

THE Freethinker

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Criminals are observed to grow more anxious as their trial approaches; but after their sentence is passed they become tolerably resigned, and generally sleep sound the night before its execution.—WILLIAM HAZLITT.

The Consolations of Religion.

How much Christians pride themselves upon the comfort their religion brings to stricken souls! It does not trouble them that very often Christianity itself is the cause of the unrest its doctrines are supposed to allay. The larger number of those who write in all sincerity about the comfort they have derived from religion are exactly those who have been made uncomfortable by religion. The evangelist's object has always been to arouse in people what he calls a "sense of sin"; and this, in plain English, meant frightening them with the fear of hell in the more orthodox times, making them feel generally uncomfortable under more civilised conditions, and then offering another dose of the doctrine that caused the trouble as its only certain cure. He supplies a quack remedy for a purely imaginary disease. Without Christianity these people would never have needed the comfort of religion. They would have lived a fairly comfortable life and died without, as someone once remarked, the consoling knowledge that there was a hell to go to.

Who is it that talk loudest of the comfort that Christianity brings them? It is a commonplace of observation that the most worthy persons are precisely those who derive the least comfort from their faith. The more sensitive a man is, the more intelligent he is, the more fervently he strives to do his duty, the more he is tortured by doubt as to whether he is really saved, or even whether he is worthy of being saved. On the other hand, the more callous and the more brutalised he is, the more confidently he talks of the beatific rewards awaiting him in the next world. Look at the accounts of Salvation Army converts. There is the burglar, retired from the cares of his profession at an age when to follow it becomes more and more difficult. The almost chronic drunkard, the wife-beater, the thief, the loafer. One never gets any doubt as to the reward waiting for them now they have accepted Jesus. They are quite sure they are saved. Their past lives seem to give them added importance in their own eyes, and they evidently feel it is the same in the eyes of their Savior also. They realise that they are rare catches, jewels in the Savior's crown; the past evil of their lives is their principal claim to favor, and many, as they gloat over their past misdeeds—to the envy of those listeners who have led more humdrum careers—appear to feel genuinely sorry that they were not worse.

Turn from them to the lives of really admirable men in Christian history, and you at once miss this note of confidence. They are often oppressed with doubts as to their ultimate salvation; they realise that their salvation may not be so certain as some would believe. The very excellence of their lives, the sensitiveness of their nature, the keenness of their intelligence, gives birth to doubts that stupidity, coarseness, and brutality are secure against. The

genuine saint—to use a religious term but with ethical meaning—is tortured by doubt. The convicted murderer dies without a glimmer of suspicion as to the certainty of his eternal salvation. What a religion that makes a good man doubtful of his own worth and fills the brute with an unshakable conviction of his own value!

Have I overstated the case? Let us see. On Monday, April 13, four men were executed in the United States. Three of the four were Jews, the fourth was a Roman Catholic. But they were all religious, and so may be taken together as they all died in the same way. They were united in death as in life. They were the agents of ex-police Lieutenant Becker, who is under sentence of death, but whose sentence is deferred pending appeal. Becker was, and is, a pious man—a Roman Catholic—who spends part of his time in prison in religious meditation, and confesses remorse for only one deed in his life, that of remarrying after being divorced. Another of the crew, Jack Rose, saved himself by turning States' Evidence, and is now doing a flourishing business as a travelling evangelist. A pretty gang! All of them pious, all convinced of the truth of religion, all probably as ready to expatiate on the immoral consequences of unbelief, as they are certain of their own salvation.

All these men were convicted of graft and murder. They had blackmailed the public, organised vice, and drawn profit from its existence, and had murdered when blackmail was refused or a witness appeared who was likely to prove troublesome. The particular offence for which these four men were executed was that of murdering a witness who was ready to give evidence against them. Two of the four men have left messages warning other people of their sinful ways—it is quite characteristic of the type to set up as moral preceptors to their fellows—and admit that they had "praying fathers and mothers." Poor fathers and mothers! The poor old people had doubtless prayed that their sons would grow up good men. They had prayed over them as little children, as youths, as mature men. And the answer to their prayers was electrocution in an American prison. What a commentary on the efficacy of prayer!

Before the four men were executed a prayer meeting was held in the corridor of the prison. The meeting was led by a Roman Catholic priest, but a couple of Jewish Rabbis joined in, as did also the prison chaplain. Two nuns who were present belonging to the Franciscan order, told "Dago Frank," the Catholic criminal, that on the morning of the execution the whole of their order would pray for their souls for two hours. These people had a most appreciative audience. Schmidt, the lecherous priest who brutally murdered his paramour, was present and joined in the service. Twelve other men under sentence of death, with three Chinamen, also convicted of murder, followed suit. The whole of them went on their knees and followed the service with attention, and, one may add, with conviction. The Litany was read to them, they recited the Lord's Prayer, they doubtless rose from their knees full of faith in a sure and glorious resurrection. It was a touching scene. Not many people have the same care bestowed upon their immortal welfare. One needs to be sentenced to death for a sensational murder to secure such treatment. Ordinary folk

must get to heaven as best they can. A small detachment of specialists was told off in this case to see that their passage was secure. If orthodox Christianity be true these men are to be envied. Other people may end their days in suspense, "Lefty Louie," "Dago Frank," "Whitey Louis," and "Gyp the Blood" met their deaths untroubled by the slightest doubts. "Go thou and do likewise" seems the not illogical moral of the whole business.

From the gramophone playing of "Whispering Hope," the evening before the execution, down to the electrocution, there was no break in the religious serenity of the proceedings. Nothing occurred to shock the officiating ministers of religion. "Dago Frank," the first to be executed, "carried a crucifix in each hand and was escorted by a priest." "Into thy hands, O God, I commend my spirit," he murmured at quick intervals. He was, says the report, "a young man, with beautifully cut features and dark, innocent eyes." One can imagine the beatific expression on his face as he took his last farewell glance at the world. "Listen, Israel; there is only one God," were the last words of "Gyp the Blood." What "Lefty Louie" said we are not told, but judging from his share in the religious services, we may assume that his last moments were equally pious. "Whitey Louis" attempted to make a statement, but it was cut short by death.

With all, not a single word of regret for their past careers. With only a few moments to live, they could not, perhaps, be expected to think of this world. Bent upon saving their souls, we ought not to expect that the clergymen who ministered to them should remind them of it. Their business was to save the souls of the prisoners. The prisoners business was to see that their souls were saved. The thieves on the cross were not sent to paradise because they regretted their past misdeeds but because they believed in Jesus. The four blackmailers and murderers were saved because of their religious belief. It is a glorious thing, religion! It can make the murderer anxious about his soul at the foot of the scaffold. But it can neither stop him getting there, deserving to get there, nor feel sorry towards the society he has outraged when he has arrived there.

Religion cannot divorce itself from the responsibility for these men. If they had been Freethinkers we should have heard much of the demoralising influences of unbelief. Articles would have been written, sermons would have been preached, tracts would have been written, all pointing out to the world where men land once they have given up faith in God and in a future life. It was not so in this case. They came of a religious stock. Two of the four, at least, had "praying parents." They had lived all their lives in a society saturated with religion, and they accepted religious ministrations up to the end with thankfulness and appreciation. What had religion done for them? Or, better still, how had religion served society in relation to these men? Of course, religion did not teach them to blackmail and murder, but at least it had not prevented their doing both. It had given them the faith that moves mountains, for it had evidently convinced them that, in spite of their past careers, their future was safe. But it could not make them decent citizens. Doubtless, some of the clergymen will "improve" their sermons with many reflections as to the way in which religion appeals to even the sin-saturated mind of the condemned convict. But they would do wisely to act carefully in the matter. It may be that some of the congregation might reflect that a low state of mental and moral development, and the power of religious appeal, have, perhaps, something in common.

Would I deny the dying convict the comfort of religion? I would neither deny it nor enforce it. It is no vital interest to me how men die; it is of far greater concern how they live. Society has no special interest in death-beds; it has a very great concern in active lives. What concern is it of mine or yours that these men die with the words of

religious conviction on their lips, if they have lived up to that last moment dabbling their hands in all kinds of villainy? Neither their lives nor their characters can have undergone any change. They do but add cowardice to their bad qualities. They do not regret what they have done, they merely regret having been caught doing it. The man who breaks every social law, and then pays the full penalty with a jest on his lips, is really a less disgusting spectacle than the blackmailer and murderer marching to the scaffold with a crucifix in either hand, buoyed up by the hope of eternal salvation. A religion that cannot keep men from reaching the state of these men, but can only secure their salvation at the last moment, may be a good religion for the gaol and its inmates; but it is no creed for honest men and women.

C. COHEN.

The Anglican Church in a Bog.

THE Kikuyu conference is bearing fruit with a vengeance, and of several kinds, one of which is persecution. We learn, on the authority of Dr. Wirgman, Archdeacon of Port Elizabeth, that the evangelical Bishop Peel, of Mombasa, who favors the idea that Anglicans and Nonconformists should sit together occasionally, specially on the mission fields, at the Lord's Table, has himself, "by his actions, and with no authority but his own, virtually broken off communion with the diocese of Zanzibar." The Bishop of Zanzibar is at present in this country for the purpose of explaining and defending his vigorous protest against the unorthodox and unanglican proceedings at the Kikuyu assembly; and in his absence from his bishopric Dr. Peel was requested to hold an ordination, which he positively refused to do. This refusal, Dr. Wirgman contends, "was an act of severance from a diocese in full communion with the See of Canterbury, as his own diocese still professes to be." Now, the island of Zanzibar and Mombasa, another small island close to the mainland of British East Africa, are within easy communication with each other, and it is alleged that native communicants from the former, who visit the latter in search of work, are threatened with "suspension from Communion if they make the sign of the Cross at the reception." Here is the Low Church, which boasts of its evangelicalism, persecuting the High Church, which glories in its orthodoxy. But "far worse, and even wicked," Dr. Wirgman adds, "was the action of the Mombasa clergy who refused to hear the confessions of their poor people and to give them Absolution, as the Prayer Book directs." Dr. Wirgman considers this to be "a more serious act of schism even than the Bishop of Mombasa's refusal to ordain." In our opinion all these happenings at the Anglican Mission only prove that the Christian religion is the most violently disruptive agency that has ever been inflicted upon a deplorably gullible race, illustrating so pathetically the truth of the words attributed to its alleged founder:—

"Think ye that I am come to give peace in the earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division; for there shall be from henceforth five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three. They shall be divided, father against son, and son against father; mother against daughter, and daughter against her mother; mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law, and daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law" (Luke xii. 51-53).

