He has taken a prominent part in social and religious work." This is what a newspaper report says of James Vose, who was charged before the Bolton magistrates with obtaining money by false pretences from the Britannic Insurance Company. Accused was remanded, bail being refused.

Rev. Cecil Frederick Blyth, rector of Rickinghall, Suffolk, left £4,303. Rev. Duncombe Herbert Sawyer, of Bournemouth, left £15,822. Their present address must be warmer than ours this October.

A workman named Thomas Toshesky was lately buried by a heavy fall in a coal mine at Wilkes Barre, the result of a slight explosion which destroyed the props of his working. His fellow workmen spent a whole week in digging him out. He was fed by means of liquid food through a pipe driven through the solid rock to his living tomb. Conversation was also carried on through the same channel. To keep his spirits up a gramophone was placed at the outer end of the pipe. But there was no "Nearer my god to thee" in the entertainment. The program consisted of the latest rag-time pieces and music-hall sketches.

More "chatter about Christ" from Bernard Shaw, who says that "Christianity has not gained an inch since the Crucifixion." We admit the fiction, but there was no Cross, and no Christ, and no Christianity but what was made up during several centuries from religious material derived from all points of the compass. It is a pity that Shaw doesn't take a more scientific view of the Gospels. Jesus Christ is as imaginary as Don Quixote, and to discuss the teaching of either of them at this time of day is a great absurdity.

A bright, clever girl was occupying a Woman Suffrage stand. She had occasion to mention the *Daily Mail*, and some of the crowd called out "the Daily Liar." "Oh, well," she said, "I know it has another name." There was a good laugh, and she deserved it.

We are reminded of that incident by the *Daily Mail's* recent attack on Mr. J. M. Robertson, M.P. It accused him of extravagant vituperation, which it attributed to "the thoroughness of his early training as a street-corner orator under the banner of the late Mr. Bradlaugh." We don't remember Mr. Robertson's speaking at any outdoor meetings, and Bradlaugh was one of the most careful speakers who ever lived.

Miss Marie Lloyd, the famous music-hall artiste, was ordered by the New York Immigration authorities to be deported as an "undesirable." Solomon himself would never have passed those terrible officials.

Mrs. Philip Snowden, speaking at Manchester, said that, unless the Christian Church was fair to women, they would forsake the Church. "Angels and ministers of grace defend us!" If the ladies leave the Church the poor clergy will have to sing in the streets.

A woman was sentenced to six months' hard labor for stealing umbrellas and handbags from St. Faith's Chapel, Westminster Abbey. It was stated that she constantly attended churches. In that capacity, doubtless, she counted as many devout believers in the religious census tables, published to the greater glory of God.

There is a National Gas Exhibition at Shepherd's Bush. We hope the clergy are adequately represented.

Atheists, Agnostics, Freethinkers, and all such people are devoid of the sense of beauty. Christians all know that. Yet it was left to Mr. H. S. Salt to protest against the proposed vulgarisation of the Sty Hill Pass in the heart of the Cumberland mountains.

The Church of England clergy have a good conceit of themselves. Canon Cunningham, of Farnham, trotted out what he might have called a home-made recipe for good legislation in the House of Commons. After the House had discussed any Bill before it, one of the late W. T. Stead's "tips from heaven" would be solicited:—

"When all the several views had been voiced," said the Canon, "surely a great silence would be kept for a space, while severally and collectively the House would consult the Unseen Presence and seek His counsel. When this had been revealed the Speaker would voice what he had come to feel had been given to the assembly. It might be on other lines than anything previously suggested, and the leaders would rise one after another to say 'Amen.'"

Evidently the reverend gentleman doesn't expect John Morley in the House of Lords, or John Burns and John M. Robertson in the House of Commons, to raise any objection to this pious performance. Nor does he suspect the possibility of the Speaker objecting to play the part of a mediumistic telephone.

"Every slum is a blasphemy," said the Rev. P. E. Rattenbury, speaking at the Baptist Union meeting at Manchester. Yet the Blasphemy Laws are still confined to Freethinkers.

Another exploded Messiah! A Breslau plumber, named Hermann Steinicke, got a number of dupes to accept him as the "returned Christ." He promised them a happy life with three or four hours' work a day when his "kingdom of peace" came in again. In return for this promise he obtained money from them that enabled him to live in luxury. Finally, however, they turned upon him, and had him arrested as a swindler. He is now doing time.

We congratulate the *Methodist Times* on its ability to see the trees through the wood. It pronounces the religious difficulty to be the difficulty in connection with Home Rule. We hardly thought anybody believed to the contrary. Every statesman who has attempted to deal with the Irish question on any comprehensive scale has found himself faced with the problem of reconciling Catholic and Protestant. Both talk, professionally, about love; both illustrate in practice the power of religion in general and of Christianity in particular, to generate hatred. For nothing but religion could make men hate each other as bitterly as do Catholics and Protestants. A difference in mere political opinion would admit of easy compromise. In religion, hatred becomes a virtue, and reasonable concession a vice. For it is not love of their own religion so much as hatred of the religion of someone else that is the real motive power in Ireland. And the situation only proves what a fundamentally anti-social, non-moral, and disruptive power religion is.

It is abominable that parents who hate the idea of beating their children should be compelled to send them to school where they may be beaten by strangers. A woman applied to the Acton magistrates the other day for a summons against a schoolmaster who had caned her son. She stated that there was a mark five inches long and two inches wide on the boy's back, and that a doctor who had seen him considered it was brutal treatment. The summons was not granted. Yet, as the woman said, she would have got into trouble if she had struck the boy so herself.

Is it not a shameful confession on the part of English school-teachers that they cannot maintain discipline without a stick? Those who really mean this have mistaken their vocation. Why should they be unable to dispense with what has long been given up in the schools of other countries? A teacher who struck a child in a Japanese school would lose his (or her) engagement on the spot. But there is no Bible reading in the Japanese schools. That may make all the difference.

