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It is a marvel if any mischief be in hand, if a priest be not at some end of it.—BISHOP LATIMER.

Freedom of Thought.

A History of Freedom of Thought. By Prof. J. B. Bury, Litt.D., LL.D. (Home University Library, 74.) London: Williams & Norgate. 1s. net.

THE modest article "a" in Professor Bury's title is a sort of deprecation of too drastic criticism of his little book; which, besides, is written for a very popular audience and not for a court of scholars and judges. On the whole, we should say that this volume is likely to do a great deal of good. The public to which it is addressed will gain a fair idea—not always in the best perspective—of the progress of freedom of thought, especially in religious matters, from the very dawn of history till the present day. And the lesson inculcated is one of mutual respect amongst men for their common rights of free thought and free expression.

NS.
C.

We do not use the word *toleration*. That is but a landmark on the road to liberty. To tolerate a man is to put up with him. There is an inevitable insolence in the word. It expresses the attitude of bigots and tyrants when they find that persecution and oppression are not as easy as they were, and that certain concessions must be made to the growing power of dissent and independence. To use the language of the man in the street, toleration means that the upper dog is beginning to be a little afraid of the lower one.

One of Ingersoll's best epigrams is very germane to this point. The Church (he said) never left off burning people alive because she was ashamed of it; she left off burning people alive when there were too many people who objected to being burnt alive. Liberty is never conceded; it is always won. The only thing that nature really honors is strength. Even the most "enlightened" Christians have never been eager to abolish such agencies of persecution as the Blasphemy Laws. The pioneer work of that movement has always been done by Freethinkers, and the only effective way of destroying such laws is to multiply the number of people who resent their existence. At critical moments a few of the better sort of Christians—nominal rather than actual Christians—rally around the standard of liberty; but the great mass of Christians hold steadily aloof; and in these cases it is sadly true that whoso is not for us is against us.

Professor Bury reminds his readers that freedom of speech is "taken as a matter of course, and seems a perfectly simple thing, in most civilised countries. People are so accustomed to it that they look upon it as a natural right." "But this right," Professor

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Bury says, "has been acquired only in quite recent times, and the way to its attainment has lain through lakes of blood."

Why should this be so? Why should one man, or one set of men, come to the strange conclusion that he or they have greater rights of thought and speech than the other inhabitants of this planet? Why is it so hard to persuade human societies that "liberty to publish one's opinions and to discuss all questions is a good and not a bad thing"?

Professor Bury offers the following observations on this point:—

"At present, in the most civilised countries, freedom of speech is taken as a matter of course and seems a perfectly simple thing. We are so accustomed to it that we look on it as a natural right. But this right has been acquired only in recent times, and the way to its attainment has lain through lakes of blood. It has taken centuries to persuade the most enlightened peoples that liberty to publish one's opinions and to discuss all questions is a good and not a bad thing. Human Societies (there are some brilliant exceptions) have been generally opposed to freedom of thought, or, in other words, to new ideas, and it is easy to see why.

"The average brain is naturally lazy and tends to take the line of least resistance. The mental world of the ordinary man consists of beliefs which he has accepted without questioning and to which he is firmly attached; he is instinctively hostile to anything which would upset the established order of this familiar world. A new idea, inconsistent with some of the beliefs which he holds, means the necessity of rearranging his mind; and this process is laborious, requiring a painful expenditure of brain-energy. To him and his fellows, who form the vast majority, new ideas, and opinions which cast doubt on established beliefs and institutions, seem evil because they are disagreeable.

"The repugnance due to mere mental laziness is increased by a positive feeling of fear. The conservative instinct hardens into the conservative doctrine that the foundations of society are endangered by any alteration in the structure. It is only recently that men have been abandoning the belief that the welfare of a state depends on rigid stability and on the preservation of its traditions and institutions unchanged. Wherever that belief prevails, novel opinions are felt to be dangerous as well as annoying, and anyone who asks inconvenient questions about the why and the wherefore of accepted principles is considered a pestilent person.

"The conservative instinct, and the conservative doctrine which is its consequence, are strengthened by superstition. If the social structure, including the whole body of customs and opinions, is associated intimately with religious belief, and is supposed to be under divine patronage, criticism of the social order savors of impiety, while criticism of the religious belief is a direct challenge to the wrath of supernatural powers.

"The psychological motives which produce a conservative spirit hostile to new ideas are reinforced by the active opposition of certain powerful sections of the community, such as a class, a caste, or a priesthood, whose interests are bound up with the maintenance of the established order and the ideas on which it rests."

This is a very philosophic explanation of the matter. But we do not think it covers the whole case. One of the most powerful influences is omitted from Professor Bury's catalogue. We refer to early education, which, in itself, and apart from all other considerations, is so potent in preserving what Comte called "Order" at the expense of what

he called "Progress." The training of a child up to, say, seven years of age is, for the most part, practically decisive of its future life. It is not at all a question of right or wrong that we are considering; it is the force of the impressions made upon the plastic and susceptible mind of childhood—whatever they are. And it must be borne in mind that education in the past has consisted more in teaching what is believable than in teaching what is knowable. The result is that old beliefs are, as it were, planted in the minds of successive generations; so that the work of progress, including the discovery of truth, necessarily becomes a fight against an artificial occupancy of the human mind by ancient errors in order to make room for new truths. The mother, the teacher, the priest—the whole force of adult authority over the child—stand up afterwards in opposition to the approach of new ideas and sentiments.

Many Freethinkers, even now, feel the appeal of the past when they suddenly hear a church bell or church music, or the voice of prayer flowing forth from the "sanctuary." Momentary it may be, but the buried past is not altogether dead; it is still capable of sporadic thrills, though incapable of complete resurrection.

With regard to Christianity, of course, the real truth is what the profounder George Eliot presented to the attention of the shallower Professor Lecky. What was the real explanation of the dreadful persecutions set forth in Lecky's Rationalism? What, after all, was the use of narrating facts without stating principles? The secret of persecution was the doctrine of exclusive salvation. On this point Professor Bury is perfectly sound:—

"But the fundamental principle lay in the doctrine that salvation is to be found exclusively in the Christian Church. The profound conviction that those who did not believe in its doctrines would be damned eternally, and that God punishes theological error as if it were the most heinous of crimes, led naturally to persecution. It was a duty to impose on men the only true doctrine, seeing that their own eternal interests were at stake, and to hinder errors from spreading. Heretics were more than ordinary criminals, and the pains that man could inflict on them were as nothing to the tortures awaiting them in hell. To rid the earth of men who, however virtuous, were, through their religious errors, enemies of the Almighty, was a plain duty. Their virtues were no excuse. We must remember that, according to the humane doctrines of the Christians, pagan, that is, merely human, virtues were vices, and infants who died unbaptised, passed the rest of time creeping on the floor of hell. The intolerance arising from such views could not but differ in kind and intensity from anything that the world had yet witnessed."

This was as true under Protestantism as under Catholicism. The historical evidence on this point is overwhelming. Jewel, indeed, in his *Apology for the Church of England*, rebuts the Catholic accusation of indifference to misbelief by pointing to certain heretics who had been put to death, asking at whose hands they suffered their punishment. "We killed them," Jewel exclaimed, "not you." That was the common spirit of the age, and the common outcome of earnest Christianity. The remarks of Professor Bury on this point are as true as they are creditable to his impartiality:—

"Nothing was further from the minds of the leading Reformers than the toleration of doctrines differing from their own. They replaced one authority by another. They set up the authority of the Bible instead of that of the Church, but it was the Bible according to Luther or the Bible according to Calvin. So far as the spirit of intolerance went, there was nothing to choose between the new and the old Churches. The religious wars were not for the cause of freedom, but for particular sets of doctrines; and in France, if the Protestants had been victorious, it is certain that they would not have given more liberal terms to the Catholics than the Catholics gave to them."

Which is what we have always said.

G. W. FOOTE.

(To be continued.)

Materialism: Its Meaning and Value.—IV.

(Concluded from p. 691.)

MODERN criticisms of Materialism are all preliminary defences of Vitalism in biology. Originally, Vitalism covered much more than the biological field, and in the history of the conflict between religion and scientific ideas every stage of the scientific advance has been contested by substantially the same arguments. Logically, indeed, the modern upholders of Vitalism are fighting at the wrong end. Once the principle of natural law is admitted, and the mechanistic or materialistic explanation accepted, no limits can be placed to its application. During the eighteenth century there was published in France a pamphlet bearing the title, *Ought Women to Learn the Alphabet?* It was a strange question, but it went to the heart of the subject. If women were allowed to learn the alphabet, argued the writer, on what ground could they be prohibited mastering the encyclopædia? If they ought to be stopped anywhere, it should be at the commencement. So with Materialism. Once admit that certain groups of phenomena—physical, chemical, etc.—exhibit no more than can be explained by the inevitable composition of natural forces, what real ground have we for believing that the principle will break down when applied to the phenomena of living beings?

None whatever. In the light of what has been said in previous articles, it will be plain that the question of the origin of life offers no fatal objection to Materialism. It is easy enough to say that Materialism cannot explain vital phenomena. The Materialist might fitly reply, If Materialism cannot, what can? It is not a question of materialistic impotence faced with spiritualistic knowledge. It is at best—or worst—theory against theory. And there is this important distinction between the two theories. On the one hand, Materialism is in line with the whole advance of human knowledge. There is no single known fact against it. Wherever ignorance has given place to knowledge, the principles of Materialism have been vindicated, and the supernatural pushed still farther back. All the Materialist really does is to assume that the future will resemble the past, and that natural causation will be found to be the key to unsolved problems, as it has been to those already solved. Still further, it is the only plan on which serious investigation is at all possible. You cannot study a mystery that is admittedly hopeless. And wherever scientific investigation is being pursued, it is on the assumption that the Materialist explanation is the true one. There is not a single investigator who expects to discover, as the result of his experiments in vital phenomena, a new and independent force. What he is looking for are the exact conditions under which vital phenomena originate. That is why physico-chemical formulas play so large a part in these investigations. For the search for the origin of life means only the search for those physico-chemical conditions under which vital phenomena appear. And when we know these, just as a knowledge of the conditions under which gravitative or chemical phenomena appear tells us really all there is to know about gravitation or electricity, so we shall then know what life is. Sir Oliver Lodge's comment that this will only tell us the condition under which life manifests itself, but not what life itself is, may be dismissed as pure nonsense. It is for the Supernaturalist to prove that beyond the thing we know as life there is something else that we neither know nor ever can know.