The state of things at home is even worse than it is in the mission fields. For months religious factions have been at daggers drawn, denouncing and threatening one another in the most furious fashion. The *Catholic Herald* calls the Anglican Church "that city of confusion," out of which Miss Jessie Southwell, secretary of the Universities' Mission, has just fled to find peace in the true fold "where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest." The Kikuyu controversy has enabled the same organ to write derisively of "the Anglican chaos." Both

descriptions are accurate, and we find the Bishop of Oxford candidly admitting that the Church he loves is in danger of becoming "a mere concensus of jarring atoms, held together by some external bond." We hold that the Bishop's malediction is at this moment fulfilled. There is no such thing as orthodoxy in the Church of England, nor is it possible to establish a standard of orthodoxy therein, as it is at present constituted. Its various canons are not binding on the laity. These may hold what opinions they please; and in reality so may the clergy. But what about the Thirty-Nine Articles? someone may ask. The Articles exist, and there is an Act of Parliament authorising the punishment of any clergyman who disbelieves them, it is true; but the court, in every case, construes the Articles, and the interpretation is such that a trial for heresy cannot succeed. Fifty years ago the Convocation of the Province of Canterbury passed judgment upon the famous *Essays and Reviews*; but the Lord Chancellor, speaking on behalf of the Government, declared that it was "simply nothing, literally no sentence at all." One of the authors of that heretical volume became Archbishop of Canterbury, and another an illustrious Master of Balliol.

We now see how utterly futile is Bishop Gore's appeal to "the ancient fundamental faith of the Catholic Church as expressed in creeds and conciliar decisions of the undivided Church." As a matter of fact, all creeds and conciliar decisions are dead except in the Church of Rome. What have the great scholars of the Established Church been doing during the last fifty years? Quietly, unobtrusively burying the Articles of Religion. "Meanwhile," exclaims Dr. Gore, "the great body of the Church has been blind or indifferent to what has been going on." The clerical scholars have come to the conclusion that most of the miracles recorded in the Bible "are for us to-day unbelievable, not chiefly on the grounds of the evidence, but on grounds of general scientific and historical principle." The Bishop's sole argument for the retention of the belief in the miracles thus rejected is derived from the fact that it has always been the fundamental belief of the Catholic Church. He calls upon his clerical brethren of all grades, in a peremptory tone, "to undertake the painful duty of thinking." However peremptory that call may be, it will not be heeded except by those who are, to some extent at least, prepared to follow their reason. Men occupying the Bishop's position are perfect strangers to honest, genuine thinking. It is *believers*, not *thinkers*, who can hold and defend the orthodox creed, and old-fashioned believers are rapidly dying out. Thinking nearly drove the great Newman to raving madness; and to escape from thinking for himself and becoming an Atheist, he joined the Church of blind believers. Dr. Gore's greatest book, the *Bampton Lectures on the Incarnation*, is not the production of a straightforward thinker, but a theoretical theologian, whose one object is to explain, which he does most lucidly, and defend, "the ancient fundamental faith of the Catholic Church." We never read a clearer exposition of the faith than that well-known work provides, but as a defence of the same, it fails at every point. It is distinctly not a faith for twentieth century thought, but for mediæval credulity. We are convinced that the Bishop does hold it in all sincerity, but, apart from his social sympathies, his lordship is not a modern man; and the modern man is not likely to respond to his bugle call.

Passing from the Bishop's antiquated theology to his equally obsolete theory of the Church, we find that the absurdity of his position increases. In this respect he is a Catholic outside the jurisdiction of the Pope. The Kikuyu controversy has opened his eyes to the grim necessity of converting "a Protestant-minded country" to the Catholic idea of the Church. That is the mission of the Anglican High Church party. The Catholic conception of the Church, as interpreted by Dr. Gore, is as follows:—

"I venture to say that nothing is more certain than that in the New Testament as it stands, and, I believe,

in the strict truth of history, the Founder of our religion instituted a visible Church in such sense that membership of the new covenant in Christ coincided simply with membership of the one visible Church. I think that careful reading of the New Testament will show how much of the moral discipline of Christians was meant to lie in the obligation of all Christians to submit to the authority—the binding and loosing—of the one body."

Then he defines the Sacraments as "covenanted instruments of the spiritual gifts of Christ to the individual, the means of communion with Christ, and also social ceremonies, ceremonies of a society, so that the institution of sacraments served to emphasise, through the Christian's whole life, the fact that communion with Christ, under the new covenant, was not otherwise to be looked for than in the communion of the one visible Church." These Sacraments, to be efficacious, must be administered by episcopally ordained clergymen. Now, if the Anglican Communion is to hold together, whether in the mission field or at home, the following "contentious positions" must be rigorously maintained:

"The requirement of episcopal ordination for the regular ministry; the requirement of an episcopally ordained priest to celebrate the Eucharist; the requirement of episcopal confirmation by laying on of hands, or at least of the readiness to receive it where it can be had, before admission to communion."

If that idea of the Church and its ministry be true, it necessarily follows that the overwhelming majority of English, Scotch, and Welsh people must inevitably be everlastingly damned. The saving mercies of heaven flow only through episcopal channels, and if you lie outside these you are doomed to eternal perdition. The Bishop will not admit this openly, but it is to this that his system logically leads. It is a signal blessing to this land that the Church of Rome is represented in it as well; but the curious thing is that the Roman Church persistently laughs this Anglican claim to scorn. The Pope indignantly declines to recognise the validity of Anglican orders, just as Anglicans refuse to admit the validity of Nonconformist orders. Just as Rome will not enter into fellowship with the English Church, so the English Church shuts its doors at the approach of any non-episcopal communions.

Thus is the Christian religion reduced to a contemptible absurdity by its own champions. Fancy a God of infinite love, a Savior of boundless compassion, or a Holy Ghost of omnipotent graciousness, being tied down to the stupendously mean line of action sketched out by the good Bishop of Oxford. And yet we are truly thankful to his lordship for coming out in his real colors. He has thereby rendered a genuine service, for a time to Rome, and permanently to the cause of Freethought.

J. T. LLOYD.

Educational Problems in America.

BEFORE leaving the hospitable American shore, I would like to give readers of the *Freethinker* a brief account of the object and incidents of the tour which I undertook in the United States, beginning October 6, 1913, and ending in April, 1914. The object was to show parents and teachers, and particularly teachers of the public schools (that is, the schools of the people, roughly corresponding with, but taking in a larger variety of social classes than, the English Council schools), how the subject of personal and social conduct may be made interesting and stimulating to young minds. I did this by means of public demonstration-lessons, delivered to girls and boys, usually aged eleven to fourteen, who sat with their backs to adult audiences and talked with me as if nobody else was present. On the departure of the class, the meeting was always thrown open to discussion, though, as a rule, I did not find American audiences much inclined to put questions or raise doubts. When, a year or so ago, I was in India, I experienced a different situation, for the Hindu mind

delights in controversy on ethical and philosophical topics.

At the moment of writing, my tour has not concluded, but I suppose that, by the end of April, I shall have given about 280 lessons to different groups of American children, met more than 20,000 people, and visited thirty-two cities in eleven States, ranging from New York in the east to Missouri in the middle west. In all places, except New York, I was officially associated with the local school boards. My program in New York was framed by the International Child Welfare League, of which the late Colonel Ingersoll's daughter (Mrs. Walston Hill Brown) is the president; and a supremely kind-hearted president she makes.

It is a great mistake to suppose that the moral and civic instruction which I have for many years advocated involves preaching and moralising. To me, the word *moral*, in connection with teaching, represents something sparkling, imaginative, courageous, dramatic, and joyous. I have often said to audiences that, as a teacher, I want to be as attractive as the moving picture show, or the writer of the blood-and-thunder tales which fascinate the plastic young heart and brain. As I conceive the business of character-training, the chief instrument should be, not so much a perpetual talk about what "ought" to be done as a recital of what is done, and has been done. The history of the world brims over with records of (to use a Platonic phrase) the true, the beautiful, and the good. I have read a colossal amount about the crimes and imbecilities of the human race; but I do not hesitate to affirm that the tale of what is noble and wholesome is richer in quantity and more extensive in its range. My idea of moral instruction is the revelation of these splendid actualities to the imagination and reason of the young. It is as if one said to the youth who will soon take the place of the elder generation:—

"This is the kind of world you are born into. This is the stage you are beginning to tread. Such are the manners and customs of this human cosmos; and he who would play the man should understand what the love, order, and progress of our race has meant, and means, and is likely to mean for ages yet to come."

Is not this a very different attitude from that of the melancholy people who consider that the civilisation of the past has been more or less a failure, and a chaos, and who desperately advise the young to leave the bad world better than they found it? We who write in the journals and discuss ethics and philosophy are too apt to think that the morality of the race has chiefly been expressed in speech and literature. As a matter of fact, the morality of the race has been chiefly expressed in kindly deeds and daily industry by men and women who spoke rather bad grammar, had small incomes, and possessed few distinctions or accomplishments. For tens of thousands of years such people cultivated honest fruit and corn, and reared babies to vigorous adulthood and social co-operation; and these were truly eminent services, which constitute the real Bible of Humanity. Moral instruction is the revelation of this continuous neighborly action from the primitive epoch to the rise of this morning's sun. This action, indeed, is civilisation itself. So that we may put the case in another way, and assert that moral education is the transmission of the message of civilisation to the individual child. The message has been uttered by Homer, Dante, Shakespeare, Swinburne; by the fabulists and allegorists of Asia and Europe; by the Greek, Roman, Hindu, and Christian parables and mythologies; by the legends of the saints of all faiths; by novelists and ballad-makers; in short, by the grand old, and yet ever-renewed tribe of the story-tellers.

The revelation should be positive rather than negative. By this I mean that the accent should be placed upon the sane and generous rather than on the evil and mean. If you tell of the valor of Socrates in openly expressing his thoughts on human morality; if you tell of the great-heartedness of Trajan in pausing to answer the widow's prayer; if

you tell of the courage of Picquart in exposing the wrong done to Dreyfus,—you are holding actions up to admiration; and Wordsworth has said, in an immortal line, that "we live by admiration, hope, and love."

