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PRICE TWOPENCE

The prudent and the devotee are cheek-by-jowl.

—VICTOR HUGO.

Tricks of Trade.

SOME time ago there appeared a number of letters in one of the papers on the question of the dishonesty of business men. The dishonesty alleged was concerned chiefly with untruthfulness in selling. Merchants, it was said, were not above stooping to misstatements concerning their goods, and the falsehoods commenced at the top filtered right the way down to the humble shop-walker. He was compelled to tell lies to customers. If an article was inferior, he dare not say so. If it possessed faults, he was forced to hide them. For a shopman to be loyal to his conscience and honest to the people who purchased was to invite dismissal. It was impossible under these conditions for a man to lead a "Christian life," and it was solemnly alleged that many people declined to confess themselves Christians because they felt the standard of morality set to be too high, and shrank from a false confession on the most sacred of subjects.

I read these protests against the dishonesty of business men and remained unmoved. Of course, it is wrong for people to adulterate their goods or to tell lies to their customers; and yet I did not feel the evil to be of so serious a kind after all. It would be better if every salesman told the whole truth and nothing but the truth about his goods, but a lie is only serious in proportion as it is likely to obtain currency. If a man tells me something that I do not believe, and which he knows I shall not believe, it seems to me that things remain much as they were. When a dealer assures me that he is getting a living by selling his goods at less than cost price, or that he is giving better value than anyone else in the trade, or that he is keeping his shop open solely for the benefit of the public, we all know these things to be part of the small talk of the commercial world. And even though I were charged half-a-crown for an article worth sixpence, that still strikes me as a small affair. There are much greater evils in the world. These things are more annoying than aught else. And, truth to tell, I feel more annoyed at people expecting me to believe these stories than at their being told.

The curious feature about the controversy was that a number of prominent clergymen took part in the discussion, and protested against the practice. This was very interesting, but I felt a little uncertain whether their interference might not be due to the irritation of the expert watching the bungling attempts of the amateur. Part of the protest was based upon the lies told being connected with such paltry matters. Which is rather illuminating. There is such a difference between false statements that affect the issue of some hundreds of thousands of pounds' worth of shares and the falsehoods that procure a sale of a yard of flannel at two shillings and three-farthings. One could not imagine a Christian gentleman like the Archbishop of Canterbury telling a lie in order to get an article sold for sixpence that

was only worth fourpence. This in itself is evidence of the bracing effect of Christianity on character, or perhaps it is only the difference between £15,000 a year and twenty-five shillings a week. Still, it must really demand a fine development of character for men circumstanced as are the bulk of the clergy to refrain from telling lies for the sake of the paltry benefits to gain which shopmen and shopkeepers daily and hourly scarify their moral nature.

To be quite serious, one could imagine a tradesman, irritated by these rebukes, advising bishops and archbishops that before lecturing others it might be as well to reflect upon the number of trade falsehoods connected with their own business. And both on the negative and on the positive side the clerical profession involves quite as many trade falsehoods as occur elsewhere, and some of them of a far more serious character. For the tradesman does not tell his tales in the interests of morality; the clergyman does. And that involves a world of difference. And I am quite certain that, taken on the whole, the morality of the business world, imperfect as it is, is still superior to the morality exemplified by the clergy.

It is said that tradesmen charge for work that is ill performed. Well, so do the clergy. Tradesmen claim that their goods are superior to any others on the market, knowing that is not the truth. What is this but one of the stock claims of the clergy? Commercial men, it is said, work for a monopoly, and crush out by all possible means—fair and foul—their competitors. Agreed; but is not every religion in the world, and particularly the Christian religion, striving to create a monopoly? What was the State Church but a monopoly in religion? What are all the other Churches doing but trying to create a monopoly? And how have they all met competition? The State Church met it by imprisoning Dissenters, cropping their ears, whipping them at cart's tail, imprisoning them thousands at a time, and even selling them into slavery. A commercial monopoly never did these things. A monopoly in oil, or coal, or corn, or copper, is really far less disastrous to a nation than a monopoly in religion. And when events brought other competitors into the field, competitors that threatened all Christians alike, a new combination was formed that strove to suppress this competition by the same methods of imprisonment and torture. Really there is not an evil connected with the establishment of a trade monopoly that is not being continuously put into force in order to maintain a corner in religion. And certainly the suppressed truths and suggested falsehoods practised to build up a business monopoly are poor, weak things compared to what is done in connection with religion.

Look at some of the falsehoods connected with the clerical business. First of all, there is the Bible. When a tradesman sells a cotton mixture for pure wool, is he really acting worse than the clergyman who nowadays presents the Bible before a congregation as the Word of God? Everyone knows who knows anything about the subject, that this conception of the Bible is now completely shattered. It is admitted to be so by numerous clergymen, under controversial pressure. And yet one is constantly meeting in religious papers with a dis-

discussion of the question whether clergymen ought to introduce critical questions into the pulpit. Thoroughly straightforward men, determined on their clients being fully acquainted with the nature of the article placed before them, would answer the question without the least hesitation. If there is one place in the world from which the results of the most critical study of the Bible should be shouted trumpet-tongued, it is the pulpit. For it is precisely the people who attend church who are most in need of such instruction. No courage is needed in making admissions to people outside the Churches. It is people who are within who need to be told the truth. And the discussion as to whether critical questions should be introduced into the pulpit or not is really a discussion as to whether a church is the place in which the truth should be told.

For, mark, all critical questions are not excluded from the pulpit. It is only critical questions, so far as they tend to unsettle orthodox beliefs, that are excluded. Other religions may be freely criticised. Unbelief may be criticised. And both these forms of criticism give rise to a fresh batch of falsehoods. For, just as we have the *suppressio veri* in connection with Christianity, so we have the *suggestio falsi* in connection with non-Christian forms of thought. The better aspects of a religion such as Mohammedanism are ignored and its worst aspects exaggerated. The evils existing in non-Christian countries are deliberately attributed to the prevailing religion. And where religions are treated in this way, non-religious naturally fare worse. Hardly any business man would circulate stories concerning a rival one-half so untruthful and malicious as those circulated by religious preachers concerning their opponents. If the sense of decency did not restrain, the law of libel would. Credit is too valuable an asset in the commercial world for the average business man to ignore the value of a good reputation. But if one will compare the stories told by Catholics of Protestants, of Protestants by Catholics, and by both of unbelievers; if one bears in mind the slanders circulated concerning Paine, and Bradlaugh, and Ingersoll, and other leading Freethinkers, he will see how much below the ethic of the business-world is the ethic of the pulpit.

Only a month or so ago the Rev. Dr. Forsyth was prophesying that there were troublesome times ahead for the Churches when congregations began to realise the bearings of modern criticism on religious beliefs. But why should there be trouble from this source? And whose fault is it that the church and chapel congregations do not already realise the bearings on religious doctrines of modern knowledge? If the clergy had been really interested in telling the truth and seeking the truth, their congregations would have nothing to learn and preachers nothing to fear. The fear was really a confession that congregations have been deliberately kept in the dark about matters on which they ought to have received information. They have looked to their preachers for guidance, and these have misled them. And in what way is the preacher who has refrained from telling his hearers the truth about religion, because he was afraid it would unsettle their faith, superior to the tradesman who tells a lie in order to sell a customer something over the counter? If the preacher has a genuine article for sale, he need be in no fear about a decline of custom. He is really alarmed lest the growth of knowledge should have the same influence on his profession that a Fraudulent Marks Act has on certain unscrupulous traders.

It would require a very bulky volume to deal at any length with all the various falsehoods that have been put into circulation at various times in the interests of their faith. There have been documentary falsehoods in the shape of tampering with existing writings and forging new ones. Manufactured falsehoods in the shape of spurious miracles and false records. Personal falsehoods relating to opponents and the suppression of the truth concerning Christian leaders. Falsification of history secured by suppressing facts and creating an atmo-

sphere that made the publication of the truth almost an impossibility. Falsehood connected with the influence of Christianity on civilisation, and of the state of pre-Christian civilisations. One may allow unconscious distortion of truth that arises from the operation of strong religious prejudices, but Christianity has gone further than this. There has been a constant tissue of falsehoods deliberately concocted in the supposed interest of religion and morality.

And these falsehoods belong to a much more serious order than those associated with business life. For they strike at the root of character itself. People who have been taught that religion is the most valuable thing in the world, but who have not been taught to associate habits of mental uprightness therewith, are hardly likely to be very scrupulous in matters that they consider of less importance. It is bad to adulterate goods, bad to tell lies in the interests of trade, bad to suggest lies about one's competitors in business. But it is more serious to debase the moral currency of a people, to treat with contempt the exercise of some of the most valuable qualities of the mind, and besmirch the character of those whose real fault has been that they have had the courage to inquire and the honesty to speak. The falsehood of the shopkeeper may, indeed, leave us poorer in pocket, but the falsehoods told in the interests of religion have left the race poorer in all those qualities that do most to dignify human nature.

C. COHEN.

The Glorification of Murder.

Now that Lent is over once more we may congratulate ourselves upon the fact that it is yearly getting to mean less and less even to Christians themselves. That this is the case is evident from the lukewarm and languishing manner in which it is usually observed. Lent is a fast of forty days, excluding Sundays, from Ash Wednesday till Easter; but how many are there who really fast all that time? It is related of George Whitefield that he partook of nothing during these forty days but coarse bread and sage tea; but even in his day the practice was rare. And yet fasting is ecclesiastically represented as an essential element in the religious life, because it conduces to the mortification of the flesh and is a certain means of securing the Divine favor. It is defined by the Church of England as "a withholding of meat, drink, and all natural food from the body for a determined period"; but in all communions the number of those who starve the flesh to feed the spirit is comparatively very small. Even in Lent of fasting there is astonishingly little. Many thousands of sermons are delivered, and innumerable are the services held; but the wicked flesh receives scarcely any punishment at all, beyond that involved in listening to the preachers and repeating prayers. The discourses given during this period deal generally with what the divines call fundamental articles in the Christian Creed, such as the Fall, the Incarnation, the Cross, and the Resurrection. The Rev. J. Neville Figgis, D.D., Litt. D., for example, has just favored the congregation at St. Mary Abbots, Kensington, and the religious press, with a series of Lenten addresses, in which an attempt is made to restate several doctrines that are regarded as vital. We frankly admit that Dr. Figgis is an extremely able defender of the faith, and that if his defence of it is not a success it is not his fault, but must be accounted for by the absolute indefensibility of the faith. Let us examine a few of his points.