Eugenio Prosetti, a Roman bootmaker, has served a sentence of fifty-four years' imprisonment for murder in Italy. It is difficult to see how such a sentence is preferable to capital punishment. We admit that the "mercy" of it is worthy of a Christian country—and the Christian deity.

Christianity is the only religion that supports a man under trials and affords him consolation in adversity. Yet nobody is surprised when a Christian commits suicide. There was a heading "Curate's Suicide" in the *Star* the other evening. It ought to have convulsed London, but we needn't say it didn't. The curate in question was the Rev. Henry Thirkill Johnston, aged twenty-nine, a former missionary in Calcutta. He had suffered for some time from a severe nervous breakdown. He laid his head on the metals before a Great Northern express, and "Providence" let him lie there.

What taste the monarchical superstition seems to inspire! Ex-King Manuel's interrupted honeymoon has been in the newspapers day after day. It was enough to make a feline night-disturber sick.

A Coventry reader says: "I wrote you some time ago about an issue of the *Freethinker* I had not received. It has just turned up, and I am herewith returning it to you, as it shows how easily the Post Office miscarries things." The word "Coventry" on the wrapper is not in our shop manager's best handwriting, but it is legible enough to any person looking at it attentively. But where it has been—or rather where it has not been—is a puzzle. Amongst the postmarks we notice Bombay. From there it seems to have been returned with a written suggestion to "Try Cowley, Cheltenham, R.U., Angleterre." Finally the actual address of Coventry was "tried" and the poor packet reached its destination at last. We must at least give the Post Office credit for ingenuity.

We suggest to Mr. Farmer, whose learned and pregnant articles on musical composers and other artistic matters are familiar to our readers, that he should follow up the history of the National Anthem. The music is not bad—in its way, but the words are "a caution." Yet people take off their hats to "politics" and "tricks" and "fix" as if they were listening to the sublimest flights of Shakespeare. The "victorious," "glorious," and "over us" form another poetical beauty of "God Save the King." How the "over us" got in is a curious speculation. Mr. Farmer may solve it. As a help to him we may point out that the very words "long to reign over us" in relation to the monarch occur in old Bishop Latimer's first sermon before King Edward the Sixth. From the context we should judge that the phrase was even then a familiar one.

"Woman in the coming season will try to recapture the lost art of blushing," says the *Daily Mirror*. We suggest that a selected course of Old Testament reading might produce the desired result.

"A War Over One Man" is a description of an industrial dispute in the press. Yet history records worse ironies. The Crusades, in which myriads of men lost their lives, was a war over the tomb of a man who never lived and never died.

A "ghosts'" dinner took place in Fleet-street recently at the "Cheshire Cheese," and the bogeys consumed a considerable quantity of meat pudding and liquid nourishment. This

was a more harmless recreation than the ghostly amusement recorded in the early part of the Gospels.

Lord Salisbury told the Church Congress that "neither baths nor parlors were the saving of souls." Agricultural souls, of course. He might have added that a lot of poor Christian people object to baths, like the water-fearing tramp who asked if he couldn't be cleaned on the vacuum system.

Another poor Jesusite! Rev. Dr. George Green Gillan, of Carmuncock, Lanarkshire, left £12,600. A large sum to make out of thrifty Scottish Christians. But he managed it.

Someone has sent us a little publication called the *Religion of a Business Man* by Herbert Parker, B.A., Liverpool. This gentleman chuckles over the fact that the *Freethinker* pays a tribute to "the great Nazarene" every week by dating after him. "Every time," he adds, "Charles Bradlaugh dated a letter he was rendering silent homage to the might of Christ!" This antiquated folly was once very common. It only lingers now in the most hopelessly stupid circles. It might as well be said that Mr. Parker renders a silent tribute to Roman emperors every time he writes the name of certain months of the year; worse still, that he renders a silent homage to Pagan divinities every time he writes the names of the days of the week.

The following appeared in the *Bristol Herald-Courier*, Tennessee:—

"Knoxville, Tenn., September 2.

"Two preachers, Matthew and Luke Duncan, brothers, of Frost Bottom, Tenn., fought over an argument about the Bible last Saturday, and after they had fought, both took to the woods. Matthew was captured yesterday and taken to Oliver Springs. He fought savagely when taken, knocking several men down before being overpowered. During the night at Oliver Springs he was lashed to a post for safe-keeping. To-day he was committed to the State hospital for the insane at Lyon's View. His brother, Luke, has not been found.

"They fought following an argument as to who has the supreme power, the Lord or the Devil. Matthew maintained that God has power over the Devil, and Luke took the other view."

This sort of thing is astonishingly common in America. Christian preachers over there beat the British variety hollow as lunatics and criminals.

"If the story is true that the Socialists and anti-clericals of Rome attempted to mob a delegation of Catholic societies from abroad visiting the Pope, then it is evident that the Socialists and anti-clericals of that city have as faint or erroneous a conception of equal rights and impartial liberty as was displayed in New York by the Irish Catholics who mobbed a troupe of actors presenting a play that was not to their taste. If anti-clericalism is but Catholicism reversed, and means only hatred of the persons of the Catholic faith, it is not so vast an improvement as it might be over Catholic bigotry."—*Truthseeker* (New York).

A Socialist at Toulon bit off an adversary's nose after a political argument. Who was it said that Socialism was a religion?

£102,000 has been raised for the Church Missionary Society as a result of the recent Swanwick Conference. This will raise the price of "rice" Christians.

Christian Evidence lecturers, and other defenders of the Design Argument, will note with pleasure that a fowl, dressed for table at Whittlesford, Cambridgeshire, was found to possess two hearts, both of which had worked independently. "He doeth all things well." Sometimes over well.