So-called moralists,—dull, wizened, and kill-joy pedants,—have tortured the soul of childhood with solemn warnings, ponderous maxims (such as "Procrastination is the thief of time"), and terrific narratives of bad boys who got hanged or jailed for life, or descended to a drunkard's grave; and other tales of the skull-and-cross-bones order. This is the cynicism of ancient Diogenes in his tub; the dualism of the Gnostics, who regarded all the material world as evil; the Calvinism which damned man as born in iniquity; the Philistinism of the nineteenth century which supposed the working class was specially created to do plumbing and scavenging and to have its faults corrected by drawing-room committees. Of course, we want faults corrected, especially among the professional and college-taught classes; of course, we must condemn vice; of course, we must employ police, prisons, and punishments; of course, we must enforce the menacing but necessary "Thou shall not." But the genuine work of education is to energise and inspire, to encourage and unfold; to move the heart by the thought of the best things in man's history, and to develop that magnanimous love which spurns meanness, pities weakness, and glories in promoting fellowship, music, and mutual service. This is the positive spirit of the twentieth century contrasted with the decadent spirit which treats morality as a machine for chastising sin.

In a preceding paragraph, I referred to the Christian mythology. But I should never use such a phrase when addressing the young citizens in the public school. In their presence the voice of philosophical criticism and controversy must be hushed, and the teacher must speak, not as a Jew, a Christian, an Agnostic, a Hindu, a Moslem, a Parsi, a Theosophist, but as a representative of the general community, detached from party issues of all kinds. For years, I have had the high privilege of illustrating this respectful neutrality of the civic platform, and I have taught the children of the various schools of belief and speculations just enumerated. I have done this hundreds of times publicly, so that men and women might hear and judge for themselves. In the United States, for example, I have seen, commingled in one audience, Christian Scientists, Rationalists, Presbyterians, Hebrews, and, occasionally (and to my delight), one or two young Hindu students. Once, I taught a class in a school-room, and on one side of the children sat a Lutheran pastor listening, and opposite him a group of Catholic sisters robed in black and white. I apologise for the personal character of these evidences; but only in such ways do I find it possible to render clear the meaning of the civic basis of ethical teaching in the people's schools.

F. J. GOULD.

Philadelphia, Pa., U.S.A., April 5, 1914.

The Patron Saint of England.

"Our ancient word of courage, fair St. George
Aspire us with the spleen of fiery dragons."

—SHAKESPEARE, *Richard III.*

ON the back of a half sovereign, that painfully rare object, you may see a design of a man on horseback apparently killing a cockroach with a carving knife. This is meant to portray St. George and the dragon, and the man is supposed to be the patron saint of our "tight little island." The inclusion, during recent years, of the harmless, necessary Union Jack among the symbols of our most holy religion has led to a renewed interest in the personality of St. George, and it was, indeed, fondly hoped that, by the help of the Almighty and the editor of a halfpenny paper, many otherwise decent citizens might be per-

sueded to observe April 23, St. George's Day, by wearing roses.

The suggestion, as might have been expected, fell flat; but it may prove interesting to many to be informed who the saint was, his connection with English history, and his association with the national flower.

We regret exceedingly to find that the saint's biography is not pleasant reading, and quite unsuited for the perusal of young persons, and the still more youthful "buds" of the Primrose League. Historians agree in disclosing a pitiable story of a mis-spent life. From the highest to the lowest, from Gibbon to William Smith, they describe the saint as an unadulterated rascal. Even Emerson can find no redeeming traits in the saintly sinner's character. Hear what Emerson has to say:—

"George of Cappadocia, born at Epiphania, in Cilicia, was a low parasite, who got a lucrative contract to supply the army with bacon."

This is a bad start; but for the moment we refrain from levelling the guns of our criticism at the holy army contractor.

"A rogue and informer, he got rich and was forced to run from justice."

This seems to suggest that St. George sold pigs which had died natural deaths, was a swindler, and had learnt the art of sprinting at the psychological moment.

"He saved his money, embraced Arianism, collected a library, and got promoted by a faction to the episcopal throne of Alexandria."

Like the Army contractors who did business in the South African War, St. George had his saintly head screwed on the right way. As for his collecting a library, his previous commercial reputation was sufficiently bad to prevent the booksellers allowing the saint any credit. We may be equally certain that his ordination as a right reverend father-in-God was also against the public interest.

"When Julian came, A. D. 361, George was dragged to prison. The prison was burst open by the mob, and George was lynched as he deserved."

There is something very distressing in the idea of a bishop being "jerked to Jesus." If the saint had died of *delirium tremens* we might still have remembered prayerfully that even bishops are but human. This lynching is a dreadful business, and we read through a mist of tears Emerson's peroration:—

"And this precious knave became in good time Saint George of England, patron of chivalry, emblem of victory and civility, and the pride of the best blood of the modern world."

A lemon-hearted cynic might liken the history of the patron saint of England to a disgusting page from the earlier books of the Bible, or the *Newgate Calendar*. Some modern historians, realising the disgraceful nature of George's career, have made desperate attempts to whitewash the career of the holy man. They have succeeded, after silent meditation among the tombs, in deceiving themselves that George was not George, but another gentleman of the same name. Criticism, sharp as Shylock's knife, cuts their nonsense to pieces. The tutelary saint of England, like so many Biblical heroes, was a blackguard, and there is an end of it.

A far more serious matter is that the founder of the religion, of which St. George was so distinguished a follower, would not command the smiles of Mrs. Grundy. For Jesus was merely the son of a working man, and he was born in a stable. He insulted his mother publicly, and used the Pankhurst methods of controversy. People who disagreed with him were called "vipers," "devils," and "dogs." From the time he disputed with the "doctors" until he whipped the money-changers, he proved himself a true militant in propaganda. He would never have been fitted for a working-party at a tin tabernacle or an evangelical lawn-tennis meeting.

What is worse is that Jesus was not a teetotaler. On the contrary, he even encouraged people to keep their spirits up by pouring spirits down. He also

associated with "publicans" and sinners. As these tradesmen are the backbone of the Church party, this need not scare us, but what does Upper Tooting think of Mary Magdalene? Jesus's views on sociology approximated very closely to anarchy. The topsy-turvy ideas he had concerning the distribution of wealth, his panegyrics of poverty, his denunciation of riches, all have a flavor about them. But the last straw, the thing that places the Carpenter of Nazareth beyond the pale of respectability, is that he did not respect the clergy. Small wonder that he left his country for his country's good. Surely, an executed criminal is not a fit patron for the handsome knights, fair dames, and fairer buds of the Primrose League.

Fortunately, English society is too firmly anchored to be washed away by the paltry spray of superstition. Here, we are thankful to remember religion is a plaything, and not a reality. It is an organised hypocrisy worked in the interests of the governing classes. Under the spiritual sceptres of Buddha, Confucius, Mahomet, or even Mumbo Jumbo, precept is united with practice. But here, on virtuous English soil, we lightly tread the Primrose League path until the poppy of oblivion is scattered on the graves of George, the pork dealer, and his master, the carpenter and joiner of Nazareth.

MIMNERMUS.

Darwin and Design.

IN a very early stage of his intellectual development, the idea must have occurred to man that, if God was the author of everything in the universe, every creature from the monad up to man, and every faculty they possessed, must have been designed by the omnipotent and all-wise Ruler of the universe for some special and wise purpose. It would be difficult to determine the exact age of this argument, or who among the ancient philosophers put it forth with the greatest clearness and force. It is certain, however, that it may be found among the writings of some of the Greek philosophers, and that it has been presented through many centuries under various guises. Since the conflict between reasoners who have argued for a materialistic basis for all phenomena and those who have taken the spiritualistic or dualistic view, the design argument has had a prominent place in all important disputations on the existence of Deity.

No one, I think, will deny that, so far as this argument is concerned, its great popularity in Europe has been due to the excellent way in which it has been supported by the memorable illustrations of Paley, from which it was sought to demonstrate an exact analogy between the watch and its maker and the universe and its supposed author.

Even according to the early belief of Darwin himself, there was nothing inconsistent in the ideas of natural selection and design. God might have designed the universe, the naturalist affirmed, and have imparted to it the potentialities from which all forms of life have since sprung. In that case natural selection would be but the working out of God's plan or design. A little thought, however, will be sufficient to convince us that in this the great naturalist has misunderstood the argument as it is presented by the theologian; for, according to all theistic reasoners up to within the last few years, when they have been compelled to accept the doctrine of evolution or be considered unworthy of the consideration of scientific or thoughtful men, God designs things just as we find them to-day—civilised man, with good eyes and perfect frame; that he did not design an animal or a variety of animals, and allow a number of other animals to be developed from them that are now considered distinct species; but that he created the variety of existing creatures just as we find them to-day in the various countries of the world.

Before we consider the value, or otherwise, of the design argument in the light of modern thought, it

is worthy of notice that coming, as it does, distinctly under the head of arguments of the mode *a posteriori*, that is, reasoning from effect to cause, it must be acknowledged to be a purely scientific argument. In answer to the question, "To what class of inductive argument does this one—from marks of design in nature—belong?" John Stuart Mill, in his posthumous essay on *Nature and Theism*, answers:—

"The species of inductive arguments are four in number, corresponding to the four inductive methods—the method of agreement, of difference, of residues, and of concomitant variations. The argument under consideration falls within the first of these divisions—the method of agreement. This is, for reasons known to inductive logicians, the weakest of the four; but the particular argument is a strong one of its kind."

Now, my own opinion is that Mill attached to the design argument greater value than it really deserved. The point upon which he laid much stress was the improbability of the principle of the survival of the fittest "being sufficient to account for the degree of perfection found in some of the organs of man, such, for instance, as the eye"; but even this hypothesis he did not think so absurd as many suppose.

It would, he says,

"require us, for example, to suppose that the primeval animal, of whatever nature it may have been, could not see, and had, at most, such slight preparation for seeing as might be constituted by some chemical action of light upon its cellular structure. One of the accidental variations which are liable to take place in all organic beings would, at some time or other, produce a variety that could see in some imperfect manner; and, this peculiarity being transmitted by inheritance while other variations continued to take place in other directions, a number of races would be produced who, by the power of even imperfect sight, would have a great advantage over all other creatures which could not see, and would, in time, extirpate them from all places, except, perhaps, a few very peculiar situations underground. Fresh variations supervening would give rise to races with better and better seeing powers, until we might at last reach as extraordinary a combination of structures and functions as is seen in the eyes of man and of the more important animals. Of this theory, when pushed to this extreme point, all that can now be said is that it is not so absurd as it looks, and that the analogies which have been discovered in experience favorable to its possibility far exceed what anyone could have supposed beforehand. Whether it will be possible to say more than this is at present uncertain."

Neither Mill nor Darwin, however, lived long enough to learn of the vast mass of evidence that has since been accumulated in support of this theory. Later writers on Evolution—especially Haeckel—have brought forward an overwhelming amount of evidence to demonstrate that functions precede organs, and that some animals now exist that see without organs, or that are conscious of the presence of light or of some distinct object.