In the sermon on Sin the reverend gentleman makes a most startling admission. According to him sin is a disease, the cure for which is Christ. Now, London accepted Christ fourteen centuries ago, and has been a Christian city ever since. Yet this is what Dr. Figgis says:—

"The home of moral horror is to be found in brilliant Athens and grand Rome, in Paris with its graceful

polish, in Venice with all her gilded splendor, and it may be in modern London [the italics are ours], not in the Polynesian Archipelago."

No Freethinker ever supplied a better example of the moral impotence of the Christian religion. Here is another fine sentence: "It is not to barbarous people that we go for examples of moral perversion; it is to ages of culture and amid scenes of refinement"—in fact, to modern London, where Christ lives and reigns. The sad thought is, that from this "home of moral horror" missionaries have gone out to convert the Polynesian race to the religion under which London has become a glaring example of "moral perversion." Indeed, Dr. Figgis gives himself, a minister of Christ, a terribly bad character. He dramatically exclaims, "John Neville Figgis, torn by temptations, impure, cowardly, vain, selfish, worldly."

Dr. Figgis defines sin as "a foreign thing" which "ought not to have been." "Sin is a corruption, a disease," he adds; "it need not have happened." We are firmly convinced that sin, as here defined, does not exist, but is solely a theological invention. It is the business of the pulpit to keep the sense of it alive in the minds of the people; but, as Mr. Arnold Bennett informs us, the malady known as conviction of sin, from which our ancestors used to suffer so much, has almost entirely vanished from educated society, and it has vanished simply because science has shown us the unreality of sin. It is sheer impertinence to call humanity a damned race. We are imperfect and often do wrong; but we are not damned. There are many grievances to be redressed, many evils to be washed away, and many forms of tyranny to be overthrown; but society is not damned. It is merely in the throes of evolution, gradually throwing off the things that annoy and hurt and establishing the conditions essential to its well-being.

Dr. Figgis is an anti-evolutionist. He believes that humanity has experienced "an initial catastrophe," generally known as the Fall. Adam fell and became the father of a fallen race which is powerless to rise again. If it is ever to stand upon its feet again it must be raised by someone of super-human strength. In other words, we are lost sinners and cannot save ourselves. Dr. Figgis says:—

"Supposing our condition loudly calls for deliverance, and supposing that we are conscious that we cannot deliver ourselves. Then whatever does deliver us must come from outside. It must be the work of a person not ourselves; and it must therefore be objective. Crude language may be used to express this objectivity, but its necessity is inherent. The whole possibility of conversion rests on the fact that we can point the sinner to something beyond himself—Jesus did it, did it all, long ago."

As we reject the reverend gentleman's second supposition, that we cannot deliver ourselves, we naturally reject the inference he draws from it. Numerous are the conditions from which society needs to be delivered, but history assures us that each deliverance already effected has come from within, not from outside. The spectacle that meets our eyes to-day is society in the process of slowly delivering itself. Upon his second baseless assumption Dr. Figgis builds a most remarkable theory of the atonement. He vainly endeavors to distinguish between the fact of the atonement and any theory of it, forgetting that to call the death of Jesus an atonement at all is to offer a theory of it. The important thing to be borne in mind here is that we are said to be responsible for our fallen condition. We are accounted guilty before the bar of Divine justice, and in front of us is hell-fire, in which we deserve to burn for ever. Therefore, we need forgiveness as well as deliverance, and the Scripture declares that "apart from shedding of blood there is no remission." Consequently, "the atonement is a thing so tremendous that it cost God the death of his Son." Why God could not deliver and pardon mankind without killing his Son, or how such a horrible murder enables him to do either, we are not told;

and it is a greater mystery still how faith or trust in that murdered Son brings salvation to the lost. On such points Dr. Figgis is discreetly silent. Utterly ignoring them, he speaks of the atonement as a thing so tremendous that to many it will seem "too good to be true." To us it is a thing so hideous, so brutal, that our whole nature revolts at the very thought of it. To the reverend gentleman, alas, it is "that great act which has reversed all the values of the world," whatever he means by such a statement, which to us is meaningless.

Dr. Figgis imagines a man who is too great a sinner to be forgiven even through so tremendous an atonement. "I can never be forgiven," he cries. "But God loves you," the preacher assures him. The sinner exclaims, "Ah, that makes it only worse. I have done it, done it to all eternity, and the world can never be the same as if I had not." "But God is love, and he will never shut you out." "I shut myself out; so ugly a thing shall not be in his sight—my loving Father! I am a traitor, and I cannot, cannot ever be in his sight again." Now listen to the appeal Dr. Figgis makes to this self-condemned sinner:—

"What hope is there for such? This hope: Let the man say that his treachery to love has been the cause of an act so beautiful that its splendor outshines all the whole world of spiritual values apart from it, and that it is through him in the sense that but for this sin this beauty would not be. Then he can be reconciled. It is the addition to the value of the world of this act of supreme devotion, and the fact that it would not have been but for human sin that allows the sinner to think of himself as forgiven and the past as done away with."

Such is speculative theology as expressed by this clergyman—a series of ridiculous conclusions based upon a series of unverifiable assumptions. Our charge against it is not merely that it is unreasonable, but that it is monstrously immoral as well. The Gospel preached by Dr. Figgis shocks our conscience and wounds our sense of right. The only truth in it is that had it not been for the doctrine of sin we would never have heard of it. The full salvation which it offers to those who believe it is wholly imaginary, an emotional affair only. If you believe that Jesus died for your sins God justifies you, and to justify means not to make just but to declare just. That is to say the moment a fiend of the deepest dye accepts the finished work of Christ, God looks upon and treats him as if he had always been a beautiful angel. "This declaration of our righteousness when we are still sinful," Dr. Figgis tells us, "is made to us as sharing in Christ's death through faith..... Jesus Christ has become the meaning of us." That, we claim, is a thoroughly immoral Gospel. Our only comfort is that it is not true, and that this is being found out by an ever-growing number of our fellow-beings.

J. T. LLOYD.

Christian Apologetics.

II.—HERMAS AND CLEMENT OF ROME.

FOLLOWING Barnabas, the next two "apostolic fathers" are said to be Hermas and Clement of Rome—the first being declared to be the Hermas named in Rom. xvi. 14, and the second to be the Clement mentioned in Phil. iv. 3. It appears to be tacitly assumed by Christian apologists that no writer named Hermas or Clement could have lived in the second century.

Now, we have the testimony of what is called the Muratorian Canon, one of the most ancient documents extant, that the author of the "Shepherd" was Hermas, the brother of Pius, bishop of Rome, and that it was written while that prelate was "sitting in the chair of the church" in that city (i.e., between A.D. 142 and 156). The only writing of Hermas, the "Shepherd," may therefore be placed at A.D. 145—150. The character of the work may be summed up in three words—"a pious fraud" or "a

fraudulent revelation." The book consists of three parts—visions, commandments, and similitudes. The visions the author claims to have seen in an out-of-the-way field, where, he says, they were explained to him by an angel in the form of "an old woman, arrayed in a splendid robe." The commandments and similitudes, he tells us, were delivered to him by "the angel of repentance," who appeared to him as "a man of glorious aspect, dressed like a shepherd." He received the command, he says, to write these down as he was told them, and he did so. These commandments, etc., are a mass of clotted nonsense, too absurd to have emanated from anyone save a second-century Christian. That the work is a tissue of falsehoods from beginning to end no one now denies. Modern Christian apologists generally ignore this fact, and appear to think that they do away with a big Christian fraud by calling the book "the *Pilgrim's Progress* of Ante-Nicene times." Had the book been given to the world as a work of fiction, like that of Bunyan, such a description might be allowable; but this was not the case. The "Shepherd" was given to the Christian world as a revelation made by God to his servant Hermas, and was received as such, and was copied, and read in the churches as "scripture." As already stated, this lying book and the misleading "Epistle of Barnabas" were found in the oldest MS. of the New Testament—the Codex Sinaiticus. It should also be noted that this pious fraud was not the work of a heretic, but was the production of an orthodox Christian. The following extracts will give some idea of the author's pretended revelations:—

TENTH COMMANDMENT: "Put all sadness from thee; for it is the sister of doubting and of anger.....For every cheerful man does well, and relishes those things that are good, and despises sadness. But the sad man does always wickedly. First, he doeth wickedly, because he grieveth the Holy Spirit, which is given to man, being of a cheerful nature. And again he does ill, because he prays with sadness unto the Lord..... For the prayer of a sad man has not efficacy to come up to the altar of God," etc.

SECOND SIMILITUDE: "The rich man has wealth; howbeit towards the Lord he is poor: for he is taken up with his riches, and prays but little to the Lord, and the prayers which he makes are lazy and without force. When, therefore, the rich man reaches out to the poor those things which he wants, the poor man prays unto the Lord for the rich; and God grants unto the rich man all good things because the poor man is rich in prayer, and his requests have great power with the Lord."

I now turn to a paragraph in which the writer mentions Clement as a contemporary. In Vision II. the angel in the form of an old woman says to Hermas:—

"When you have written down all my words, the elect shall become acquainted with them through you. You shall write therefore two books, and you shall send one to Clement and one to Grapte. And Clement shall send to foreign countries, for it is his office to do so. And Grapte shall instruct the widows and orphans. But you shall read the words in this city [*i.e.*, Rome] with the presbyters that preside over the church."

Note: Grapte is supposed to have been a deaconess.

It would thus appear that Hermas was himself a presbyter of the church at Rome, of which church Clement was corresponding secretary. We have seen, however, that the author of the "Shepherd" was not noted for veracity. The question arises, then, Can we accept his statement that Clement was a contemporary? There can be no doubt whatever that *in this case* we can, and the reason is obvious. However great a liar Hermas may have been, it was not in matters of this kind that he exercised his talent. He desired his book to be accepted as a revelation from heaven by the members of the church at Rome, to most of whom he was well known. He could not, therefore, have spoken of one, whom everybody knew to have been long since dead, as then living, unless such was actually the case. He only lied in connection with matters in which his falsehoods could not be disproved.

Moreover, in his day, and for many decades later, there were men and women in the Christian Church

who professed to see visions and receive revelations from God, and their claims were admitted by all the churches. Hermas, therefore, had no fear of his fraud being detected. Hence, though we reject, of course, his fabricated visions and revelations, and his statement of being commanded by an angel to write copies of his book for Clement and Grapte, we cannot, as a matter of reason, doubt the fact that those persons must have been living when he wrote his book. We may therefore take it that Clement was one of the dignitaries of the Church of Rome some time during the episcopate of Pius.