What Secularists these Christians are! At Carshalton Surrey, they have been raising funds for a church institute by selling lead pencils, which were bought at wholesale rates and retailed at a penny each. When the full amount is raised the result in all probability will be attributed to prayer and not pencils.

The Bishop of London, when before the Divorce Commission, pretended to represent the "Christian view" of marriage. The President tried in vain to get him to tell where it was to be found. No such thing exists, unless it be in the Catholic Church. The discussions at the recent Church Congress show that all sorts of views on the subject are held even by the clergy of the Church of England.

Mr. Foote's Engagements

October 19, Manchester; 26, Stratford Town Hall.
December 7 and 14, Queen's (Minor) Hall, London.

To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1913.—Previously acknowledged, £193 7s. 3d. Received since:—Anonymous (Liverpool), 15s.; W. H. B., 2s. 6d.; G. Le Quesne and Friends (New Zealand), £1 1s.; Welsh Doctor, £2.

W. RICHARDS.—Why do you call him "the doctor"? He is no more a doctor than you are. Thanks for the papers, though we had already received them from other hands.

E. B.—Many thanks for cuttings.

W. H. B.—Thanks for pleasant letter.

J. DRISCOLL.—Not without merit, but hardly up to our level of publication.

E. HANNAH.—Thanks for your trouble. But we hardly know what to make of Leeds. Perhaps we had better give it a rest for a bit.

A. H.—See paragraph.

J. HECHT asks if anyone can find work for a worthy Freethinker who wants it badly. He has been an active member of the Edmonton Branch. He is skilled in the management of horses, an experienced driver, and a good canvasser.

BIRMINGHAM "SAINT."—"Blasphemy" cases must go to the Assizes. They have to be tried by a judge of the supreme court. A special statute to that effect was passed some seventy years ago.

W. MCCLELLAN.—Your letter was sent on to us at Birmingham, too late for any useful reply, even if we could have given advice in the absence of full details.

WELSH DOCTOR.—The memorandum we made in a hurry after the lecture on Sunday night has got mislaid somehow. We therefore acknowledge your subscription to the President's Honorarium Fund in one of the ways first suggested.

E. B.—Much obliged for cuttings.

L. E. ADAMS.—Your letter repeats what we have often said, and the case, being purely private, cannot be used as evidence.

A. POTTS.—From various sources.

W. P. BALL.—Thanks for welcome cuttings.

W. DAVIDSON.—Always pleased to hear from you, but kindly let it be before Tuesday.

W. H. HARRIS.—We don't think Bernard Shaw's reply to the reverend gentleman is just what you appear to think it. But we cannot deal with the matter just now.

W. G. KING.—We are seldom able to deal with things that reach us on Tuesday, unless they are really urgent. We had already written on the Wolverhampton prosecution.

W. GARDNER.—We saw the correspondence on Hyde Park "blasphemy" in the *Referee*. We don't think, however, that the Home Office or the Police want more "blasphemy" prosecutions in London. Perhaps an attempt may be made to deal with "improper" language. But even that could only be justified by treating Freethinkers and Christians alike. Any check in the interest of the peace must be applied impartially all round.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sugar Plums.

Mr. Foote was not able to travel to Birmingham on Saturday evening, as he has usually done in the past. He had therefore to travel on the Sunday, leaving home at 9 in the morning and arriving at Birmingham at 2 in the afternoon, after nearly missing the connection at Paddington. He entered Birmingham in a deluge of rain; the deluge continued all the afternoon and all the evening, and apprehension was felt as to the success of the Town Hall meeting.

But there was a splendid audience in spite of the weather and Mr. Foote had a great reception, which Mr. Fathers, the chairman, noted with much pleasure. The criticism of "Sir Oliver Lodge's Theology" was followed with close attention throughout, and enthusiastically applauded at the finish. Many questions were asked and answered, and there was the time-honored complaint of "no discussion" which is a condition attaching to the grant of the Town Hall for the meeting. Mr. Foote's visit should give a fillip to the N. S. S. Branch's regular Sunday propaganda in the King's Hall.

Mr. Foote is only delivering two lectures at the Queen's (Minor) Hall this side of Christmas—on Sunday evenings, December 7 and 14. During the month of November he will devote himself exclusively to literary work and fresh publications through the Pioneer Press.

District "saints" are reminded that Mr. Foote visits Manchester next Sunday (Oct. 19) and delivers two lectures (afternoon and evening) in the Secular Hall, Rusholme-road.

Glasgow "saints" are once more reminded that Mr. Cohen lectures in their city next Sunday (Oct. 19).

The Stratford Town Hall course of Sunday Freethought lectures begins this evening (Oct. 12). Mr. Cohen occupies the platform and we hope the local "saints" will do their best to advertise the meeting amongst their friends and acquaintances. Mr. Lloyd takes the second lecture of this course and Mr. Foote the last.

Despite the unpleasant weather on Sunday last, the bright and cheerful-looking little Foresters' Hall, Highgate-road, was comfortably filled. Mr. Cohen was in excellent form, and his lecture was greatly appreciated. Mr. J. T. Lloyd occupies the platform next Sunday, and the North London "saints" should give him a hearty welcome.

The tenth annual Bradlaugh Dinner is to be held rather late—on October 23—at the Holborn Restaurant. Tickets are 5s. each—but only 3s. to members of the Bradlaugh Fellowship; and can be obtained of W. J. Ramsey, 146 Lansdowne-road, Hackney, or of H. Reeve, 107 Green-street, Bethnal Green. There is a piquancy in the announcement that Mr. Bernard Shaw is to occupy the chair.

The October number of the *English Review* contains an excellent article by Florence G. Fidler on "The Position of Women under the Hammurabi Code." The editor contributes his monthly supply of vigorous editorial notes—chiefly, this time, about Home Rule. Some of the other contents are interesting, but they do not call for special mention in our columns.