But what is the value of this design argument when examined in the light of reason and common sense? It is affirmed in the first instance that nature manifests marks of design as a whole, or in objects taken by themselves; that it is inconceivable that these manifestations could have been brought about by any number of haphazard occurrences, or by occurrences that have happened by the inherent properties of bodies—indeed, these manifestations carry with them the evidence of having been produced by some intelligent agent behind phenomena which Theists unanimously proclaim to be God. Then we have the illustration of the watch, and upon that is founded an argument that there is a complete analogy between the maker of a watch, with all its complicated mechanism, and the alleged maker of the universe. Although this argument is rather out of date to-day, it is worthy of notice for the benefit of young Freethinkers, who may have it presented to them in one of its manifold guises, and who may not have heard or seen an examination of it in the light of reason and common sense. Well, here it is. It is said: "Here is a watch; obviously that watch did not make itself. Mechanism of so complicated and delicate a nature could not have so

arranged itself without the aid of an intelligent person behind it. If that is admitted, then it is acknowledged that watches are made; that they are constructed by intelligent persons. If a watch," it is then argued, "requires an intelligent person to make it, how much more does the universe, infinitely more complicated and admirable in its working, require an intelligent Creator to produce it?" Or, to take another familiar illustration: "Look at the human eye. See what a delicate and beautiful organ it is—how admirably adapted for the purpose of seeing. Could it possibly occur that, in a universe such as this, an organ so perfect in all its parts could come to be possessed by man and the lower animals by any process short of Design?" The human hand is sometimes adduced as another effective piece of evidence of the existence of a designing mind in the universe.

Now, man cannot possibly transcend his own experience; and all his judgments are necessarily based upon it. And it will be observed that this argument from marks of design is one purely drawn from experience. A man sees a watch made, or sees a man whose business it is to make watches; he therefore concludes that all watches are made. If, however, instead of being made by hand, they were fashioned by machinery, the materials only being required to be placed in the cavity of a machine, he would still know that watches were made and that the machinery was constructed by the ingenious mind of some man. It is merely, so far, a matter of experience, and not a question of complicated structure at all. In point of fact, if a man saw a wooden watch that contained no wheels, no mainspring, and that was of no practical use, he would still conclude that it was made. He would know the man who made it; or, at worst, he would know a man who knew the man who made it. On the other hand, a savage seeing a watch for the first time would be very unlikely to think that it had been made. He would be very likely to think, if it was a watch in good going order, and if he heard it tick, that it was alive. Why? Because he has no experience of watchmakers. But if a watch is made, the maker is not also the manufacturer of the materials out of which he manipulates it. These are already at hand; his design, or contrivance, consists merely in skilfully arranging certain parts to produce a certain result. In this case, therefore, there is no analogy between the maker of a watch and the maker of a universe. According to all Theists, God is also the maker of the materials out of which he produces so many designs. Now, while man has some experience of watchmakers, he has absolutely none of universe-makers, and, therefore, he cannot say that the universe was made. Moreover, there is, in reality, no resemblance whatever between the natural processes of nature and the artistic works of man. Nobody ever saw anybody who made a tree; and there is absolutely no analogy between a manufactured article and the natural processes of nature, such as the growth of a tree from the seed or a human being from a germ. Unless we knew the Deity and understood his capabilities, it would be merely assumption on our part to affirm that he was the maker of trees, or indeed, that he was the maker of anything. In another article I will deal with the question of the alleged design of the human eye by an all-wise and all-good God; but, for the present, let me urge the young Freethinker to apply the rational tests which I have applied above to all arguments of this order that may be advanced by theologians and he will find that, in every case, they are utterly fallacious and unconvincing.

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

We call men *dangerous* whose minds are made differently from our own, and *immoral* those who profess another standards of ethics. We condemn as *sceptics* all who do not share our own illusions, without ever troubling our heads to inquire if they have others of their own.—*Anatole France*, "The Garden of Epicurus."

Acid Drops

Lord William Cecil and half-a-dozen other clergymen have issued an appeal for another day of prayer for China, following the example set in April of last year. It will be remembered how Christian preachers, from the Bishop of London downward, piled falsehood on falsehood in connection with that day of prayer. Christians at home were led to believe that China was pleading for the prayers of Christians, and that the conversion of China was imminent. "The intercession of the Churches," say the signatories to the present appeal, "was immediately followed by a relief of the situation." What a terminological inexactitude! As a matter of fact, China has been in continuous trouble ever since, and conditions now seem to be very serious indeed. And the prayers of the Churches, instead of hastening the Christianisation of China—if they had any consequence at all—led to the promulgation of Confucianism as the State religion.

Sir Thomas Clouston, M.D., says that in his experience of 2,000 alcoholic cases, nine-tenths of them took to drink before they were twenty five years of age. We may point out that the same thing holds good of religious conversion. They are both essentially complaints of adolescence.

Rev. H. Montgomery, ex-Moderator of the Irish Presbyterian Church, writes to the *Times* expressing his thanks for "the stream of intercession" that has gone up from English Christians on behalf of his "distracted country," and hopes for "earnest intercession to the Great Deliverer" to give light to all concerned. Now, we wonder whether the "stream of intercession" or the Ulster Volunteers has been the more effective? And is the "Great Deliverer" Sir Edward Carson or someone else? The worst of these pious folk is that they mix things up so terribly. Now, if they would only turn out Sir Edward Carson and disband the Volunteers, and trust to the "stream of intercession," one would then be able to see what it was worth. As it is, things are mixed up terribly.

The imitation of Christ must not go so far as having nowhere to rest one's head—at least in a Christian country. At an Essex police-court last week two homeless men were charged with sleeping in the open. One was fined five shillings, and the other was sent to prison for seven days with hard labor.

In accordance with an ancient Easter custom, a number of old women picked up sixpences from a tombstone in a churchyard at St. Bartholomew the Great, City, E.C. The clergy have picked up many sixpences from tombs and funerals.

Mgr. Tynan, rector of St. Mary's, Burnley, is of opinion that Christianity in this country is but a thin veneer. This is shown by the fact that Good Friday has been made a day of pleasure. During his long experience in the priesthood, the reverend gentleman has learned, further, that "on Good Friday and Christmas Day—the days of Christ's death and birth—there were more sins of impurity and other mortal sins committed than on any other day in the year." What a significant admission of the total failure of Christianity by one whose profession it is to defend it. Occasionally we get the truth from most unexpected sources.

In the *Church Times* recently, the Bishop of Oxford teaches that no one can be a true minister of the Gospel without being episcopally ordained, and that no saving and sanctifying grace can come through the Sacraments unless they are administered by a man so ordained. That is a polite way of saying that Nonconformist ministers are all quacks. We agree; the only difference between Dr. Gore and ourselves being that we regard all clergymen, whether episcopally or non-episcopally ordained, as persons who pretend to possess and do what they do not possess and cannot do. The ministry is in its very nature fraudulent, and all who believe in it are gulled. The man of God is only one of many illusions.

Mr. Israel Zangwill, writing in the *Evening News* says that "the miracle of the Shakespeare's divination of Shylock remains, unless he saw a Jew in the mirror." "Angels and ministers of grace, defend us"! If Shakespeare were a Jew, he had less to do with bacon than his most ardent admirers imagined.

According to the papers, "elastic houses" are being erected on the Duchy of Cornwall estate in Kennington.

Modelled on Noah's Ark, we imagine, and made of similar materials.

It is, as we have often pointed out, almost an impossibility for a Christian to deal fairly with historic facts where his own religious prejudices are involved. Christians never have done this, and we do not believe they ever will. And, unfortunately, Christian conviction seems to give the mind a fatal twist which dulls it to any sense of duty as to finding out what the facts are, or of responsibility for misstating them. Mr. R. J. Campbell, in a recent sermon, referred to the case of slavery in the old Roman Empire, and of the relation of Christianity to the system. And the references contained all the stock misstatements and exaggerations. He did point out that "servant" in the New Testament really means slave, and it would have been as well if Mr. Campbell had also pointed out that the mistranslation is itself an example of Christian dishonesty. In other writings the word is universally translated "slave." In the New Testament it becomes "servant." Why? The answer is, of course, that it was so translated to cloak the fact that Christianity endorsed the slave system, and was so far actually behind some of the best contemporary ethical thought.

But, Mr. Campbell says, the slaves in Paul's time "were the absolute property of their masters, bought and sold in the open market, liable to ill-usage without redress, and even to be put to death at their owner's caprice." And he adds, "There were kind masters.....but these were probably the exception." Well, if the slaves in Paul's time were really in the condition stated, the endorsement of the system by Paul becomes all the more villainous. But is this picture a true one? As a matter of fact, public opinion had always placed a limit to the power of the master over the slave, and this opinion in Paul's time was reflected in legal enactments. At the time of Nero the murder of a slave was illegal, masters were forbidden to sell slaves as gladiators; if they were cast out for sickness and recovered, they became free men; private prisons for slaves were abolished; a judge was appointed to hear their complaints, and empowered to punish masters who treated them cruelly; it was forbidden to sell separately husband, wife, and children; and if a master died without direct heirs, his slaves were entitled to a share in the estate. All this where Mr. Campbell asserts slaves were without redress! And, we have only to add, all authorities agree that generally a slave could purchase his freedom with a few years' savings.

Mr. Campbell says that "Slavery had to go in time because it was seen to be incompatible with the spirit of Christ. A man could hardly be a consistent Christian and continue to own slaves." Perhaps Mr. Campbell will explain in the light of these statements how it happened that the number of slaves actually increased under Christianity; while there was a complete cessation of remedial legislation, with a repeal of some of the beneficent measures named above. As a matter of fact, slavery in Christian times, and particularly in modern times, was, as Lecky said, "carried on upon a scale and with circumstances of atrocity little known to the ancients." Another great authority upon the slave trade—perhaps the greatest—Professor Cairns said:—

"The ancients kept the bodies of their slaves in bondage, but they placed no restraint upon the mind, and no check upon education; and they acted consistently with their principle, since a natural termination of slavery then existed, and one day or other the slave might be set free and become the equal of his master.....The education of slaves amongst the ancients prepared the way for their emancipation."