On the other hand, all the probabilities are dead against Supernaturalism, or Vitalism, in any form. As an instrument of investigation, it is not, and never has been, of the slightest use. The search for entities, whether vital, chemical, or physical, is of all quests the most hopeless. And it has now become so absurd that even Sir Oliver Lodge is forced to disown the name of "Vitalist," and to explain that to refer anything to "vital force" is

a mere cover for ignorance. It tells us nothing, and leaves the whole problem exactly where it was, with the addition of having created an obstacle to future investigation.

Moreover, and this should never be overlooked in any discussion of the subject, Vitalism in any form is only primitive animism masquerading as science. Animism has it that the soul, or double, or life, of man is something dwelling within the body and directing its movements. This is the form taken by the vital principle in all ages; and between the primitive and the later form there is no substantial change. The "soul" of the modern is only the "double" or ghost of the savage refined and emasculated. But it is essentially the same thing, and ringing the changes on the name ought not to disguise the fact. Still further, the "soul" or the "vital force" would not be here at all but for the primitive ghost. When men in the position of Sir Oliver Lodge claim a place for a "directive force," or a "life force" working in conjunction with natural forces and yet distinct from them, they are not exhibiting the result of modern investigation; they are only exercising their ingenuity in devising formulas that will graft a primitive delusion on to ascertained facts. Behind the "directive force" of the modern is the "vital principle" of the mediæval metaphysician, and behind that again is the "ghost" of the primitive savage.

The extent to which the materialistic conception of nature dominates modern thought may be seen quite apart from the domain of pure science. Its influence is hardly less marked in the sphere of advanced religious thinking. In the first place, there is the general abandonment of the idea of a God who continuously interferes with natural operations. In place of a Deity who directly controls natural phenomena in the interests of man, we have a Deity who exists somewhere behind nature, responsible, it is said, for the existence of things, but, having created them, doing nothing but see them work. In practice, this reduces God to a negligible quantity. If things are what they are because of their inherent properties, it is not a matter of vital concern whether these inherent properties were originally called into existence by God or not. They are there, and affect all alike without distinction of person or creed. God does nothing *now*, and this conclusion is not in the least affected by the assumption that he once did everything in a supreme and final act of creation. It admits the first principle of Materialism that all phenomena are the resultant of a complex arrangement of natural forces. Materialism has always claimed that the closest scrutiny of the known world fails to reveal the slightest trace of superhuman or supernatural influence. It has nothing to do with a God who may exist at the back of everything—wherever that may be—and may leave the proof of his existence to those who make the assertion. If God is excluded from the world of natural phenomena, he has, for all practical purposes, ceased to exist.

The position is not improved for the Theist if, instead of a God at the back of nature, he assumes a Deity permeating nature. In the first place, a God who merely exists as something permeating everything is not a God at all. It is a mere conception, something in the nature of a universal ether, and lacks the essential characteristics of Deity—personality and intelligence. Some people seem to be under the curious delusion that God is to be saved by, so to speak, beating him out thin, just as others assume that the dignity of God is enhanced by his having nothing to do. To work for one's living used to be considered a sign of social inferiority, and is yet to a very considerable extent. "Gentleman" is still largely synonymous with one who doesn't work. But it is curious to find the same notion applied to a God whose claim to praise once rested upon his assumed care and watchfulness over all his creatures. An immanent God—to use the cant expression—is no more than an algebraic expression, but lacking the important function of utility.

In the second place, this does not escape the mechanistic principle, it rather asserts it. I have already pointed out that, so far as Materialism is concerned, it is a matter of indifference whether we call existence matter, or spirit, or merely X. The essential thing is that the resultant phenomena shall appear as the mathematical consequence of the workings of non-personal forces. Merely calling this substance—to use a technical term—God does not benefit supernaturalism and it does not injure naturalism. That is, in the minds of those who understand on what issue the dispute turns, although it may affect those who are influenced by mere phrases. To say that "matter" is neither ultimate nor omnipotent, but is the outcome of something still more ultimate, is only turning Materialism out by the door in order to readmit it by the window. What the Theist really does in these apologies is to bring his God within the materialistic category and treat it as a natural force operating in a fixed and definite manner.

In what has been said in these articles I have purposely stated the issue between Materialism and Spiritualism in the broadest terms, and have deliberately refrained from bringing forward a great deal of evidence in favor of scientific Materialism. The question of the origin of life, for example, by natural causation, is no longer a very serious subject of dispute in the scientific world. The vast majority of chemists and biologists agree on this as an inevitable assumption. All their researches are based upon it. The only question is, How did it occur? Under what conditions did the synthesis occur that brought this new factor into the world, and can we recreate these conditions for ourselves? Even though no success were ever met with in this direction, the origin of life by purely natural methods remains an inevitable assumption of all scientific thinking, and all we know is in favor of its accuracy.

I have also passed by the common assumption that the Materialist is called upon to prove in what way mind, or consciousness, is dependent upon material organisms. He is logically bound to do no such thing. We have not to find the connection between body and mind; that already exists as one of the indisputable facts of experience. What has to be found is the fact of their separateness, and that is wholly the work of the Anti-Materialist. The Supernaturalist first of all separates two things never found save in the closest possible connection, and then throws upon the Materialist the onus of saying how they can be connected. The real problem here is to discover in what way they can be separated.

What I have been, above all, trying to make plain, is that the materialistic or mechanistic conception of nature is an indispensable condition of sane, scientific, and profitable thinking. Until nature in any or all its phases is thought of as following a determinable order, human thought is little better than a chaos. If the determinable order is there, Supernaturalism—or its modern equivalent, Spiritualism—is doomed. If it is not there, sane science is impossible. This is the simple issue, and there is no logical half-way house. The ghosts of exploded theories linger, and recent events have shown, that even in the world of science, they are not without influence. But that influence is fortunately on the wane, and to-day the principles of the old Greek Materialists are triumphant all along the line. Time and labor, and a fuller knowledge have shown many of their speculations to be faulty, but experience has only justified the Lucretian claim that nature does all things of itself and without the aid of the gods.

C. COHEN.

The Cross.

IN modern speech the Cross means Christianity, just as the Crescent is often used as a synonym for Mohammedanism. More specifically the Cross signifies the death of Jesus Christ as a sacrifice of infinite merit, offered up on the Cross for the sins of the whole world.

The leading article in the *British Weekly* for Oct. 30 is devoted primarily to a discussion of it in this sense. The writer, presumably the editor, Sir William Robertson Nicoll, is severely orthodox, holding that Jesus, by dying a sacrificial death, made himself responsible for guilty mankind. He died that we might escape death by being saved from our sins. Jesus is not merely an admirable character, a leader of men, a prophet full of wisdom, or a philanthropist, brimming over with enthusiasm, but the Savior of the world, who laid down his life for our redemption. To believe this concerning him is supremely difficult, Sir William admits; "to come with empty hands and *take*, to put ourselves in his debt for all that is called salvation, this is hard, so hard that we are tempted to regard it as unnecessary." We look upon it not only as hard, but as fundamentally irrational, immoral, degrading, and bound to result in the loss of self-reliance and self-respect. We agree that "nothing is so fruitless as appeals to men not Christians themselves to Christianise the social order." Non-Christians are much too sensible to undertake so foolish and so injurious a task. Nothing worse could happen to the social order than to become Christianised; but, thanks to the underlying common sense of the community at large, there is no danger of so disastrous a revolution ever taking place. On this point Sir William is unintentionally on our side. He says:—

"It has not infrequently been said, with great confidence, that belief in the Cross as a Divine Atonement is impossible and irrelevant for the characteristically modern mind, the unexpressed inference being that the sooner it is banished from the minds of religious people—and specially of preachers—the better. Its impossibility for the irreligious modern mind is very credible; nothing in the creed, now or at any period of the world's history, can be understood or apprehended without faith, since everything in the creed is supernatural. But impossible for the mind of modern Christians—so to describe the Cross of Jesus is false. If modesty forbids us to come forward ourselves as convincing types of modernity, we may take one or two examples."

We are amazed beyond measure at the damaging admission so naively made in the above extract, which is that in the twentieth century "belief in the Cross as a Divine Atonement is impossible" to all who are not already in possession of it. The lost sinners of to-day are absolutely beyond the reach of salvation. Belief in the Cross as a Divine Atonement is essential to the saving of the soul; but for the irreligious modern mind that belief is impossible. From Sir William's point of view "this is a hard saying; who can hear it?" Preaching the Gospel to the irreligious is a culpable waste of time and energy, because in order to understand or apprehend the message it brings they must have faith, and faith is by a Christian minister declared to be impossible to them. Surely so unfortunate a pronouncement never slipped from a divine's pen before, and for him the worst about it is that it is only too true. This is probably why a reverend gentleman said the other day that the Church's hope of winning converts from outside is now almost wholly vain; if she is to survive she must breed believers within her own borders. It was a realisation of this ugly fact, no doubt, that led to the formation, largely at the instigation of Sir William Robertson Nicoll, of what is called "The League of Worshipful Children." This is the last hope of a falling Church, the last straw at which she can catch. Poor, innocent children, before they learn to discern between their right hand and their left hand, so many supernatural beliefs are forced down their throats. "Everything in the creed is supernatural," exclaims Sir William, in which the irreligious modern adult cannot believe; therefore, we must use our authority as parents, guardians, and teachers, to make believers of our children before they learn to think for themselves.

That, we repeat, is the Church's very last hope, and even this is not going to avail her much. It is a notorious fact that only a small proportion of religiously trained children become Church members.

In spite of the vigilance of the teachers, the majority of them drop out of the Sunday-school into the outside world, where early beliefs become inoperative, if not non-existent. Sir William is certainly wrong when he claims that belief in the Cross as a Divine Atonement is possible for all modern Christians. Are Unitarians not numbered among the Christians? Is that the reason why they are excluded from membership in the Council of Free Churches? What about the growing class of scholars who style themselves Liberal Christians? Are they also to be denied the right to use the name? Unfortunately for Sir William, among these is to be found the very first "example" cited by him for his case—"Harnack, the greatest living Church historian." This eminent scholar does not believe in the Deity of Jesus Christ, nor in the Cross as a Divine Atonement in the orthodox sense. On this point Sir William and he are as wide apart as the poles. Dr. Nicoll's doctrine of the Atonement gets no certificate from Harnack. He supplies a most lucid account of the rise and evolution of the dogma, but he never adopts it himself. His able work entitled *What is Christianity?* is decisive evidence against the claim made on his behalf in the *British Weekly*. It is absolutely undeniable, therefore, that the quotation given from his writings does not even tend to "dispose of one tolerably widespread and intimidating misconception, according to which the Atonement is obsolete for typically modern Christian thought"; and to affirm, on the ground of it, that "it is something to have this point settled," is to commit a serious blunder. Harnack's supreme emphasis is not laid on the death of Jesus, but on his life and teaching.