George Macdonald, of the New York *Truthseeker*, has had a month's holiday. He appears to have spent it in his native district in New Hampshire, amidst old friends and other persons of "rural simplicity"—to borrow Lord Rosebery's happy description of the mental characteristics of the "slim" Dutchmen of South Africa. They have stirred up George's own native humor, and caused him to contribute one of his happiest efforts to the old paper. We confess to having had several good laughs over it. We are also glad to infer that the month's holiday has afforded our distant friend and colleague some real bodily and mental refreshment.

George Macdonald's early reference to a certain minister of the gospel (he got across the fraternity pretty soon) is dry—but not with the dryness of Shakespeare's remainder biscuit after a long voyage:—

"A few days before the Old Home Day I had fallen in with a Universalist minister who does odd jobs of preaching in a number of near-by parishes. With him I discussed religion and Rationalism, and found him cognisant of biblical criticism at least as late as Colenso on the Pentateuch. He was liberal and reasonable enough to admit that if the Christian religion had not been invented and presented to the world until the twentieth century nobody would think it worth patenting. Its success, he said, required the age of ignorance and credulity in which it originated. That was going far, for a minister, and so when he took the floor during the services at Surry I looked for something educative. But there was nothing. His preaching proved as dusty and musty as the rest."

The "Colenso" touch is George all over.

Here is another passage about ministers:—

"If going to meeting in New England is to continue, it looks to me as if the people and the preachers would need to come together for a heart-to-heart talk. A preacher can be liberal enough in his expressions when he is talking to somebody who knows that orthodoxy is a blown-out tyre in these automobile days; but the suspicion does not seem to have entered his mind that the people are as well acquainted with the fact as himself. On the other hand, the people talk like Rationalists, but seem to suppose that the ministers are unconscious of their state of mind. So they are pious enough when the preacher is about, and the minister is orthodox in their hearing. Both sides are wearing masks in the other's presence. The minister has every Sunday the opportunity of a student or teacher to tell his hearers something they don't know and so to be to them a source of information about progress made in religious thought and even in science. But he is either too lazy or afraid, and his people haven't the sense or courage to demand something besides the old husks he feeds them. The churches are poorly supported, and the contributors are paying reluctantly for something they don't want, and wanting what they don't get."

Capital! And what a lot of good nature there is in it!

We think we like George Macdonald best of all, however, in his personal touches. For instance, he meets an old farmer friend that he hadn't seen for a generation. "I went to school with him," he writes, "in the 'seventies. I shook his hand, and, to make conversation, asked, 'Has anything happened since I saw you thirty-five years ago?' He thought a minute, and then — 'Well,' he said, 'I don't know as there has.'" That is so natural that one can imagine the interview. It is equalled, if not bettered, by a later sparkle. George was rather proud in former days of his wrestling and his spelling. But he painfully remembers that he was not always successful. "A consumptive from Boston name Will Cleland, then rusticated for health, took a fall out of me at wrestling, and I was spelled down in my fourteenth year by Ben Crosby, a boy later adjudged an idiot and put in an asylum."

The month's holiday has done George Macdonald good. It hasn't made him a humorist; nature did that; but it has pricked him up to do more justice to the fact than he seems to fancy he is entitled to do—at least as a regular thing—in the *Truthseeker*. But, for our part, to use an Hibernicism, we wish he could have a month's holiday every week.

We have received the following letter from the antipodes:

"Dear Sir,—A few friends and devoted admirers of yourself and of the noble work of emancipation from the shackles of superstition to which the best years of your life have been ungrudgingly given, hearing with keen regret of your recent indisposition, desire to send you a small spontaneous token of their goodwill.

"On behalf of these friends, therefore, I have much pleasure in enclosing the sum of one guinea, which has been subscribed among them, and we trust that this small mark of our esteem may be of some slight service to you in furthering the glorious cause of Freethought.

"My fellow-subscribers unite with me in wishing you a speedy restoration to health, and ardently hope that you may long be spared to wield the bloodless sword of Reason against the ranks of Ignorance and Superstition.—I am, very truly yours, GEORGE LE QUESNE."

Our readers will be interested in the following item taken from the *Glasgow News* (Sept. 30):—

"The remains of Colonel Leith Hay, a gentleman who resided for a number of years in Lochaber, and who died last week, were yesterday interred in Glen Nevis burying-ground, Fort-William. The Colonel left explicit, albeit somewhat peculiar, instructions as to his burial, and amongst other things it was stipulated that his coffin, which was to be made from fir grown at Achnacarry, was to be quite plain and to contain no name-plate. Another stipulation was that no clergyman was to attend the obsequies, and that on the approach to the grave a piper should play 'The Cock o' the North.' These instructions were faithfully carried out at the interment yesterday, and the incongruity of a funeral cortege proceeding to a cemetery to the accompaniment of a rollicking marching tune was pronounced in the extreme. Unmarked by any solemn rites or ceremonial the body was silently committed to the tomb."

A piper instead of a clergyman at a funeral! And the good Christians have to put up with it.

Nature proposes to herself no aim in her operations, and all final causes are nothing but pure fictions imagined by men.—*Spinoza*.

Charles Bradlaugh—an Appreciation.

CHARLES BRADLAUGH was not a commonplace man; he was a great man; or, as the saying is, a man-and-a-half. One of those rare and fine spirits who appear on the great stage of the world at long intervals to enhance the power and dignity of man—who crowd their lives with noble services in the cause of truth and justice. He would have been conspicuous in any age and in any society.

For the love of humanity he endured persecution, calumny, and bitter struggles. The people, the politicians, the press, the pulpit, all combined their great forces to denounce, to libel, to crush this mighty giant and to attack his character with virulence. They called him a vulgar and dangerous agitator, a Godless man, a breaker of holy images, a Republican, a man who impeached the royal House of Brunswick, and boldly denounced the unjust system of paying regular pensions to individuals whose ancestors were of doubtful character, and whose pedigrees would have done no honor to horses in a stud book. He defied the gods in heaven, the Devil and his friends in hell and on earth, and other sundry nobilities of this world.