Under Christianity slavery became perpetual. The slave family was broken up and sold piecemeal. In Christian America, little more than seventy years ago, South Carolina punished with six months' imprisonment anyone who taught a slave to read or write. Virginia inflicted a similar penalty. In Georgia there was the same punishment for teaching a slave to read either written or printed characters. Louisiana inflicted twelve months' imprisonment, and Alabama from 250 to 500 dollars' fine on anyone who attempted to educate the slaves. This nearly 1,800 years after the "spirit of Christ" had made slavery impossible. And the man who thus falsifies historic fact is one of the leading lights of modern "advanced" Christian thought! When the leaders are such, what can one expect from the rank and file?

Historically, the Churches held on to slavery to the end. In the ninth century, some of the leading ecclesiastics, including Pope Adrian, were selling slaves to the Mohammedans. In the eighteenth century Voltaire notes that the Church owned over 50,000 slaves. Between 1783 and 1793, 878 ships belonging to Liverpool carried no less than 303,737 slaves. This represented to Liverpool an annual

value of nearly £1,200,000. The Rev. John Newton, author of the celebrated Olney Hymns, actually commanded a slave ship during the time he was studying for the ministry. According to a paper presented to the House of Commons in 1770, out of a total of 74,000 slaves sold annually by five European countries, Christian England sold 38,000. In America scores of resolutions were passed by churches supporting slavery, and many of the churches actually owned slaves. In the American Methodist Church, out of 14,000 clergymen, only 241 could be found who would sign a protest against slavery. What a commentary on the power of "the spirit of Christ."

That delightfully religious periodical, the *Daily News and Leader*, describes the new Criminal Justice Administration Bill, which provides for more lenient punishment of juvenile offenders, as "the most Christian Crimes Bill." Why Christian? The root idea of the Christian superstition is the punishment of the innocent for the guilty, and it teaches infinite retribution for finite offences.

"Nine-tenths of all work is drudgery" is the startling dictum of Dean Inge, "the gloomy dean." Yet the Christian Church has ever sought to make the "day of rest" as dull as ditchwater.

Mr. Bernard Shaw put some crimson flowers of speech into the mouth of a flower-girl in his latest play, *Pygmalion*. If the eminent dramatist is not more careful, he will be confused with the philological members of the Christian Evidence Society.

That Christianity is saturated with superstition has again been demonstrated in a striking manner. At Catanzaro, Italy, the peasants stormed the cathedral because the Bishop deprived the religious processions of all forms of Paganism. "The Bishop," adds the report, ironically, "and the priests ran away."

A relation of the German Kaiser has become a priest of the Romish Church and preached a sermon in a Parisian church where a fashionable crowd flocked to hear him. It was a novelty to see a royal prince wearing petticoats; as a rule they only chase them.

The Vicar of St. Mary Major, Exeter, seems quite happy because "in spite of their dwindling numbers their collections had gone up, and not down." So the vicar is content, and says they are getting what they want—quality, not quantity. It looks as though what they want is cash, not congregation. Both if they can get them; but of the two, the former most.

We desire to do justice, even to the Church. Rev. J. Neville Figgis says "the belief gains ground that the Church is a body of respectable persons; that real sinners have no place in her." We can assure Mr. Figgis that he is quite mistaken. A great number of people are quite convinced that there are as many sinners in the Church as elsewhere. They are of a more saponaceous character than those outside, but that is all. We do not like to see the Church unjustly accused, and by one of its own ministers, too.

What an amiable gentleman the Bishop of Sodor and Man must be! Mr. Charles Gill, who is trying to form a Farm Laborers' Union on the island, wrote to the *Ramsay Courier* protesting against the Bishop discharging his old gardener and employing an Englishman in his place. He says there are plenty of Manxmen to do the work, and it is a disgrace to the Church that such things should happen. Except for the discharge of an old servant, we do not see very much in the complaint; but the Bishop denounces it as an untruth "so foul that one would not expect to be uttered by anyone outside of hell." Further, "he wondered why God allowed some people to live, and was sometimes impressed with the need of a second flood, so that the world might begin over again." Which proves, as we said, that the Bishop is a very amiable man, and an apt preacher of the doctrine to turn one's cheek when the other is smitten.

A picture in a recent issue of the *Daily Telegraph* represented a Catholic priest and two altar-servers going round the houses of Earlsfield and sprinkling them with holy water. A pail of limewash or of Condy's Fluid might easily have been more efficacious.

In the days of faith, particularly the Puritan times, some of the names given to children were very quaint. From a jury list in 1700 the names of some of the good men and true were: Kill-sin Pimple, Fly-debate Roberts, Be Faithful

Joiner, Fight the Good Fight White, and Weep-not Billing. What a change nowadays, when even Biblical names are out of fashion.

A writer in the *Daily Mail* suggests the painting of buildings in gay colors. A novel idea. Imagine the churches and chapels of the Man of Sorrows painted in all the colors of Joseph's coat.

The Rev. Joseph Shaw, a member of the Epsom Guardians, has offered to swallow all the microbes found in the crevices of the workhouse infirmary flooring. It is contended that the crevices harbored germs. Maybe the reverend gentleman is relying on the Biblical promise that no deadly thing can hurt a believer.

Mr. P. W. Wilson, M.P., says, "Just causes never die. Causes rooted in the errors of mankind live on until the errors are exorcised." Exactly! But when, as in the case of the Christian superstition, error is heavily endowed, the process is a slow one.

"Neither a peace palace, nor even a large fund for paying peace lecturers is necessarily a step nearer to the establishment of real peace," says Mr. C. E. Maurice. This is true, especially as priests of the Government religion bless guns and battleships, and consecrate regimental colors.

Rev. C. Haldon writes to the *Times* that in twenty years experience "not a single person has ever voiced to me an objection to the Athanasian Creed, and not one of the hundreds of incumbents that I have met has mentioned it as a difficulty." Mr. Haldon has had a most remarkable experience. One would be interested in getting the cranial developments of the people he has come across. We have no reason to suppose that his clerical life has been spent in ministering to the inmates of an idiot asylum.

The Vicar of Shrewsbury has expressed the opinion that a "damn" now and then is a good thing. Well, if anyone should be an authority upon the subject it is a dignitary of the Church. Charles Haddon Spurgeon is credited with saying that there are times when a man must swear—or burst. It is astonishing, by the way, what a number of ordinary "cuss-words" had their origin in religious expressions. We fancy this will turn out to be its most permanent contribution to civilisation.

John Bull, at the conclusion of a slashing criticism of the Bishop of London's Bill to secure the closing of publichouses on Sunday, asks "Why doesn't the Bishop of London get married and settle down? He will never be any good till he does." Well, it is just possible that had the Bishop married and settled down as a young man—and possessed the right kind of wife—a good many of his absurdities might never have seen light. Whether a man is an enforced celibate, or one by natural taste, his views of life are apt to be jaundiced, and if he possesses in addition strong religious fervor, the result is certain. We do not complain, however; the appointment of F. W. Ingram to the Bishopric of London was not at all a bad stroke of work for Free-thought.

A Brighton centenarian has two "children," a daughter aged seventy-five and a "baby" son aged seventy-one, and the newspaper reporters are making headlines of the matter. What type would the printers use if Adam or Methuselah were alive to-day?

A churchwarden and Sunday-school superintendent in Belfast, who has just completed a term of imprisonment for embezzling was a witness in the Belfast Bankruptcy Court the other day. It turned out that he had spent £27,000 on women, but he said "They were not immoral women, before my God." Judge Craig told him that he had "better leave God out of this. He does not trouble much about bankruptcy business." We agree, but what we should like to know is what on earth God *does* trouble himself with? Perhaps Judge Craig, or someone else, can inform us.

Fleet-street was once the wonder-place of London, and some marvellous exhibits were shown by enterprising showmen. Ben Jonson alludes to "Jonah and the whale being shown at Fleet Bridge." Nowadays, even the clergy would have to be put on the rack to speak of the lodging-house whale.

The litter of the streets and public conveyances caused by newspapers and periodicals is becoming a nuisance. "Littery London" is not confined to Fleet-street.

To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1914.—Previously acknowledged, £130 15s. 5d. Received since:—J. E. Stapleton, 2s. 6d.; A. Vickers, £1; Mrs. Helena Parsons, £2 10s.; A. Galpin, £1 1s.; W. Dodd, 10s.

A. GALPIN (U.S.A.).—We note your kind wish that your subscription to the President's Honorarium Fund were "ten times as large."

C. PARE.—Someone has evidently been testing the extent of your credulity. No such document has ever been discovered. There were during the middle Ages various letters from the Virgin Mary and Jesus afloat. Possibly your informant has been giving you one of these old stories.

E. B.—Many thanks for cuttings. As you will observe, they generally come in useful.

J. BRENN.—Sorry to hear the news in one part of your communication. The cuttings enclosed are just symptomatic of the present state of the Churches. The problem all round is how to placate the liberal-minded without frightening others of an opposite kind.

F. J. S. GILBERT (Biloxi, U.S.A.).—Pleased to know you appreciate the *Freethinker* so much, and think that "the British people should be proud of such a paper." We believe some of them are, and we are content to get along with that.

We regret that, owing to pressure on our available space, we are compelled to hold over the third of "Abracadabra's" articles on *Christian Apologetics* until next week.

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

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

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

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

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

Sugar Plums.

We may reply to a number of inquiries by saying that Mr. Foote's health is now much improved, and that he appreciates the inquiries that have been made concerning him. He intends being present at the Board meeting of the Secular Society, Ltd., and at the meeting of the Executive of the N. S. S., both of which take place on April 30. Branches who have business for the Agenda should forward their motions by that date if possible. The last date for sending in is May 2.

A correspondent reminds us that with the beginning of May the *Freethinker* completes thirty-three years of its existence. This is not an old age, and we believe we may say without boasting that no signs of old age are observable in its columns. But it is a good age, considering all the difficulties attendant upon running a paper of this kind. Only those who have given themselves to a great cause would care to face all these difficulties, and not only face them when they arise, but expect them. We take pride, too, in the fact that during all those years the *Freethinker* has never lowered or sullied its flag. It has never stooped to compromise, and it has been repaid by the personal respect and devotion of thousands of its readers. We believe we are right in saying that the *Freethinker* is the only paper in London—perhaps in the country—that has been under the same editor for so long a period. And that, too, is no small achievement. All things considered, it would not be a bad thing if the readers of the *Freethinker* turned May into a birthday month, and each one resolved to present the paper and the cause it represents with at least one new subscriber. That should not be a difficult matter in a very large number of cases, and it would form the best of birthday congratulations.