The document which is properly associated with the name of Clement of Rome is an Epistle to the church at Corinth, written in consequence of dissensions in that church connected with the office of presbyters. The Epistle is addressed—"The Church of God which sojourns at Rome to the Church of God sojourning at Corinth." As a sample of the language employed I select the following:—

"Our apostles knew, through our Lord Jesus Christ, that there would be strife on account of the office of the episcopate.....We are of opinion, therefore, that those appointed by them, or *afterward by other men of repute with the consent of the whole Church*, and who have blamelessly served the flock of Christ, in a humble, peaceful, and disinterested spirit, and have for a long time possessed the good opinion of all, cannot be justly dismissed from the ministry" (par. xlv.).

"Take up the Epistle of the blessed Paul. What did he write to you at the time when the gospel first began to be preached? Did he not, by the Spirit, admonish you concerning himself, and Cephas, and Apollos, because that even then ye had begun to fall into parties among yourselves?.....It is disgraceful, beloved, yea, highly disgraceful, and unworthy of your Christian profession, that such a thing should be heard of, as that the most steadfast and ancient church of the Corinthians should, on account of one or two persons, engage in sedition against its presbyters" (par. xlvii.).

"And we have sent faithful and prudent men, *that have walked unblameably among us from youth until old age*, who shall be witnesses between you and us" (par. lxiii.).

It is evident from the Epistle itself that the writer was not contemporary with Paul or the apostles. The words I have italicised clearly show that a long period of Church government, during which the church at Rome had gained an ascendancy over the other churches, had elapsed when the Epistle was written.

Clement appears to have been of too kind and gentle a nature to have been entrusted with the control of a church that had assumed authority over all the other churches. Such a church would require as its head one with more force and determination of character. Though Clement was living when the "Shepherd" was composed, it is quite possible that his Epistle to the church at Corinth may have been written much earlier, say in the episcopate of Hyginus, the predecessor of Pius (A. D. 138—142).

In 1873 a document called the *Didaché* or "Teaching of the Twelve Apostles" was discovered in a library at Constantinople, which document is assigned by Biblical critics to A. D. 80—100. The following passage in the "Teaching," which no Christian advocate appears to have noticed, enables us to fix approximately the date of its composition:—

"To every one that asketh thee give, and ask not back: for to all the Father desireth to have given of his own free gifts. Blessed is he that giveth according to the commandment, for he is guiltless. Woe to him that receiveth; for if, indeed, one receiveth who hath need, he shall be innocent; but he who hath no need shall give account, why he received, and for what purpose, and shall come under judgment" (par. i.).

Where do we find the "commandment" to which reference is here made? Apologists, of course, refer us to Matt. v. 42, which reads:—

"Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away."

This passage does not, however, explain what is said in the "Teaching" about giving and receiving, and of the receiver being innocent or guilty according as he received with or without need. Neither does the

exhortation in Tobit (iv. 16) to "Give of thy bread to the hungry" throw light upon the matter. We turn now to the "Shepherd," and we find under the heading "Second Commandment" the following injunction:—

"Give to all the needy in simplicity, not hesitating as to whom you are to give. Give to all; for God wishes his gifts to be shared amongst all. They who receive will render an account to God, why and for what purpose they have received. For the afflicted who receive will not be condemned; but they who receive on false pretences will suffer punishment. He, then, who gives is guiltless.....Keep therefore these commandments, as I have given them to you."

Here we have, beyond all doubt, "the commandment" referred to in the "Teaching." When the two passages are compared there can be no two opinions on the subject. Hermas, too, is quite original in his Visions, Commandments, and Similitudes, and has taken nothing from either the Old or New Testament. Moreover, the reference in the "Teaching" to an existing and well-known "commandment" is conclusive. The "Teaching" was therefore written some considerable time after the "Shepherd"—and not until the latter had been received by all the Christian churches as "scripture." This would probably be about two decades before the time of Irenæus (A. D. 185), who quotes it as such.

ABRACADABRA.

The Idea of God not Universal.

"The child is born, not into the religion of nature, but into blank ignorance; and, if left entirely to itself, would probably never find out as much religious truth as the most ignorant of parents can teach it."—PROFESSOR FLINT (Professor of Divinity), *Theism*, p. 23.

"It is true that no one may boast that he knows that God and a future life exist; for, if he possesses such knowledge, he is just the man for whom I have long been seeking."—EMMANUEL KANT, cited in Huxley's *Hume*, p. 179.

"Everyone is born with a nose and five fingers, and no one is born with a knowledge of God. This may be deplorable or not, but it is certainly the human condition."—VOLTAIRE, cited by Wheeler and Foote, *Voltaire*, p. 88.

"After all that has been so plausibly written concerning the innate idea of God; after all that has been said of its being common to all men, in all ages and nations; it does not appear that man has naturally any more idea of God than any of the beasts of the field; he has no knowledge of God at all; no fear of God at all; neither is God in all his thoughts. Whatever change may afterwards be wrought (whether by the grace of God, or by his own reflection, or by education) he is, by nature, a mere Atheist."—JOHN WESLEY, *Sermon xcvi., On the Education of Children*.

THE ordinary believer, who has been trained from infancy to believe in the existence of a God, finds it very difficult to understand the position of the Atheist who has no such belief. He thinks that the unbeliever must have some hidden motive for rejecting a belief which his training and education has taught him to think must be self-evident to everyone else.

Indeed, there are no lack of "Anti-Infidel" works in which we are plainly told that we wish to disprove the idea of God and a ruling Providence so that we may lead wicked and debauched lives without fear of having to answer to an Almighty Judge in some after-life; little does the average, and often the educated, man know about ideas outside, or contrary to, his own religious beliefs. For our educational system, even among the upper classes, rigidly excludes any teaching as to the natural evolution of religious ideas. Nay, its first object is to maintain the current mythology, founded upon the Bible, and established as the State religion of the country.

The fact of the matter is, that the great majority of the world's inhabitants are without any belief in the existence of a God. And, far from the belief being innate, intuitional, or arising naturally in the minds of children without its being taught, it is, as John Wesley emphatically declared, true that if children were brought up from their birth "without being instructed in any religion," there is little doubt

"they would have no religion at all. They would have no more knowledge of God than the beasts of the field, than the wild ass's colt."*

We have demonstrated proof of Wesley's statement, in the fact that uninstructed deaf-mutes are wholly destitute of religious ideas, as Herbert Spencer has pointed out in the following extract:—

"The deaf Dr. Kitto, in his book called *The Lost Senses* (p. 200), quotes the testimony of an American lady who was deaf and dumb, but at a mature age was instructed, and who said 'the idea that the world must have had a Creator never occurred to her, nor to any other of several intelligent pupils, of similar age.'

"Similarly, the Rev. Samuel Smith, after twenty-eight years almost daily contact with such, says of a deaf-mute, 'he has no idea of his immortal nature, and it has not been found in a single instance that an uneducated deaf-mute has had any conception of the existence of a Supreme Being as the Creator and Ruler of the universe' (Rev. Samuel Smith, *Church Work Among the Deaf and Dumb*, p. 4).†

Laura Bridgman, who, from the time she was two years old, was deaf and dumb, blind, and even without the sense of taste, thus having only the sense of touch, but who, by persevering instruction, attained a relatively high intellectual condition, says Vignoli, "A careful study of her case showed that she had been altogether without intuitive knowledge of causes, of the absolute, and of God."‡

Similarly, the blind deaf-mute, Edward Meystre, "had no idea of God, and could not be brought to form such an idea, despite every effort that was made, and although he had very good intellectual abilities."§ The reason for this is obvious, for if a child is born totally deaf, it will also be dumb, because a language must first be heard before the sounds of which it is composed can be spoken. Therefore the reason why deaf-mutes are destitute of religious ideas is because they have not learned them from others through the medium of language, which proves the truth of John Wesley's statement, that man "is by nature a mere Atheist."

A further proof of this is the fact that not only many tribes of savages have been found without any idea of a Supreme Being, but some highly civilised nations are in the same condition.

Professor Max Müller, the great Orientalist, says: "As to atheistic religions, they might seem to be perfectly impossible; and yet the fact cannot be disputed away that the religion of Buddha was from the beginning purely atheistic."||

Professor Monier says of the Buddhists and Jains:—

"With them there is no Supreme Being, no Supreme Divine Eternal Soul, no separate human eternal soul. Nor can there be any true soul-transmigration. A Buddhist and a Jaina believe that the only eternal thing is matter."¶

Dr. Findlater, in his article on "Buddhism" in *Chambers' Encyclopædia*, observes:—

"Contrary to the opinion once confidently and generally held, that a nation of Atheists never existed, the Buddhist peoples are essentially Atheist; for they know no beings with greater supernatural power than any man is supposed capable of attaining to by virtue, austerity, and science. Indeed, some of the Buddhist nations—the Chinese, Mongols, and Tibetans—have no word in their languages to express the notion of God as supreme ruler."

Finally, Professor Rhys Davids—and there is no greater authority in this matter—observes: "It will seem strange to many that a religion which ignores the existence of God, and denies the existence of the soul, should be the very religion which has found most acceptance among men."** Thus, the religion

* Sermon xlv., "Original Sin," *Works of Wesley* (ed. 1829), vol. vi., p. 59.

† Herbert Spencer, *Ecclesiastical Institutions* (1885), pp. 671-2.

‡ Tito Vignoli, *Myth and Science*, p. 207.

§ Buchner, *Force and Matter*, p. 392.

|| Max Müller, *Introduction to the Science of Religion*, p. 25.

¶ Monier Williams, "Buddhism and Jainism," *Contemporary Review*, December, 1879.

** Professor Rhys Davids, "Buddhism," *Encyclopædia Britannica* (ninth edition).

which counts the largest number of adherents knows nothing of a God.