His following was immense. Mr. Foote tells us in his interesting *Reminiscences*, that at the last Bradlaugh demonstration, on February 15, 1883, in Trafalgar Square, seventy or eighty thousand people were present. The conflict was a desperate one. It was between truth and falsehood; and the overthrow of tyrants and the deluders of mankind if Bradlaugh triumphed over the forces of obscurantism. He put up to auction all the theatrical properties of priesthood. What a sacrilege!

But truth is great and will prevail. Next to the glory of discovering a new idea is the elimination of a false one. Everything was against him; but no power on earth can, at any time, drive to despair a genius of such vigorous determination. He began the war of his life with every disadvantage. He was not born in the purple, and was without family connections, without friends, without means or any social influence. He stood alone—firm in his policy and lofty principles. He laughed at difficulties that would have overwhelmed a lesser man. He trampled over prejudices like a bull in a china shop. Legends, traditions, ancient privileges, old and new superstitions were all treated by him with sovereign contempt. As he was a born actor, *in the best sense*, he was very effective. He had nothing but genius, wonderful energy, and purity of aim to inspire and guide him in his holy crusade. Creeds, geographical limitations, imperial bombast, and hoary institutions did not intimidate him. He did not isolate himself and stand for country or party. He was a citizen of the world, and, in the words of Horace, he was a man, and felt interested in all that concerned man—irrespective of color, class, creed, or country. He was too great, too enlightened, too noble a man to belong to one family, one party, or one country. He belonged to the republic of the world; he preached the gospel of humanity. Religion, to him, was not a bag of tricks made of impossible dogmas, doctrines, ritual, ceremonies, and other fooleries; it meant pure life and noble deeds; the service of man and not the worship of an imaginary God. He loved real men and women.

Compared with others, he had very few illusions. Indeed, it is neither possible nor desirable to be without them. To him this was a grim world and not a playground for gambling with the destinies of humanity. Tennyson's words, "Nature red in tooth and claw," banished from his mind the prating of ages about the love of God, his providence, and his wise dispensations. He was incurably convinced that true and lasting salvation must be the work of man. He therefore labored with a heart and a head and a will to clear the social, religious, and political atmosphere of all shams, frauds, and delusions. This was not an easy task, but Bradlaugh believed in himself—the hallmark of all great men. He was a

man born to conquer and to command. Thousands became devoted to his personality and ideals. His ever-increasing followers were fired by his zeal and enthusiasm. He led a propaganda whose aim was war, and not petty spectacular skirmishes. The people idolised him. He possessed all the qualities of a great leader: strategy, knowledge, geniality, and reserve force. He was a promoter of truth and gave to the world his best, caring nothing for rewards and applause. He gave no quarter and expected none. He was a magnificent fighter and played the game fairly and like a man. He was not a hireling, but a hero. He worked like a Trojan and stamped his personality on his generation, and left a name and fame which will shine brighter with the march of time.

In honoring his memory we do not canonise or worship him like a divinity, but remember him as a great man—a man who left humanity in his debt. He was essentially a self-taught man. In the words of Carlyle, his university was a library of books. Nature was his tutor, goodness his theme, a passion for truth his whole philosophy, and the emancipation and happiness of the human race his ultimate end and object in life. What a man! What a noble ideal! Of such is the kingdom of heroes and heroines.

He was a clear-headed man and soon gave up soldiering, as he did not believe in that form of rascality called patriotism—the killing of innocent people to add to the (false) glory of his country.

When he became a clerk in a solicitor's office he mastered all the bewildering technicalities of the law which proved so useful to him in his future conflicts with the forces of law and order. By reading and reflection the light of knowledge dawned upon his clear intellect and acute judgment.

His lectures and addresses impressed all those who heard him. He was not a meteor, but a fixed star. Thousands attached themselves to his blazing propaganda and became fascinated by his style of oratory, at once clear, eloquent, and fatally logical.

He founded the *National Reformer*, with contributors like Mrs. Besant, Mr. Foote, and many other rising men. The articles proved a shock and gave a rude awakening to all the Churches. The clergy attacked him, lied about him, hunted him everywhere, but all to no purpose. The more they persecuted him the harder he worked. He replied to them, debated with them, and routed his enemies in hollow fashion. He lashed them unmercifully—and they felt it. The whole country rang with his name. His triumph was complete, and the rise of the Higher Criticism and the unwilling surrender of one dogma after another are a tribute to his work and success.

The Churches have been losing ground ever since. Bradlaugh undermined the Rock of Ages and ridiculed the high pretensions of the clergy. He was the pioneer of various secular, rationalist movements which have become such a power in our time. All the best informed minds at present concentrate their attention on the affairs of this world. This is largely due to Charles Bradlaugh, Mr. Foote, and many other able men and women.

His legal and parliamentary struggles, and his ultimate triumph, are now matters of history. Those incidents in his life reflect no credit on his persecutors—religious or political. When he entered the House of Commons—that great museum of cultured curiosities and pathetic monstrosities—the members soon discovered his genius, ability, patience, insight, grasp of all political problems, honesty, disinterestedness, clear vision, impartiality, reach of knowledge, and noble aims.

He was a strong Individualist and believed in self-help and independence. He was not a believer in Socialism and officialism. In his judgment, education, arbitration, conciliation, co-operation, and legislation were the best and sanest methods for securing social reform. His firm attitude excited the hatred of the more fanatical Socialists. His great achievement was the Act dealing with Oaths and Affirmation.