Our reply to "Anti-Cant," of a couple of weeks ago, on the question of "Brotherhoods," has brought to hand several letters, one of which is deserving of more than a line or two in the "Answers to Correspondents" column. This gentleman writes that he has made it a practice of attending several brotherhood meetings, and finds that while in some considerable latitude of opinion is permitted, in other cases—the majority—"they are simply occasions for goody-goody preaching, as a rule, religious gatherings under another name." In any case, the opportunity for a *Freethinker* speaking his mind on religious questions seldom arises. Still, he is satisfied that he is doing good work in attending these meetings, and in broadening the minds of

those who attend by, apparently, a policy of permeation. In conclusion, this correspondent agrees that if *Freethinkers* would speak out when religious questions are introduced in non-religious associations, they would soon find their position changed for the better.

There are several points raised in this letter, all of which deserve a word or two of comment. One point is whether these brotherhood societies would really permit a free expression of opinion on religion? We do not believe for a moment that it would be tolerated. Those who tried it would be made to feel that their room was more desirable than their company, and would be forced, in some way or other, to leave. Of course, they are welcome there—even though their opinions may be known—while they keep their mouths shut. In the first place, their presence serves to keep up the pretence of no religious tests. Secondly, it keeps them out of "mischief" elsewhere. If they were not listening at a brotherhood meeting they might be listening, or talking, elsewhere, and their doing so might lead to further injury to the Churches. Every man they can get there is so much gain to the Churches. This fact must never be forgotten.

Finally, is it quite certain that the policy of permeation is the wisest or the best one at present? In the absence of all possibility of anything else, something may be said in its favor, but there is an unfortunate tendency to take the policy of permeation as an end, rather than as the means to an end. It is safe, it is comfortable, and, therefore, it is attractive. But permeation does not seem a pressing need to-day. What is needed is rather outspokenness. There are thousands, hundreds of thousands, of non-believers who ought to speak out. There is a much larger number of believers who need instructing as to where they really are in matters of religion; and, therefore, the real need is for greater boldness of thought and speech, not a mere broadening. You may broaden a river until it becomes a swamp; and you may broaden thought in such a way that it becomes of no value to anyone. And we have watched the effects of this policy of permeation in more than one instance. We have seen *Freethinkers* commence a Sunday Lecture Society, with the intention of breaking down religion. What has been the result? With the exception that the meetings were held on Sunday, the lectures have developed into a class of a very harmless character, such as do not injure superstition to any particular extent. Nay, they have positively helped the Churches by withdrawing from the direct attack many men and women who might otherwise have been conducting a vigorous campaign against superstition. Our advice is to let those societies conduct their own work in their own way and with their own people. Those *Freethinkers* who really take pride in their opinions, and who duly appreciate their value to the community, will best advance their cause by working for the direct organisation and propaganda of *Freethought* in their respective localities. The real way to make people respect your opinions is to lead the way by respecting them yourself.

We are asked to announce that Miss Vance has received a number of subscriptions towards the W. J. Ramsey Testimonial. All of these will be duly acknowledged when the Committee of the fund has made its final arrangements.

Some Notes.

I AM sorry in one way, but glad in another way, that I referred somewhat too seriously to Miss Vance's position in the metropolitan hospital where she is undergoing special treatment for her old trouble—rheumatism, which, of course, is affected for the worse by the conditions involved in her later malady of blindness. I misunderstood some expressions, and the tone of my remarks rather belonged to my own mood. I learn now that the hospital treatment is doing Miss Vance some good. Nevertheless the essence of what I said remains true. After all, being a very careful writer, though liable to mistakes, like everybody else, including writers who are not careful,—I did not state that Miss Vance actually was "fighting for her life." I added the word "almost," which shows that even then I felt the need of some qualification in that extremely brief sentence. I do not find that she is in any special danger at present, but her danger is general and continuous if nothing can be done for her relief. I hope I have made the

matter fairly clear; anyhow, I must leave it there now.

Mr. Cohen's paragraph on the case of Mr. W. J. Ramsey tempts me to say that it was not a real kindness on the part of those who have taken his case up to treat me as too ill to be troubled or consulted about it. I wish to say, at this earliest opportunity, that I sincerely desire to have my name associated with the effort that is being made to mitigate the lot—as far as it can be mitigated—which Nature is dealing out to him in his last days or years, as the case may be. It is one of her most malignant forms of execution. I shall send my subscription as soon as I see the name of the general treasurer of the Fund projected by various bodies of sympathisers in his behalf. Mr. Ramsey went to prison with me in 1883 for the crime of "blasphemy." I am afraid the responsibility was all mine, but he accepted the share he was charged with, and took his portion of the punishment without weak complaint or foolish boasting. I care to remember nothing else now. He participated in the public subscription raised for the "prisoners for blasphemy" then, but it was not a colossal figure, and the lapse of thirty years, and the approach of the final need of his life, are enough to justify a last appeal for an old Freethinker who has always been, in his own way, a hard worker for the movement.

The death of Mr. Hubert Bland reminds me of something which the newspapers do not report, and which his latter-day friends would not wish to recollect. Long ago he stood as the Secular Education candidate for the Finsbury Division of the London School Board. I have not time, or spare energy, to look the matter up in the old pages of the *Freethinker*, but I think it was the London Secular Federation, which still existed, and of which I was still President, that invited Mr. Bland to enter the lists as the "secular" champion. It also found the cash for the campaign. Mr. Bland kept his contract faithfully, but I don't think he succeeded in convincing anybody that he was very much in earnest. His wife took part in the public meetings, and was in all ways an attractive speaker. Both of them were Socialists; Mr. Bland, indeed, was one of the founders of the Fabian Society. They did not catch the Socialist vote, however. I fancy Mr. Bland had too few marks of the "orny-anded son of toil" to satisfy them. His military appearance and his monocle may have suggested Satan canvassing the "saints" at the door of the tabernacle. I was in the thick of the fight myself, for it was soon evident that the purely "secular" vote was all we could rely upon.

The *Referee* comes into my house on Sunday, though I seldom read it. But I gave a good look at it last Sunday. I wanted to see if my "intellectuals," as Charles Lamb would have said, had suffered from my recent illness. I turned to "Mustard and Cress" by the great "Dagonet." There were two emphatic witticisms by this distinguished journalist. He remarked that "the vacation [of Easter] was over" but "the Government had not vacated." He also remarked that the wax treatment for gout was appropriate, as "gout always made one waxy." After these wonderful efforts of the distinguished journalist and playwright I felt reassured.

My recent illness was primarily the result of overwork. Behind the scenes, more than before the footlights, the past six months has been a very trying period. I say no more at present; I may have to say more in the near future. A good deal of the troublesome work has to be faced again. I am facing it again. At the same time, I am doing my best to nurse my strength back into fighting form. So thanks to Mr. Cohen again for his saving me for a time the editorial worry of the *Freethinker*.

G. W. FOOTE.

The Idea of God not Universal.—II.

(Continued from p. 246.)

"We only know of the supernatural through human thought. The dog, the bird, the elephant may dream, but the dream leaves no result in their sensoriums. Man only has faith, he only sees a supernatural existence, out of humanity there is no God; nay, with man the sentiment of a universal Deity is but, as it were, of yesterday. The united balance of physical action that now pervades the kosmos had persisted through untold periods of time, before man existed there were no temples, no prayers, no rites, no ghosts or gods. Then the sun shone and the tides flowed as now; life came and went, and came again, and the Ichthyosaur and the Dinosaur were the princes of the earth; days, years, and cycles passed without the presence of charm or spell, of sacrifice or fetish, or god-power being feared."—J. H. KING, *The Supernatural* (1892), vol. ii., pp. 266-7.

"In spite of the vulgar prejudice, it is certain that belief in imaginary beings worthy of the name of 'gods' is far from universal. There are two principal causes which keep certain tribes or races outside or above these errors: either a brain so ill-developed that it is incapable of any speculation, or else our own clear practical sense, or an innate common sense too strongly born."—LETOURNEAU, *Sociology* (1881), p. 276.

"I cannot entertain the slightest doubt in my mind," says the famous anthropologist Broca, "that there are among the lower races people without worship, without dogmas, without metaphysical conceptions, without general creeds, and consequently without religion."—BUCHNER, *Force and Matter*, p. 382.

HERBERT SPENCER says:—

"From various parts of the world, witnesses of different nations and divergent beliefs bring evidence that there exist men who are either wholly without ideas of supernatural beings, or whose ideas of them are extremely vague. 'When Father Junipero Serra established the Mission of Dolores in 1776, the shores of San Francisco Bay were thickly populated by the Ahwashtees, Ohlones, Altahmos, Romanons, Tuolomos, and other tribes. The good Father found the field unoccupied, for, in the vocabulary of these people, there is found no word for god, angel, or devil; they held no theory of origin or destiny.' This testimony, which Bancroft cites respecting the Indians of California, corresponds with the testimonies of old Spanish writers respecting some South American peoples. Garcilasso says that, 'the Chirihuanas and natives of the Cape de Pasau.....had no inclination to worship anything, high or low, neither from interested motives nor from fear.' Balboa mentions tribes without any religion as having been met with by Ynca Yupangui; and Avendano asserts that in his time the Antis had no worship whatever."*

All the Indian tribes now existing are credited with a belief in a Great Spirit; but when the Spaniards discovered America, and sought to introduce Christianity among the inhabitants, they found them quite destitute of any idea of a Supreme Being, as we have seen by the testimony cited by Spencer. Junipero was a Spanish priest, and Garcilasso one of the earliest historians of America, who had the intimate knowledge of the native language necessary to a knowledge of native beliefs.

Mr. R. Dorman, a competent authority, writes:—
"that the Great Spirit of the red man or Supreme God of the Indians is almost certainly nothing more than a figure of European origin, reflected and transformed almost beyond recognition in the mirror of the Indian mind."†

Mr. J. H. King, who cites Dorman, also cites the high authority of Stephen Powers, who goes further still. In the "Ethnological Report of the Geographical Survey of the Rocky Mountains" (iii., p. 418), published by the United States Government, he writes:—

"With the exception, perhaps, of a few tribes in the northern parts of the State, I am thoroughly convinced that the great majority of the Californian Indians have no conception of a Supreme Being. Nearly all now speak of the Great man, the Old man above, the Great One above, but they have the word and nothing more. This is manifestly a modern graft on their ideas, because this being takes no part in their affairs, is

* Herbert Spencer, *Principles of Sociology* (1885), vol. i., p. 280.