Sir William is of opinion that the future of the Atonement is safe, "if men will only preach with their eyes on the New Testament"; but we maintain that that is possible only when the eye is a blindly believing one. Professor Benjamin W. Bacon is in charge of New Testament Criticism and Exegesis at Yale University, and Sir William cannot deny but that he keeps his eye pretty closely upon the documents under his care, with the result that he has discovered two conflicting gospels therein, and that he himself has adopted the one in which the Cross does not count. It must be admitted that, at last, even preachers are beginning to look at the New Testament through a critical eye, and to discern in it a considerable amount of legend embarrassingly mixed up with what they still treat as genuine history. The truth is that to a rapidly growing number of preachers the New Testament is no longer authoritative.

Sir William furnishes another guarantee of safety, thus:—

"The future is safe, again, if men preach with their eye upon the human conscience. Every minister knows there are men who passionately avow their need of a dying Redeemer, and have no rest till they have found him; every minister knows there are situations, penitences, deathbeds in presence of which a man who has nothing to say about vicarious Atonement must acknowledge himself dumb and baffled."

There is such a conscience, to be sure; but it has been produced by such preachers as those who preach with their eye upon it. It is an abnormal, diseased, and demoralising conscience, whose only mission is to make wretched cowards of its unfortunate possessors; but it is as rare as it is unnatural. To-day very few indeed are afflicted with it. Despite all the efforts of the evangelical pulpit to keep it alive, to develop it in the young, to appeal to it in those who still retain some remnants of it, it is steadily becoming a forgotten bugbear of a dead past. This is why churches and chapels are emptying.

It does not seem to occur to Sir William that the Cross is many thousands of years older than Christianity. We know that in ancient Mexico the sacred tree was made into a cross on which was suspended a substance representing the Savior-god, which was eventually taken down and sacramentally eaten by the faithful. For the Persians the Cross was a charm against evil and death, while to the ancient Gauls it was a solar emblem endowed with creative

and fructifying power. Indeed, the Cross was used in nearly all parts of the ancient world as a religious symbol, and generally closely associated with the Deity. In Egypt it was a symbol of everlasting life. When Christianity came it found the Cross in universal use; and it so often signified the death of a god or a god-man that it was chosen as the supreme Christian symbol. Our point, therefore, is that the Christian Cross is an imitation of innumerable Pagan Crosses, and that there is no more reality behind it than behind the others. As regards objective truth, they are all on a perfect equality. Man's salvation depends, not upon the efficacy of a Divine Atonement; but upon the sincerity and uprightness of his own actions. What he needs is not entire trust in an atoning sacrifice beyond the stars, but a deep-seated and dominating sense of honor, dignity, justice, and comradeship in his own breast, bringing him into a state of joyous harmony with his environment. The myths, even the Christian, are passing, and we are engaged in learning the truth about ourselves. "Everything in the Christian creed," Sir William tells us, "is supernatural," which is its greatest condemnation; but everything in the creed of science is natural, and this is its highest commendation.

J. T. LLOYD.

The Ugliness of God's Earth.

GOD'S earth is an exceedingly popular phrase. Speakers of all kinds use it publicly; and all sorts of people use it privately, when they wish to strengthen their words. Perhaps the picturesqueness of the phrase tends somewhat towards the glibness of its usual utterance. God's earth sounds finely. It is an oratorical "take." There is a grand ring about it. It gives some warranty for the accusation of having a comprehensive mind, a broad conception, and a capability of carrying some weight. In fact, so popular and so picturesque is the phrase that we might prophesy it will become, in the shades of the future, an oath.

The character of God, as represented by his children, is very similar in many respects to God's earth. When a religionist refers to God, he means you to imagine everything that is bright and beautiful about God's reputed nature; and when he says God's earth, he means you to think about everything that is lovely in God's earth. But immediately you begin to divest God's character and God's earth of verbal superficiality, you find both are dirty and clean, beautiful and ugly, revolting and appealing; that, in short, both contain all the antitheses you can imagine without being mentally absurd.

There are repulsive things in God's earth that an ordinary man would not own as his handiwork; but we must not forget that God has never personally claimed to be the maker of them; nor should we forget that God has never personally claimed the earth as his. Even an Atheist may be pardoned, wishing sometimes, in his more rebellious moods, that God would hurry up and take possession. Only God can prove the existence of God. We are so astoundingly lacking in spiritual vision that we cannot even observe him trying; and we are afraid it would require some bold, uncompromising, realisable campaign against Landlordism to satisfy the doubtings of our sceptical minds.

Whenever I see the ugly in God's earth these doubtings—perhaps I should say denials—come upon me with redoubled force. My logic may not be of the best; but, for me, if there is no God in the ugly, there is no God in the beautiful.

In these modern days there is as much futility in attempting to restrict God's activity and presence as there would have been at any time in the past, had our forefathers been so foolish as to try. God must be everywhere or nowhere. His activity must be universal or a dream. Omnipotence, omnipresence, and omniscience were straightforwardly acknowledged as essential to God's nature by the theologians

of yesterday; and to-day God must possess these traits or be cleared from man's mind. There can be no half measures, no compromises, no arbitration on the matter. It is useless to turn upside down and tell us, in words spelled and pronounced backwards, that all God did was to set the universe going. Assuming that true, God would probably have found it a more serious task, notwithstanding his omnipotency, to get rid of himself.

Religious sophists might pile their printed sophistries around us till we imagined that God's earth had suddenly become conical in shape, and we were standing at the base; but the result would be *nil* when compared with the simple deductions from the inevitable inferences of God's existence. That Free-thought has been compelled to go from simplicity to scientific complexity of warfare may be regrettable in one sense; but, as the attacking force, it had to follow the enemy of social progress.

Spiritual religion, the stuff of to-day, has no recognition, or, rather, deliberately neglects the recognition of the ugly in God's earth. It resembles too minutely the problem of evil. There are the same difficulties to be overcome; the same glaring and growling contradictions to be tackled; the same ditches to be traversed; and our spiritualistic pastors like it not.

Often the statement, that God made the evil to teach us to love the good, has been uttered in the pulpit; and the people of the pews were satisfied. But one cannot very well say that God made the ugly to teach us to love the beautiful, and be assured of Christian satisfaction. Not that there is any real difference between the two statements, as statements; but perhaps because the clerical ju-jitsu experts managed to enrobe evil in the garments of purity, fascination, delicacy, loveliness, etc., etc. They contrived to manipulate the existence of evil in a manner absolutely impossible with ugliness. It might be argued reasonably that their very treatment of evil made it more palatable to the delicate Christian constitution, and was, consequently, of great assistance in its fertilisation. Evil became possessed of a theological survival value that ugliness could not possibly contain.

Ugliness never taught anyone to love the beautiful. You can't clothe ugliness in purity, fascination, refinement, and the rest. It was always a blot, always something that repulsed you, something that stirred hatred within you. The theologians cannot adorn ugliness, as they can and do adorn evil. They cannot apologise for its reality with as much fluidity as they use with evil. Ugliness baffles their divine powers of apologetic pleading. Unable to render a well-balanced account of assets and debits on ugliness, and its silent but strong denial of God's existence, the ministerial marionettes completely neglect it; and ugliness, in the quietude of mind that characterises the lover of the beautiful, conquers the idea of God.

Extravagantly it is said that God's earth is full of beauty; but it is strange that you cannot go far afield without witnessing many, very many, examples of the ugly in nature. Let the mind but fall from the peaks it likes to gaze at, and there, at your feet, lies an ugliness that ruins your joy. To endeavor to transform what the mind revolts from into something that urges and forces it again to the heights, giving and sustaining a renewed and more vigorous enjoyment, is but to ask for cynical laughter even from the most bigoted religionist. A Christian, sincere in his beliefs, and with a sensitive appreciation of loveliness in nature, would never be dishonest enough to apologise for the ugliness, saying God created it with the beautiful that we might learn to love the beautiful more and more. It is simply impossible to harmonise the modern idea of God with the ugliness of God's earth. The two ideas cannot exist simultaneously in the mind. Ugliness evicts God from the earth; and if this world is not God's earth, well, perhaps he owns some of the other planets.

ROBERT MORELAND.

Acid Drops.

Florence Nightingale (what a lovely name!) was nominally a Christian, but actually a very unorthodox one. She said that Christ never mentioned what are now called "essential doctrines" of the Christian Church. Not even Dr. Clifford, with his Bible Syllabus for Children, could stand against this brave woman's censure of the lives of Bible Heroes. She wrote this in a letter to Jowett:—

"The story of Achilles and his horses is far more fit for children than that of Balaam and his ass, which is only fit to be told to asses. The stories of Samson and of Jephthah are only fit to be told to bulldogs; and the story of Bathsheba to be told to Bathshebas. Yet we give all these stories to children as 'Holy Writ.' There are some things in Homer we might better call 'Holy' Writ—many, many in Sophocles and Æschylus. The stories about Andromache and Antigone are worth all the women in the Old Testament put together; nay, almost all the women in the Bible."

Bright little lady! We have said this hundreds of times. It is delightful to learn that Florence Nightingale was saying it too.

Bishop Welldon is at it again. He repeats—without a scrap of additional evidence, or indeed any evidence at all beyond his own uncorroborated assertions—that Christianity is the cause of the "elevation" of woman in Christian countries, though he admits that the said "elevation" has taken nearly two thousand years—as if some natural improvement might not be expected in that long tract of time! In India and China, he says, any advance in the status of woman has been recent, and is due to "contact with Christendom." But is not woman's advance in Christian countries as recent as recent can be? And is not all such recent legislation—as, for instance, the Married Women's Property Act—simply a return to the best days of Roman jurisprudence? Even in the matter of marriage and divorce English women are not yet on the level of the Roman women in the days of Marcus Aurelius. Husbands must be guilty of adultery and cruelty before innocent wives can divorce them. Adultery alone is not sufficient. But it was more than sufficient in Pagan Rome. Marcus Aurelius, in issuing a new decree against adulterous wives, provided that the husbands had shown them an example of fidelity, as it would be infamous to expect a fidelity which the complainants did not display themselves.