As the President of the N. S. S. he did a great work, but failing health compelled him to resign on February 16, 1890. With great judgment he nominated Mr. G. W. Foote (the Christians always emphasise the initials, G. W., whenever they refer to Mr. Foote) as his successor. This gave no surprise to those who knew the high qualifications of our present President. Mr. Foote was then, as he is now, a man of great ability, literary tastes, and a sound and subtle critic of human character. He has a personality and many faculties and charms that appeal to the imagination of his readers and auditors. His other great colleague, Mrs. Besant, also suffered much persecution. She was then a great power; but now, alas!—let us be charitable and judge her as she was at her best.

Bradlaugh pleaded eloquently on behalf of the people of India. When he went there he received a great ovation. Mr. Foote tells us that, although Bradlaugh was a poor man, he declined handsome gifts of money made by the people of Hindoostan.

The physical and mental pressure became too great and he broke down completely. He died on January 30, 1891. His funeral was an imposing scene, and the grief of the whole civilised world and the appreciation of his services are his lasting epitaph.

His creed is best described in his own words in the pamphlet by his talented daughter, Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner, entitled *Did Charles Bradlaugh Die an Atheist?* In the same pamphlet, on p. 7, will be found his dignified reply to the false rumors that were circulated about his change of opinion.

He died as he lived, a confirmed Atheist. We have the written testimony of Dr. Bell and his daughter concerning this much-canvassed topic—a perennial theme with many lying Christians.

What is the moral of his life?

It is very easy to criticise men, but most difficult to estimate them. Let us be fair and just and not flatter his memory, but paint him as he appeared to those who knew him well and loved him. It is our duty to do full justice to the great services he rendered to humanity. He was impulsive, electric, and himself said he was hardly a poet. Full of passion and emotion, he possessed a logical and practical mind. He was a hard hitter, a most severe critic, but transparently fair. He was a philosopher and a statesman, and had a genius for public affairs, according to the judgment of Mr. Foote. He was not only a born orator, but a born ruler of men. His commanding personality, his insight, his generous sympathies, his iron grasp of all the essential problems of life, his love of progress and order, his knowledge of the world and human nature, marked him out by temperament, education, and circumstances, as a leader of a revolutionary intellectual movement.

He was indispensable after the Oxford Movement and its reactionary tendencies. What a contrast he was to Cardinal Newman! They were both sincere, elemental, and lovers of truth. They both had a distaste for hypocritical compromises of large principles. Between Catholicism and Atheism there is no compromise. Newman's honesty and logic drove him to Rome—singing pathetically, "Lead, kindly light." Bradlaugh's clearer vision made him an Atheist.

The impartial historian, while admiring them both, must record with sorrow Newman's crusade against the progress of human reason, and shed tears at the fall, crash, and death of such a fine intellect. He will say of Bradlaugh that he loved the light and opened vistas to humanity in all directions. In the one case a beautiful sunset passed into the dark night of obscurantism, in the other, the dawn passed into the great light of day.

History offers many such contrasts: Dante and Shakespeare, Napoleon and Washington, Edmund Burke and Thomas Paine, Bernard Shaw and the Pope of Rome, Harry Lauder and the Bishop of London—are cases in point. The tragedy of the human intellect is too sad to contemplate.

Bradlaugh, though an orator, was not a great literary writer like Mr. Foote and Mr. Robertson. The styles

of talking and writing are different. The dash, the go, the fire, the overwhelming flow and fluency of words and ideas lend charm, dignity, and power to oratory, but are totally inappropriate to the calm, patient, and stately marshalling of arguments on the printed page. Cicero, Edmund Burke, and Macaulay united both excellencies, but such a combination is very rare.

Bradlaugh had a capacity for broad outlook, brushed aside all minor details, and boldly took large views. He had the divine afflatus and was too matter of fact and hurried for literary artifices. He had more natural abilities than book-learning; he was not a pedant, but a philosopher—not a pettifogging politician, but an enlightened statesman. He was educated and well-informed, but not a man of classic culture or scientific acquirements. He would have risen to the top in any profession and achieved success in any activity.

In his large view men and women were not puppets or pawns in a game of chess; not commodities for sale; but human beings, who needed light, sympathy, encouragement, and full opportunities to lead comfortable and happy lives.

In the law courts he showed his grasp and learning and mastery of legal technicalities. The judges were much impressed by his personality and his vast acquaintance with legal precedents and all the machinery and trickery of jurisprudence. It would be a delicate task to strike a balance between the profits accrued from the Mosaic law or the institutes of Justinian. The law and the profits go together. Mr. Foote, who heard some of the most eminent lawyers in the last generation, tells us that no practised lawyer approached Bradlaugh in grasp, subtlety, and skill in handling complicated cases and elucidating legal points.

Bradlaugh worked for the triumph of liberty and justice. The only fees he received were sleepless nights, bad health, and persecution. True heroism consists, not in doing things for glory and gold, but for the good of others. It shuns rewards and the applause of a fickle multitude who one day praise a man to the skies and the next day stone him. Such is the ingratitude of the world! Real happiness consists in increasing the happiness of others; and kindness to dumb animals is not less meritorious than kindness to our brothers and sisters.

Love of God is vague and vain, but the love of humanity should be our greatest aim. This is the love that passeth understanding. A grateful nation may sometimes raise monuments and sepulchral arches to glorify the life of a great man, but the most enduring monument is the worth of his own life.

Among the men and women who have influenced the thoughts and destinies of their contemporaries and left a deep mark on their own and future generations, Bradlaugh occupies a large place. He gave cheerfully and freely his life, health, pleasures, comforts, and wonderful gifts to the cause of true religion and human welfare—a man who has enriched his country, not by leaving millions of money, which no honest man can accumulate without wholesale exploitation, but by spreading the light of great ideas which mould human character and modify social institutions, bringing the human race nearer to the goal of complete emancipation from the slavery of the body and the mind. He left behind him a shining example of service and high aims. He was always in harness and had no time to be tired. The way to honor him is to walk in his footsteps—to remember that the best way to honor the dead is to discharge our duty towards the living. Life is too short for whining or frittering away in selfish occupations.