† *Anthropological Institute Journal*, xi., p. 361.

never mentioned in the real and genuine aboriginal mythology or cosmography, creates nothing, upholds nothing. They have heard of the white man's God, as some of them have taken enough interest to translate the word into their own language, as Pokoh, Lush, Sha, Komus. It is an idea not assimilated. The Indian asked knows no more than the name, but questioned on man, fire, and familiar objects, his interest is aroused and coyote (the Prairie Wolf) comes forward; the coyote did everything, made everything, that his father told him, and his father's father. I affirm without hesitation there is no Indian equivalent for God. There are numerous spirits, chiefly bad, some in human form, some dwelling in beasts and birds, having names which they generally refuse to mortals, and haunting chiefly the hills and forests. Some of these spirits are those of wicked Indians returned to earth, others appear to be self-existent. There are great and potent spirits bearing rule over many of their kind, and there are inferior. All these spirits are to be propitiated and their wrath averted. There is not one in a thousand from whom the Indians expect any active assistance; if they can only secure their non-interference all will go well. Nature was the Indian god and the only god he knew, and the coyote was his minister."*

Like the native Americans, the natives of Africa knew nothing of a Supreme Being until the belief was introduced by Christian and Mohammedan missionaries. Sir John Lubbock observes: "Among the Koosa Kaffirs, Lichtenstein affirms that 'there is no appearance of any religious worship whatever'" (Lichtenstein, vol. i., p. 255). And "Dr. Vanderkemp, the first missionary to the Kaffirs, 'never could perceive that they had any religion, or any idea of the existence of God.'"[†]

The Rev. F. W. Farrar, in an article dealing with this subject, contributed to the *Anthropological Journal* (1864), says of the Africans, "The missionary, J. Leighton, tells us of the Mpongwes that he found among them neither religion nor idolatry; and another missionary, the Rev. G. Brown, tells us of the Kaffirs, 'That they have not in their language any word to use as the name, or to denote the being, of a God—of any God.'"

According to one account,—

"the nearest approach to it appears to be the word 'Tixo,' which means 'wounded knee,' and was the name of a celebrated medicine-man a few generations back! The natives of Cape Mount, when questioned by Smith about their religion, said they obeyed their chiefs, and troubled themselves about nothing higher."

And, again, "Of the Kaffirs the missionary Scultheiss also says that 'they have no religion, never pray, know nothing of a higher Being, and believe only in the existing life.'"[‡]

In the face of all this evidence, Dr. Livingstone declared of the Africans, "There is no occasion for telling even the most degraded of these people of the existence of a God, or of a future state, these things being universally admitted."§ Yet it is a fact that only on the previous page (157), speaking of the Bakalahari who live at Motlasi Wells, he says, "When we kneel down and address an unseen Being, the position and the act often appear to them so ridiculous that they cannot refrain from bursting into uncontrollable laughter"; and of a tribe of Bechuanas, that when a missionary attempted to sing to them—

"the effect on the risible faculties of the audience was such that the tears actually ran down their cheeks. Nearly all their thoughts were directed to the supply of their bodily wants, and this has been the case with the race for ages" (p. 157).

He admits—

"the want of any form of worship, or of idols, or of formal prayers or sacrifice, make both Caffres and Bechuanas appear as among the most godless races of mortals known anywhere. But, though they all possess a distinct knowledge of a deity and of a future

state, they show so little reverence, and feel so little connection with either, that it is not surprising that some have supposed them entirely ignorant on the subject" (p. 158-9).

Well, the belief in a God without "any form of worship, or of idols, or of formal prayers or sacrifice," is scarcely worth dignifying with the name of a "belief." And, indeed, he tells us that once, speaking to a native about God, "I discovered that, though he was employing the word which is used among the Bakwains when speaking of the Deity, he had only the idea of a chief and was all the while referring to Sekomi" (p. 159), Sekomi being a native chief.

Moreover, when Livingstone said that the Kaffirs had a clear idea of God, he was not competent to express an opinion; for he tells us explicitly, "I have not had any intercourse with either Caffres or Bushmen in their own tongues" (p. 159). Therefore, he could not possibly know what their ideas upon the subject were. In spite of his sweeping assertion that all the African tribes had a belief in God, he tells us of the Bambiri, "They pray to departed chiefs and relatives, but the idea of praying to God seemed new, and they heard it with reverence."*

In his *Last Journals*, Livingstone says of the Matambwe:—

"They have all great reverence for the Deity, and the deliberate way in which they say 'We don't know Him' is to prevent speaking irreverently, as that may injure the country. The name is 'Mulungu.' Makochera afterwards said that 'He was not good, because he killed so many people.'"[†]

It is evident that Livingstone was so prejudiced in favor of the belief in God himself that he could not realise that people could exist without the same belief; and when they declared their ignorance of any such being, he puts it down to their "reverence," an idea wholly foreign to the savage mind, as we shall see when we come to consider the ideas and capabilities of thought of the uncivilised.

In the last passage quoted, Livingstone tells us that the name of God is "Mulungu." Now, the Rev. Duff Macdonald, an African missionary, and well acquainted with the language, says:—

"In all our translations of Scripture, where we found the word God we used Mulungu, but this word is chiefly used by the natives as a general name for spirit. The spirit of a deceased man is called his Mulungu, and all the prayers and offerings of the living are presented to such spirits of the dead."[‡]

Sir Richard Barton, the famous traveller, linguist, and explorer, who is said to have mastered forty languages, observes:—

"Dr. Livingstone, with his usual peremptory and unsatisfactory way of laying down the law upon every question, affirms that 'the existence of a God and of a future state has always been admitted by all the Bechuanas.' A far better authority, Dr. Moffat (*Missionary Labors*, p. 245) remarks concerning the Bachwanas (Bechuanas), whilst owning that they are acute reasoners and minute observers of men and manners, that 'to tell them, the greatest of them, that there was a Creator, the Governor of the heavens and earth—of the fall of man, or the redemption of the world—the resurrection of the dead, and immortality beyond the grave—is to tell them what appeared to be more fabulous, extravagant, and ludicrous than their own stories about lions, hyænas, and jackals.'"[§]

The same veteran missionary declared of the Bushman, "He knows no god; knows nothing of eternity."^{||}

W. MANN.

(To be concluded.)

* Livingstone, *Missionary Travels and Researches in South Africa*, p. 605.

† Livingstone, *Last Journals*, vol. i., p. 145.

‡ Rev. Duff Macdonald, *Africa, or the Heart of Heathen Africa*, vol. ii., p. 59.

§ Barton, *Abeokuta and the Camaroons*, vol. i., p. 178.

|| Rev. Dr. Moffat, *Missionary Labors and Scenes in South Africa*, p. 15.

* J. H. King, *The Supernatural*, vol. ii., pp. 180-1.

† Lubbock, *Origin of Civilisation* (1880), p. 215.

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

§ Livingstone, *Missionary Travels and Researches in South Africa* (1857), p. 158.

Correspondence.

"ORGANISMS ANTAGONISTIC TO HEALTH."

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—It will be admitted by all Freethinkers that theologians are apt to run in ruts, to accept dogmas in blind faith on the authority of someone else, and to pass them on unquestioningly to others. In a like spirit, the pseudo-scientist of to-day blindly accepts the germ theory of disease, warns us against flies and germ carriers, writes confidentially about things like toxins and anti-toxins which have never been seen or chemically demonstrated, parrots a fairy tale as to the supposed actions of invisible agents, confuses causes and results, disease and disease germs, micro-organisms and animal parasites, and builds up a whole body of doctrine, including the usual kind of legendary narrative, which he expects others to swallow as "facts."

And yet the whole theory rests upon a foundation of sand, owing to the failure of the alleged disease germs to comply with three simple rules laid down by Koch, which, had they been the malign creatures they are represented to be, they ought certainly to have complied with. These rules are very simple:—

- "1. The alleged specific germ should invariably be found in connection with the disease it is supposed to have caused.
- "2. It should not be found apart from it.
- "3. It should, when injected into an animal, give rise to the same disease."

Alas! even the editor of the *Lancet* has been obliged to confess that "these postulates are seldom, if ever, complied with."

But the association of a particular germ with a particular disease has become a dogma. If the patient clearly has malaria, but one of the various illusory blood tests shows *Micrococcus Melitensis* to be present, his case is labelled "Mediterranean Fever." If, in connection with laryngitis, the Klebs-Loeffler bacillus be found, the case becomes one of "diphtheria." Nay, if you are perfectly well, and are found to harbor some alleged specific germ, you are accused of being a danger to the community. The diagnosis of disease has been turned topsy-turvy by this method of deciding everything by the germ, and a class of experimenters who are bacteriologists before they are physicians has arisen, regarding men but as a battle-ground for microbes, and vying with each other in producing ever-increasing numbers and varieties of disease-inoculation, under the mistaken idea that the way to get rid of bad matter is to pump more bad matter into the body. In their wake has sprung up a large and enterprising class of serum and vaccine manufacturers, and the Lister Institute presses its nostrums for sale with as great a pertinacity as a Holloway and a Beecham have displayed. "Keep the blood-stream pure" is no longer considered the ideal counsel for health; our medical men who rave about the supposed danger of germs entering the body by natural means think nothing of inoculating them in countless thousands direct into the blood-channels, which nature has so well protected from interference by their covering layers of cells.

Concerning this Alfred Russel Wallace wrote:—

"The medical profession appear to hold the view that pathogenic or disease-producing microbes exist for the purpose of causing disease in otherwise healthy bodies to which they gain access—that they are, in fact, wholly evil. It is also claimed that the only safeguard against them is some kind of 'anti-toxin' with which everyone must be inoculated to be saved from the danger of attack by some or all of the large number of such diseases which affect almost every organ and function of the body. This view seems to me to be fundamentally wrong, because it does not show us any use for such microbes in the scheme of life, and also because it does not recognise that a condition of health is the one and only protection we require against all kinds of disease; and that to put any product of disease whatever into the blood of a really healthy person, is to create a danger far greater than the disease itself."

And now comes Madame Henri's claim to have discovered that germs change one into another—that the alleged specific germ for anthrax, by treatment with ultra-violet rays, turns into a differently shaped organism capable of causing a disease differing in every respect from anthrax! If the ultra-violet rays can do this outside the body, may not conditions inside the body bring about equally startling changes? Here we are back again at the question—Are not these germs the normal inhabitants of our bodies, changing their shapes in accordance with varying states of health, found now in association with one disease and now with another? The theory that they are specific was started by Pasteur, a man with no medical training or experience. Like Jenner, who bought his degree of M.D. for £15, he led a profession much more qualified to decide such matters than himself, had not its love of sensationalism and hero-

worship given him his opportunity. It is said that a new idea starts as a heresy and ends as a superstition. The germ-theory, once accepted and hailed as a dogma, soon became a superstition, and all those who have found flaws in it and dared to voice them, especially when they have been medical men, have been penalised for so doing.