Bishop Welldon's reference to India is peculiarly unfortunate. He does not penetrate the veil of manners and customs. A good deal of what is called freedom in England deserves quite another name. Hindu parents certainly do not expose their young daughters to the gross eroticism displayed at what may be called crowding time in the principal streets of our great cities or on the promenades of seaside towns. Much of the seclusion of females in the East is due to affectionate guardianship, and not at all to oppression or contempt. Connubial affection, and reverence for motherhood, are at least as strong in India as they are in England. Architects are divided as to what is the most beautiful building in the world, but many would vote for the famous Taj Mahal at Agra. It was built by Shah Jehan out of love for his wife; a dead woman, but living still in his heart, and to live for centuries after him in a lovely memorial combining all that wealth and art could produce. Bishop Welldon looks round on the chimneys of Manchester, with all that they imply, and rebukes the country that boasts of the Taj Mahal for its want of respect for woman! Agra or Manchester—where would a woman prefer to live? The Jumna or the Irwell—in which river would she like to bathe?

The Bishop of Manchester (Dr. Knox: not to be confused with Bishop Welldon, the Dean of Manchester) has been protesting at a London meeting against the Church Pastoral Aid Society making grants to parishes where the eastward position was observed. This eastward position formed part of the Romeward drift. Is it so? Well, well! We are reminded of a saying of Sydney Smith's—who showed that he understood his "cloth" by referring to the three sexes—men, women, and clergymen. "Puseyism," said that witty parson, "consists of influxion and genuflexion, incense and nonsense, bowing to the East and curtsying to the West, posture and imposture."

Rev. William Edwards, Bangor, Carnarvon, left £4,033. Rev. Edmund Church Brace, St. Paul's Vicarage, Wimbledon, left £3,586. Not very large humps, but enough to keep the camel from threading the needle's eye.

Rev. Robert Chichester, of the Vicarage, Tamworth in Arden, left £4,830. As the landlady of a Southampton

hotel said to us when we went down overnight to meet Samuel Putnam from America, "It is all I can make it"—as she finished adding up the bill. £4,830 is not a colossal fortune, but it was all the reverend gentleman could make it.

Mr. Dan Crawford, the African missionary, is lecturing in America, but likes life there as little as he did in England. He is longing to get back to Africa and the blacks. He thinks the life there is more wholesome. We daresay that in some respects this is true. Any way, Mr. Crawford's desire to get back is a commentary upon heroic sufferings described by other missionaries far away from home. The truth is that the vast majority of them have a far better time than they could ever hope for in their own country.

Mr. Percy Illingworth, the chief Liberal Whip, says he has not much patience with people who declare that the Christian faith is losing its hold over the people of these islands. After this we should not be surprised to hear that Mr. Illingworth is disgusted with those who believe that the dodo is extinct, or that Queen Anne is dead. If Mr. Illingworth's insight into the future of the Liberal Party is on all-fours with his expressed knowledge of the position of Christianity in this country, Mr. Asquith would do well to select a new officer. Mr. Illingworth calls himself an optimist. He evidently thinks that is synonymous with declining to recognise a wall, even when he has run his head against it.

Rev. Frank Swainson, Vicar of St. Barnabas, Holloway, tells a different tale. He has been spending a holiday at Bexhill-on-Sea, and wearing undress uniform. He says:—

"While dressed in flannels as a layman, and not as a parson, I have had an opportunity of talking to and hearing men. I find that men will talk far more freely to a man if they don't know he is a cleric. So I have been taking the opportunity, and, candidly, I have been shocked at the appalling indifference of men with regard to their souls. The vast majority seem concerned only about the things of the body. They will talk politics, grow enthusiastic over sport, tell questionable yarns, and all that sort of thing; but the moment a man introduces the real essential thing—religion—he is either boycotted or looked upon as daft by the 'man of the world.'"

This is a much more accurate view of the situation. People shun religion because they are not really interested in it. If they were, it would be as much a topic of conversation as anything else. And naturally, when a parson, or a religious crank, goes round, a great many either say nothing against religion, or they profess an interest they do not feel. It is only when the majority of people are off their guard that one gets their real opinions. If the world were suddenly attacked with an epidemic of outspokenness, men like Mr. Illingworth would receive the surprise of their lives.

There is a movement on foot in favor of what is called corporate prayer. Some clerical geniuses amongst the Non-conformists have conceived the idea that if people will only pray in groups some solid good may be achieved. Perhaps it is assumed that God must be approached in the same way as Parliament—by means of a monster petition. The old plan was for each one to pray "on his own," the new method is to inspire a kind of mock belief from the fact of numbers. The psychological point about it is that each one acquires a certain confidence in praying because he sees others around him doing the same thing. That, to some extent, guards the individual from recognising the folly of the practice. Only to some extent, however. The same forces that have broken down faith in individual prayers are still working, and are not likely to be checked by the new move. Collective folly is often easier than individual folly, but the same causes ultimately destroy both.

We are always learning. The *Christian Commonwealth* has discovered that the agreement between the preachers on "Citizen Sunday" is "significant of the deepening conviction that a spiritual revolution must accompany the swift changes now taking place in the environment." We have no objection to the word "spiritual" if it is taken to mean that considerations—other than those of cash or material—ought to govern human relationships. But that is not what the *Christian Commonwealth* means. What it means is that religion must accompany social change, and that is pure trade cant. And this is really all the preachers did say, apart from vague generalities with which everybody agrees, and which, therefore, neither helps nor injures anyone. They were agreed in their sermons, naturally, because they are all faced by the same danger—the escape of social affairs from the controlling influence of religion. And they naturally agreed that no social revolution was worth anything that left the clergy out of a job.

Professor Driesch has been in London lecturing on the subject of Vitalism. The Professor is a champion of this scientifically forlorn cause, and mentioned in the course of his lecture that the one man who has done anything of real value on the subject of instinct is Professor Lloyd Morgan. We do not wholly endorse this opinion, although we thoroughly endorse the value of Lloyd Morgan's work. His *Habit and Instinct* and *Comparative Psychology* are in every way two fine works. What we want to point out is that Professor Morgan is a thorough-going anti-Vitalist, and one who takes the absolute dependence of vital and mental phenomena on material conditions as an established fact.

Mr. Thomas Pratt, speaking at the Leeds meeting of the National Chamber of Trade, told those present of the unfair competition of the Salvation Army with ordinary traders. The annual turnover of the Salvation Army, in its trading department, was more than £200,000 annually, and Mr. Pratt said that some of the money contributed for spiritual work was turned over to the commercial side. In one year £36,333 of the money collected for religious work was put into the trading concern as capital advanced. He advised traders to refuse contributions to the Army so long as a religious organisation was used for trading purposes.

We are not surprised at Mr. Pratt's indignation, but we were under the impression that the general facts were pretty well known. The Salvation Army is, and has been for years, mainly a trading concern. Most of its so-called charities are run as a business, and its benevolence is mainly exercised in the shape of the voluntary work done by members of local bodies. Its emigration agency is a pure business concern from top to bottom. It yields a handsome profit, although, from the nature of its advertisements, the public are led to believe to the contrary. The one general rule in the Army is, "When a thing doesn't pay, drop it." That is why shelters that are opened are closed when they cease to pay their way. Mr. Manson's book thoroughly exposed the whole concern, and no reply from the Army was ever forthcoming. It would almost seem that a people who can be imposed upon by such an organisation as the Salvation Army are past saving.

Writing of the Ritual Murder trial at Kieff, Russia, the *Evening News* says "the gross ignorance of the Jewish faith displayed by people who might be supposed at least to have read the Old Testament is nothing short of wonderful." Nonsense! Numbers of people who believe the Bible have never read it. That is usually why they do believe it.

"Respectability in the Churches must go," said Mr. Harry Jeffs at a Brotherhood meeting at the Empire Theatre, Southend-on-Sea. If the worshippers of Mrs. Grundy leave the Churches, the other worshippers will be easily counted.

"If you ask the man in the street to tell you the names of any six pieces of literature which he remembers, it will be safe to wager four are in verse," says the *San Francisco News Letter*. Unhappily, they might include "There is a Fountain Filled with Blood" or "Snookey Ookums."

In a review in *T. P.'s Weekly* of a volume of minor verse, it is stated that the new author snatches at the hem of Swinburne's garment, which is frayed by this time. Frayed or not, it will outlast *T. P.'s Weekly*.

Mr. Stephen Walsh, M.P., denies that the Welsh Colliery disaster was due to a "visitation of God." So do we, but on different grounds. Mr. Walsh says there is no greater blasphemy than to ascribe to God acts that are done by man. Well, but Mr. Walsh believes that there is a God and that he created man, so the difficulty is only moved back a step. Besides, if the evil in life is not a visitation of God, neither is the good, by exactly the same reasoning, and God is ruled out altogether. Mr. Walsh is fond of addressing religious meetings, and so we would bid him remember that if some men were responsible for the disaster, other men risked their lives in the work of rescue. God alone did nothing. And the irony of the situation is that it is not the men whom Mr. Walsh believes were responsible for the disaster, but others who were quite innocent. If these things do not make Mr. Walsh reconsider his religious position, nothing will.

The Rev. F. Dormer Pierce, of Southend-on-Sea, has some quaint notions concerning the Christian God. Speaking at a recent meeting in that town, he said Southend was "a place where men not only took a holiday from work, but a

holiday from God as well." We were not aware that the All-Seeing Eye could be dodged in that way.

We don't vouch for it, but the *Daily Mail* reports that "a woman's gold and ruby ring, a gold brooch, and a man's gold ring have been found in recent collections at Brentwood Parish Church. Brentwood has a flourishing lunatic asylum."

A detestable outrage on George Meredith appeared in the advertisement department of last week's issue of a Socialist contemporary—at the top of the first column of the front page. The Waverley Book Company were offering for sale, on what is now the good old instalment plan, a certain *History of English Literature*—which is well puffed in the editorial department, in addition to other "Testimony that carries Weight." One would think that the advertisers of such a book would show some respect for English literature themselves. They do not display it, however, in this advertisement, which is started in the following manner:—

"OUR LANGUAGE AND GLOIBIOUS LITERATURE.

"It was not got by miracle nor rape;

It is the offspring of the patient year,
Bequeathed from sire to son."

What on earth could such words apply to the English language and English literature? The word "rape" is ludicrously inapplicable in such a matter. And in what sense can a year be "patient"? We might also ask *what* year is to be singled out for such praise—and *why*? Why likewise *bequeathed*? Bequeath is an external word; an innate possession is transmitted. The Waverley Book Company should really explain. Had they hired a literary decorator, and had he consumed too much ginger beer over the task? Or had he attempted something original?