Of savage tribes, as Darwin remarks,—

"there is ample evidence, derived not from hasty travellers, but from men who have long resided with savages, that numerous races have existed, and still exist, who have no idea of one or more Gods, and which have no words in their languages to express such an idea."*

Sir John Lubbock (Lord Avebury) observes: "Those who assert that even the lowest savages believe in a Supreme Deity affirm that which is entirely contrary to the evidence." In some cases, he says:—

"travellers have arrived at these views very much to their own astonishment. Thus Father Dobritzhoffer says: 'Theologians agree in denying that any man in possession of his reason can, without a crime, remain ignorant of God for any length of time. This opinion I warmly defended in the University of Cordoba, where I finished the four years' course of theology begun at Gratz, in Styria. But what was my astonishment, when, on removing from thence to a colony of Abipones, I found that the whole language of these savages does not contain a single word which expresses God or a divinity. To instruct them in religion, it was necessary to borrow the Spanish word for God.' †

Says M. Bik:—

"It is evident that the Arafuras of Vorkay (one of the southern Arus) possess no religion whatever.....To convince myself more fully respecting their want of knowledge of a Supreme Being, I demanded of them on whom they called for help in their need, when their vessels were overtaken by violent tempests. The eldest among them, after having consulted the others, answered that they knew not on whom they could call for assistance, but begged me, if I knew, to be so good as to inform them." ‡

Of the Australian tribes, Messrs. Spencer and Gillen tell us:—

"The Central Australian natives—and this is true of the tribes extending from Lake Eyre in the south to the far north and eastwards across to the Gulf of Carpentaria—have no idea whatever of the existence of any Supreme Being who is pleased if they follow a certain line of what we call moral conduct, and displeased if they do not do so. They have not the vaguest idea of a personal individual other than an actual living member of the tribe who approves or disapproves of their conduct.....We know of no tribe in which there is a belief of any kind in a Supreme Being who rewards or punishes the individual according to his moral behavior, using the word moral in the native sense." §

Mr. Gideon Lang tells a story of a friend of his trying to make an intelligent Blackfellow understand the immateriality and immortality of the soul. "One day," he says, "the teacher watched, and found that he went to have a hearty fit of laughter at the absurdity of the idea of a man living, and going about without arms, legs, or mouth to eat." ||

The naturalist Bates tells us that "None of the Indian tribes on the Upper Amazons have an idea of a Supreme Being, and consequently have no word to express it in their own language." ¶

Robertson, the historian of America, says:—

"Several tribes have been discovered in America which have no idea whatever of a Supreme Being, and no rites of religious worship.....Some rude tribes have not in their language any name for the Deity, nor have the most accurate observers been able to discover any practice or institution which seemed to imply that they recognised his authority, or were solicitous to obtain his favor." **

"Father Baegart," says Lubbock, "who lived as a missionary among the Indians of California for seventeen years," affirms that "idols, temples, religious worship, or ceremonies were unknown to them,

and they neither believed in the true and only God, nor adored false deities"; and M. de la Perouse also says that they had no knowledge of a God or of a future state."* The same writer also tells us "Hearne, who lived amongst the Northern American Indians for years, and was perfectly acquainted with their habits and language, says the same of some tribes on Hudson's Bay" (577).

Of the Veddahs of Ceylon, Sir J. Emerson Tennant does not hesitate to say, "They have no religion of any kind—no knowledge of a God or of a future state; no temples, idols, altars, prayers, or charms" (Ceylon, ii., p. 441). Mr. Bailey, long a resident among them, confirms this judgment. "They have no knowledge of a Supreme Being! 'Is he on a rock? on a white ant-hill? on a tree? I never saw a God' was the only reply I received to repeated questions. They have no idols, offer no sacrifices, and pour no libations." †

They were as destitute of religious ideas as the Papuans of the Aru Islands, who, when Mr. Bik sought for information as to their idea of immortality, replied, "No Arupura has ever returned to us after death; therefore we know nothing." When told by the missionaries that God was everywhere, and in everything that is for our good, one of them replied, "Then this God is certainly in your arrack (spirits), for I never feel happier than when I have drunk plenty of it." ‡

In spite of the overwhelming evidence, from which we have only selected a few examples, of the existence of tribes and nations without any idea of God, there are still people who maintain the opposite opinion. We will consider these in our next article.

(To be continued.) W. MANN.

Acid Drops.

The Devon County Education Committee has decided that two lessons in religion, each one occupying forty minutes, shall be given in the secondary schools under its control. Canon Pryke says there is great interest taken by the teachers in this religious lesson, and is proof, offered by those most qualified to judge, that secular instruction is insufficient. We take this proof with the proverbial grain of salt. To our mind it is rather proof that the teachers have been "got at," and dare not show any dislike to the proposed religious instruction. The clergy have ways of managing these things, and if a clergyman asks a teacher his opinion on the value of religious instruction, there is little doubt as to the kind of answer he will get. It is, indeed, one of the counts in the indictment against religion in the public schools that it condemns so many teachers to a life of hypocrisy. If they are straightforward in the matter, their career is blocked, and promotion becomes almost an impossibility. And, naturally, there are very few that will risk this. If teachers could speak their minds honestly on the question, we believe that the majority would sooner see religion out of the schools than in it.

When men like Canon Pryke talk of the insufficiency of secular education, one would imagine that the nation had practical experience on the matter. This, of course, is not the case. Education in this country has never been free from the influence of religion, which, up to 1870, was mainly under its direct control. And no one who knows the history of education in England would claim that the results were satisfactory. Indeed, it was the utter inefficiency of education in religious hands that forced the Government to step in and undertake it as a national responsibility. Moreover, it is forgotten that, except for time given to religious instruction at the beginning or end of the lesson, State schools are really secular schools. And all teachers know that the religious instruction given is precisely that which is gone over in the most perfunctory manner, and to which the children pay the least attention.

How things have changed in the Churches! Exactly fifty years ago the heresy of Bishop Colenso was convulsing the

* Charles Darwin, *Descent of Man* (1875), pp. 93-4.

† Lubbock, *Prehistoric Times* (1872), pp. 579-80. The Abipones are a tribe of South American Indians.

‡ Lubbock, *Origin of Civilisation* (1889), pp. 214-15.

§ Spencer and Gillen, *Northern Tribes of Central Australia*, p. 491.

|| Bonwick, *Daily Life of the Tasmanians*, p. 174.

¶ Bates, *The Naturalist on the Amazons*, p. 294.

** Robertson, *Historical Works* (1829), vol. i., p. 123.

* Lubbock, *Prehistoric Times*, p. 577.

† Rev. F. W. Farrar, "On the Universality of Belief in God and a Future State," *Anthropological Journal* (1864), ccxviii.

‡ Bonwick, *Daily Life of the Tasmanians*, p. 171.

religious world. And on April 9, 1864, a "Pastoral" was ordered to be read in all the Anglican churches in the diocese of Natal, stating that the ecclesiastical authorities had, "after long and anxious deliberation," decided that Bishop Colenso "had not been charged falsely with erroneous teaching," but had "openly proclaimed opinions which are at variance with the belief of the Church in all ages." It was, therefore, decided "to deprive him of his office as Bishop of Natal, unless he shall, within a specified time, retract the false teaching which has been condemned." We all know how it ended. Colenso did not "retract," and his heresy remained. To-day the teaching which was "at variance with the Church in all ages" has become orthodox. Every opinion for which Colenso was condemned is now accepted by every educated clergyman in the country. And if Colenso were alive to-day he would discover in the teachings of eminent dignitaries of the English Church heresies that he in his boldest flights never dreamed of uttering.

According to a provincial paper, Mr. Fergus Hume, the novelist, will shortly lecture on "The Christ." The subject is scarcely as sensational as *The Mystery of a Hansom Cab*.

"Burns was more than a poet; he was a prophet and a reformer of the Scottish clergy," says the Rev. Erskine Nicol, of Westcliff. Especially when the great poet sang "The Church and State may go to hell; but I'll go to my Ann."

"In almost all the religions right conduct has been urged on man by means of a substantial bribe," writes Mr. C. Collum in *The Quest*. Mansions in the skies sounds substantial as a bribe, but the priests get something more solid for the promise.

Those newest of new painters and artists, the Cubists, Futurists, and Post-Impressionists, intend bringing out a periodical with the quaint title, *Blast*. Probably it means the blast of a trumpet; but it appears like a word from a Christian Evidence lecture.

Bishop Gore, the once heretical contributor to *Lux Mundi*, has issued an open letter to the clergy of the diocese of Oxford. He says therein:—

"An 'advanced' school of Biblical Criticism, on grounds, however, rather philosophical than strictly critical, has reached the conclusion that certain miracles—those which by contrast to the miracles of healing are called 'nature-miracles,' such as our Lord's feeding of the five thousand, or the stilling of the waves by His word, or the raising of the dead; or, again, the miracle of His own birth of a virgin mother, and the resurrection of His dead body from the grave—are for us to-day incredible, not chiefly on grounds of the evidence in each particular case, but on grounds of general scientific and historical principle."

Bishop Gore will have none of this, and has evidently decided to stick to a more orthodox conception of the creeds which clergymen are ordained to preach. He asks:—

"Is it consistent with the sincerity which ought to attach to public office, and especially to public office in the Christian Church, that a man should pledge himself to the constant recitation of these Creeds, as an officer of the society which so strenuously holds them, if he personally does not believe that these miraculous events occurred, if he believes that our Lord was born as other men, or that His dead body did in fact 'see corruption'?"

We quite agree with Bishop Gore that it is not consistent with sincerity for a clergyman to remain in a Church while repudiating the plain meaning of its teaching by putting a construction upon its doctrines which they were never intended to bear. Such a practice reflects little credit upon the man, and still less upon the religion in which he has been trained. If Christianity had ever made intellectual uprightness one of its teachings, and had insisted upon it, there would now be no need for the Bishop's "Open Letter." Men would feel that when they disagree with a religion their proper place is outside. Only we would observe that it is the Christian Churches themselves that have made honesty of speech and fearlessness of thought two of the most costly luxuries in which men can indulge. People have not been encouraged to develop these qualities in themselves, and they have naturally ceased to expect their expression in others.

To this we would add one other observation. Suppose the clergy were really seized with an epidemic of honesty, and left their pulpits so soon as they discovered that they no longer held the plain meaning of Christian doctrines; how many would remain? Not only in the Church of England, but in all the Churches? Clearly, we should soon

have an outcry about empty pulpits as well as about empty pews. For there is hardly an educated clergyman in the country—and certainly none of the leading ones—who do accept Christian doctrines in a plain, straightforward sense. Their chief energies are being given to demonstrating that Christian doctrines cannot mean what they have always been taken to mean, and to proving that they really mean a great deal of what Freethinkers have always taught concerning them. Really honest men do not ask, "What can I make a thing mean?" They ask, "What did it mean to those who wrote it?" And if what it meant to them is not in agreement with fact, it is only the exercise of common honesty to say that it is false. Dr. Gore is afraid that the clergy will, if they are not careful, "lose both the reputation and the reality of sincerity." If he will come down out of the clouds and face facts, he will discover that they have largely lost that already.