Most laymen imagine that the association between an alleged specific germ and its disease is so close and unmistakable that it is easy of detection. This is not so. So difficult, in fact, has it been to decide between the claims of rival germs to produce the same disease that the honors have frequently been given to one and afterwards fleeced from it and handed on to another. Pages of Mr. Stephen Paget's book, *Experiments on Animals*, were devoted to claims (including, be it noted, statistical claims concerning the success of a serum obtained from the germ!) for a certain germ of yellow fever which was afterwards denounced as the wrong one. The same thing happened with the sheep-pox germ. As an example of the cocksureness of bacteriology, beside which the cocksureness of theology must take a back seat, I quote from Sir John Simon: "By these experiments on sheep it has been made quite clear that the contagion of sheep-pox is something of which the habits can be studied as the habits of a fern or moss can be studied." But the "contagion" alas! was not the germ. "Sheep-pox," said Sir Stewart Stockman to the Royal Commission on Vivisection, "has been shown not to be due to these organisms." Sleeping sickness was a few years ago put to the credit of an altogether different organism from the one now fashionable, and that on the authority of the Royal Society.

There is not a single germ which complies with Koch's invaluable test laid down in the postulates I have quoted. Human tuberculosis is known to be set up in certain manufacturing factories by lung-irritation; it has been produced in guinea pigs by inoculation with silver wire or cotton. Sir Douglas Powell naively states that the tubercle bacillus is far more virulent "when mixed with other infections"! The disease is notoriously more rife among the slum children who seldom taste milk than among those in constant danger of imbibing the bacillus.

Confectioners are not decimated by disease as they ought to be, seeing that flies usually swarm in their neighborhood. Draining swamps gets rid of malaria apart from any question of mosquitoes. Plague is got rid of wherever stone houses are substituted for mud hovels in India. Smallpox vanishes as sanitary science marches onwards and vaccination declines.

The articles contributed to the *Freethinker* by Mr. T. F. Palmer lead me to believe that he has not made any independent study of both sides of this question. He is so certain that he has been told the truth about these germs without any possibility of error that he is ready even to vouch for the hotly disputed stable-fly theory of infantile paralysis (Pettersen and Laudsteiner proving that it exists too far north for the stable flies to live), and he asserts that "the natural healthy healing of wounds is absolutely dependent upon the absence of bacteria or the presence of some powerful anti-toxin," although Dr. George Stoker's classical experiment showed that an ulcer treated with corrosive sublimate to kill the bacteria refused to heal, whereas another ulcer on the same patient, at the same time, in the same part of the body, treated with oxygen whereby the bacteria swarmed and multiplied, healed up to perfection. And his experience was amply confirmed by Dr. Granville Bantock in his own surgical work.

But the germ theory is "orthodox." The position of the medical profession towards it is displayed with absolute accuracy, and consequently with humor, in Mr. Bernard Shaw's play, *The Doctor's Dilemma*. The same keen-witted critic pointed to a fact which merits the attention of all Freethinkers when he suggested that the law of the conservation of energy operates in human credulity, and that every atom of it withdrawn from theology has been diverted to what passes for science. "If people will believe in tales and miracles," he writes,

"is it not better that they should believe that Balaam's ass spoke, that Joshua stopped the sun, that Samson cracked the pillars, that Jonah was swallowed alive by a whale, and that the blind Syrian saw men as trees walking, rather than that they can live for ever with sound bodies if only their men of science will shrink from no cruelty, and they themselves from no filthiness in the pursuit and use of magical inoculations? The truth is your ordinary man cannot reason, or perform any other skilled mental operation..... The scientist comes along and says to him: 'My friend, by a diabolically cruel process I have procured a revoltingly filthy substance. Allow me to inject this under your skin, and you can never get hydrophobia, or enteric fever, or diphtheria, etc. I have even a very choice preparation of unmentionable nastiness, which will enable you, if not to live for ever, though I think that quite possible, at least to renew in your old age the excesses of your youth.'"

This, be it noted, is actually what has been offered:—

"The ordinary man jumps at the bait.....As to filth, science has taught him that dirt is only 'matter in the wrong place.' It has not taught him that disease is only matter in the wrong condition, and to inject matter in the wrong condition into matter in the right condition [healthy flesh, to wit] is to put matter in the wrong place with a vengeance."

Much more might be written on this interesting topic, but I fear to encroach further upon your space. May I, in conclusion, urge your readers to study the numerous critical writings of Dr. Hadwen, the President of the British Union, and if they want to hear the subject discussed from both sides, to try to induce any doctor of their acquaintance to debate with him on the germ theory of disease.

B. H. KIDD, *Secretary,*
British Union for Abolition of Vivisection,
32 Charing Cross, S.W.

A Mission to Wowsers.

(There is great need of a mission to convert the poor heathen wowsers.—Tasmanian paper.)

SHALL they perish, O my brothers?
Let us rise and call the others—
Let us start and save the heathen,
Save the pulpsteering crew;
Save the wowsers, save them early!
Won't you help us, Maud and Pearlie?
Girls, I beg you do a hustle,
For I think it's up to you!
They are heathens all benighted—
Some are sepulchres and whited—
O be forward, men and brothers,
Help us, sisters, night and day;
Shall the heathen wowsers perish?
I beseech you, save and cherish—
Help us load Australia's wowsers
In our earnest mission dray!

For the wower in his blindness
Needs the hand of Christian kindness—
Stroke the curate, pat him softly,
I implore you, Kate and Jane;
Lead him back to life and gladness,
And remove his look—whose sadness
Seems to ooze across the landscape
Like a melancholy stain!
Let each wowsing tax-expounder
Cease in sin to moan and flounder—
Lead him back again to manhood,
Make him human, I implore;
Bishop, rector, solemn deacon—
Show to each a gladsome beacon
Let us save them with this mission
Whilst our gay girls shout "Encore!"

Think, my brethren! Turk and nigger
Have their missions waxing bigger,
And the Chow is pawed and prayed for,
And likewise the Cherokee;
But I find no earnest mission
Saving wowsers from Perdition—
Therefore rise in haste, my brethren!
Rise in scores and follow me!
Let us save these pious wowsers
With the drab and dismal trousers—
Sisters, kneel, and urge each curate
From his wowsing to refrain;
From Perdition let us snatch 'em—
Girls, get busy! Skip and catch 'em,
For the wower hath his weakness,
So we shall not mish in vain!

Join the mission, friends, I urge ye!
Help us save the solemn clergy—
Men who know not joy nor pleasure,
Help us, daughters and mammas;
Seek the mournful wower-chappie—
Make him cheerful, make him happy;
Parents, hearken to these pleadings!
I implore you, good papas!
Mish in earnest! Mish with vigor!
Shall we save the Chow and nigger—
Shall we pray for brown and brindle
Whilst the heathen wowsers groan?
O my sisters, be not bashful!
Pass the plate, sweet emblem cashful—
Mish with me; and raise an anthem,
Joy infecting every tone!

See the heathen, joyless vicar!
Lead him gently to his liquor,
Let the damsels dance before him,
Bearing jars of purple wine;
Softly lift 'em, consecrate him—
If he's single, likewise mate him—
Round this mission-temple's doorway
Let Hymeneal symbols twine!
Days are these that call for labor—
He who hath a wowsing neighbor,
He who meets with persons solemn,
Let him mish with words of cheer;
Ah, the joy! The speechless rapture
O'er wower-cove we capture—
Oh, the hymns of praise ascending
When we lead him to his beer!

Shall they perish? That's the question!
So I make this great suggestion—
Doth the wower in thy township
Call in vain, dear friends, to you?
Save the wowsers! Help this mission!
They are leaping to Perdition—
Sisters all, with me go forward
Towards the heathen in the pew!
Hark! the trump at last is sounding!
Let us mish then, gaily bounding—
Let us lead the heathen wowsers,
Bringing Whiskers to the fold:
Make them Men!—aye, make them human!
So get busy, Men and Women—
Will you? Won't you? Can't you? Don't you
Mean to mish like soldiers bold?

—Truth (Melbourne).

ROLAND SMITH.

THEN AND NOW.

Rev. A. J. Waldron says he does not believe in the resurrection of the body, and adds that there would probably have been a different account of the affair had psychical research reached its present stage when Christ was crucified. We agree, not only as regards psychical research, merely in relation to the resurrection, but to the whole story. Imagine anyone coming along to-day with the story of Jesus, from the birth to the resurrection. People would have examined the evidence, and they would have criticised the reliability of the witnesses. They would have said that here was only a rehash of a very old superstition. They would have pointed out that the woman who first saw the empty tomb was one who had been "possessed of devils"—probably an epileptoid subject. They would have known how common were delusions of sight and of hearing. They would have rightly seen in Paul's conversion either a sun-stroke or an ordinary attack of epilepsy. They would have laughed at the miracle of the loaves and fishes, of walking on the sea, of conversations with the Devil. If the whole story were told for the first time to-day, there is not a daily paper in existence that would waste a couple of columns on printing it.

If the knowledge available to-day had been present two thousand years ago, the story simply could not have been told. Such legends, to originate and to gain credence, require a peculiar environment. The general mind must be saturated with supernaturalism. It must regard such things as only slightly out of the usual order, and there must not be current a degree of positive knowledge with which they conflict. In the time of Jesus these conditions were all present. People were ready to believe in more stories of the supernatural because they already believed in a goodly stock. Jesus, performing miracles, was only doing what religious leaders had always done and were still doing. The resurrection was no more wonderful than a thousand-and-one other stories in which the people believed. That is why the Christians of the earlier centuries accepted Pagan miracles as readily as their own. They questioned none, and swallowed all that were offered. Whether they came from God or the Devil was the only question at issue; but they were all genuine. That is also why it was so easy to start a new religion then, and so impossible to inaugurate a new one to-day. The thaumaturgist was then hailed as an instrument of Deity. To-day he is described as either an impostor or a lunatic.

The picturesque Easter ceremony of the washing of the feet of choirboys, in imitation of the humility of Christ when he washed the disciples' feet, was performed by the Catholic Archbishop. This "imitation humility" is merely an annual feature of a lordly and profitable business.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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INDOOR.
KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (Mr. Miller's, 8 Mathias road, Stoke Newington, N.): Monday, April 27, at 8, Business Meeting—Election of Conference Delegate, etc.

OUTDOOR.

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

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

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (outside Maryland Point Station, Stratford, E.): 7, E. Burke, "Evolution."

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.
GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (Ramshorn Rooms, 122 Ingram-street): 12 noon, Annual Business Meeting of Members.

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