We soon saw what had happened, though we are at a loss to understand *how* it happened. The lines were reminiscent of a noble passage in George Meredith's "Ode to France" written in 1870:—

"Lo, strength is of the plain root-virtues born:
Strength shall ye gain by service, prove in scorn,
Train by endurance, by devotion shape.
Strength is not won by miracle or rape.
It is the offspring of the modest years,
The gift of sire to son, through those firm laws
Which we name Gods; which are the righteous cause,
The cause of man, and marhoods ministers."

Read those fine lines carefully, and again and again, if necessary, until you grasp all their significance and beauty; and then turn back to the abortion in the previous paragraph—and realise an English publisher's respect for English literature. If the History is anything like the advertisement what is it worth?

Mr. Edwin C. Walker has been contributing some interesting articles on "The Old Guard" in the *New York Truthseeker*. He has mentioned all sorts of Freethinkers on this side of the Atlantic, as well as on the American side. Some mistakes are natural in such a wide review. Here is one:—

"Edward Truelove, a veteran of the second generation back; by selling the *Fruits of Philosophy* he precipitated a conflict in which Bradlaugh, springing into the breach in a fight not his personally, overmatched the best professional legal talent of Great Britain and won a victory prodigious in its consequences of good for freedom of speech and publication."

This is all wrong. Bradlaugh sprang into the breach, it is true, but it was in connection with Charles Watts's prosecution—not Edward Truelove's. Watts retired from the defence of the Knowlton pamphlet by pleading guilty and accepting a nominal penalty. Bradlaugh then published the pamphlet himself and challenged another prosecution. He was tried, found guilty, and sentenced to imprisonment; but he succeeded in quashing the indictment on appeal, in consequence of an irregularity which his keen eye detected. Truelove was tried twice on one indictment for publishing Robert Dale Owen's *Moral Philosophy*, and, in spite of his age, was sentenced to four months' imprisonment. He stood firm, and upon his release was presented with a testimonial and a purse of 200 sovereigns. That was in 1878.

There is a reference to ourselves in Mr. Walker's final article:—

"George W. Foote, founder of the *Freethinker*, and its most able editor, victim of the blasphemy laws, President of the National Secular Society, untiring tractarian."

We suppose that "most able" means "very able" or something of the kind. But it may easily be read otherwise. We take the opportunity, therefore, of stating that the founder of the *Freethinker* has been its only editor. During his imprisonment Dr. Aveling acted as "interim" editor, and

during more recent illnesses the same service has been rendered by Mr. Cohen.

Ingersoll's very clever Christian Catechism, embodying ironically the Presbyterian creed of the famous Rev. Dr. Talmage, is peculiarly clever in its ending. Christianity is represented as the only religion that gives man support and consolation in death. Then comes the question, "What were the last words of Jesus Christ?" And the shattering answer is, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Ingersoll ended at that. Further words would have been an anti-climax.

A few weeks ago we said that we had been turning over again the pages of old Bishop Latimer's sermons. He was a very outspoken preacher, even before nobles and royalty. Had he listened to Ingersoll he would probably have raised an objection as to the truth of a religion being proved by the support and consolation it gives a man in his last hours. In his fourth sermon before Edward the Sixth he oppugns the argument that a man's cause is good because "he seemeth not to fear death." Latimer proceeds as follows:—

"The Anabaptists that were burnt here in divers towns in England (as I heard of credible men, I saw them not myself) went to their death even *intrepide*, as ye will say, without any fear in the world, cheerfully. Well, let them go. There was in the old doctors' times another kind of poisoned heretics, that were called Donatists; and these heretics went to their execution, as though they should have gone to some jolly recreation or banquet, to some belly-cheer, or to a play. And will ye argue, then, he goeth to his death boldly or cheerfully, *ergo*, he dieth in a just cause? Nay, that sequel followeth no more than this: A man seems to be afraid of death, *ergo*, he dieth evil. And yet our Savior Christ was afraid of death himself."

That is a clincher.

The Soul of a Doll is the alluring title of a book of verse. Souls are cheap to day.

"Thousands of children are damned for life during the first month of their existence," says an ex-police-court missionary. And millions are damned for ever after death, if Christianity be true.

"In the days to come music will be a department of the Government," prophesies Mrs. Katherine Tingley, a Theosophist. We hope that Salvation bands and bagpipes will be kept in their proper places.

Thomas Grant, a laborer, of County Armagh, has just died at the age of 108, and the editors are making headlines in the press about him. At that age Methuselah was still playing marbles.

"We all err, and it seems to me that a parson should err on the side of charity," says the Rev. A. J. Waldron. South London Freethinkers know how the reverend gentleman has followed his own advice.

"Should a Woman Tell?" is the title of Rev. A. J. Waldron's music-hall sketch. It might as well be called "Should a Parson Pry?"

We congratulate the Rev. A. J. Waldron on appearing in the *Daily Mail* picture gallery with Mlle. Gaby Deslys. According to the letterpress accompanying the block the reverend gentleman and his lady friend have had "some earnest conferences." She has certified his play to "have true Christian qualities." That settles it.

"Henry Smart, the mid-Victorian composer, whose centenary was celebrated yesterday at St. Paul's Cathedral, Westminster Abbey, and many London churches, by the performance of his melodious music, had a fantastic hatred of 'Gregorianism.' This was partly for æsthetic reasons, but partly based, also, on religious grounds, for Smart, unlike most musicians, was an extreme Low Churchman. To a High Churchman who championed the cause of Gregorian chants he exclaimed, 'God will some day rain fiery crotchets upon your heads, and prevent you from ever again chanting your Gregorian groans.' Reminded that Gregorian tones are ancient Oriental music such as David probably played before Saul, he replied, 'Ah, now I can quite understand why Saul threw that javelin at David.'"—*Daily Chronicle*.

The Wesley Bible Union has been formed to oppose the "heretical" movement in Wesleyanism represented by the Rev. G. Jackson, the now famous professor at Didsbury College. Sir William Smith is the president, and the Rev. W. Spiers, of Hayward's Heath, the secretary, of this new

Society. They and their supporters declare that nothing but loss and trouble comes from deserting "the doctrines formulated by Wesley." They are specially indignant at "advanced interpretations of Scripture." They appear to be proud of having nothing "advanced" about them. We wish them all the success they deserve.

The Dean of Rochester complains that the fifth commandment is turned upside down nowadays, and reads "Honor thy sons and thy daughters." Perhaps the charge is going a bit too far, but it was time that some change took place, especially in religious households. We hope the Dean of Rochester will get over it.

Mr. Asquith says that his old chief, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, was a humorist, and adduces this as a sample:—

"It was said that on the occasion of an election here Sir Henry was met in the street by a voter who came up to him and said, 'Sir Henry, I like you very much, but I would rather vote for the devil.' (Laughter.) Sir Henry at once replied, without turning a hair, 'As your friend is not a candidate you might just as well vote for me.' (Laughter and cheers.)"

How the thing is specialised! It was "here" and Sir Henry replied "without turning a hair." Somebody must have been pulling Mr. Asquith's leg. The story is far older than Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman. It belongs to the John Wilkes budget. It has often been stolen and always spoiled in the stealing. Wilkes was a real wit—and the author of much wit in other men. And this devil story fits him to a t. We all know what his reputation was, and the voter's exclamation was not unnatural; but who would even think of talking in that way to the harmless necessary Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman? It takes a really dramatic narrator to tell the story, and that by word of mouth, for intonations are not printable. Wilkes's reply was swift and pointed. When the voter he was canvassing expressed a readiness to vote for the devil rather than for him, Wilkes replied "Yes, but in case your friend doesn't stand?" Only the human voice could do that full justice.

Mr. G. B. Shaw raised laughter at the Bradlaugh Dinner by stating that his next public engagement was at the City Temple. He addressed a "crowded congregation" there on October 31. Some of our readers will be interested in the following report which we take from the next morning's *Daily Chronicle*:—

"Mr. G. Bernard Shaw informed a crowded congregation at the City Temple, representing the City Temple Literary Society, last night, that Christianity came to an end with the Crucifixion.

"For that reason 'Christian Economics,' the subject of his lecture, did not concern them unless they had made up their mind to reintroduce Christianity into the world and into this country. At present all our institutions were deliberately organised for the prevention of Christianity. Was it worth while to undo the Crucifixion, to take up the tradition of Christianity again and see what we could do with it?"

"If we did, he recognised three main things to which we should stand committed as Christians. We should have to give up revenge and punishment completely and entirely: we should have to scrap the entire judicial and criminal system. We should have to stop putting people in prison, we should have to stop scolding and complaining and writing to the *Times*.

"Then we should have to take, in a sense, no thought for the morrow—which would necessitate communism. And last, we should have to adopt the doctrine which was called the immanence of God, and believe that there was a divine spark in man.

"But the only one of those doctrines which touched Christian economics, remarked Mr. Shaw, was that we should take no thought for the morrow. The weak point in communism was that it did not give the consumer any control over production. Therefore everybody must have an income, and naturally everybody must have an exactly equal income. What we had at present was not a distribution of income but absolute plunder. And in a Christian State, when a man was regarded as a bit of God, and his value was infinite, we could not buy him and sell him as we did now."

Laughter was also caused at the Bradlaugh Dinner by Mr. Foote's observing that if Mr. Campbell were to tire of his job Mr. Shaw might prove a competent successor. Mr. Foote's observation seems still more pertinent now.

Churches and chapels suffered severely during the late disastrous storm in South Wales. "Providence" doesn't recognise—certainly it doesn't spare—its own buildings on these occasions.

"Society is like a gigantic fat man troubled with all kinds of maladies and diseases in all parts of his enormous person," the Bishop of Oxford tells us. Just so. And Oxford mixture will not cure the complaints.

Mr. Foote's Engagements

December 7 and 14, Queen's (Minor) Hall, London.

To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1913.—Previously acknowledged, £241 11s. 11d. Received since:—N. Gould (S. Africa), £1; T. W. Key (S. Africa), £1; W. Fitzgerald, 10s.; W. Dodd, 10s.

E. JACKSON asks for proofs of Mr. Lloyd's statement that Christ is "fully as mythical as Osiris, Adonis, Attis or Mithra, after whom he was modelled." We may save Mr. Lloyd some trouble by pointing our correspondent to two books—though we could point him to twenty: Frazer's *Golden Bough* and Robertson's *Pagan Christs*.