The *Church Times* opens its Easter number in quite a tearful vein. It laments that "as each year comes round we find what we believe to be the historical fact of the Empty Tomb more and more called in question, and that even by men who exercise the sacred ministry among us." This is very sad—for Christians, but we feel quite cheerful at the news. It is a confession that the effects of Free-thought propaganda is making itself felt. Of course, we knew it was doing this all along, but usually Christian writers pretend to ignore the fact. The "historical fact of the empty tomb"! We are more impressed with the historical fact of empty heads.

"The world's great heart is aching, and nothing but Jesus will cure it," says the Bishop of Chelmsford. Whether the world is so afflicted is an open question; but at any rate it is a more difficult piece of joinery than the Carpenter of Nazareth can manage.

"One Laugh Three Hours Long" is the description of an entertainment being given at a metropolitan place of amusement. A longer laugh could be obtained by reading the stories in the Bible.

The late Mr. Prime Taylor Coulson, originator of the famous Cambridge sausages, who died a few days ago, was known as the "Sausage King." Royal persons need feel no alarm, for the "King of Kings" was a carpenter.

Defenders of the Design Argument will be pleased to hear that a Hackney baby, whose death was the subject of an inquest, had webbed toes and fingers. This condition, said the child's grandmother, had occurred in the family for several generations. This sample will not satisfy the quacks.

What wonderful Atheists are met—by Christians. We have, naturally, come across a good many Atheists in our time, but we have never been fortunate enough to meet the kind religious people so often encounter. There is the weeping Atheist, who is full of regrets that he has been compelled to give up the belief in God, and who envies the religious man his serene and comforting belief. He appears to be a very common type, but he has never come our way. Rev. F. C. Spurr, on his way home from Melbourne, met another extraordinary specimen, a Frenchman by nationality. He had no hostility towards religion; on the contrary, he had something like an affection for it. Stranger still, he thought that some kind of moral instruction was needful for France, and he would prefer this to be religious rather than nothing at all. We wonder whether Mr. Spurr was surprised at finding an Atheist who believed in some kind of moral instruction? Or did he expect that the Atheist believed the world would be able to get on without it? The old religious method used to be the presentation of an Atheist who repudiated all morality. Now we have an Atheist who believes in morality but who doesn't quite see how we are to get it in the absence of religion. And both are built up on the common assumption that there is something antagonistic between Atheism and morality. Really, the Atheist does not object to moral instruction; his chief complaint is that religious teachers are such poor hands at the job.

One of the religious journals asks "Does God Suffer?" We should be inclined to answer in the affirmative, if it is assumed that he reads all the apologists say in his defence.

According to a *Times* telegram, the Greek archbishop, Germanos, is to be tried by court martial on the charge of having superintended, during the last Balkan war, the

formation of bands of Christians which participated in the massacre of Moslems at Kavala.

The Bishop of Winchester has received authorisation by Order in Council to borrow £100 from the governors of the Bounty of Queen Anne for improving the laundry at Farnham Castle. We have no doubt that there is much in connection with the diocese that needs cleaning.

The *Christian Commonwealth* publishes an article on "The Testimony to Immortality of Non-Christian Religions." We should hardly have thought this necessary even in a Christian journal. Certainly none of those who reject the belief in immortality would question the universality of the belief. Part of the modern case against a future life rests, as a matter of fact, upon the universality of the belief. If it could be shown that only a few races believed in it, and these amongst the higher ones, a much stronger case could be made out for it. But this is not so. It is universal amongst the lower races, and it is only questioned with advancing knowledge. If the *Freethinker* is right in asserting that the belief in a soul or double, and consequently in a future life, originated in the savage mistaking the nature of certain subjective and objective experiences, then, as the human mind is everywhere the same, and under primitive conditions, at least, is faced by the same circumstances, we should expect men everywhere to arrive at substantially the same conclusions. And this is what we actually do find. The "soul" is a product of primitive psychology. And as modern thought has revised primitive conclusions elsewhere, so it has revised them here also. The universality of religious belief is no proof of its truth, but rather of the reverse.

Bradford has just been witnessing an orgy of revivalism which ought to remind people that there is often a fine line only between religion in some of its forms and insanity. According to the *Yorkshire Observer* report, after the service had been in progress for a while—

"Everyone knelt down on the floor, and then began one of the most remarkable scenes it is possible to imagine. The preacher commenced a prayer, in which he called upon the Almighty and invoked the presence and blessing of Christ in terms which under ordinary circumstances would be described as irreverent and insulting to the point of blasphemy. The Deity was extolled in words of such familiarity and ardent personal fervor, with interjections of such fiery sentiment that the congregation set up an accompanying chorus of moans and ejaculations. The prayer became more and more fervid and less and less coherent; the people groaned and mumbled inarticulate phrases, swaying to and fro and trembling with the intensity of their ecstasy. Some cried out aloud, clutching the benches and burying their heads in their arms; others simply rocked themselves backwards and forwards, wailing as if in agony."

A young woman then began to preach, becoming more and more inarticulate, and finally collapsed, writhing on the ground in emotional rapture. An old woman followed suit, and then men and women were together jabbering all sorts of sounds which were doubtless intended to prove that the "gift of tongues" had come upon them. The scene was not an unusual one in the history of revivalism, and it illustrated what religion becomes when the controlling influence of the intellect is lacking. The regrettable thing is that there should be people amongst us who do not hesitate to trade upon the pitiful state of these poor semi-demented creatures.

"The true Puritan can perhaps never be the true saint," says a writer in the *Times Literary Supplement*. Had the writer been a Nonconformist, he would have denied the possibility to the followers of the Government religion.

The connection between cookery and Christianity is not confined to the roasting of missionaries. One London firm sold a quarter of a million hot cross buns, which were retailed at "penny each, or four for threepence."

Of all the "blessed words" in the language there is none more so than that of "instinct." It has a scientific sound that seems peculiarly attractive to some minds, and it is most often little more than a cover for ignorance, or an excuse for avoiding a little hard thinking. People are said to do this or that by "instinct," or to have an "instinct" for this, that, or the other, when they do and have nothing of the kind. Mr. T. J. Hardy has just written a book on *The Religious Instinct*, and a very pertinent criticism of the work is that the volume is based on the non-existent—which, by the way, is not an unusual feature of religious writings. There is no such thing as a religious instinct. One may possess ideas about religion, or one may

have beliefs about religion, but no one has a religious instinct. If people are left alone, and remain uneducated, they are likely to drop into the animistic interpretation of things and become religious. In that case their religion is the outcome of theorising about things in the absence of adequate knowledge. Or, if they are not left alone, but are trained in religious ideas, they may also become religious. In both cases their religion is acquired. But if, instead of being either left alone, or trained to believe in religion, religion is eliminated altogether from their education and they receive proper instruction on all other topics, what becomes of the "religious instinct"? It is simply non-existent. Man has no instinct for religion, but he is susceptible to it, just as he is susceptible to numerous diseases. And he tends to acquire immunity to both.

Mr. Hardy says that "nothing could be more detrimental to religion than the constant intrusion of 'difficulties' on the notice of mixed congregations." Quite so. If people are to be kept religious, the fact that there are difficulties in the way of their belief must be carefully kept from them. They must be brought up in the full belief that difficulties only exist for immoral or perverse people. That is really the principle on which all religious teachers work. They keep all sorts of information away from those under their charge for fear it may unsettle their belief. If they do not tell lies, they suggest falsehoods. For it is suggesting falsehoods when a growing generation is barred from access to the reasoned opinions of people who have tested the "faith" and found it wanting.

The supply of Biblical films appears to be somewhat limited. "The Messiah," "Daniel," and a few other subjects made up the Easter programs. Now the manufacturers are booming "The World, the Flesh, and the Devil." This ought to attract the "unco' guid" more than faked films of fables.

Among recent wills we observe that of the Rev. H. H. Allott, vicar of Warton, Warwickshire, and of Stifford, Grays, with a value of £20,701, also Rev. G. Granville, of Warpeton, Warwick, with a value of £25,199, Rev. T. Maude, of Selborne, Torquay, £8,295, Canon Bristow, £12,405, Rev. M. W. F. St. John, Gloucester, £8,690. All bore their inflections with true Christian fortitude.

"Now that the talk is of Ireland, one recalls a story of Hartley Coleridge. That unfortunate youth then had as dinner neighbor an Irish enthusiast whose talk was all of Popish evils. Hartley listened in silence, but after dinner he took the Irishman aside and said with all solemnity: 'Sir, there are two great evils in Ireland.' His hearer agreed. 'The first,' continued Hartley, is Popery.' 'Most truly, was the answer, '—and the other?' 'Protestantism,' replied Coleridge as he moved quickly away."—*Daily Chronicle*.

"We know that our Lord loved his country and his family," writes the Dean of Durham in *Lloyd's Weekly News*. As the "Chosen People" have been outcasts for many centuries, he had a curious method of dissembling his love. As for his family, he publicly insulted his mother, and, if Christian dogma be true, he was his own father.

At the annual meeting of the Hotel Association, Lord Bessborough remarked that "the old Sunday had passed away." The witty writer of "Asterisks" in the *Star*, commenting on this, says, "Instead of the day of rest, we have the day of restaurants."

The City Council of Vancouver proposes keeping the Japanese children in that city in schools different from those which the white children attend. The Japanese Consul has protested against this, and has pointed out that very undesirable relations between his country and Canada may arise if this proposal is carried into effect. What a lovely influence Christianity has upon the relations of human beings to be sure. We do not think that any nation of the ancient world would ever have dreamed of a proposal of this character. And yet we find Christians full of the cant of brotherhood and of talk about the love and kindness that Christianity brings into the world. It might, of course, be argued that such a proposition as this has nothing to do with Christianity. But it is very evident that Christianity has not sufficiently civilised its followers to make it impossible.

Concerts are given in various prisons on Sundays, and popular hymns are special favorites. It is one of life's little ironies that there is a special call for "Abide with me."

To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1914.—Previously acknowledged, £128 3s. 5d. Received since:—Aberystwyth, £1 1s.; J. G. White, 10s.; C. D. Morris (West Africa), £1 1s.