He is the true benefactor who boldly sweeps away from the human imagination a lie, a fraud, or a delusion, and plants the seeds of truth, harmony, and social order. To secure general happiness, the resources of nature, human learning, and art should be open to all.

Work is neither a blessing nor a curse, but a

necessity, and ought to be made pleasant and shared by all.

The world was not leased by God or the Devil to a few choice individuals whose waste, idleness, and extravagance cause most of the miseries of mankind.

Bradlaugh's great aim was to readjust the claims of all on the lines of sanity, economic justice, and freedom. This is, in reality, the whole task of true statesmanship; the rest is all rhetoric and vanity.

Where there is poverty, ignorance, crime, disease, prostitution, political shuffling, and the spirit of war, there can be no order—no civilisation.

Given a free and enlightened people, who can measure the potentialities and possibilities of their lives?

Bradlaugh saw clearly and steadily the whole tragedy of a civilisation based on tyranny, stupidity, and supernatural beliefs. He had faith in man.

What a world this would have been if such great minds did not light up the dark places in men's minds.

He was one of those choice spirits—a true man. The world has produced greater men, but none more honest or more indispensable. No niche in any pantheon contains a nobler figure than Charles Bradlaugh.

E. BURKE.

Alleged Blasphemy.

"DR. KNICKOLI" BEFORE THE STIPENDIARY MAGISTRATE.
COMMITTED TO THE ASSIZES.

A LECTURER named Thomas William Stewart, *alias* "Dr. Knickoli," appeared at Wolverhampton Police Court this (Wednesday) afternoon, and was charged with committing blasphemy by attacking the truth of Christianity "by ribaldry, profanity, and indecency" on September 26 and 27.

He brought with him several books and sheets of MSS., and after explaining to the Stipendiary (Mr. N. C. A. Neville) that he wanted to make notes of the proceedings, he was accommodated with a seat behind the solicitors' bench.

Defendant's wife sat in the gallery—also taking notes.

Among the local gentlemen present were the Rev. J. A. Shaw, Alderman Price Lewis, Councillor W. Hodgson, etc.

Mr. K. Tweedale Meaby (Deputy-Town Clerk) prosecuted, and said three charges were being preferred. So far as they had been able to find out, the defendant was a prominent resident of Sheffield. He was a travelling lecturer and a seller of pamphlets, obscene literature, and very improper goods. From the evidence it seemed very clear that the man was endowed with an adequate supply of words for what he wanted to express.

Besides the charge of blasphemy already mentioned, Mr. Meaby said there was another charge of sending on September 29 a postal packet, a certain obscene article; and another, of offering for sale on September 26 a certain indecent object. The prosecution, Mr. Meaby said, did not suggest for a moment that there was any offence on the part of the defendant if he, with due gravity and propriety, contended that religion was untrue or if he attacked even the fundamentals of religion, but what the prosecution did allege was that he wilfully perverted, insulted, and misled others by licentious abuse applied to sacred subjects. He (Mr. Meaby) should submit that what the defendant said came within the definition of blasphemy in the English law.

The first charge was then taken.

Mr. Bernard W. Molton, sub-editor on the *Express and Star*, spoke to recording in shorthand the speeches of the defendant on the 26th and 27th ult., at Snowhill and on the Market Place respectively.

A transcript of the notes was read out by Mr. Meaby, and the defendant was promised a copy of the notes. They had reference to Scriptural passages and theological opinions. In one passage the defendant was alleged to have said that he would not mind doing three months at Stafford. "Nothing would please me better," he said, "than to be prosecuted. It would be a fine advertisement for me. I would not mind three months in every place in England."

Mr. Molton was cross-examined by the defendant, who occasionally became excited.

Detective-inspector Nixon corroborated.

Defendant (cross-examining): What do you mean by profanely scoffing at the Christian religion?—Witness: You were speaking with contempt of Jesus Christ.

Well, who is Jesus Christ?—I am not going to enter into an argument.

Can you make a thing that is not, ridiculous?—Now you are talking like a showman.

Detective-sergeant Jeffreys said he attended the meetings in question, and corroborated the evidence of the previous witnesses in every detail.

Detective-sergeant Murphy also said he corroborated the previous witnesses in every detail.

Defendant (cross-examining): Have you consulted me privately?

Witness: No, I have not.

Have I not your written request for private advice on a delicate subject?—Yes, you have; I asked for it for a purpose.

Then you aided and abetted me in doing wrong?—Oh, no. We wanted to see what the advice consisted of.

The Stipendiary: I don't think this has anything to do with the case.

Defendant went on to cross-examine witness regarding the correctness of the shorthand writer's transcript, and asked the witness if he could swear that the words read in the extracts were used?—Yes, when they are repeated.

Of course you could, damn it. I could expect that.

To the Stipendiary: I apologise to your worship—a figure of speech.

The Stipendiary remarked that a man would be a marvel if he remembered every word of a speech.

Defendant: But you have heard three witnesses swear that they can corroborate the exact words. Then a man who can corroborate it must be a marvel or a liar.

This was the case for the prosecution.

On being committed to the Stafford Assizes, the defendant said he would not say now what he had to say, as it would take some hours to do so.

The Stipendiary told him that bail would be allowed, himself in £50, and a surety of the same amount.

The defendant thought he had a man in Court who would go bail for him, but on asking for him he was found to be missing.

A travelling friend of the defendant ran out of Court to look for him, and as he was away some time, another man volunteered to go bail.

However, on entering the box, the volunteer was asked to take the oath, but he declined, saying, "I do not believe in anything of this."

Thereupon the Stipendiary observed that he would not take the bail offered unless the bondsman would swear.

The defendant appealed to the volunteer to take the oath "as a personal favor," but just then the Court doors opened, the missing man entered, and was bound over.

The second charge of sending through the post a certain obscene article was then preferred, the defendant pleading "not guilty."