E. B.—Thanks for welcome cuttings.

GAEVY FISHER.—You are mistaken. We didn't object to Mr. Shaw's fun. We enjoyed it and said so at the time. What we objected to was his bad arguments. We have done that before, and may do it again. If he replies to us our columns are at his service. But we cannot accept a proxy in such matters; as, on second thoughts, you may perceive.

T. W. KEY AND N. GOULD, two South African subscribers, regret that the President's Honorarium Fund progresses so slowly (when they wrote) and hope to see it rally before the year is out.

TOM TAYLOR.—Much obliged for the book, and delighted to hear from one who has never missed a copy of the *Freethinker* from the first issue.

W. FITZGERALD.—Glad you still find this journal stimulating after all those years.

A. H. SMITH.—Mr. Foote is keeping fairly well, but wishes he could sleep better.

M. E. PEGG.—We have strained a point for Mr. Lloyd's sake. How often we have printed that Tuesday is too late for paragraphs!

W. DODD.—We wish all were as considerate.

THE SMOULAR 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.

London "saints" are reminded of Mr. Foote's two Sunday evening lectures at the Queen's (Minor) Hall (Dec. 7 and 14). Subjects will appear hereafter.

Mr. Lloyd had a large audience at the King's Hall, Birmingham, on Sunday evening. He lectures twice to-day (Nov. 9) at the Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, Manchester. District "saints" will please note.

We are asked from time to time for the addresses of contributors to our columns. The only reply we can make is a general one. It is against journalistic etiquette to do anything of the kind. Letters addressed to a contributor at our office will, of course, be forwarded to him. The rest is no concern of ours.

The Edinburgh magistrates issued a proclamation prohibiting open-air meetings at the Mound, an open-air space off Prince's-street adjoining the National Gallery, unless permits from the magistrates were obtained. They were resisted by Mr. John M'Ara, who was supported by a public committee, and the Courts declared that the proclamation was illegal in itself and that it was unconstitutional, in any case, to discriminate as to who should and who should not hold public meetings at given places. The latest news is

that the magistrates have agreed to pay the pursuer £200 damages, while reserving his right to get his conviction for breach of the proclamation set aside by the High Court. Another lesson in the wisdom of defying local despots, who are generally local bigots.

It is worth paying a shilling for the November *English Review* if only to see the last of the book-reviews for the month appearing in such a publication. Not, of course, that there is nothing else worth paying for. Both the editor and the sub-editor come out—or should it be come in?—well this month; the former's "Editorial Amenities" being very amusing, and, alas, in some respects, only too true. There are some outspoken things in a Layman's article on the Church Congress. Aleister Crowley is just as outspoken on "Art in America." There is a sentence at the bottom of p. 587 which shows that Mr. Crowley has not forgotten the ignominious part that a certain Agnostic played in the Boulter case. All the worshipers of the late Mr. W. T. Stead will resent the estimate of his favorite poet, James Russell Lowell. They will think it little, if anything, short of blasphemy—or even that final blasphemy which is never forgiven, either in this world or in the next. Perhaps the most interesting thing in this number of the *English Review* is a small batch of "Letters on Napoleon's Last Days." They were written by Dr. Shortt and his wife at St. Helena. The English physician was not allowed to treat or see Napoleon, but he attended the autopsy, and he certifies that, while all the rest of the body was sound, the stomach was "a perfect mass of disease from cancer." "In death," Dr. Shortt says, "his countenance was the finest I ever saw, expressing the greatest softness and placidity that can be imagined." Dr. Shortt saw him immediately after he expired, before any material alteration could have taken place. We ought not to close without mentioning Mr. Israel Zangwill's article on "The Militant Suffragists." He seems to think that Mr. Asquith is much to blame, and deserves any sort of treatment—including, we suppose, dog-whips and cayenne pepper.

Mr. F. S. Marvin, in the November *Positivist Review*, replies briefly but admirably to Professor Murray's curious criticism of the former's book *The Living Past*, especially in relation to Shakespeare. Mr. Marvin is not at all angry at being classed as a Shakespeare "idolator." He smiles very cheerfully and takes it as rather a compliment.

The Pioneer Press has come into possession of a parcel of an old pamphlet by Charles Bradlaugh, which deals with "The Compulsory Cultivation of Land." Many of his admirers will be pleased to see how much he anticipated Mr. Lloyd George in the matter of Land Reform. The price is threepence, with a halfpenny extra for postage; and orders should be sent direct to the Pioneer Press, 2 Newcastle-street, E.C.

THE MIDNIGHT VISITOR.

Whose steps are those? Who comes so late? }
Let me come in, the door unlock.
'Tis midnight now; my lonely gate
I open to no stranger's knock.

Who art thou? Speak? Men call me Fame;
To immortality I lead.
Pass, idle phantom of a name.
Listen again, and now take heed;

'Twas false. My names are Song, Love, Art.
My post, now unbar the door.
Art's dead, Song cannot touch my heart,
My once love's name I chant no more.

Open then now, for, see, I stand,
Riches my name, with endless gold,
Gold, and your wish in either hand.
Too late—my youth you still withhold.

Then if it must be, since the door
Stands shut, my last true name to know,
Men call me death. Delay no more;
I bring the cure of every woe.

The door flies wide. Ah, guest so wan,
Forgive the poor place where I dwell;
An ice cold hearth, a hearth-sick man,
Stand here to welcome thee full well.

Henri Murger; translated by Walt Whitman.

Free-Will and Necessity.—II.

(Concluded from p. 700.)

WITH these facts and reflections in mind, let us examine the doctrine of free-will. What does this doctrine mean? How far does it extend? If it be asserted that the Will is fully or absolutely free, facts and arguments abound to show that this is a fallacy. A man cannot will or wish that of which he has no knowledge. The child's wishes cannot be so numerous as those of the man, for his knowledge and capacities are so very circumscribed. Nor can the mere savage feel the same range of desires as the civilised man. The former, no doubt, longs for his dinner, and devours it with as keen a relish as the latter; but is it possible the savage can wish or will the same variety, styles of cookery, the service, surroundings, elegance, the caprice, it may be, as the civilised epicure? He can have no conception of such adjuncts to a dinner. Here the Will can be free only to the extent of knowledge and taste possessed; and so in a thousand other cases that might be instanced. Civilisation and culture vastly extend the play of the Will; whether they render it more free, is quite another question.

But what is Will? Is there not a pitfall in the word? Some people seem almost to personify it, or else to treat it as a member, an organ, or a special faculty of the individual. To me it seems the Will is no more a part of man's constitution, mental or physical, than his seeing, walking, or thinking. When we walk, see, taste, sleep, think, it is not any particular part of us that does it; it is the person as a whole. No doubt we use our legs to walk and eyes to see; but it is the individual that walks and sees. The Will is not a part of us; it is merely a state or condition we are in, a mental act, a desire, a wish, a purpose, a resolve. What more it can be I know not. I have no doubt that all the mystification thrown around the subject by metaphysicians has risen from theological bias; they have, for the most part, endeavored to harmonise man with moral government conducted by means of rewards and punishments, and so have corrupted the philosophy of *Willing* in favor of essential barbarity admitted into the government of mankind. The moment theology is dispensed with and the Will is examined apart from all bias, the truth appears. The Will in its highest phases is nothing more than the best and highest wish we have, developed into resolve or determination—if, indeed, wish and will can be separated or distinguished, even so far as that.

We cannot help wishing whatever our nature, circumstances, and sentiments incline us to. But our wishes are many, our wants and desires often clash one with another; present pleasures compete with more lasting ones in the future. Often there is a struggle between our desires, a wild and passionate turmoil, and each in turn gains a temporary victory; till one is decidedly conqueror we must be passive. Some men spend years in suspense, their desires all the while struggling in a drawn and wearisome battle. If men possessed Wills that could decide offhand, they would never submit to suspense of this sort; they would finish the quarrel and act in a prompt and ready manner. No doubt, in this respect, men immensely differ from each other; though everyone must have experienced the conflict of opposing desires, and the suspense, more or less severe and continued, to which I refer.

Now, in a battle of this sort, what decides the issue? Not the Will, for a whole host of Wills or wishes are often struggling together. A judicious man will reflect, weigh, balance the *pros* and *cons* as best he can, and, as popular language puts it, decide or resolve upon a certain course. Like an honest and enlightened jury, his verdict goes with the strongest evidence. As in physics, so in morals, the greater force always conquers or sways the less. You cannot conceive of a pound weighing as much as two pounds, or of a steam-engine of 1,000 horse

power having the force of one of 5,000. So in morals, we cannot act without motives; the motives we can neither create, shape, destroy, nor resist; in every case the strongest motive sways us and bears us on to the commission of crime or the performance of a virtuous deed. Sometimes the prevailing motive is so strong, or its counter-agents so few or weak, that the person rushes to the deed with the force of a stone falling to the ground; at others, the motives are so evenly balanced that the stronger but just wins the day, and the individual goes to his deed (good or bad) slowly, with reluctance, with "almost half a mind" not to go at all.

The subject of motives is an immense one, and as intricate as extensive. The motive which weighs with one man and decides him, will scarcely, or not at all, move another; the motive that hurls a youth into action with a bound fails to stir him when he is an old man. The sight of distress does not move the miser—it opens the heart and the purse of the philanthropist; the vision of a beautiful female face throws a youth into a fever of excitement, rouses all the chivalry of his nature—it does not affect the old man; a gorgeous landscape fills the poet with ecstatic musings, and the Will to linger in view of it—the merely business man regards it from the £ s. d. point of view, and wishes it his own for the wealth it would bring. Yet in one respect we are all alike, for throughout life we are the sport of motives which we never made; if we escape from one it is to fall a prey to another. We can no more escape those motives than we can jump off the earth into some other planet; they dominate us from cradle to grave; their tyranny is unbroken, unrelaxing. We are no more free to leave our natural path through life than a planet is to escape from the gravitating force of the sun. Our life is decided for us by our antecedents, constitution, education, and surroundings. Could all the elements that enter into our life be sifted out, fully estimated in all their complexity, the mathematician might predict our whole future course as correctly as that of a planet. Even as it is, we can often form more than a happy guess of the actions of one we well know in new circumstances. We know what motives are most likely to sway him, and to what extent; we know what motives the new conditions will supply, and hence the predictions we venture to utter.