B. KOLAKA (Calcutta).—We do not see what the N. S. S. can do concerning the missionary movement in India beyond exposing it whenever opportunity offers. We note your observation that Christianity in India is "a mere show kept up with the aid of money from England, and that the missionaries "are simply picnicking at the expense of others, and having the best of everything. Unfortunately, there are so many people at home who have an interest in keeping up the sham, and so many people on the spot who do not care to speak out on account of the ill-will that would be manifested. All we can do, and all you can do, is to keep on pegging away until the truth on the matter becomes more general than it is at present.

E. LECHEMERE.—Mr. Foote will quite appreciate your good wishes for his recovery, and is, indeed, making good progress towards complete health. You may depend that his pen will not be idle in these columns once he is out of the doctor's hands.

A. FAWN.—See "Sugar Plums."

A. MILLAR.—It is always pleasant to learn that one's efforts meet with appreciation. We take it that the reason why the *Freethinker* keeps to so high a level is that none of its writers are "bired" in the journalistic sense of the word. With all it is a labor of love, and to that sort of work a man always gives of his best. Plenty of writers may be bought, but theirs is not usually the kind of writing that appeals to sincere men and women. And there is no mistaking that the *Freethinker* has a curiously effective way of getting "home" to the minds of those who read its pages.

T. M. BROWN.—We despair of making the matter sufficiently intelligible and interesting to our readers.

A. KOHN.—We do not see that "Mr. G. W. Foote" is under any obligation to answer your letter by post, or even at all. You ask "whether the Life of Bradlaugh by Mackay is allowed to be sold now?" Why do you ask him the question? And why do you expect him to answer it?

ABERYSTWYTH.—There is a good deal of truth in what you say. We shall certainly act on some of your advice.

H. ROBERTS.—Mr. Foote appreciates the West Ham Branch's resolution of sympathy and encouragement.

A. SCOTT.—We see nothing calling for special comment. Thanks all the same.

J. BRUCE.—Received. Mr. Foote, as you will see, is utilising the burst of good weather in getting back into fighting form.

G. E. QUIRK.—Will deal next week with the points raised in your letter. We are greatly afraid that your chance of getting a reply, from the Freethought side, in the paper you name is very remote. Whether that particular paper is aware or not of there being "two sides to a question," it takes care that only one shall appear.

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.

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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.

Special.

I AM regaining my strength gradually, but surely. I am not, however, capable of work at present; although I hope my pen will be represented in next week's *Freethinker*. I infer this from the fact that I have just been reading a new book with real pleasure,—which is a sure sign of vital recovery. My voice, too, which I completely lost for a time, is coming back to me. Per contra, I am distressed to hear of the breakdown of my old friend, W. W. Collins, of Christchurch, New Zealand. He is a younger man than I am, and he had a healthy look when he lived in England. After all, therefore, I may venture to hope that he still has a good many years of service to render to the Freethought which has been the love of his life. I am thinking, also, of Miss Vance, who is almost fighting for her life in a London hospital. Her dreadful affliction of blindness intensifies the sufferings she experiences from other ailments, and her loneliness must be terrible in such a situation.

G. W. FOOTE.

Sugar Plums.

A correspondent who takes an interest in the *Freethinker* has been trying to get the Ealing Public Library to accept a copy of this paper weekly. The Librarian replied rather curtly that a similar offer was made last December and declined, and that the Committee decided not to accept it; and, therefore, they are not likely to accept the offer if it is submitted to them. Perhaps not; but we think it is the duty of the Librarian to submit the offer just the same, and the gentleman who made it should see that it goes before them. The Committee may have become wiser or more liberal in the interval. We are asked how the matter could be advanced. The only plan we can suggest is to get people of a liberal turn of mind to join our friend in asking that the *Freethinker* be accepted. It is simply intolerable that a paper should be barred from a public library because certain of the Committee do not agree with its opinions. We have no doubt that there are enough people in Ealing in favor of justice being done to all ratepayers, if only they can be got at. And if the Library Committee will not act fairly, there is always the elections, at which the matter can be raised.

Now that the summer months are approaching there are many ways in which friends of this paper might help in the matter of circulation. In the first place, the offer to send free specimen copies to likely subscribers is still open, and this has already been the means of introducing the *Freethinker* to new readers. Next, as summer is the time when most people travel about more than at other periods of the year, there are always plenty of opportunities for doing some unobtrusive but very-useful propaganda work. Those who do not file their *Freethinker* may profitably utilise them in this direction, once they are done with. The great thing is to get the paper known. Were the paper as well known as it ought to be, it might easily become a "property" in the financial sense of the term. There are only two ways of securing this. The one is by extensive, and expensive, advertising. The other is by the personal enthusiasm of all who care for the Freethought cause. The first method is beyond our power. We have, therefore, perforce to rely upon the second.

Freethinkers, particularly those whose memories go back to the earlier Bradlaugh days, will learn with regret that Mr. W. Ramsey has fallen upon evil days. Mr. Ramsey has for many years been a worker in all sorts of advanced movements; he was one of the three sentenced in 1883 during the *Freethinker* prosecution, and has of late years lectured constantly at the Freethought open-air stations in London. An attack of paralysis has now prevented him following any kind of occupation, and, like many other workers in advanced causes, he now finds himself without resources. A meeting of representatives from various London bodies, held at the Finsbury Radical Club, decided to raise a fund for his benefit. An appeal will be issued, which will be supported by Mr. J. Dent and Mr. B. T. Hall, of the Club and Institute Union; Alderman Jeffrey and Councillor Garrity, of the Metropolitan Radical Federation; Messrs. Herbert Burrows, H. Snell, G. Standring, W. Darby, Miss A. Stanley, Miss E. M. Vance, and others. Miss E. M. Vance has undertaken to receive subscriptions on behalf of the fund from readers of this notice, which will be duly acknowledged. The Committee is a representative one, and we hope that the response will be a generous, and above all, a ready one. The need is urgent, and he gives twice who gives quickly.

We are just in time to acknowledge the receipt of a card from Mr. F. J. Gould, informing us that he sails for England on the *Mauratania* on April 23. Mr. Gould has just spent three weeks in New York, giving public lessons under the auspices of the Child Welfare League, of which Mrs. Walston Brown (née Eva R. Ingersoll) is president. Mr. Gould appears to have had a very successful tour, and his many friends on this side will welcome his return. An article from his pen on "Educational Problems in America" will appear in these columns at an early date.

The Bethnal Green Branch N. S. S. commences its summer work in Victoria Park this afternoon (April 19) at 3.15. The lecturer is Mr. Darby. East End Freethinkers will doubtless see that the lecturer has a good audience round him. There is nothing like it to spur a speaker to do his best, and even to listen as one of a large crowd is, somehow, more enjoyable than when one is only an item among a "faithful few."

Modern Poets.

It is rather late in the day to poetise about war. The clatter and bluster of the war correspondent during the Balkan carnage has robbed the poet of his legitimate theme. Since those unhappy days of suppressed truth and deliberate lying we have looked with suspicion on most designs to point a moral and adorn a tale in connection with war. International scandals have been brought to light and armor-makers have figured pitifully in these disclosures. Therefore it was with grave misgivings that we read "The Wine Press," and we must confess that the epilogue was quite up to our expectations. We had one moment of a sense in which we thought that we were face to face with a truthful and reasonable attitude towards the problem, but that vanished when we came to the end.

The majority of our present-day poets are either incapable of rising above the level of popular applause and approval, or they fear to express in their language any sentiment that is likely to shake orthodox foundations. There is William Watson: he danced in the twilight of anæmic Agnosticism, but now he has rattled back to the haven of convention. We have only to read his "Moonset and Sunrise" to see that he prefers to be on the side of the angels. Following in his steps is one more poet—splendid, virile, and a natural singer; he also prefers to ruffle no feeling of good taste or defy any canon of what passes for respectability. Must we conclude that our modern poets are so many stuffed lions?

When we began the Prelude to "The Wine Press" we knew that we were on familiar ground:—

"Sandalphon, whose white wings to heaven up-bear
The weight of human prayer,
Stood silent in the still eternal light
Of God, one dreadful night."

Milton, in the valley of his genius, was never guilty of such banality. He could use reverential characters to command respect; but imagery of this kind is very feeble, and excites nothing but contempt. "White wings" and "dreadful night" seem to have a far-away echo of the nursery, and we venture this cheerfully: Sandalphon's function possesses at least one quality which we never suspected before—that of originality.

"His wings were clogged with blood, and foul with
His body seared with fire. [mire.
'Hast thou no word for me?' the Master said,
The angel sank his head."

Now observe the harmony of construction. Are angels material or not? We ask this question in the best of good faith, and we make due allowance for poetic license. What baffling problems are presented in these eight lines! They positively bristle and shout aloud to any critical reader not blinded by religious or non-religious prejudice. We should have thought that the question in the seventh line was slightly superfluous, but apparently it was considered necessary. We are reluctantly compelled to point out these absurdities to the Hall Caines of the Muse. It is with no surprise that we find the poet producing such an ill-balanced picture as that in the Prelude. If heaven could be visited, and authentic information obtained, we venture to think that religious prose and poetry writers would not provoke our sense of the ridiculous in this manner. If angels are invisible, they cannot have bloodstained wings; if they are visible, then it is childish to write even poetically that they up-bear the weight of human prayer. We leave the poet to take his choice of the two anomalies.

Sandalphon appears in heaven to announce that two nations are at war, and they are both invoking the Lord God of Sabaoth. This is one of those Rabelaisian situations that frequently occur in connection with the Christian faith, and one does not know whether to pity the object of Christian worship or to pity those who imagine that the Lord takes sides in the squabbles of his own children. We, as Freethinkers, will have none of this omni-

potent being who is entreated, cajoled, pacified, and thanked year in year out. Neither shall we bow down to one who is supposed to be on the side of the victorious or of the defeated. To us the God of the Old Testament, when presented in the modern manner, is no more acceptable now than he was when we read of him during our childish purgatory called Sunday-school and compulsory church attendance. One important point not to be overlooked in this presentation of the Lord is this: he is not yet divorced from blood and slaughter; he still continues to be made in the image of his makers. Personally, if we needed a God (and we have not yet had that experience), we think we could choose from the world's Pantheon a much better specimen. We might go to Greece, or to India, or to Norseland. From our bookshelf we take out *Heroes and Hero-Worship*—we have not read it for ten years—and we open it and find underlined:—

"We must get rid of Fear; we cannot act at all till then. A man's acts are slavish, not true but specious; his very thoughts are false, he thinks as a slave and a coward, till he have got Fear under his feet. Odin's creed, if we disentangle the real kernel of it, is true to this hour."