Mr. Meaby remarked that the defendant was not only a lecturer upon religion, but a dealer in obscene literature.

The defendant asked for an adjournment so that he could prepare his defence. He was only informed of these other charges at eleven o'clock this (Wednesday) morning, he said.

The Stipendiary agreed to an adjournment of seven days, bail being allowed in his own recognisances of £25.

—*Express and Star* (Oct. 1).

COLERIDGE ON GHOSTS.

Define a vulgar ghost with reference to all that is called ghost-like. It is visibility without tangibility; which is also the definition of a shadow. Therefore, a vulgar ghost and a shadow would be the same; because two different things cannot properly have the same definition. A *visible substance* without susceptibility of impact, I maintain to be an absurdity. Unless there be an external substance, the bodily eye cannot see it; therefore, in all such cases, that which is supposed to be seen is, in fact, *not* seen, but is an image of the brain. External objects naturally produce sensation; but here, in truth, sensation produces, as it were, the external object. In certain states of the nerves, however, I do believe that the eye, though not consciously so directed, may, by a slight convulsion, see a portion of the body, as if opposite to it. The part actually seen will by common association seem the whole; and the whole body will then constitute an external object, which explains many stories of persons seeing themselves lying dead. Bishop Berkeley once experienced this. He had the presence of mind to ring the bell, and feel his pulse; keeping his eye still fixed on his own figure right opposite to him. He was in a high fever, and the brain image died away as the door opened. I observed something very like it once at Grasmere; and was so conscious of the cause, that I told a person what I was experiencing, whilst the image still remained. Of course, if the vulgar ghost be really a shadow, there must be some substance of which it is a shadow. These visible

and intangible shadows, without substance to cause them, are absurd.—*Coleridge*, "Table Talk."

What is meant by Conscience? If it means the perception of right and wrong, it is an intellectual faculty, which varies in individuals and societies, some having greater discrimination than others. If it means the recognition of distinct, settled categories of right and wrong, it depends on social and religious training. In a high state of civilisation these categories approximate to the laws of social welfare and disease; in a low state of civilisation they are fantastic and fearfully distorted by superstition. There is hardly a single vice that has not been practised as a virtue under a religious sanction. Finally, if conscience means the feeling of obligation, the sense of "I ought," it is a product of social evolution. It is necessarily generated among gregarious beings, and in the course of time Natural Selection weeds out the individuals in whom it is lacking or deficient. Social types of feeling survive, and the anti-social perish. And this is the whole "mystery" of conscience.—*G. W. Foot*, "Ingersollism Defended Against Archdeacon Farrar."

MIDDLE-CLASS RELIGION.

The religion of this vast English middle-class ruling the land is Comfort. It is their central thought; their idea of necessity; their sole aim. Whatsoever ministers to Comfort—seems to belong to it—pretends to support it, they yield their passive worship to. Whatsoever alarms it they join to crush. There you get at their point of unity. They will pay for the security of Comfort, calling it national worship, or national defence, if too much money is not subtracted from the means of individual comfort; if too much foresight is not demanded for the comfort of their brains.—*Dr. Shrapnel*, in *George Meredith's* "Beauchamp's Career."

MORALS AND MIND.

Imagination or mind employed in prophetically imaging forth its objects, is that faculty of human nature on which every gradation of its progress, nay, every, the minutest, change, depends. Pain or pleasure, if subtly analysed, will be found to consist entirely in prospect. The only distinction between the selfish man and the virtuous man is, that the imagination of the former is confined within a narrow limit, whilst that of the latter embraces a comprehensive circumstance. In this sense, wisdom and virtue may be said to be inseparable, and criteria of each other. Selfishness is the offspring of ignorance and mistake; it is the portion of unreflecting infancy, and savage solitude, or of those whom toil or evil occupations have blunted or rendered torpid; disinterested benevolence is the product of a cultivated imagination, and has an intimate connection with all the arts which add ornament, or dignity, or power, or stability to the social state of man. Virtue is thus entirely a refinement of civilised life.—*Shelley*.

The true philosophy is to retire within oneself, and listen to the voice of reason, amid the stillness of the passions.—*Rousseau*.

AN ACCOMPLISHED MINISTER.

Church service was over on Christmas morning and three prominent members walked home together, discussing the sermon.

"I tell you," said the first, enthusiastically, "Doctor Blank can certainly dive deeper into the truth than any preacher I ever heard."

"Y-es," said the second man, "and he can stay under longer."

"Yes," said the third, "and come up drier."

'Tis a good thing preachers don't go to Congress. Whin they're ca'm they'd wipe out all th' laws, an' whin they're excited they'd wipe out all th' popylation. They're niver two jumps fr'm th' thumbscrew.—*Mr. Dooley*.

SPIRITUAL CONSOLATION.

Husband (sarcastically): "Well, my dear, did you derive much consolation from your attendance at church this morning?"

Wife (enthusiastically): "Rather! Mrs. Gibbs had on that old blue hat of hers, and I sat right in front of her the whole morning."

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.**INDOOR.**

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (Mr. Banham's, 56 Richmond-road, Barnsbury): 7.30, General Meeting—Business, Election of Auditors and Plan of Next Season's Lectures. After business, a Social.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Foresters' Hall, 5 Highgate-road, N. W., adjoining "The Bull and Gate"): 7.30, J. T. Lloyd, "The Lying Gospel."

STRAFORD TOWN HALL: 7.30, C. Cohen, "The Rule of the Dead."

OUTDOOR.

EDMONTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Edmonton Green): 7.45, W. Davidson, "Christianity and Civilisation."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Parliament Hill): 3.15, a Lecture.

COUNTRY.**INDOOR.**

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N. S. S. (King's Hall, Corporation-street): 7, E. Clifford Williams, "The Message of Freethought."

LEICESTER (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Joseph McCabs, a Lecture.

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