If this doctrine be true, says the orthodox, it is fatal to morality. So much the worse for morality, then. Nothing can be good which is not founded on truth. Morality founded on false motives is not the sort we want. If necessity be true, and that it is "all nature cries aloud through all her works," morality must be adjusted to that truth, not that truth to a false morality. Do we not find the solution of the difficulty in the doctrine of reaction? Every planet is whirled round in its orbit by the superior force of the giant sun; but the very smallest planet sways the sun to some extent. In chemistry also, and throughout nature, every action is attended by a reaction; influence and counter-influence run through the universe and through society. "No man liveth unto himself; no man dieth unto himself." Each unit is a necessary phenomenon, but so are his neighbors; we are all, in the main, swayed by the same leading motives; hence we act and react upon each other incessantly. We are all struggling for the same goal—happiness—the minimum of pain, the maximum of pleasure; the mass, or society, forms a stream or river; the units must go the general way, they must adjust themselves to their surroundings; but in doing this they move more or less their nearest fellows; those who cannot adjust themselves must be got rid of in some way, not from revenge, but from necessity. Necessity is everywhere; it compels most people to live as their neighbors do; it compels society to check, or expel, or destroy, those who injure it or endanger its interests. In society, man is played upon by a host of motives; by education he learns to play them off one against the other; habit, self-interest, respect for others, self-respect, love, hatred, likes, dislikes,

hopes, and fears, all tend to mould his character and develop his nature. The bad man is he who shows little or no regard for others, who seeks his own pleasure at the unfair cost and expense of his neighbors; the good man is he who seeks his own happiness conjointly with that of others. The true type of social man is he who enjoys life and does the least harm to his neighbors, but the utmost good in his power; and that society is the best and most enlightened which can prevent the evil of the vicious by the infliction of the least possible pain; that can reclaim and utilise the worst of characters; and, above all, that can prevent crime, by educating and training the young, and by preventing gigantic monopolies in the few and the consequent poverty in the many.

In a word, when we regard necessity as swaying all equally, we shall perceive that so far from destroying morality, it tends to increase and establish it, by giving us the certainty that a wrong once done can never be undone, never atoned for, never expiated; and therefore must be prevented by all the motives that can be focussed upon those likely to commit it. The doctrine also shows us the folly of driving young criminals more deeply into crime by mere punishment, instead of teaching and encouraging them to do better for the future. When once the true doctrine of motives has been fully mastered, society and reformers will do their utmost to place the best motives before the young, so as to induce them, independently of priestly threats and Tory oppression, to do what is right. When this has been properly done, the system of bribery and intimidation, which goes under the names of rewards and punishments, may be laid aside.

Necessity does not destroy the Will, it creates it; for in every case a man wills or wishes in the direction of the strongest motive. The only freedom we can rationally hope for is exemption from ghostly and political tyranny; and that is enough. That freedom can be won only by the spread of education and enlightenment; so that each man may freely understand both his rights and his duties.

JOSEPH SYMES.

Pioneers of Physiology.

THE intellectual unrest which led to the Protestant Reformation in Northern Europe manifested itself in more important ways. The outcome of the revival of learning, and the broadened human outlook which resulted, among other things, from geographical discovery, widened acquaintance with alien races and religions, and economic and commercial development; the revolt from Rome was accompanied by the re-birth of the spirit of inquiry into nature's secrets, which had for centuries languished under the iron hand of sacerdotal despotism.

The middle of the sixteenth century may be regarded as one of the most brilliant periods in the annals of the human race. The reign of Charles V. was nearing its end. Venice still proudly bore every outward appearance of splendor and prosperity, if internal decay had already set in. The Medici were reestablished at Florence, and that very remarkable monarch, Henry VIII., occupied the English throne. Twenty years had fled since the able, if cruel, Cortez had commenced the ruin of Mexico; Pizarro's later adventures had laid low the civilisation of Peru, and Europe was enjoying the proceeds of the plundered lands of the West.

Martin Luther was declining towards the grave; Calvin's baleful sceptre was in Geneva supreme; the Society of Jesus was come to check the heresies which abounded; the Inquisition was doing devil's work in Spain. Michael Angelo yet lived, and Titian's art was at the height of its glory. The old seats of learning were being humanised despite themselves, and new universities were everywhere arising. The study of Greek literature became

fashionable; the printing presses of Venice and other cities were spreading books in every direction. The mighty Copernicus had prepared the way for the coming revolution of our concepts of the universe; the dirt and darkness of the Middle Ages disappeared in the dawn period of modern times.

In 1543 a Basel printer sent forth to the world a folio volume dealing with the structure of the human body, the work of one Andreas Vesalius. The publication of this book marks an epoch in the history of anatomy, as also in that of physiology and medicine. Under the benumbing hand of the Church, all inquiry had been stifled for a thousand years. The pioneer work of the ancients, when stamped with the authority of sacerdotalism, became the be-all and end-all of science. Woe was usually the lot of the man who dared to dissent from the dogmas to which the Church lent her countenance:—

"As spiritual truths were learned from the study of the revealed word, so anatomical and medical truths were to be sought for, not by looking directly into the body of man, not by observing and thinking over the phenomena of disease, but by studying what had been revealed in the writings of Hippocrates and Galen. As the Holy Scriptures were the Bible for all men, so the works of the Greek and Latin writers became the bible for the anatomist and the doctor. Truth and science came to mean simply that which was written, and inquiry became mere interpretation."*

Against this state of things the mind of Vesalius arose in revolt. He dissected the human body, and described, not what he found in Galen, but what his own dissections disclosed. He placed fact above authority, never hesitated to point out where Galen was mistaken, although he insisted that the Roman physician must be followed when correct in his conclusions, for the very excellent reason that his conclusions were in harmony with demonstrable truth.

Vesalius' path was prepared by his few predecessors who had dared to depart with fear and trembling from the beaten track. In the fourteenth century, Mundinus risked the censure of the Church when he dissected the human corpse; but her power, as yet unshaken, was directed towards the prevention of the sacrilegious use of the anatomist's scalpel. As a result, Mundinus found no one venturesome enough to continue his work. In the sixteenth century, however, the Church had declined in power, and Carpi, another Italian, resumed the studies of the earlier anatomist. But his peace was of short duration; he was compelled to leave Bologna, which was the centre of his teaching, and live in a state of exile in Ferrara.

The next anatomist of importance was the celebrated Sylvius, and from him Vesalius received his first anatomical instruction. The young Vesalius, while quite a boy, had taken the keenest interest in dissection, and had seized every available opportunity to examine the structure of such animals as came his way. Although Sylvius was an anatomist of standing—the fissure of Sylvius being named in his honor—he was wedded to the old traditions in too great a degree for the liking of Vesalius. When the bodies of men and other animals were shown to the students, the barber servants clumsily dissected the corpses in a manner which excited the contempt of the newcomer. Possibly Vesalius thought it was the duty of the Professor to carry out the dissections himself. In any case,—

"At the third dissection at which he was present, he, already well versed in the anatomy of the dog, irritated beyond control at the rude handling of the ignorant barbers, pushing them on one side, completed the dissection in the way he knew it ought to be done."

Besides attending the lectures of Sylvius, Vesalius became a pupil of Günther, but neither of these was able to afford him the opportunity of making a thorough dissection of the human body. It was only on rare occasions that a human corpse was exposed to the view of students. The great majority of the bodies shown were those of the lower animals. All

* Sir Michael Foster, *History of Physiology*, p. 4.

that was then available for the study of human anatomy was a hurried, and sometimes secret, examination of the remains of a patient who had succumbed to disease.

Resurrection-men existed long before the time of Jerry Cruncher, and it was not supremely difficult even in the sixteenth century to gather up a skeleton in the burial-grounds of Paris. In many of the cemeteries the bones of the unhonored dead lay scattered about in all directions. Just as Hamlet meditated over the skull in the Elsinore graveyard, so Vesalius spent many days in studying the bones he picked up in the burial-ground adjoining the Church of the Innocents at Paris. And he has recorded how, in another graveyard, "he and a fellow-student nearly left their own bones, being on one occasion attacked and in great risk of being devoured by savage, hungry dogs, who had come there in search of bones." By such dangerous and awkward means the undaunted Vesalius collected the materials for a work which contains a full and accurate description of the human skeleton.

The wars which then raged drove Vesalius from Paris to Louvain, where he continued his anatomical researches with unflagging zeal. Leaving Louvain, he proceeded to Venice, where he crossed the path of one who bore the sinister name of Ignatius Loyola. Vesalius was a student, and Loyola was a monk, at the Hospital at Venice.

"One was gathering a rich harvest of exact knowledge which six years later he was to embody and give to the world in a great book, the beginning of biologic science. The other was busy with a scheme for the spiritual welfare of mankind, which six years later took shape in the order of the Jesuits. The one with his eyes fixed on man's body brought forth a work the fruits of which have profoundly influenced, and are still profoundly influencing, men's minds. The other, with his eyes fixed only on truth and goodness, began that which, after him, became the incarnation of Authority; an engine powerful, it is true, for good, but often used for the support of lies and for the maintenance of evil."

In the Venetian republic Vesalius was free from molestation, as its enlightened rulers were not overburdened with orthodoxy. The young anatomist—he was only twenty-two—was in 1537 appointed to the Medical chair in the Venetian University of Padua, to which was subsequently added the professorship of Surgery with the care of Anatomy. Vesalius conducted his own demonstrations before the students with signal success, and his anatomical lectures were addressed to crowded and enthusiastic audiences. There were many difficulties in obtaining the materials he employed in his ocular demonstrations of anatomical truth. Vesalius therefore petitioned all the doctors to permit him to study the bodies of their fatal cases. He approached the judges for the purpose of employing the corpses of condemned criminals in his public dissections. Other methods were sometimes adopted, as the following curious episode proves. He himself has told us how, "learning of the death and hurried burial of the concubine of a monk, he got possession of the body, and proceeded at once to remove the whole of the skin, in order that the peccant holy man, who had got wind of the matter, might be unable to recognise his lost love."

It was only in the Freethinking Republic of Venice that such knowledge as that obtained by Vesalius was possible. Wherever the Church's power was unimpaired, every hindrance was offered to the advance of physiological and anatomical science. The strange devices to which Vesalius was compelled to resort become perfectly explicable when that circumstance is borne in mind. As a result of five years' unwearied toil, at the early age of twenty-eight, Vesalius, in 1543, brought forth his great work on the *Structure of the Human Body*. This work laid the foundations of modern morphology and modern physiology; and although Vesalius made no personal contributions of importance to the latter science, he made smoother the paths of the physiological pioneers who succeeded him. It was no mean task

to convince the world that the old anatomical methods were wrong, and that the only rational way of determining the structure and functions of the living organisms was to abandon the truth of authority and to embrace the authority of truth. Vesalius insisted that a knowledge of the architecture of the animal frame was a necessary prelude to any real acquaintance with the activities of the living creature. Moreover, an understanding of the structure of the skeleton was by him regarded as the only real safeguard against physiological error.