We commend the above to those who approach their own deity on their—knees. The Norse belief taught valor as its chief virtue; how easily would all other virtues take their place after that? England still staggers about in her choice of a deity with all the vices of the Old Testament and none of the virtues of present-day enlightenment. If we had no other signs of this, "The Wine Press" would convince us.

The story is one of a young man, Johann by name, called to war. He leaves his wife and child to bear arms against the Turk. With the Greek Allies he fights the hated Moslems, and at a later time is forced to fight against the Greeks. He eventually returns as a crippled invalid to find his wife and child murdered, with all the accompanying rites of the soldiers of the Cross, and his friend crucified. In the madness of despair he kills himself:—

O Christ of the Little Children.

"Over his naked blade
Johann bowed, bowed and fell
Gaspung, Sonia, Dodi, tell
Your God in heaven, I grow so weary
Of all that He has made."

It was at this point that we thought we had arrived at a masterly treatment of a situation chiefly brought about through religion. But no; we read on:—

"Conquered, we shall conquer!
They have not hurt the soul,
For there is another Captain
Whose legions round us roll,
Battling across the wastes of death
Till all be healed and whole."

There are two more verses in a similar strain, and then we have the Epilogue, the concluding two lines of which we quote:—

"One path of love and peace climb'd higher,
Make straight that highway for our God."

With these we shall quote the last verse of William Watson's "Moonset and Sunrise," with its anti-Turk title and its childish prattle:—

"Enough, if hands that heretofore
Labored to bar His road,
Delay henceforward nevermore
The charioteers of God,
Who halt and slumber, but anon
With burning wheels drive thundering on."

Blank verse was the measure of Shakespeare's genius, but he was compelled occasionally to substitute the rhymed couplet at the end of a prologue or an act. This was caused by the demand of the vulgar patrons of the theatre. The reader will now perceive why we have quoted the two modern poets. Their conclusions are identical, and we think that we have indicated the reason of this common failing in the present day. War is a hateful business, but it is doubly so when our accepted singers have neither the Norse virtue nor the vision to throw overboard this vulgar pandering to the mob. If

civilisation means an advance from the simple to the complex, then the introduction of the Deity into the problem of war is nothing more or less than demoralisation.

WILLIAM REPTON.

The Associative Principle in Evolution.

HERBERT SPENCER has very convincingly shown that the evolutionary process, inorganic, organic, and super-organic, consists fundamentally of an advance from an indefinite, incoherent state to a definite coherent state. In the sphere of inorganic evolution this is shown throughout by those aggregations and redistributions of matter with which physics and chemistry deal. Organic evolution shows it in the aggregations of cells into tissues, organs, and organisms, with all those ever-increasing differentiations and complexities of structure and function which form the subject-matter of morphology and physiology. Super-organic evolution shows it in the increasing coherence and definiteness which accompany the development of social communities among man and the higher animals, as dealt with, in the case of man especially, in the science of sociology. And among human societies this universal world-process culminates in ethics.

Through organic and super-organic evolution the advance from an incoherent to a coherent state manifests itself in that associative principle which seems to govern all living things, from the primitive cell to the member of a developed human society. As this associative principle—manifested in its three great divisions of sexual association, parental association, and communal association—forms the basis of ethics, it will be of considerable interest to trace its working from the very beginnings of life to its culmination in human communities, and thus to examine, as it were, morals in the making.

The growth and subdivision of a simple cell is a purely mechanical affair—a matter of equilibria between nutrition and waste; between the forces of aggregation and those of disruption. As the volume of a cell—the quantity of living matter it contains—increases more rapidly than its surface, and as all nutrition has to reach this living matter by way of the surface, there must come a stage in the cell's growth when the extent of surface can only permit of a supply of nutriment just sufficient to compensate for the waste. The cell then reaches a condition of equilibrium between nutrition and waste, and ceases to grow.

But the equilibrium is essentially an unstable one. The surface of the cell, by the very fact of its being the surface, is under different conditions to the interior of the cell, and the molecular elements of the protoplasm at the surface must, therefore, be different from the molecular elements of the interior. The protoplasm of the surface layer, by reason of its being in immediate contact with the surrounding medium, would probably be more adapted to rapid assimilation of the nutritive materials. It would probably contain a larger proportion of molecular motion—probably be of a more dynamic and active habit than the protoplasm of the interior, which would, on the other hand, exhibit a more inert, static, or sluggish character. As the cell reaches its limiting state of equilibrium, and the amount of nutriment assimilable through the surface reaches its minimum, the active surface protoplasm would tend to assimilate a disproportionately large share of it. We know that the vital functions of a cell have to be regarded as a sort of contest between the anabolic and katabolic forces of the protoplasm. As long as the amount of nutriment available through the surface is more than sufficient for the performance of these functions, the contest could go on without any disturbance of the cell's equilibrium, but, as the available supply of nutriment reaches its limit, the contest between the predominantly katabolic surface protoplasm and the predominantly

anabolic interior protoplasm would become sufficiently acute to disturb the already highly unstable equilibrium and bring about a disruption of the cell. The process of cell division would be initiated.

But this cell division would rarely be an absolutely equal division. It would very rarely happen that the plane of cleavage would pass exactly through the centre of the cell, but in the vast majority of cases the cell would divide into two portions not absolutely equal. Now, it follows from simple mathematical principles that when a spherical body, surrounded by an outer layer of material different from the inner mass, is divided by a cleavage plane into two unequal parts, the proportions of outer to inner substance in the two parts differ from each other and from that in the parent body. The smaller fragment would contain a larger proportion of outer layer to inner mass than the parent body possessed, and the larger fragment would contain a smaller proportion of outer layer to inner mass than the parent body possessed. Thus, when our supposed heterogeneously formed cell divides into two unequal "daughter cells," the smaller of the two would contain a greater proportion of active surface protoplasm than the large. Successive subdivisions would continue and increase this differentiation, and there would thus eventually be evolved two functionally different kinds of cells—small, energetic cells containing a preponderant share of active, dynamic molecular elements; and large, inert, static cells manifesting an essentially sluggish and passive habit. Now, these are well known to be the distinguishing characteristics of "male" and "female" cells—of sperm and ovum—and thus we reach the conclusion that possibly the very earliest steps in cell division may also have initiated the first step in the great associative principle—the differentiation of sex.

Without further following up this hypothesis, we find that, as a matter of fact, sex differentiation does take place very low down in the organic scale, and hence our proposed survey of the associative principle will have to begin almost at the beginning of life itself.

Though among the protozoa, reproduction is generally non-sexual, it is often effected by processes which may be described as partially sexual. Thus, in the gregarina, reproduction sometimes takes place after the previous fusion of two individuals, and in paramœcium, an infusorian form, fission is sometimes preceded by conjugation. Though in most cases the individuals uniting are alike, in some cases they are unlike in form and size, thus seeming to foreshadow the beginnings of true sexual reproduction. This is seen among the infusoria in vorticella, where the stalked form becomes joined with a small, actively swimming form. Among the radiolaria there may be simple fission, or there may be a breaking up into minute germs or zoospores. All these various methods of reproduction seem distinctly to indicate the beginnings of sex differentiation.

Among the metazoa, sexual reproduction is practically universal, but it presents many intermediate forms before the perfect type is reached. Thus, in the porifera, sexual reproduction does not seem to be completely established, though sometimes ova and spermatozoa become developed in certain parts of the organism—the female elements in the deeper layers and the male elements in the more superficial ones—and fertilisation of the former by the latter probably takes place. There is also a form of budding by gemmules which escape and develop into new sponges.

In the coelenterata sexual differentiation takes a further step, but is not yet completely established. In hydra, non-sexual reproduction by budding takes place in summer, and sexual reproduction in winter. In the latter case, the mature ovum becomes exposed to the water by rupture of the cells surrounding it, and is fertilised by spermatozoa floating in the water. It then is shed from the parent, and eventually gives rise to a young hydra. Here we see the beginnings of sexual reproduction between distinct individuals, but it is effected in a more or less irregular and hap-

hazard fashion. This is a characteristic which we find, indeed, in all the processes of evolution, none of which proceed straightforwardly to their goal as though under a definite and purposive guidance; but we see it nowhere more clearly than in this gradual advance of the associative principle. There is no steady forward march in serial order here, no cut-and-dried plan of progress; but all is tentative, groping, experimental, full of irregularities and overlaps, of deviations and even retrogressions.

In the composite hydroids there are some beautiful examples of division of labor into nutritive and reproductive functions—the “hydriform” zooids or polypites attending to the procurement and assimilation of food, and “medusiform” zooids to the business of reproduction. This may be regarded as a foreshadowing of the development of distinct sexual organs in the higher metazoa. Indeed, in the same sub-kingdom, among the actinozoa—corals and sea-anemones—there are always distinct reproductive organs, both sexes being sometimes represented in the same individual, but often in separate individuals. Thus, even as low down as this, we begin to pass from hermaphroditism to complete sexuality.

In the vermes the sexes are often distinct, especially among the higher worms, and in the echinoderms they are almost universally so.

Among the molluscoidea, the polyzoa—in those cases where sexual reproduction occurs—are always hermaphrodite, and their colonies are formed by continuous generation. Among the brachiopoda we have either distinct or united sexes, as also among the lower classes of the true mollusca. But the typical gastropods have the sexes separate, and among the cephalopods—the highest class of the mollusca—the sexes are always distinct. The remarkable modification of one of the “arms” of the male octopod cuttle-fish for reproductive purposes is very noteworthy.

With the arthropoda we see the sexes much more definitely separated, and sexual association thus more fully developed. The crustacea are generally uni-sexual, but parthenogenetic reproduction occurs in some of the lower orders, and in the degenerate cirripedia—barnacles and acorn-shells—the sexes are generally united. Nor is this the only instance we shall notice of a degenerate condition being accompanied by a correspondingly imperfect form of sexual association. The arachnida and myriopoda are unisexual, but in the special division, pro-tracheata, the curious primitive form, peripatus, has the sexes sometimes united. The insects are all unisexual, but some parasitic and degenerate forms can reproduce parthenogenetically. Among the higher insects the development of secondary sexual characters (differences in outward appearance between males and females) give rise to forms of great variety and beauty. As is well known, among the social hymenoptera the “workers” are sexless; thus furnishing a case where the normal sexual association has been profoundly modified by the extraordinary degree to which the communal association has been carried in this order of insects.