Having reconstructed and reformed the science of human anatomy, Vesalius might, in a better world than ours, have entered into his just reward. But the crown of the reformer is ever the crown of thorns. While he was preparing his work for the press, some of his friends tried to persuade him not to publish it; they said that its appearance would ruin its author's career. And to some extent it did. After the completion of his book, Vesalius left Padua, with the consent of the senate, for the space of a year, his pupil, Realdus Columbus, becoming his temporary successor. With the appearance of his book arose a howl of anger. The powerful Sylvius and others stormed against him, "reviling him in a free flow of adjectives." Returning to Padua, Vesalius found his views unpopular even there; his pupil Columbus had deserted him, and gone over to the enemy. He vindicated the truth of his teachings in lectures at Padua, and asked his opponents to witness the evidences of his discoveries in the dissecting theatre itself. At Pisa, where the great Cosimo de' Medici of Florence was creating a University, Vesalius might have been installed as professor. But the friendliness of the Florentine ruler was insufficient to overcome the feelings of bitterness engendered by the bigoted conduct of the old-fashioned professors. The mighty work which Vesalius had built up with such infinite pains was treated as the product of a blasphemer's brain. Mortified beyond measure, the great anatomist consigned to the flames manuscripts of various kinds containing invaluable records of his observations and thoughts; and the Emperor Charles V. requesting him to accept the post of Court Physician, he turned his back on the University which he had adorned by his presence, and brought his brilliant scientific career to a premature close.

The remainder of Vesalius' life proved comparatively uneventful. When Charles V. sought repose in a cloister, the services of Vesalius were transferred to his son. But in the Spain of Philip II. the pursuit of science was impossible. As Sir Michael Foster truly says:—

"The hand of the Church was heavy on the land; the dagger of the Inquisition was stabbing at all mental life, and its torch was a sterilising flame, sweeping over all intellectual activity. The pursuit of natural knowledge had become a crime, and to search with the scalpel into the secrets of the body of man was accounted sacrilege. It was for a life in priest-ridden, ignorant, superstitious Madrid that Vesalius had forsaken the freedom of the Venetian Republic and the bright academic circles of Padua."

In the withering atmosphere of Madrid, Vesalius cast many a wistful glance towards Italy. His old affection was deeply stirred when the anatomical writings of Falloppius, who now occupied Vesalius' former chair at Padua, came into his hands. Becoming more and more dissatisfied with his unproductive court life, he made a journey to the East for the purpose of escaping it. At this period Falloppius died, and Vesalius received an invitation, if we may trust to traditional statements, to return to the scene of his Paduan labors. But, on his return voyage from the East, he was seized with a serious illness, and died on the island of Zante in 1564.

T. F. PALMER.

(To be concluded.)

Human pride is skilful to invent
Most serious names to hide its ignorance.—SHELLEY.

Religion and Morality.—II.

(Concluded from p. 690)

THESE are real services; but, to say nothing of its anti-human and anti-social doctrines, they should not make us forget the frightful tyranny with which the religion of Jesus has burdened both spirit and body. The ancient world—above all, the Roman Empire, with its incongruous Pantheon—practised religious toleration until the day when Christianity came to sap the political constitution itself. The Christians had then their martyrs, and those martyrs were worthy of admiration. Nothing is finer than self-sacrifice for what is believed to be the truth. But the persecuted were scarcely in power before they surpassed their persecutors in cruelty. The rites of Pagan worship became high treason, which the Theodosian code unhesitatingly visited with capital punishment; the temples, even the finest, were demolished, and the idols destroyed. The Church haughtily arrogated the right of persecution, and used it largely from Constantine and Theodosius to the threshold of contemporary history.....

Here I end my exposition. As usual, I have let the facts speak for themselves. They are eloquent, and tell us loudly enough the good and evil that religions have done to morality. Doubtless they have contributed to tame man's evil passions, by adding to the curb of laws that of religious cruelty; but their special share consists above all, as we are coming to see, in a deviation of the moral sense. Religious morality does not test the value of actions according to their social utility, but according to priestly fancy or the apprehension of a beyond. In its eyes, to eat forbidden food is as grave, if not more so, as to commit a murder; asceticism is, in certain religions, the supreme virtue. Lastly, when morality becomes divine, not only is it regarded as immutable and beyond improvement, but a right is claimed to impose it, if necessary, by fire and sword.

In this last respect the palm belongs beyond question to Christianity. Without doubt she has had her martyrs, but she has made many more; glorifying her own, vilifying others, and thus habituating men to the idea that they should be ready to give their life for her faith. The teaching has its value, but not that of the seas of blood it has cost..... To resume, what arises above all from our inquiry is that we should not ask religious conceptions to regulate conduct. Amongst the gods of the great religions those of Epicurus have alone been wise. Their great business was to relish their nectar; they ignored the human animalculæ. But the other gods have been pesterers and despots; they have meddled at random with our affairs; and in the interest of social progress we should remind them that their kingdom is not of this world, and exclude them from it.

—From Letourneau's *L'Evolution de la Morale*, translated by G. W. FOOTE.

Correspondence.

ATTACKING THE BIBLE.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Will you kindly give this letter room in your magazine? I am not a regular reader of the *Freethinker*, but a friend lent me a copy and I was much interested in your article "Bible Blunders." I agree most heartily with many of the things you say; we Christian Freethinkers are trying to say the same Sunday by Sunday, and we are with you absolutely in your work of smashing the old mechanical notion of "inspiration" in favor of something more natural and spiritual. Your words, "No one can be assured that God has spoken unless God speaks to him *individually*," and "Revelation must always be *personal*," are splendidly true. External authority, whether of Bible or Church, is no authority at all unless ratified by our own consciousness. Conscience is the only authority, the value of the Bible lies in the fact that so much in it appeals to our conscience.

The sentence in your article with which I cannot agree is the following: "Freethought must keep on attacking the Bible." Surely not? Is not your meaning rather this: "We must keep on attacking *worn-out views* about the Bible?" Because a few fanatics have made a fetish of the world's greatest book, are we therefore to tear it in pieces as an imposture? No; rather as true Freethinkers to separate the kernel from the husk, to destroy Bibliolatry but not the Bible, and so set it up once again in its true greatness, as a book *like other books*, the greatest and most useful of them all. All of us, Sir, are liable to prejudice one way or the other, but we must overcome it, as it is as culpable on our part as on that of the ignorant Bible-worshiper. We are out for truth and nothing else, you in the press and we in the pulpit, and may the spirit of truth guide us into all truth.

With many thanks to you for allowing me to express myself in your pages.

A CHRISTIAN FREETHINKER.

[This correspondent is a *bonâ-fide* clergyman of the Church of England, and there is a ring of sincerity in his letter. When the Bible is treated like other books our quarrel with it will be at an end. Meanwhile it occupies a false and usurped position, and we must continue our efforts to bring it down on what Thomas Paine called the democratic floor. Of course we don't want to destroy the Bible as a book; we want to destroy it as the Book of God.—EDITOR.]

National Secular Society.

REPORT OF MONTHLY EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD ON OCT. 30

The President, Mr. G. W. Foote, in the chair. There were also present:—Messrs. Baker, Barry, Cohen, Cowell, Cunningham, Davey, Judge, Lazarnick, Neate, Nichols, Quinton, Roger, Rosetti, Samuels, Shore, Silverstein, Thurlow, and Miss Kough.

The minutes of the previous meeting were read and confirmed.

The monthly cash statement was presented and adopted.

New members were admitted for the Preston and West Ham Branches.

The action of Mr. J. W. Gott in connection with the unauthorised use of the Society's name was again discussed, and no reply having been received from Mr. Gott to the Executive's resolution, the following was carried unanimously:—

"That, as Mr. Gott has not thought fit to reply to the Executive's letter of remonstrance as to the abuse of the Society's name, and has driven incivility to the point of insolence in refusing to send the Executive a direct answer to their request for an undertaking that he desist from the same, it is hereby resolved that his membership shall not be renewed at the expiration of the current year."

The recent prosecution at Bolton and its result was reported.

The Annual Dinner was discussed, and the Secretary instructed to arrange for the 1914 Dinner to be held on a day other than Tuesday, to enable provincial members to take advantage of the mid-week railway excursions to London.

E. M. VANCE, *Secretary*.

All the world over, savages and semi-civilised people are in the habit of sacrificing human victims, whose bodies are buried in the field with the seed of corn, or other broad stuffs. Often enough the victim's blood is mixed with grain in order to fertilise it. The most famous instance is that of the Khonds of Orissa, who chose special victims, known as Meriahs, and offered them up to ensure good harvests. The Meriah was often kept years before being sacrificed. He was regarded as a consecrated being, and treated with extreme affection, mingled with deference.—*Grant Allen*.

Obituary.

On Sunday, October 26, one of the old Secular brigade passed away in his eighty-fifth year. Our late friend, Mr. J. E. Schofield, of Oldham, had been a reader of the *National Reformer* in former days and continued a reader of it so long as it was issued. He afterwards took up with the *Freethinker*, and has purchased and read that journal up to the end. Mr. Pegg, of Manchester, kindly undertook the last offices in connection with his interment by giving a suitable rendering of Austin Holyoake's Secular Burial Service, which was well received by the relatives and friends at the graveside.—J. E. BROADBENT.

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.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Workman's Hall, Romford-road, Stratford, E.): 7.30, C. Cohen, "The Challenge of Atheism."

OUTDOOR.

EDMONTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Edmonton Green): 7.45, R. H. Rosetti, "God, Faith, and Morality."

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

LEICESTER (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, John M. Robertson, "Christianity in the Melting-Pot."

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, All Saints): J. T. Lloyd, 3, "Some Heroes of Our Cause"; 6.30, "The Passing of the Sabbath." Tea at 5.

PROPAGANDIST LEAFLETS. New Issue. 1. *Christianity a Stupendous Failure*, J. T. Lloyd; 2. *Bible and Teetotalism*, J. M. Wheeler; 3. *Principles of Secularism*, C. Watts; 4. *Where Are Your Hospitals?* R. Ingersoll. 5. *Because the Bible Tells Me So*, W. P. Ball; 6. *Why Be Good?* by G. W. Foote. *The Parson's Creed*. Often the means of arresting attention and making new members. Price 6d. per hundred, post free 7d. Special rates for larger quantities. Samples on receipt of stamped addressed envelope.—N. S. S. SECRETARY, 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.



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