Passing on towards the vertebrates, we find hermaphroditism in the tunicates or ascidians, which are generally believed to be a degenerate type of vertebrata; but in all true vertebrates there is sexual reproduction, and except in some fishes the sexes are separate. Sexual association may therefore be regarded as reaching its full expression only in this, the highest of the sub-kingdoms. However, the association is by no means equally developed throughout, but passes from an incomplete form in the lower classes to its most perfect manifestation in the mammalia. In most fishes and amphibians the ova are fertilised by the male after deposition by the female, but in the three higher classes sexual congress is universal. And with the progress of evolution through this sub-kingdom we find the sexual relationship becoming increasingly definite and increasingly permanent, till finally, in the higher orders of the mammalia, an ethical element emerges,

and the mere physical impulse becomes largely supplemented by a moral emotion.

We have next to consider the second great stage of the associative principle—parental association. This takes its rise very early in evolution, but not, of course, as early as that sexual association we have been examining; though, like all other results of the evolutionary process, the order of the three stages of association is by no means strictly serial. Parental association begins long before sexual association attains completion, and communal association begins long before parental association reaches its final development.

Parental association can scarcely be said to exist below the sub-kingdom of the arthropoda, but here we can detect the faint beginnings of an instinctive care for the offspring. Among the crustacea, female crabs and lobsters carry their eggs about until they are hatched. Some female spiders make a sort of nest for their eggs, and guard them carefully. Among insects elaborate provision for the safety of the eggs is sometimes made, and the parental care displayed among the communities of the social insects is well known. But here, again, the normal course of parental association has been remarkably modified in accordance with the highly developed social organisation, the care of the eggs and larvæ being attended to by the whole community of “workers,” and not by the actual parents.

Among the lower vertebrata parental association continues to develop, but it remains in the instinctive stage, and is aided in many cases by structural modifications. In some species of fishes the female carry the ova on the belly till hatched, and in others a pouch for the eggs is formed by the skin and ventral fins. The male stickleback makes a nest of grasses and weeds in which the eggs are guarded. In some cases the male carries the ova about in the pharynx, while in others abdominal brood-pouches are developed.

The amphibia exhibit various arrangements for the care of the eggs and young. In the Surinam toad the eggs are placed by the male on the back of the female, where they form small pits in which the young are hatched and developed. In another case there is a large pouch on the back of the female for this purpose. Sometimes the male carries the eggs in a pouch around its throat, and in the case of the “obstetric frog” the male winds the string of eggs round his legs and buries himself in moist soil till they are hatched.

Among reptiles parental care, though not very frequent or pronounced, assumes a more purposive character. Some female snakes and crocodiles guard their eggs and young, haunting the localities where the eggs have been laid and attacking fiercely any enemies which may approach. The female python is said to coil itself around its eggs and thus to facilitate the process of incubation.

But it is among the two highest classes of the vertebrata that parental association acquires its most definite, permanent, and developed form, and the instances are so numerous and so familiar that it is needless to cite them. No one who considers the care which the fiercest birds and beasts of prey devote to the welfare of their young—the eagle bringing food to her fledglings, or the lioness licking her cubs as they gnaw the meat she has provided—can fail to see clear instances of morals in the making. And among both birds and mammals, as is well known, the parental association becomes closer in proportion to the helplessness of the offspring when hatched or born, and to the length of time which elapses before they are able to help themselves.

We now come to the last and highest development of the associative principle, viz., communal association, or the association of individuals in communities for mutual protection, aid, and the achievement of the corporate welfare. Here intelligence plays the predominant part, and communal association, in the true sense of the word, is only seen among the birds and mammals. The communities formed by the social

insects are indeed wonderfully organised and most perfectly adapted to their ends, but it does not seem likely that intelligence plays any part in them. The very perfection of the social arrangements in these communities—the mechanical precision with which the various functions of the social life are performed—indicate that they are brought about by blind instinct alone, and that reason, intelligence, and moral sense do not exist. But the social insects no doubt represent the highest possible achievement of terrestrial evolution along the line of instinct.

Among the three lower classes of the vertebrata the frequent groupings of large numbers of individuals in one locality seem to be the result of unavoidable conditions incidental to their manner of life rather than of deliberate choice—and deliberate choice may be regarded as the essential feature of communal association in the true sense of the term. The groupings of fishes and frogs in large numbers are due to circumstances of spawning, in which vast numbers of eggs are hatched in one locality. Crocodiles and aquatic lizards dwell together in lake or river merely because their restricted habitat compels them to do so. They would get on just as well, or better, if each pair dwelt in solitude. In all such cases the aggregation brings no mutual advantage; no aid is given or required; no real communal life is held. It may be that this is due to some failure of brain development inherent in the whole line of reptilian evolution, aided by the oviparous habit of reproduction, and this would be almost sufficient to account for that extraordinary break in the continuity of animal evolution which seems to have taken place at the close of the Mesozoic period. Here the feeble beginnings of bird and mammalian life, aided by the awakening power of the great principle of association, might easily defeat in the struggle for existence the huge, powerful, but unintelligent forms of reptile and amphibian life of the Triassic and Jurassic ages.

It is only among birds and mammals, then, that communal association really obtains, and instances of this are too familiar to need mention. It is only necessary to point out the broad fact that among both birds and mammals the degree of completeness to which the association is carried varies generally with the degree of intelligence of the species, till, reaching its culmination in man, it forms the groundwork of rational ethics.

Our brief survey has shown that the associative principle, commencing with the very beginnings of life in the form of sexual association, extends throughout the whole of organic nature known to us. And as the associative principle forms the basis of ethics, we reach the conclusion that the whole course of organic evolution has exhibited—dimly and vaguely, but none the less surely—a sort of preparation for the final development of the ethical principle. From the dawn of life we see evidences, first vague and feeble, then definite and strong, of morals in the making.

This throws an instructive light on the supposed antagonism between what Huxley called the "cosmic process" and the "ethical process"—the subject dealt with in his well-known essay, *Evolution and Ethics*. He fully recognised that the "ethical process" was itself a product of the "cosmic process"; but none the less insisted on the antagonism between the former, as exhibited in the moral order obtaining within human societies, and the latter, as exhibited in the natural order under the iron law of the survival of the fittest obtaining outside human societies. And the seeming paradox becomes all the more prominent when we regard the ethical process, not as an ultimate product of evolution making its appearance in human societies only, but as a fundamental element of organic evolution in general.

But the apparent paradox seems to be due to a tacit assumption that there exists some sort of purpose in the cosmic process. The idea of an "antagonism" between two processes must really imply that each of them has some end or design opposed to that of the other. Once we get rid of the

idea of a design in the cosmic process, the notion of its being either antagonistic or favorable to the ethical process disappears, and the fact that the latter has been actually brought about by and forms part of the former involves no paradox whatever. On the contrary, this very fact that the cosmic process has itself evolved an ethical process, the full operation of which it is constantly tending to hinder, affords, to any unprejudiced mind, a very convincing indication that the universe is subject to an eternal and unalterable necessity absolutely preclusive of any element of design.

A. E. MADDOCK.

Correspondence.

IRISH UNREST.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—It is really remarkable that, despite the cause of Irish unrest being so obvious, not one of the numerous journalists who have written pages on the subject has, as yet, given a true account of it. Many and various reasons have been put forward, but all ignore the real cause.

Without hesitation I say (and I think every unprejudiced person will agree with me) the real root of the trouble is religious antagonism. It is all due to that grand Christian gospel of love one another. Unfortunately, the Christian translates the words love one another thus: love one another if they are of the same creed as yourself. Thus we have the continued rivalry of Christian against Christian.

To make myself perfectly clear, let us imagine we could take all Protestants out of Ireland. What would be the result? Why the Home Rule Bill would now be passed and in force. On the other hand, let us imagine we could take all Roman Catholics out of Ireland. What would be the result? Why Home Rule would probably not be thought of.

As the two courses I have mentioned are impossible, I can only suggest one remedy. Someone with a tremendous personality and influence, and more patience than the proverbial Job, is required to start the task of reconciling the two sects and teach them to live in peace and harmony side by side. In fact, he must get them to practice what they preach, *i.e.*, love one another. That accomplished, Irish unrest will be a thing of the past.

MANCUNIAN.

DIPHTHERIA ANTI-TOXIN.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—In the course of his articles on "Organisms Antagonistic to Health," Mr. T. F. Palmer says that all known anti-bacterial products are specific; the anti-toxin of diphtheria has no preventive or remedial effect on any other disease. If this be so, can he say why firms of manufacturing chemists, on the strength of medical authority, recommend it for such diverse diseases as the following: Scarlet fever, quinsy, measles, cancerum oris, tuberculous disease, ocular inflammation, exophthalmic goitre, rhinorrhoea, asthma, whooping cough, boils and carbuncles, chronic skin diseases, hæmorrhage, erysipelas, and so on?

I suggest that the alleged "anti-toxin" has just as much, or as little, relation to these diseases as it has to diphtheria—that is to say, none at all. Can Mr. Palmer safely affirm that "anti-toxin" has any real existence, and that it is not a purely imaginary substance? J. E. ELLAM, *Secretary*.

The Manchester Anti-vivisection Society, 9 Albert-square.

TO-DAY'S EVANGELISM.

(SAYINGS OF THE REV. WILLIAM SUNDAY.)

If any minister believes and teaches evolution he is a stinking skunk, a fraud, a hypocrite, and a liar.

There goes old Darwin. He's in hell sure.

Here, you young bulls—some of you come and take these heifers out on the grass. (A rebuke to giggling girls.)

Stand up there, you bastard evolutionist! Stand up with the Atheists and the Infidels and the w— mongers and the adulterers and go to hell.

I'd stand on my head in a mud puddle if I thought it would give me greater power with God.

And, oh say, Jesus, better take along a pair of rubber gloves and a bottle of disinfectant, but if you can save him, Lord, I'd like to have you do it.

To hell with that kind of a minister.

—*Truthseeker* (New York).

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.**OUTDOOR.**

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 3.15, Mr. Darby, a Lecture.

EDMONTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Edmonton Green): 7.45, Miss Kough, a Lecture.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (outside Maryland Point Station, Stratford, E.): 7.30, R. Rosetti, sen., a Lecture.

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